Framing the Magdalen. Sentimental narratives and impression management in charity annual reporting.

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Abstract
We analyse the annual report narratives, between 1801 and 1914, of the Edinburgh Magdalen Asylum, a reformatory for 'fallen' women. We aim to provide new insights by combining interdisciplinary perspectives: the work of Erving Goffman on stigma, asylums, impression management and framing, and writings on literary genres, in particular eighteenth and nineteenth century fiction. We also contribute to research on the annual report as source material for social history and to accounting histories of women. We find that the narratives were employed to discharge the directors' accountability, by portraying their work and the asylum as socially and economically useful, accounting for the inmates in their charge, securing funding, and finding suitable employment for inmates after release. The narratives and their subjects were framed in accordance with conventions of sentimental novels and recurring literary plot structures. By creating a dichotomy between victims of seduction and 'hardened' prostitutes, the directors could manage expectations: not all Magdalens could be saved. On the other hand, this allowed the directors to advertise their 'product' in the market for domestic labour: Case histories and personal narratives were presented to show that the remorseful Magdalen could become a docile domestic servant and productive citizen.

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1. Introduction

This paper analyses the narratives, between 1801 and 1914, in the annual reports of the Edinburgh Magdalen Asylum (EMA), a refuge and reformatory for 'fallen' women.

Narratives can be employed by organisations in fundraising, discharging accountability, promoting corporate objectives, or defending actions and outcomes. The choice of particular narratives, plots and styles permits the organisation to frame its mission statements and to manage impressions. In the case of the EMA, key messages, successes and embarrassments, as well as the EMA's 'product', the reformed Magdalen, had to be framed in the report narratives in ways most likely to mobilise supporters. In particular, the EMA's objective to reintegrate Magdalens into society and into the labour market required careful management of the stigma associated with the Magdalen and, by association, the asylum.

The primary objective of this paper is to innovate by combining interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives, to provide new and deeper insights into how such narratives were effectively used by a nineteenth century charity to manage impressions. It therefore combines theoretical perspectives from the work of Erving Goffman on stigma, asylums, impression management and framing, with writings on literary genres and conventions, in particular the sentimental narrative of eighteenth and nineteenth century fiction, and more generally on narratives and popular culture in management and accounting research. Goffman's work is particularly relevant to the present study because the EMA itself was, in Goffman's terms, a 'total institution', its inmates were stigmatised women with 'spoilt identities'; and the EMA objectives and ideology, but also setbacks, were carefully 'framed' to manage impressions. Further, the sentimental narratives employed in the EMA's impression management often take on a theatrical nature, which further resonates with Goffman's work.

We argue that the EMA's directors drew on their audience's cultural norms and expectations to manage impressions. While these changed throughout the period under investigation, master narratives and rhetoric employed were inspired by religious language and imagery, humanitarian ethics, and in particular by sentimental narratives of Magdalen House Literature.

Magdalen House writings have been explored, primarily in literature studies, with regard to the earlier London Magdalen House. There is also a growing body of research on the Irish Magdalen Laundries (e.g. McCarthy 2010), although, with the exception of Killian (2014), not from an accounting perspective. Some limited prior research also examines the Edinburgh Magdalen Asylum from a social history perspective. There are further increasing numbers of studies exploring corporate narratives in impression management. In particular frame analysis (not exclusively based on Goffman) has been applied in many disciplines, including communication and media studies, political sciences, social movement research (e.g. Snow et al. 1986, Benford and Snow 2000) and accounting and audit research (e.g. Vollmer 2007, Christensen and Skærbæk 2007, Bay 2011, Solomon et al. 2013). Similarly, Goffman's work on stigma has been widely applied, and not only with reference to individuals. A stigma may attach also to institutions (see e.g. Sutton and Callahan, 1987, Neu and Wright 1992). Thus Goffman's work on impression management, while focusing primarily on the individual's presentation of 'self', is also pertinent to

corporate entities.

To the best of our knowledge, however, this is the first study to combine Goffmanesque frameworks of impression management with literary research and employing this to narratives in a nineteenth century charity's reports.[1] In addition, this paper contributes to research on the annual report as source material for social history (Jeacle 2009; Jackson 2012) and to accounting histories of women (see e.g. Walker 2008a). We finally suggest that the techniques and framing devices employed in the EMA's annual report narratives, including the use of popular culture and sentimental narratives, continue to be successfully employed by modern organisations, in particular charities.

Below we first provide the historical background to this paper (section 2), then introduce our theoretical frameworks (section 3). Section 4 explores how the EMA itself – a penitentiary and 'total institution' – was framed as a refuge and home, and how directors managed impressions to downplay discrediting processes and events. Section 5 explores the framing of the EMA's present, former and prospective inmates. Diagnostic and adversarial framing were employed to manage expectations, in particular by contrasting the irredeemable sinner with the Magdalen capable of redemption. For the latter, different positive outcomes were presented to overcome the prostitution stigma and facilitate the Magdalen's reintegration into society. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. Background
2.1 Historical context
The EMA was modelled on the London Magdalen House, founded in 1758. In London, rapid population growth had led to an increase in social problems, including prostitution (Bristow 1977). Prostitutes challenged the ideological demarcations between public commerce and private sexuality and domesticity (Jones 1997), were seen as agents of social destruction (Peace 2007) and considered 'economically and reproductively barren' (ibid., p. 128). However, during the first half of the eighteenth century, prostitutes came to be seen as capable (with philanthropic assistance) of redemption, and worthy of charity, rather than punishment (Andrew 1989, Peace 2007). Rescue work began later than elsewhere in Europe because it was associated, in popular imagination, with Roman Catholicism, and the initial ideas were met with protests against '"popish convents" and "sacred prisons"' (Bristow 1977, p. 64). In fact, convents and similar institutions for penitent prostitutes had existed in Europe from the early thirteenth to the late seventeenth century and, with the advent of capitalism, had from the early eighteenth century been transformed into forced workhouses (McCarthy 2010). Examples of these survived until recently in the notorious Irish Magdalen laundries (McCarthy 2010, Killian 2014).

The foundation of the London Magdalen House, which preceded those in Ireland and elsewhere in the UK, resulted from a number of connected developments. The period was one of reform and humanitarianism (Nash 1984), with a large number of charities created, many of which were associated with the ideologies of sentimentality and mercantilism (Peace 2007). At a time of war, colonial expansion and concerns about population decline, the mercantilist vision, although frequently employing religious language, was less concerned with prostitutes' moral qualities, but rather with the practical problem of prostitution itself and with the aim of turning prostitutes into productive workers and mothers (Andrew 1989, Peace 2007). A wealthy state required a productive labour force, and therefore productive citizens were assumed to have a concrete monetary value (Andrew 1989, p. 23). This

philosophy also motivated other charities, including orphanages (Peace 2007). Earlier attempts to address the prostitution problem, including the Bridewell and the workhouse, had not been successful, they had provided neither moral incentives nor opportunities for women to change, since they had not equipped them with any skills for the labour market. The Magdalen asylum on the other hand was intended to provide such an opportunity for moral and vocational regeneration (Andrew 122). This was one of the main factors that distinguished the London Magdalen House and later, similar English and Scottish asylums from those in Ireland, which frequently incarcerated inmates for life, without intentions to prepare them for a life outside the institution.[2] Another was that the latter were under the control of the Catholic church, while the London House and the Edinburgh asylum investigated below were ostensible secular - although religion played a major part in motivating their supporters, in fundraising, and in the running of the institutions.

In addition to mercantilism, the changing attitudes towards prostitutes and the foundation and initial success of the Magdalen owed much to the emergence and the popularity of the sentimental novel, which was embraced by Whiggish sentimental discourse of improvement (Peace 2007, p. 131; see below). This assumed that women were naturally morally inclined, had turned towards prostitution out of need, and would be open to redemption (ibid.). Taken together, sentimentality and mercantilism allowed for a fundamental 'reframing' of the prostitute.

The foundation of the London asylum was also symptomatic of a general change in the ideology of punishment in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, from the physical punishment of the body to the birth of the prison and the 'disciplinary punishment' of confinement (Foucault 1977). In this new ideology, systems of surveillance, recording and classification would permit professionals to exercise power over the individual, in a vision architecturally imagined in Bentham's Panopticum (ibid.). In England, this new ideology was manifested in a prison reform movement from around 1770, with an emphasis on confinement and attempts to 'improve' delinquents' minds with religious instruction and physical labour (Ignatieff 1978/89). This coincided with industrialisation, capitalist transformation, a change in class relations, and a shift of economic power and leadership from the aristocracy to professions, the new gentry, trade and manufacturing; that is to actors who believed that materialistic rationalism could improve humanity and contribute to the maintenance of order, and exercise their power over the poor (Bender 1987, Ignatieff 1978/89). It thus foreshadowed Victorian philanthropic tradition, which associated humanitarianism with domination and required subjects' submission to moral improvement, to a colonizing of the mind (Ignatieff 1978/89). Like the emergence of the Magdalen House, prison reform was also closely related to cultural events; thus Bender (1987) argues that attitudes towards prison in eighteenth century literature and art facilitated the conception of the actual penitentiary prisons later in the century.

In the London Magdalen House, inmates submitted to a system of voluntary incarceration. They had to surrender to a strict discipline which stressed submission, repentance (Nash 1984) and work. Inmates' work contributed to the charity's income (Batchelor 2004), but mainly served rehabilitation, by teaching inmates '… the principles of industry' and preparing them for domestic service (Nash 1984, p. 620). Work increasingly included laundry work, one of the heaviest forms of labour for women (ibid.). Bristow (1977, p. 66) suggests that 'in this form, as a "sanctimonious sweatshop", the Magdalen became widely copied'.

In spite of its ostensibly voluntary and non-punitive ideology, Nash (1984) therefore argues that the London Magdalen shared many features with the prison

penitentiary as proposed in the 1770s by John Howard, and the Penitentiary Act of 1770 to which Howard contributed. Thus 'the inculcation of guilt coupled with lessons of industry, sobriety, and good manners was the formula used to effect reform and rehabilitation, just as it was the formula of many theorists of penology from the 1780s on' (Nash 1984, p. 624). Although humanitarian motives were clearly present, the London Magdalen thus anticipated the technologies of social engineering represented later by the prison penitentiary (ibid.).

Prostitution was also a concern in nineteenth century Scotland. Industrialisation, migration, economic depression, epidemics and inadequate housing had contributed to a situation where 'Scottish cities were regarded as crying scandals of poverty and ill-health, and the urban poor were ranked among the most wretched in the nation' (Littlewood and Mahood 1991, p. 161, with reference to, inter alia, Smout 1986/97 and Engels 1951). Scottish poor law did not offer a right to relief (McGowan 1997, p. 39), did not provide for the able-bodied poor (Carson and Idzikowska 1989, p. 281), and was at times poorly complied with and enforced (Alison 1840). There was strong resistance to centralised state control and to state provision of poor relief, because this was feared to discourage initiative and remove incentives to work (Checkland 1980, Andrew 1989, Morris 1999). Instead, the mounting social problems were addressed by local and voluntary initiatives and philanthropy (Checkland 1980, Littlewood and Mahood 1991, Morton 1998), on which the church had considerable influence. In 1843 the Free Church of Scotland was formed, which was favoured by middle class evangelicals, whose Calvinist ideals focused on changing and saving the individual, rather than changing social order (Littlewood and Mahood 1991; see also Morris 1999, Levitt 1988).

The middle classes increasingly engaged in charitable activities because it was seen as their Christian duty, but also because, in nineteenth century society, involvement in charities had become fashionable; it signalled social standing and status (Checkland 1980, p. 5, Jackson 2012; Holden et al. 2009). Not only financial support but also time was given in a society where leisure was the ultimate sign of success (Checkland 1980, p. 5), and in particular medical and legal professionals and ministers of religion could offer time and expertise (Morris 1999). In addition, involvement in charities allowed the middle classes to publicly network with their social superiors, including aristocracy, thereby raising their status while simultaneously showing their superiority to and imposing their values on the lower classes (Holden et al. 2009, Jackson 2012). Upper and middle class women found in charitable activities a means of self-expression and a not only sanctioned, but approved relief from the confines of their domestic sphere (Walker 2006, Holden et al. 2009). The number of new charities rose dramatically. However, they provided only discriminatory individual relief, based on the assessment of need and the recipient's character (Levitt 1988, Morris 1999, Checkland 1980).

With a (perceived) increase in prostitution, sexual behaviour became the subject of 'an explosion of distinct discursivities which took the form of demography, biology, medicine, psychiatry, psychology, ethics, pedagogy and political criticism' (Mahood 1990, p. 48, citing Foucault 1980, p. 33). Social factors, the labour market and women's character flaws were blamed, variously, for the problem. Proposed solutions included attempts to raise public awareness and standards of behaviour, campaigning for legislation, in particular Police Acts, and Magdalen Asylums (Checkland 1980).[3] The supporters of any of these initiatives faced the need to align the diverging reference frames of individuals with an interest in the prostitution

problem, and in particular to present carefully managed impressions of their specific projects to their respective audiences.

2.2 The Edinburgh Magdalen Asylum and its annual reports

Founded in 1797, the EMA was intended as 'an asylum for Females, who having deviated from the paths of virtue, are desirous of being restored, by religious instruction, and the formation of moral and industrious habits, to a respectable station in society' (Annual Report (AR) 1827-29). It was typical of voluntary organizations in nineteenth century Scotland. Such organisations

> 'could be quickly established because the rules were always similar and its conventions likewise. An organizing committee was formed, office bearers duly elected, a titled patron was sought, a membership rate established or a subscription rate suggested. The rules and regulations were published as were the accounts. This was a public process based on public accountability, … . The power of the voluntary organization was its very modularity. Donate money; commit and visit; standing orders; pay and benefit. The subscriber democracy marked the voluntary organization of the nineteenth century off from its eighteenth-century counterpart' (Morton 1998, p. 352).

Initially the EMA targeted women, irrespective of age, who had recently been released from prison, but it soon shifted its focus.[4] An upper age limit of 26 was specified (AR1833-35) and women who were ill or pregnant were not admitted (Laws and Regulations (LR) 1909). Applicants were initially admitted on a probationary basis (LR1801).

Inmates were subject to a strict regime, which included moral education and domestic and industrial training (Mahood 1990, p. 55). Incentive systems (including a share of earnings) and sanctions (including solitary confinement and, ultimately, dismissal) encouraged cooperation. Initially, inmates were expected to stay for two years (although some stayed considerably longer), later this was reduced to 18 months (AR1827-29; LR1909). Upon release, the aim was to return them 'to the "private" sphere as competent and submissive domestic servants' (Mahood 1990, p. 87). However, it was at times difficult to find places in domestic service, and other forms of employment had to be sought. In addition, many women were dismissed, or although this was made difficult, left early, on their own initiative.

As in London, the inmates' labour served ideological as well as economic purposes, but unlike the London House, the EMA was highly successful in economic terms. It was initially funded by subscriptions and donations, but income was increasingly raised through inmates' work, in particular in industrial-style laundries. Thus average annual income from work done, in real terms, increased fourteen-fold over the period of investigation, whilst income from legacies, donations, subscriptions and collections dropped.

[Insert Table 1 approximately here]

The increase in work done accelerated during the second half of the nineteenth century, rising to 98% by value of total income. In most years until 1855 the EMA cash accounts showed a shortfall of income over expenditure, although, apart from years when additional funding from subscriptions and donation had to be raised for

major capital expenditure, its financial situation stabilised during the second half of the century, and in 1886, for the first time, income from inmates' work alone exceeded ordinary expenditure. From 1900 the asylum had sufficient reserves to be self-financing, despite the negative cash flow in some periods.

The decrease in subscriptions and donations may have been due to less emphasis on fundraising in the annual reports as the laundry business became more successful, but also to increasing competition between charities: In Edinburgh, 27 new charities were founded between 1800 and 1850, 36 between 1850 and 1875, and 85 between 1875 and 1900 (Levitt 1988). While subscribers remained important audiences for the EMA's annual reports, their financial contribution became less important than their ideological support, in particular their willingness to take reformed inmates as domestic servants, and to make use of the EMA's laundry services.

Thus the EMA's financial success was partly due to a shift towards the more lucrative laundry work in the second half of the century, partly to an increase in the number of inmates to perform this work. Average numbers of inmates were around 40-50 in the first half of the nineteenth century, but had more than doubled at the start of the twentieth (see Table 2).

[Insert Table 2 approximately here]

A number of factors influenced the fluctuation and gradual increase in inmate numbers: Employment was uncertain and often seasonal and especially women's wages were pushed down to an extent that few women were able support themselves independently (Checkland 1980). Women therefore often resorted to prostitution when they were unemployed, or to part-time or 'clandestine prostitution' when other earnings were too low (Mahood 1990), and became likely candidates for the EMA. Recruitment thus also fluctuated between seasons (Checkland 1980). Economic downturns in particular contributed to increasing numbers of application. In 1893, for example, at a time of adverse winter conditions and trade depression (Levitt 1988) 108 women were admitted (84 the previous year).

In 1864 the asylum moved to better, purpose-built premises, which permitted the EMA to admit a larger number of inmates, and also provided better facilities for the laundry business (AR1864, Mahood 1990). When the available space was not filled, the directors adopted more active recruitment strategies by making greater use of 'missionaries' (AR1874), who were engaged to actively recruit inmates by scouting the streets and courts. For example, Mrs Purves, the then missionary, sent 37 girls to the EMA in 1879, a year when a total of 113 women were admitted, as compared to 69 in the previous year (AR1879). She was therefore a major source of recruitment. In addition, the General Police and Improvements (Scotland) Act of 1862 and, in Edinburgh, the Municipal and Police Act (1879) gave substantial powers to the police to act against prostitutes (Checkland 1980, p. 242), and in the later part of the century the EMA and other asylums became increasingly instruments of the police, since magistrates were encouraged to send women convicted of loitering and soliciting to these institutions (Checkland 1980, p. 235).

These financial results, inmate numbers, and other financial and non-financial information were conveyed to actual and prospective subscribers, donors, and other supporters in the EMA's annual reports. An almost complete series survives. The standard content includes lists of office bearers, directors, named subscribers and their

contributions, lists of donations and legacies, an abstract of the accounts, a statement of inmates, the directors' report and initially occasionally and from 1866 regularly, a brief report of the directors' annual meeting. In some years, other items were included, such as abstracts of income from different types of work, price lists and advertisements, and appeals for employment (in service) for reformed inmates.

The reports' style and length changed throughout the period under investigation (see Table 1),[5] but apart from the last decades, were dominated by religious and often bathetic language, and employed narratives inspired by different cultural forms and genres, at times resembling sermons and religious or philanthropic tracts (from which they borrow). They were also inspired by the genre of the sentimental novel.

The reports constitute a careful balancing act between the commercial, financial and pragmatic affairs of the asylum, and spiritual, moral and ethical concerns arising in the charge and disposal of its inmates. They appear to have been written in most years by the chaplain, on the directors' behalf. The chaplain also acted as secretary. Only in 1876 was the office of secretary formally separated from that of the chaplain, when 'a man of business appointed with a salary' was employed (AR1876, see below). Throughout, the reports made use of other sources, such as committee minutes, quotes by the matron and other employees and office holders (including, in later decades, the chaplain) and of extracts from pamphlets, religious texts, Bible extracts, sermons, and reports. The main focus was not, as a rule, financial affairs, although this was prominent in years of financial distress. Instead, emphasis was on objectives (an example is provided in Figure 1) and on inmates, and in more general terms, on the problem of prostitution. Stressing the magnitude of this problem and the social, economic and public health related advantages of the asylum, the directors attempted to justify its existence, to appeal for financial and other support and to discharge their accountability, by demonstrating that they had met the objective of rehabilitating prostitutes. To facilitate this, the conduct of inmates had to be a major concern. Successes and setbacks were therefore discussed at great length and illustrated through carefully presented case studies. Almost without exception, the reports contained a statement of inmates. This summarized admissions and destinations. (An example is provided in Figure 2).

[Figure 1 approximately here]

[Figure 2 approximately here]

Rehabilitation also required reintegration into the labour market, and a major theme in the reports was the need to find 'situations' for the inmates - the marketing of the reformed Magdalens as suitable domestic servants. As will be explored below, this required careful management of the stigma associated with the inmates and, by association, the asylum. The asylum's key messages, 'successes' and 'embarrassments', and the inmates' stories had to be framed in the report narratives in ways most likely to mobilise supporters.

3. Theoretical frame(works) and narratives
In recent decades, research in accounting and related disciplines has taken an increasing interest in narratives. Annual report narratives can be employed in fundraising, discharging accountability, promoting corporate objectives, or defending

actions and outcomes. The choice of particular types of narratives and plots permits the organisation to frame its mission statements and to manage the impression it wishes to convey. Research on impression management in corporate reporting has been inspired by the seminal work of Erving Goffman (see e.g. Solomon et al. 2013 for an overview). This is particularly pertinent to our analysis of the EMA's annual report narratives because it resonates with the EMA's objectives and ideology on a number of levels: the EMA itself was, in Goffman's terms, a 'total institution', its inmates were stigmatised women with 'spoilt identities' and the stigma of the inmates may well have contaminated the reputation of the institution and its management. The directors therefore had to frame the messages they aimed to convey in the annual report narratives with considerable care, to manage impressions by adapting to changing social and cultural norms and expectations. The stories told and their telling often take on a theatrical nature, which further resonates with Goffman's work.

3.1 Stigma, asylums and impression management

According to Goffman, (1963/90, p. 11) society categorizes individuals and creates a 'virtual social identity' (p. 12), based on our assumptions, for persons thus categorized. A discrediting attribute that distinguishes a person from others ('normals') by reducing them to a 'tainted', or 'discounted' person, is referred to as a stigma. Stigma is thus not necessarily the consequence of an attribute or behaviour itself, but rather of definitional processes (Neu and Wright 1992, with reference to Jones et al. 1984). The labelling of others as 'deviant' may be self-interested; it allows the 'normals' to advance social position and to gain control over the stigmatised (ibid., with reference to Page 1984 and Schurr 1980).

Stigmatized persons may accept and adopt society's standards. This may be as a result of a specific turning point in their life (Goffman 1963/90, p. 53) which may, for example, refer to a period in what Goffman, in Asylums (1961/91), refers to as 'total institutions', such as orphanages, mental hospitals, penitentiaries, religious retreats, work camps, army barracks, etc. While the aims of such institutions can include a variety of economic and social goals, including education and training, religious purification or protection of society against pollution, the institutions typically fall short of these aims (ibid., p. 80-1). Where total institutions are concerned with rehabilitation, the inmate is expected to maintain the institution's standards after she or he leaves, but Goffman believes that this, too, is not entirely successful.

The EMA was such a total institution, with many of the typical characteristics identified by Goffman (see below). To portray the EMA as legitimate, the directors had to manage the stigma associated with the subjects of their charity and with discrediting events that could call into question the EMA's effectiveness in rehabilitating prostitutes.

Techniques to manage stigma and embarrassment include, *inter alia*, 'passing' (as 'normal'), concealing discrediting information, creating a 'front', and 'cover*ing*' - a technique that, while acknowledging a stigma, attempts to reduce its impact Goffman (1963/90, 1959/90). Such techniques may entail misrepresentation of the underlying reality (Solomon et al. 2013, Jeacle 2008).

In Frame Analysis (1974/86), Goffman further explores how individuals manipulate expectations and social situations for the attainment of specific goals (Manning 1992, p. 120). Specifically, framing means encouraging others to see the world in a particular way by making certain aspects of reality more, and others less accessible or noticeable. Thus '[f]rames are central organising ideas within a narrative account of an issue or event; they provide the interpretive cues for otherwise neutral

facts' (Kuypers 2009, p. 182). Frames may be subject to change, they may be transformed when activities which are meaningful in one specific framework become interpreted as something different; Goffman (1974/86, pp. 43-4) refers to a 'keying'. This may be the staging of an action, such as a play fight, social rituals, sporting contests, etc. (Goffman 1974/86, Chapter 3). Frames may also be broken, for example when discrepancies arise between the intended frame and the actor's impression management performance (Solomon et al. 2013, p. 198).

Below we explore Goffmanesque techniques of impression management in the annual reports of the EMA. First however, we discuss in more general terms the use of narratives in impression management, and in particular the use of sentimental narratives in promoting Magdalen charities.

3.2 (Sentimental) narratives and impression management

To use narrative effectively requires the skilful selection and shaping of suitable detail (Jameson, 2001). Of particular importance are 'corporate myths' - stories with special value for the organization, incl. stories about key leaders, company founders, key events and key principles (ibid.). Such recurring special or master narratives are employed in political and religious movements and repeated in speeches or sermons. They can shape not just organisations, but entire cultures and historical eras (Jameson 2001, with reference to Bormann 1985). They have been used for example by Disney Corporation to manage meaning and mythologize its founder in communication with stakeholders, or by the Salvation Army to manage its reputation in the face of damaging allegations of child abuse in the 1950-70s (Middleton 2009). The latter controlled its messages in a carefully managed process, employing narratives, popular culture, entertainment, and 'a multitude of techniques, including parades, lectures, vaudeville, slide shows, films, radio, and television to present its faith and charitable works to the world' (Middleton 2009, p. 147).

Frame analysis suggests that a frame should be credible; the receiver of a message has to believe that it is real or reasonable (Bay 2011). Its credibility depends on the amount of evidential support provided, and whether this evidence is culturally believable (Benford and Snow 2000). To be believable, it can draw on existing cultural resources, including 'the extant stock of meanings, beliefs, ideologies, practices, values, myths, narratives, and the like' (ibid., p. 629). This suggests that the facticity of elements included in corporate narratives may be less significant than their cultural credibility. In general, the fact-fiction divide has been challenged. Thus Phillips (1995, p. 625) argues that

> '[t]he powerful critiques of postmodernism, poststructuralism, and feminist theory have exposed the political bias of the boundaries between different forms of knowledge and have underscored the role of power in the definition of 'truth'. As a result, the barriers between fiction and fact, and art and science, have become increasingly difficult to defend; …'.

In a similar vein, Maltby (1997, p. 83) notes that contemporary middle class readers praised Gustav Freytag's novel *Soll und Haben* for its realism not because it reflected reality as it was, but rather because it portrayed them as they wished to be. The boundaries between life and art become further blurred when, by propagating specific images or stereotypes, fiction influences actual, real-life practices (see e.g. Czarniawska and Rhodes 2006).

As noted above, in London, the changing attitudes towards prostitutes and the

Magdalen Asylum owed much to the ascent, in the 1740s, of the sentimental novel (Peace 2007). Early eighteenth century libertine and satirical literature had portrayed the prostitute as promiscuous and vicious, and prostitution as part of a criminal underworld. A more sympathetic representation began to emerge by the mid-century (Ellis 1996). Sentimental and compassionate portrayals of 'fallen' women were presented in increasingly popular seduction novels - including the works of Samuel Richardson. [6] The sentimental narrative contributed to frame transformation, an alignment process that changed old interpretations and created new ones (cf. Benford and Snow 2000, p. 625). Here also, the boundaries between fiction and social reality were unclear and the influence was mutual; 'fictional accounts were presented as true ones and the hospital featured in explicitly fictional material' (Lloyd 1996, p. 58; see also Batchelor 2004, Jones 1997). Thus, as was also the case with the later prison reform (Bender,1987), the Magdalen controversy was not only a political, but also a cultural event that drew on material provided by novels (Ellis 1996). The term 'Magdalen House literature' (MHL) (Batchelor 2004, Koehler 2010) was used to apply to all publications associated with promoting the London charity, which included:

> '… administrative and narrative writings, fictional and 'real-life' stories, … various proposals that led to the foundation of the charity …; published accounts of the charity's purpose and operation … [containing] lists of rules and regulations for the inmates; published sermons originally delivered in the institution's chapel, along with testimonials from inmates and their relatives; and separately published fictional, sentimental accounts of the lives of women supposedly rehabilitated at Magdalen House, which capitalized on public interest in the charity in its first few years of operation' (Koehler 2010, p. 250-1).

Mostly famously, the *Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen House, Supposed to be Related by Themselves* (1760) [7] were published as fund-raising medium (Jones 1997). Employing familiar paradigms by drawing on standard prostitution plots (Jones 1997, Batchelor 2004), they contain four fictionalized narratives, purportedly the histories of the first inmates of the Asylum (Peace 2007). To legitimize the inmates in spite of their spoilt identities, the narratives had to be emotionally engaging, and portray the Magdalens as '"worthy" and pitiable", qualities upon which "sympathetic visibility" depended' (Grossman 2000, p. 248, citing Van Van Sant 1993). Inmates are therefore represented as fallen innocents (Jones 1997), victims of seduction or of devious bawds (Jones 1997).

In accordance with the genre's conventions, the stories in *The Histories* were framed as first person narratives, as if these were genuine personal experiences (Ogborn 1998, see also Lloyd 1996). Such narratives included also letters, seemingly the inmates' only surviving personal accounts (Lloyd 1996, p. 58, see also Ellis 1996). But allowing the penitents to speak for themselves was an artificial fictional device - in the actual Magdalen House inmates were not permitted to discuss their past (Andrew 1989, Grossman 2000).

The choice of the novel genre appealed to a public that 'was hungry for stories about the proper virtue of fallen women and the pitiable plight of prostitutes' (Peace 2007, p. 135). It also permitted authors to explore morally ambiguous territory by discussing more elaborately the women's experiences than could have been done in a religious or philanthropic tract (Ogborn 1998, see also Rosenthal 2006). This was not

unproblematic, since in the mid-eighteenth century reading novels was seen as a possible threat to female chastity (Ellis 1996). It appears at first glance perverse, therefore, that Magdalen House propaganda included seduction narratives that resemble those of the sentimental novel (Ellis 1996, see also Rosenthal 2006), especially since the Magdalen's capacity for remorse signalled her middle-class status, and allowed identification with the reader. This, of course, might imply the risk of similar vulnerability (Jones 1997, p. 205).

However, the conclusions of narratives such as those in *The Histories* were always predictable: repentance and reform and, frequently, the penitent's death. Placing the Magdalen in a narrative with a well-know plot paradigm turned her story into 'a comforting cultural myth; through this figure, the object of pity and charity, disruptive sexual energies, class antagonisms and commercial guilt could appear to be morally contained'. And the reader, aware of the familiar narratives' inevitable ending, was allowed to remain securely outside the text (Jones 1997, p. 206). Thus, while frames are most effective if they resonate with the experiences of the audience, frame resonance can also be achieved by narrative fidelity, that is by resonance with the target groups' cultural narrations, or myths (rather than with personal, or factual, experience) (Benford and Snow 2000). Frames can thus be amplified by idealising, clarifying, embellishing or invigorating existing beliefs and values, by tapping into cultural resources. This is in particular useful where movement constituents differ significantly from movement beneficiaries (ibid.).

While, over time, the portrayal of the fallen woman in reform literature and fiction shifted (see Andrew 1989, Jones 1997, Walkowitz 1992), many of the conventions of eighteenth century sentimental fiction and reform literature prevailed, including the portrayal of the women as victims of seduction, their redemption, and typically, their death. Such portrayals occur inter alia in novels by Gaskell, Dickens, Hardy, Collins and Eliot (see e.g. Auerbach 1980). In fact, melodrama was the nineteenth century's most important theatrical and literary form (Walkowitz 1992).

4. Framing the asylum

Below we explore how narratives were used in the EMA's directors' reports, for different purposes, but primarily to portray the asylum as useful and to market its product: the reformed, socially and economically useful Magdalen. In doing so, the narratives draw on their reader's cultural expectations by employing religious themes and master narratives from popular culture. They also employ diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing (cf. Snow and Benford 1988, Benford and Snow 2000). Diagnostic framing is concerned with causality, blame and responsibility (ibid.), and the EMA's narratives discussed at length the prostitution problem generally and culpability and the 'causes of sin' specifically. Among these presumed causes were seduction, drink, neglect of piety and domestic worship, lack of spiritual instruction, lack of supervision of one's children and servants, laxness of manners and dress, corrupting examples, the 'present mode of female attire' (AR1864), 'low theatres, singing and dancing saloons' (AR1876), certain forms of employment, unemployment, and poverty. In 1872 and (a few) subsequent years, brief statistical summaries about parentage, age and education of inmates were published, permitting speculation about 'the causes of sin' and concluding that these were 'Orphanage, a particular period of Age and Ignorance' (AR1873). Numbers are useful for 'the ordering of social situations' (Vollmer 2007, p. 577) and accounting reports and techniques can facilitate the gathering and dissemination of stigmatizing information (Walker 2008b). However, statistics played a very limited role in the annual reports,

as compared to narrative discourse. This supports Jameson's (2001) findings, in a modern context, that in meetings, senior executives found arguments based on statistical evidence to be less persuasive than narrative discourse and evidence based on stories (see also Roundy, 2009). The EMA's directors may similarly have found that narratives were more effective in their discourse about the prostitution problem and the inmates.

The narratives also engaged in prognostic framing - the articulation of proposed solutions and strategies. Among the proposed remedies and preventative measures were foremost religious instruction, but also education, industrial training, social punishment for seducers and frequenters of brothels, legislative changes, provision of employment (for example, district washing houses), detention of habitual offenders, and of course, the EMA itself.

Finally, motivational framing was employed to encourage engagement and collective action – primarily with reference to modest behaviour, religious observance, and 'more vigilant and kindly superintendence … exercised over the young females in their employment, by masters and mistresses, and the proprietors of manufactories, sewing-rooms, and public works' (AR1867); providing employment for reformed Magdalens, and financial and other contributions were also encouraged. Further, it was 'the plain interest … of the whole community, of every class, of every denomination, to give as God enables them, for the support of an Institution which is alone in this city as a refuge for those unhappy women …' (AR1858) because the asylum not only provided refuge and instruction, but also contributed to 'the prevention of the invasion and spread of a dangerous disease' (AR1858).

The EMA was thus framed as a benign refuge, a home (see below), although it was, in fact, a total institutions as described by Goffman (1961/91). Inmates were separated (physically and ideologically) from staff, their benefactors, and the outside world in a system of ostensibly voluntary, but at times forced incarceration. (While AR1827-9 stresses that the asylum is a refuge and not a prison, later reports explicitly refer to it as a penitentiary.) They were subject to strict surveillance, which continued after release; to formal rules and regulations, rigorous admission procedures, 'work therapy' in the guise of industrial training, and violations of private information. As was the case for other total institutions, the EMA's goals were reformation of inmates towards an ideal standard, although, in reality, it was at least partly what Goffman terms 'storage dumps for inmates' (1961/91 p. 73), aiming to protect the public from (moral) contamination. Thus, while asylums such as the EMA were initially intended as voluntary, and remained essentially philanthropic institutions, 'from the powers which they took and used they came to be seen as penal institutions' (Checkland 1980, p. 235).

Once admitted, inmates in total institutions are infantilized and suffer the destruction of their conceptions of self, their private spheres and self-determination. Goffman interprets admission procedures as degradations and profanations of the inmate's self (Goffman 1961/91, p. 32). EMA admission procedures included physical/medical examinations, the recording of personal information and 'confessions', the exchange of personal clothing against a uniform and, at times, head shaving (a stigma symbol; Goffman, 1963/90, p. 59), solitary confinement and classification (according to education, behaviour, ability (LR1909)). Inmates' time, work, conduct and diet were strictly regulated, with punishment for offensive behaviour (such as lying, swearing), and contact with the outside world was limited – for example, '[n]o letter or message, shall be conveyed to or from the Institution except through the medium of the matron' (LR1909).

In total institutions, the personal information (including discrediting information) gathered during admission and confinement and held in the inmate's personal file may be disclosed to new audiences and affect her identity and social relations after discharge (Walker 2008b), and the power 'to give the kind of discharge that reduces stigmatization' gives staff considerable leverage (Goffman 1961/91, p..71). Inmates have become objects for biography – somebody about whom a record can be created, whose life line can be retained in the minds of others, or documented in an organization's files – and selectively released.

Work involves typically mean tasks, such as basic domestic or laundry work, which may be presented as useful training or evidence of improvement, but which in fact derives from the daily requirements of the institution (Goffman 1961/91, p. 86). In the case of EMA, all procedures, including work, contributed to institutionalizing inmates in a way intended to make them suitable for a return to society. However, the shift from training in domestic service to industrial laundry work led to a clash between material realities and the ideology of moral reform (Mahood 1990, p. 76). While this discrepancy between the activities pursued and the image presented was not actively concealed, it represented a tacit sacrificing of some ideal standards for others (cf. Goffman, 1959/90, p. 53).

In spite of the increasing move towards laundry work, the directors preferred to place inmates into domestic service after release, assuming this would make them least likely to reoffend. In reality, domestic servants were particularly vulnerable to seduction of force from employers of members of their household, and in the late 1850s, 80% of the EMA's inmates had once worked a domestic servants (Smout 1986/87, p. 161). Rather than acknowledging this concern, AR1867 suggests that '[w]here domestic servants fall into sin, the cause is almost invariably neglect of domestic worship in the family, or the practice of being allowed 'Sunday to themselves'.

Given the historical context, we cannot infer that the EMA's directors would have considered its procedures, as reported in the annual reports, as 'dirty work' – as tasks 'which were physically unclean, semi-legal, cruel, and degrading in other ways' (Goffman 1959/90, p. 53), in particular since they were not concealed from the audience. However, a specific (prognostic) frame, or keying, was required to allow the audience (and also the inmates) to interpret these procedures as meaningful and useful.

To be credible, a frame does not only have to resonate with the audiences' cultural expectations (see above), but also with the frame articulators' credibility. Their status and knowledge will thus contribute to a credentialing process on behalf of the organisation (Benford and Snow 2000). While the cultural credibility of the EMA's narratives was strengthened by the authority of religious language and rhetoric, and familiar plots and myths[8] - credibility also derived from the directors' (middle class, professional) status, and that of the EMA's patrons (from 1805 King George IV (initially as Prince of Wales), from 1842 Queen Victoria) and subscribers, which included further representatives of the aristocracy but predominately the middle classes.

Additional assurances were provided by narratives that portrayed the asylum as a happy home, the matron as a benign surrogate mother and inmates as happy and cheerful. For example:

'In Mrs Milne … they continue to have a Matron in whom they have had
the best reason to place the fullest confidence. As in former years, she

continues to be a succourer of many of the class whose temporal and spiritual benefit has been her life work.

The discipline of the house is excellent, and the work in all its departments goes on most pleasantly. The inmates yield most cheerful obedience. … All the officials work together most cordially, and seek to make the house a home, a Christian, home, where not only the saving truth of God's word is taught in the letter, but exemplified in the spirit of it' (AR1877).

These sentiments were often conveyed through the medium of letters allegedly from former inmates, cited in the annual reports (see below). Further, it was stressed that 'the daily duties … continue to be made as varied as possible - every attention is paid to the dietary and general health of the inmates; … while brightness and cheerfulness are sought to be inculcated in all the departments of the Institution' (AR1894). In addition, the narratives made reference to improvements, including changes in premises and accommodation and, increasingly towards the end of the period, relaxation and entertainment for inmates, such as concerts, lectures and a library. However, the former were in fact partly demanded by the Factory and Workshop Act (1901), which required alterations to working hours and machinery (AR1908 & AR1909). The EMA and similar institutions had initially been excluded from inspection under the Factories Act (1895), but this had given rise to public criticism, amid fears that hours might be to long, and girls overworked (Checkland 1980, p. 239).

Further, total institutions are not very effective in achieving their stated objectives, such as rehabilitation (Goffman 1961/91, see above), and the directors also had to deal with events that have would have been interpreted as discrediting by a contemporary audience. These included large numbers of inmates leaving of their own accord. This had to be presented in the best possible light to reduce its potential detrimental impact.

Damage to individual and organisational reputations can be limited by concealing or underplaying facts or motives incompatible with the ideal (Goffman, 1959/90, p. 56), by defining/explaining undesirable outcomes (cf. Sutton and Callahan, 1987) or by attributing responsibility elsewhere. Thus diagnostic framing can involve boundary framing and adversarial framing to 'delineate the boundaries between "good" and "evil" and construct movement protagonists and antagonists' (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 616). Therefore narratives can create dichotomies between binary opposites, such as male-female, young-old (cf. Boje 2001), saint and sinner (McCarthy 2010) and, crucially, salvation and damnation, virtue and vice, believers and non-believers (Middleton 2009). The latter include groups associated with negative stereotypes, such as criminals, the unemployed, single mothers, etc., and 'because the narrative only provides a dichotomous choice, if we choose not to trust the damned nonbeliever because they are fallen, then we must choose to trust the saved believers as purveyors of the ultimate truth' (ibid., p. 150).

Partly to explain the considerable number of unsuccessful outcomes (see Table 2, the EMA adopted a similar strategy, contrasting the deviant and the redeemable sinner, the 'fallen' and the philanthropist, the bad and the good woman. The Magdalens in particular were framed by drawing on different cultural reference points: the 'hardened and most wicked sinner' (drawing on biblical language and imagery) and the seduced victim (drawing on sentimental literature). The latter could be presented as an individual, with a life-story, a biography that would evoke empathy

and pity. Since '… biographies are very subject to retrospective construction' (Goffman, 1963/90, p. 81), the personal information gathered during the admission process, suitably reframed with references to sentimental master narratives, formed part of the raw material for the annual reports, and for a dichotomising between 'redeemable' and 'irredeemable' sinners.

5. Framing the Magdalen
5.1 The sinner: 'victims of their unbridled passion' and the 'restless'
Early leavers were a problem because they could have been seen as evidence that the asylum did not achieve its objectives. Since basic statistical information about inmates was provided in the annual reports as a mechanism of accountability, concealment would have been difficult. Instead, efforts were reported that made such negative outcome less likely. These included the admission of only 'unhardened' young women, many of whom would not have been prostitutes at all, which increased the likelihood of 'rehabilitation' (see above, also Note 4).

Another strategy, in particular in the first half of the century, was to frame early leavers in a manner that presented them as beyond recovery - typically in the most damning language:

> 'And there is reason to fear, as she has not been heard of, that she has now "returned with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire:" – an awful example of the deceitfulness and desparate wickedness of the human heart!' (AR1824-6, citing 2 Peter:22)

In Goffman's terms, they are portrayed as 'disaffiliates' and 'social deviants', who decline their allocated social place voluntarily and openly (Goffman 1963/90, p. 170). They are 'dissolute and degraded females who are lost to all sense of virtue and feeling of shame' (AR1824-6), are associated with disease, including venereal diseases and cholera, have been 'associating with the most abandoned classes of society' (AR1850) and are 'lamentably ignorant of the contents of the sacred volume; and such of them as are unable to read' (AR1824-6). These irredeemably fallen ones are not given a voice, nor are they, as a rule, given a story - and thus remain impersonal, abstract, and faceless. Biblical citations and religious imagery are the cultural reference points employed to frame these sinners. They are those who

> 'make their brow as brass and their neck iron, who declare their sin and hide it not, who refuse to be ashamed, who blush not but stare. They watch as for prey, saith the Word of God; "they multiply transgressions amongst men; they cast down many wounded, yea many strong men have been slain by them, for their house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death, and the simple knoweth not that the dead are there, and that their guests are in the depths of hell' (AR1858, paraphrasing from Isaiah 48:4; Isaiah3:9; Jeremiah 6:15; Proverbs 9:18, 7:26,27).

From approximately the mid-1860s, the narratives became more secular in style (see below). The negative descriptions of the Magdalens became shorter, less pejorative, less religious in language, and more formulaic. Although we are still told that '[t]he inmates come under our care with heart, mind, body, and habits sorely deteriorated'

(AR1882), there is now more reference to the 'fallen' as 'homeless and friendless', as 'poor, destitute girls taken from the streets and otherwise, finding a shelter in our Home' (AR1885), and to their 'weariness and loneliness' (AR1875).

While those unwilling to remain in the institution were previously framed in most derogatory terms, they are now 'those styled restless' (AR1901; 1912; 1913), or 'unsettled'. For example, the AR1881, AR1887, AR1893 referred to:

> 'a proportion of those admitted who have been too unsettled to remain long, or who have not been able to conform to the industrious life, or submit to the salutary discipline of the Institution; and a still smaller proportion of those whose persistently bad conduct necessitated their dismissal'.

Two factors were acknowledged to play a part in this 'restlessness': in 1904, the exceptionally good weather over the summer suggested that 'the "restless" class did not feel the need of shelter so much as perhaps in former years' (AR1904), and '[s]ome of the women brought from the Police Court go to the Asylum reluctantly, being pressed by the missionaries, and these very often only remain a few days' (AR1887; AR1893). The more coercive recruitment practices may therefore have resulted in lower success rates. Thus in 1904 an 'unprecedentedly large number of admissions' resulted in 45 early leavers. The reports now do not engage in adversarial framing to the same extent as in the earlier decades, and responsibility is attributed partly to economic causes. Inmates social and economic background also was seen to play a part, and provided a justification for not placing all inmates into domestic service after release, and an explanation of why they may not always have continued to be a success:

> 'Of those sent to employments other than that of domestic service, the directors cannot altogether have so much assurance that their efforts will be rewarded with the same measure of success. With this class, who are too often the offspring as well as the associates of: the low the drunken, and the dissolute, who have not even had the elements of a religious or moral training and who have previously been employed as field workers, mill-workers, charwomen, hawkers, .&c, the Directors have some difficulty, as they are manifestly unsuited for domestic services' (AR1880)

In general, thus, by engaging in boundary framing between the redeemable and the unredeemable Magdalen, and by providing other (social and economic) explanations for early leavers, the EMA's directors created manageable performance indicators and managed expectations: not all Magdalens admitted could be expected to turn into a success story.

5.2 The redeemable Magdalen

A different impression had to be created for the redeemable Magdalen, the woman or girl who had 'been snatched as brands from the burning, when they had just begun to tread that dismal path which surely do leadeth down to the chambers of death …' (AR1852). These inmates made the EMA necessary and valuable, and could be presented as a successful outcomes. They were the 'young girl of eighteen, abandoned by those friends who used to regard her with admiration, haunted with the gnawings

of a still upbraiding conscience, disgusted with the nauseous companions of her crimes, and eager to discover some means of regaining her character' (AR1801). They were 'outcast—friendless—homeless—the veriest waifs of humanity' (AR1850). Such girls were 'desirous of abandoning their vices' (AR1804), 'anxious to be restored to a reputable station in society' (AR1838-40) and were sometimes presented as victims of seduction (AR1827-9; 1830-2), 'more sinned against than sinning' (AR1890), of 'a very tender age' (AR1827-9), well educated and 'respectably connected' (AR1830-2) – in other words, they were framed as the victim of classic MHL. Facing the 'wretchedness and shame of their position', the 'prospect of deepening misery, disease, and early death' and the 'regret at the recollection of happier days', these Magdalens wished to return to 'the ranks of the virtuous' (AR1868). In many years, throughout the EMA's history, this image was emphasised:

> 'Of the seventy inmates at present in the Institution, many are most hopeful cases. Some of these have been well educated and are the daughters of respectable parents. What they told of their past life, of their sin and sorrow, when they applied for admission, was peculiarly touching.' (AR1877)

Where this Magdalen could be portrayed as a success for the EMA, i.e. as redeemed and returned to a useful place in society, she was at times, and especially in the earlier ARs, given her own voice, in the tradition and genres of MHL (see below).

The Magdalen's situation was not always the result of a single, irreversible step, as in much of the MHL and the eighteenth and nineteenth century sentimental novels (cf. Koehler, 2010), but rather the result of a downward spiral, which turned her from the seduced into the 'bold and shameless seducer' (AR1857). Thus, according to AR1850:

> 'The fallen Magdalene is not always the first or the greatest transgressor. The enormous criminals are they who first led her inexperienced youth astray from the path of purity and peace. And if affecting history of many an inmate of the institution could be painted from the beginning till she found a refuge within the gates of the asylum, she might be seen passing step by step in fearfully accelerating speed into the depths of degradation which her heart can never cease to feel but which human language can scarcely depict. She may remember a home fragrant with associations of early and unpolluted happiness when she neither knew nor could conceive the misery of which she has since been the victim. She cannot forget the scenery amid which it reared its lowly roof; yet she cannot remember it without bitter tears, for never was there a contrast on earth more sorrowful than her present with her past. Father, mother, brother, sister, seem names for ever buried in the grave of her innocence and peace.'

This vignette frames the Magdalen, by describing a detailed sentimental picture, as a woman with a personal history. She thus becomes a character 'type' with whom the reader can sympathise, though not identify - the boundary between the virtuous female reader/supporter and the Magdalen is carefully stressed:

'To the maidens and the matrons of many a happy home, of which they are the comfort and the ornament, the Directors appeal. The Magdalene, even savingly converted, can scarcely be conceived able to enjoy the self respect and dignity which distinguishing grace has preserved to you.' (AR1850)

While the ideal redeemable Magdalen of the EMA narratives thus shared characteristics with the genteel victim of traditional MHL, the large majority of the EMA's inmates were from a working class background (and likely to have turned to prostitution, often temporarily, out of economic necessity). The reports distinguished between different 'classes' of inmates, according to 'the restraints through which they had broken, the length of time during which they had continued in their vicious ways, the depths into which they had plunged' and the character and extent of their compunctions (AR1857). Not all may have provided suitable material for lengthy stories.[9]

While the narratives relating to the inmates prior to their admission to the EMA would serve to evoke subscribers' compassion and provide a justification for the asylum's limited achievements, the narratives relating to the reformed Magdalens presented success stories. They thus served in discharging the directors' accountability and, by presenting a marketable 'commodity', were also used to help find employment for the inmates, during and after their stay in the EMA.

Different forms of narratives were employed. We find longer, touching stories and 'pleasing anecdotes', often first person narratives and extracts from letters purportedly written by the inmates, former inmates, or by (typically male) family members or (female) employers. The narratives often follow the conventions of MHL, although there is less detail of or emphasis on the 'fall'. Instead, the emphasis in both the 'pleasing anecdotes' and in the shorter reports is on the successful rescue and reintegration into society. The case histories described also employ the recurring plot structures of MHL: the penitent's 'decent social origins; her seduction and ruin; the importance of dress in signifying a woman's moral condition; reclamation through family and work; and finally her death' (Lloyd 1996, p. 58).

As was the case also with the framing of the 'sinner' (see section 5.1), as the century progressed, increasingly more, but shorter and less personalised accounts appear, and reports become in general more rational and less emotive. This is likely to have been partly the result of the increasing number of inmates discharged, and also of the fact that in 1876 a secular secretary became responsible for the drafting of the reports (see above). It is also likely to have been due to changing cultural norms and expectations in which, to be culturally believable, religious and sentimental frames became replaced by more secular, pragmatic and economic ones. In general, the late 1860s and 1870s had seen a change in the philosophy underlying philanthropy. Attempts were made to rationalise the previously ad hoc approach. New supra-charitable organisations, such as the Charity Organisation Society emerged (Checkland 1980, Levitt 1988) and '[n]ew techniques were introduced to place social enquiry on a "scientific base" to find out more exactly where the short-falls occurred, and where charities overlapped' (Checkland 1980, p. 4). In essence, 'this was a scientific age where measurement and rationalism increasingly supplemented religion in determining cause and effect in society, the economics of public health and poor relief being a prime example' (Holden et al. 2009, p. 529).

As noted above, the increasing interest in statistics in the Victorian era (see e.g. Hudson 2000, pp. 32-36) was also reflected in the EMA narratives, albeit only

briefly. In general, the emphasis remained on narratives, and the dominant theme on redemption, and indebtedness to the asylum. This is at times contrasted with the distressing life led before admission to the EMA, at other times with the even worse fate that might have been. The means of redemption vary: being reunited with family, finding employment, marrying, or a remorseful death. Thus, inspired by MHL, the stigmatised prostitute could be reframed in terms other than the victim/sinner dichotomy, creating new productive roles as labourers, wives and mothers, servants and colonists, thus challenging the assumption that 'a woman's virtue was irrevocably compromised by the loss of virginity' (Koehler 2010, p. 261; citing Batchelor 2004[10]).

5.2.1 Death: 'Her illness was lingering but her religious improvement was satisfactory'

According to Jones (1997), from the eighteenth century a new type of narrative began to describe ordinary people's pains and deaths in extraordinary detail, as if to causally connect the reader's actions with the subject's sufferings. Citing Laqueur, she suggests that 'the humanitarian narrative creates "a sense of property in the objects of compassion"'. Although humanitarianism is devoted to saving lives, ideally the subject of compassion in humanitarian narratives is dead, thus making her free to be controlled by, and the property of, the reader (Jones 1997, pp. 204-5). In reform narratives, death is a frequent outcome and the narrative subjects accept death willingly (Rosenthal 2006). In fact, in MHL 'the sentimental prostitute's capacity for disgust, penitence – or simply having the decency to die – proves her to be a creature of sensibility, truly feminine after all' (Jones 1997, p. 205), and thus a suitable object for compassion. Also in nineteenth century melodrama, social criticism and seduction literature, the fallen woman tends to die. This is the case for Gaskell's Ruth, for Dickens' Nancy in *Oliver Twist*, for Hardy's Tess, and Eliot's Hetty Sorrel in *Adam Bede* (see e.g. Auerbach 1980). As noted by Walkowitz (1992, p. 87), 'melodrama particularly appealed to female audiences, writers, and performers, precisely because it foregrounded issues of gender and power and highlighted the role of the heroine, however passive and suffering she might be'. Thus, to frame the Magdalen, religious and literary cultural reference points could be complemented by others, grounded in the ethics of humanitarianism and enlightenment.

In the EMA narratives the death of a reclaimed Magdalen also provided the most powerful means of claiming successful outcomes. Fictionalised accounts, vignettes and stories of dying or recently deceased Magdalens were employed. This emphasis on death is particularly interesting because the actual number of inmates who appear to have died in the EMA was small (see Table 1). But for the ideal Magdalen

> 'her death, when death comes, is calm, and peaceful, and resigned, not bright with the joys of triumph, but soothed by the tears of wholesome contrition, enlightened by a well grounded though timid faith and warmed by the love of a heart that feels like it should love much, because it has had much forgiven.'(AR1820)

In 1820,

> 'It has been among the duties of the year, to follow to the grave the remains of one of whom they have had good hope. Her illness was lingering; but her religious improvement was satisfactory. And while

they committed her mortal remains to the ground, your committee felt warranted to indulge the hope, that the Magdalen Asylum had been again consecrated by the best blessing of Heaven and that the reward of your labour of love is already before the throne. … It is not in the nature of things that all should be reclaimed. And for little fruit, after much and wearying labour, it behoves us to be thankful. But the encouragement is drawn from this, that the remedy is of Divine appointment.' (AR1820)

The dead or dying Magdalens shared other common features with the genteel victim of MHL: they may have been orphaned (AR1835; AR1862; AR1889), very young (AR1833-5; AR1889), 'without the guidance and protecting care of a mother' (AR1889), nor anyone 'to guide her in the paths of virtue' (AR1862); they may have been well educated (AR1833-5) and beautiful in terms of character and/or looks (AR1862; AR1889), or 'a great favourite with all' (AR1894). Their 'fall' was not reported in great detail (but in formulaic language), but blamed on the lack of (parental) guidance (AR1862, AR1889); temptation arising from her good looks (AR1889); or associated with intoxication (AR1833-5). However, once admitted to the EMA, a 'favourable change' (AR1856, two cases), or 'a complete change of heart' (AR1833-5) took place, and they died repentant, in the expectation of future 'blessedness' (AR1856; AR1862).

Some narratives, and some deaths are related at considerable length and detail and with excruciating bathos. For example:

'A few days before her death, she asked to see the members of her own class one by one, and, though very weak; spoke to them separately about their eternal interests. Sometimes when she heard their voices in the lobby she would turn her beseeching eyes to heaven and faintly breathe the prayer "Lord save these girls". During the last few days her memory gave way under the pressure of disease so that she could not remember scripture and hymns which were wont to give her delight. She would then ask any one beside her, to, repeat them. … Shortly before her death she asked matron to sing her favourite hymn.[11] … she raised her own feeble voice, and sang it; then, turning round to the matron, whom she loved intensely, she said I will soon be there, and you will soon follow. Thus she lived, Mary like, sitting at the feet of that saviour whom she loved so, well and thus she died, resting on his finished work'. (AR1862)

Thus the directors keyed an event which might have been embarrassing or discrediting, as a success, by drawing on the audiences' cultural (including religious and humanitarian) expectations and master narratives. However, not everybody would have considered a remorseful death as the ideal outcome. Apart from the salvation of the Magdalen's souls, the EMA had to demonstrate what it achieved for the living, and for society.

5.2.2 'After much sinning and great consequent suffering': Reconciliation with friends and family
Among the aims of the EMA was, where possible, to reunite the reformed Magdalen with her 'family and friends', and narratives of such successful outcomes were presented in the reports, as for example the case of 'J',

> 'A well educated girl of twenty years of age, of interesting appearance and pleasing manners sought shelter in the Asylum. Some years ago she, who was the youngest of the family, wandered, like the prodigal son, from her father's, house into the deceitful paths of sin. After much sinning and great consequent suffering, she, like the prodigal, arose, and said, I will return to my father. But, alas! he could not now be found. The family had removed …' (AR1880)

'J' appealed to the asylum, which helped her to trace her family and be reunited, and

> '[h]umbled and penitent, and feeling herself no longer worthy to be called a daughter, she was welcomed and forgiven. Since her return home, the Matron has been written to in the most grateful terms by a member of the family, thanking her earnestly for what had been done for the lost one, and testifying to the joy of the whole family in her restoration' (AR1880).

The importance of family was stressed throughout, and the lack of family cited as a common cause of prostitution. A means to show that reform and reconciliation had been achieved was to print extracts of letters from present inmates to their family, from former inmates reconciled with her family, or from her (typically) male relations, a father or brother. As noted above, such narratives, presented as authentic letters, were used already in the early days of the London Magdalen Asylum as a fund-raising device, and employed plot structures and symbols recurring in MHL (Lloyd 1996). Bataille (1997) suggests that in terms of promotion and operation, eighteenth century charities resembled corporate stock companies. Thus

> 'perhaps it is not surprising to discover that the products – the reformed prostitutes – produced by the Magdalen House needed further scrutiny in order to provide proofs to the stockholders that the house indeed "worked". Part of that assurance was provided in Hanway's 1761 *Account* through the publication in that report of letters of support mostly from both current and former inmates who had either expressed content at being in the institution or had already departed and gone on to lead productive and moral lives. As befitting an institution that shares characteristics both of a business and a religious retreat, the house received and had reprinted these letters of testimony from eleven young women who responded most positively to their Magdalen training and reported varying degrees of success in their current stations in life. … These testimonials amounting almost to a kind of commercial propaganda for the house no doubt helped to allay whatever fears investors in the charity may have had about the efficacy of the disciplinary regimen.' (Bataille 1997, p. 119)

The EMA, esp. in the second half of the nineteenth century, was financially far more successful, and more comparable to a commercial enterprise, than the London asylum had been in its early years. Its directors used the same means to advertise the EMA, but also used these letters to discharge accountability, to frame the asylum as an

effective means to achieve social change, and to frame themselves, and the asylum's stakeholders, as moral and pius philanthropists.

Letters could be the vehicle for redemption narratives, related by the Magdalen herself or somebody close to her. They could be used to contrast the probable fate of the Magdalen if the EMA had not come to the rescue, as in the following extract from a letter of a present inmate to her parents. According to the report, '[m]any similar attestations come under the notice of the Committee in the course of the year':

> 'I do not hesitate to say that, had I been left to go on in the way I was, and where you, by the merciful hand of providence, guided me from, the debased life I *then* led would have brought me to an untimely end; even then I was afflicted, and I was afraid, as well I might—*then* I drank until I made myself insensible of any feeling; thereafter, I would have awaked with a conscience, the horrors of which I could not express then the suffocating draught was again applied as a remedy for sickness; but only to fit me for their infamous purpose. Such, my dear father and mother, was the way in which my days were spent, and I now see the baneful effects of it; it has been the means of destroying my body, besides ruining my immortal soul, *for I am sure had I died then, it would just have been as I lived, a hardened and a most wicked sinner*; yes, I was such in the sight of man; what would I have been, had I been summoned into the presence of a holy and a just God, where every one shall be judged according to their works? dreadful would have been my condition: when I look back on my past life, how mercifully I have been protected in many a perilous situation, I often wonder at the goodness of the Lord to me, and that I am still in the land of the living, and in the place of'.' (AR1833-5)

However, as noted above, to allow such apparently well spoken and genteel penitents to speak for themselves is clearly an artificial fictional device (cf. Andrew 1989, Grossman 2000). Nevertheless, the (fictional) first person narrative was popular because, according to Dodd (the 'fashionable preacher', royal chaplain and long-term supporter of the London charity), 'of all species of writing' none but this 'can be more delightful or more useful, none can more certainly enchain the heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition' (Peace 2007, p. 140).[12] Dodd's sermons also used monologues, attributed to a fictional woman or her mother, and were 'littered with apostrophes and archaic language; their artificiality was clearly marked by rhetorical conventions and by a histrionic, theatrical quality' (Lloyd 1996, p. 59). Such rhetorical and narrative devices were also used in the EMA's reports, often creating a theatrical, 'Goffmanesque, stage-managed world' (Solomon et al. 2013, p. 209) to manage impressions. While its audience must clearly have been aware of the artificiality of the device, it would also have been willing to suspend its disbelief, to allow itself to be, in Goffman's (1974/86) terms, engrossed in the performance, rather than to allow the frame to break.

Towards the end of the century, the narratives were largely replaced with (somewhat) more sober, less formulaic letters:

> 'H T writes: I have good news for you. My sister has been writing to me, and wishes me to come home as soon as possible. I am so glad, but

my mistress wants me to stay with her till the term, and I suppose I must after her kindness, but I do wish I was home again. I have not seen any of my people for twenty years, and they have forgiven all as soon as they heard from me. It seems almost too good of them, but God has answered my prayer after five years, and I shall be glad to go. I thought I must write and tell you, for I think you will be glad too.' (AR1900)

Other extracts from letters from family members (and Magdalens) were short and sometimes not verbatim. They stressed, primarily, that the penitent had been changed for the better, i.e. that the time in the EMA had been effective. For example, parents found that their daughter 'appears very penitent, and that whereas formerly it was impossible to live with her, she is now as quiet and submissive as they could wish' (AR1822). Other letters referred to 'a marked change for the better in my sister since her return' (AR1851), or expressed 'great satisfaction at the way she [a niece] has conducted herself since leaving the Asylum' (AR1856), a sister 'is conducting herself with the greatest propriety' and 'appears to have undergone a great change' (AR1857); and the brother of a further ex-inmate reports that 'she is doing well, and has plenty of employment at sewing; and also that she has great cause to bless the day she entered the Asylum, as she is an entirely reformed woman' (AR1857). These extracts from letters were also frequently cited to express inmates', or their relation's gratitude to the asylum, often in brief formulaic statements, but sometimes at considerable length. This also served as useful testimony to the EMA's usefulness and its directors' effective management

5.2.3 'Happy and useful': The docile servant

As noted above, there was considerable discrepancy between the reality of work in the asylum's laundry – Bristow's (1977, p. 66) 'sanctimonious sweatshop' - and the ideal of training for work in domestic service. There was potentially similar discrepancy between the ideal portrayal of the protective domestic setting with its benign paternal householder and the reality of the domestic service which, in a large household, would represent another form of total institution (Goffman 1961/91, p. 16).

Nevertheless, training inmates in 'the habits of industry' to enable them to support themselves was one of the main aims of the asylum, and employment as domestic servant or (less desirable) in other occupations, was a more common outcome than reconciliation with family. It was, however, not always easy to find work for the stigmatised ex-inmates. It was important, therefore, that the directors marketed their 'product' by reporting positive case studies. While in the earlier reports such case studies were relatively rare, by the 1830s a sufficient number of inmates had been successfully placed and could be reported on to permit the directors to be selective. However, in most cases the reports were brief, mainly stressing that the Magdalens made excellent servants; for example, the readers were told that they 'behaved so well' (AR1830-2), 'pleased her mistress so much', acted 'to the entire satisfaction of her employers' (AR1833-5), and leading her minister to express 'himself much pleased with her religious knowledge, and the uniform propriety of her conduct' (AR1858); 'turned out to be a very nice girl; tries to do her best, and speaks as highly of you and the others who took such trouble with the girls' (AR1900), etc. That they had gone to a 'respectable family', 'highly respectable family' or 'respectable service', was a frequently used formula (AR1823, 1830-2, 1833-5, 1858). They may themselves even have become so respectable that they were recommended

to 'the family of a neighbouring clergyman' (AR1833-5). Some were described moving from one employer to another, thus suggesting that it was not difficult to find employment for good servants (AR1823, AR1833-5), others remained in the same position for years (AR1875), finally to be provided with a pension for life by a grateful employer (AR1823), 'treated with great kindness' by employers (AR1858), or 'happy, and … pleased with all her surroundings' (AR1884), being 'in the best of spirits, and getting a good wage' (AR1909). Inmates appear to have taken a variety of positions. Most commonly these were referred to as 'service', without further specification, but there are also references to work as 'sick nurse', nursery maid, servant of all work, laundry and house maids, and to positions not only locally, but also in England and abroad, in New Zealand, the US, Canada, Greece and Algiers.

Examples of the financial reward from a good situation were also provided, however the spiritual rewards were emphasised more: 'I have got another situation, and I am to have four more pounds a year, which makes me £18 a year, but there is a lot of work; but what about the work. What is it to a free, decent, honest life! Oh, if we girls would but think twice before we took the fatal step to ruin, how different it would be with us all' (AR1893). In some instances, donations made by former inmates to the EMA out of their hard-earned wages were referred to in the reports, such as 'a dozen of postage stamps in a letter of thanks … for benefits received in the Asylum' (AR1857); and 'presents to some of the girls', and '£1 to provide a treat for the inmates' (AR1912). These were interpreted as expressions of gratitude, but there may have been additional motives for ex-inmates to make such gifts: a proud presentation of a new, economically independent, identity.

Documents cited were primarily letters from ex-inmates, reporting on their new life and expressing gratitude to the asylum and its directors and staff, and letters from their (typically female) employers. As was the case with correspondence from families, the letters reproduced were for obvious reasons carefully selected, edited and probably subject to censorship through the employers. Although this no doubt remained the case, towards the end of the period under investigation the extracts from letters are more convincing, in language and content, as 'real voices'. For example:

> 'I sit down with pleasure to write you this note. I am very sorry for not writing sooner, but the truth is, we were very busy here all summer and when it came to night I was so tired that I went straight to bed. I am here as laundry and housemaid, and I like it very much. I do everything - shirts and collars, and all sorts of finery. I have a very nice laundry, and I am very comfortable and happy. MB' (AR1904)

The differences in economic and social standing and education between employers and servants were emphasized not only in the style, but also in the content of these letters. I.H. accompanied, 'as nursery maid, a highly respectable family to Upper Canada'. A letter from her employer to the matron was cited in the AR1833-5:

> 'Mrs Ormiston, Dear Madam, I avail myself of a gentleman going to Liverpool to write to you, as I know you will be anxious to hear how I H has conducted herself since we left England. *She has in every respect been what you or I could wish, and has on all occasions shewn herself most grateful and anxious to give satisfaction.* She has been in very trying situations; for from the 6th July, the day we arrived at New York,

till, the 1st September, we lived at hotels, and she had to dine at a public table.

I regret that I did not take another from you. I. H. speaks of a girl of the name of ___, who she thinks would be glad to come. If you approve of her, and if she is still with you, if the Directors would pay her passage, I should be glad to take her, or any one you think would answer as servant of all work'.[13] (AR1833-5, emphasis original)

The publication of such carefully selected employer testimonies, which were of course also open to censorship, could thus provide a powerful marketing device for the asylum. Employers' requests for additional servants (as above), or servants for friends, were particularly powerful evidence for the suitability of the EMA's 'product'.

5.2.4 Other outcomes: 'Being unfit for a situation' and *the 'excellent wife'*
There are also (much rarer) reports concerning women in employment other than domestic service: as laundry workers (AR1896, AR1906), seamstresses (AR1849, AR1857) or in other institutions, perhaps rising to 'assistant matron' (AR1858) or 'laundry matron' (AR1909). This was not an easy life, but was clearly seen as a desirable outcome for the institution and for the former inmates, as is apparent from the directors' decision to cite the following letter in AR1906:

'You must be thinking me very unkind not writing you before this. I am very sorry to have kept you waiting so long, but I have been ill during May and June, off and on. The doctor said I was very much run down, and should have gone to him sooner; but I am much better now. The weather is so very warm, and in the laundry it is fearful: when night comes I always feel quite exhausted. The head laundress left to get married, and I am second now, and of course have more to do 970 sheets for a week isn't at all bad.'

There may have been a number of reasons for Magdalens not being sent to service. They may have had particular characteristics or skills that made them useful to the EMA, such as 'one young woman, about seventeen years of age, of respectable parentage, well educated, and a good pen woman', who was 'promoted to a situation of usefulness in the house' (AR1875). In some instances they may have been 'unfit for a situation' or other hard labour exactly because they were too well educated and brought up, as in the case of H.S., 'who was respectably connected, and was employed previously to coming to the Asylum in teaching music, &c,' and who 'in consequence of being unfit for a situation' was retained as staff member by another institution (AR1858; see also AR1832). Other solutions in such cases were attempting to make a living self-employed, as seamstress (e.g. AR1832). The portrayal of the Magdalen as self-supporting, independent woman however was exceptional, as it clashed with contemporary values and gendered conventions; in addition seamstresses and similarly self-employed women were considered particularly vulnerable to falling into prostitution (e.g. Checkland 1980, p. 242).

Perhaps the most appealing image, from the inmates' perspective, was the prospect to live 'in respectability and happiness' as a married woman (AR1878). A number of reports of marriages occur mainly in the second half of the century but with the exception of an early lengthy, sentimental narrative (AR1819) are usually

treated briefly – perhaps because of a remaining cultural unease at the image of a Magdalen as wife and mother. Perhaps also, for this reason, marriage had to occur to a 'respectable tradesman', 'respectable working man', or 'respectable colonial farmer' – emphasising respectability, but also the remaining distance between the Magdalen and the often socially upwardly mobile EMA supporters.

6. Concluding comments

This paper aims to innovate by combining interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives - in particular sociological insights into impression management and literary insights into the use of sentimental narratives as a means to mobilise charity supporters. It contributes to research on narrative reporting, to work on the annual report as source material for social history (Jeacle 2009, Jackson 2012) and to accounting histories of women (see e.g. Walker 2008a).

We explored the annual report narratives of the Edinburgh Magdalen Asylum (EMA) between 1801 and 1914, drawing on writings by Erving Goffman and on prior research on eighteenth and nineteenth century literature. Goffman's work is particularly relevant to the present study because the EMA itself was, in Goffman's terms, a 'total institution', its inmates were stigmatised women with 'spoilt identities'; and the EMA's objectives and ideology were carefully framed to manage impressions, often in a way that gave the narratives a theatrical feel, thus further resonating with Goffman's work.

We found that the EMA's annual report narratives were used to promote the charity itself and its output: the reformed Magdalen who, if she did not find redemption in death, could be reintegrated into society as a docile domestic servant, a dutiful daughter, or a wife and mother. The narratives (and to a lesser extent quantitative information) allowed the directors to discharge their accountability by portraying their work and the asylum as socially and economically useful, accounting for the inmates in their charge, securing funding and work for inmates while resident in the asylum, and subsequently finding suitable employment on the outside. However, this required careful management of the stigma associated with the inmates and, by association, the asylum.

Drawing on their readers' cultural expectations, the directors used different styles and devices to frame the asylum and the Magdalens. As the century progressed, religious and literary reference points were increasingly complemented by others, grounded in the ethics of humanitarianism and enlightenment. However, sentimental master narratives of fall and redemption proved popular throughout. They could be third or first person narratives, frequently presented as extracts from letters from former inmates, their relatives or employers. While for the earlier London Magdalen House fundraising appears to have been the primary objective in employing such devices, for the EMA this appears to have been a lesser concern, in particular during the second half of the century, when income from laundry services far outstripped that from donations and subscriptions. Instead, the narratives were used to justify the EMA's work by attempting to demonstrate its success in reforming inmates, and by advertising the Magdalens as domestic servants. Both were accomplished by creating, in the narratives, a dichotomy between the irredeemable wicked sinner and the remorseful Magdalen. While both were stigmatised, the latter in particular would be presented as an individual, with a life-story, a biography that would evoke empathy and pity. The narrative could also be employed to relate the individual's moral career before, during and after incarceration in the asylum's total institution. On the other

hand, by framing, inter alia, early leavers as irredeemable sinners, the EMA could attribute blame for failures elsewhere and manage expectations.

Given the background of some of its inmates, it could not be successful in every case:

> 'Indeed, when the previous characters, the great proportion of those who present themselves for admission into your Asylum are considered, it seems really more surprising that any of them should be effectually reclaimed, than that there are so few who are truly brought out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel.' (AR1822)

In spite of the large market for domestic labour in Victorian Britain, the asylum found it difficult at times to find suitable places for its 'commodity', the reformed inmates. This may have been due to the increasing number of inmates discharged (also by competing institutions created during the century), but in particular to the stigma attached to the Magdalen. The reports therefore frequently entreated readers to overcome their prejudice. Again personal stories, suitably edited and presented, could be effectively employed. For example, in the case of M.D.:

> 'A young lady who had taken her passage in the same ship with her for America, after hearing of her story, determined not to sail in the same vessel with her, and threatened to leave it, if she was to go out in it. By the advice of her friends, however, she was at length induced to agree that the girl might be allowed to go in the steerage. After her arrival at their place of destination, the same lady wrote to her friends here, that she was ashamed of her conduct to the girl, as she never saw any person conduct herself with greater propriety than she did all the voyage.—So much for the effects of prejudice'

Testimonies from satisfied employers reproduced in the reports, requests for additional servants, or servants for friends, were particularly powerful evidence for the suitability of the EMA's 'product'.

The directors had to frame the messages they aimed to convey in the annual report narratives with considerable care, adapting to changing social and cultural norms and expectations. The stories told and their telling often took on a theatrical nature. As in the original MHL, the fact-fiction borderline was often blurred; the moral careers of actual and of fictional Magdalens were presented in ways that made them, at times, hard to distinguish. Czarniawska (2008, p. 33, citing Watts 1990, p. 3) suggests that while fiction may tell truth about economic realities, 'apparently factual works on economic realities may be infiltrated by fiction, so that they can offer covert myths and fantasies, or disguised dramas with heroes and villains'. The blurring of fact and fiction, the creation of master narratives out of collective experiences, and the fictionalisation of real events and persons permitted the EMA's directors to shape their messages to achieve the desired effect on the reader, and the portrayal of events and individuals that were, at best, morally ambiguous and highly sensitive – such as the case histories of inmates. It also permitted the directors to draw on other forms in (popular) culture, such as sermons and novels, to create styles and narratives that would appeal to and even entertain their readers. Whether fictional, partially so, or not, such narratives would permit them to combine 'the subjective with the objective, the fate of the individuals with that of institutions, the micro events with the macro

systems' (Guillet de Monthoux & Czarniawska-Joerges 1994, p. 9[14]; see also Stone 2001, Rorty 1989). As long as they were culturally believable, the factuality of the narratives did not matter so much as their perceived 'realism' in portraying the asylum's and its directors, staff and subscribers as they wished to be seen (cf. Maltby 1997), and their 'product' as would best serve the EMA's objectives.

Finally, some of the impression management techniques observed in the EMA annual reports have previously been explored in modern contexts. It is particularly interesting to note that techniques reminiscent of the sentimental narratives are still successfully employed in modern charities, to generate compassion and to promote organisational objectives and outputs. This applies in particular to charities caring for the young, and for animal welfare charities.[15]

An exploration of the extent to which the sentimental narrative is still effectively employed in modern charities, and the extent to which it has been replaced with other reference points in contemporary (popular) culture, would provide an interesting avenue for future research.

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[1] McCarthy (2010, Chapter 2) refers to Goffman's frame analysis in examining how discourse on women's roles was shaped by the church in the early middle ages. She does not deal with impression management nor draw on Goffman's other writings.

[2] See McCarthy (2010) for a comparison between the English and Irish asylums, and a historical exploration of the origins of the Irish approach.

[3] Reflecting the opposition to state legislation, the English Contagious Diseases Acts (1864, 1866, 1869) were not implemented (Littlewood and Mahood 1991, p. 164).

[4] In this it followed the London asylum's example, which by the 1790s had moved towards admitting primarily young and 'unhardened' prostitutes and victims of seduction, in the expectation of greater success in rehabilitating prostitutes or preventing descent into prostitution in the first place (Nash 1984).

[5] We accessed original annual reports from 1801-1914 in the Edinburgh and Scottish Collection, Edinburgh Central Library. The only large gap was 1805-1818, for which no reports could be located. See Table 1. In our analysis, we drew on a mixture of techniques from narrative analysis, including close and surface reading, elements from narrative deconstruction, historical interrogation and primarily, thematic analysis. All of these techniques required attention to authorship, intended audience, purpose of the text and underlying assumptions. We also scanned and analysed narratives with NVivo software. (While this provided confidence in our interpretation, given the complexity of the annual reports it would not have given meaningful results as a main or stand-alone method.) Financial data were converted into decimal currency and indexed (using 1858 as base year).

[6] Author of *Pamela* (1740), *Clarissa* (1748), and *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753). Richardson provided, in his novels, plots of 'young women who embody virtue in distress, separated from their parents and friends and placed in the power of libertines and bawds' (Koehler 2010, p. 252). The Magdalen House propaganda literature borrowed heavily from the narratives of these novels.

[7] The author is unknown (Peace 2007, Koehler 2010).

[8] Including the story of the EMA's foundation, in which a young man refused the attentions of two young prostitutes and instead initiated rescue work, which eventually led to the founding of the EMA.

[9] And as an alternative to first-person narratives, which were reserved primarily for stories of redemption, brief case histories were also provided. These also become a more frequent alternative towards the end of the century. For example, the following cases were cited in the AR1879:

> No. 1.—Was caught hold of just as she was about to throw herself over the North Bridge. Dr. Littlejohn, the Police surgeon, spoke to the missionary about her. She was taken to the Springwell Place Home, and afterwards to the Magdalen Asylum, where she is now doing well.
> No. 2.—Was taken to the Asylum, but had to be sent to the Infirmary, where she died in a few days in great distress. Her father was dead, and her mother was in the House of Refuge.
> No. 3.—Came from England. She said to the women of the house, to which she had been decoyed, one day, that she could no longer live the life she was now living.

The missionary having heard about her, got her away and took her first to the, Springwell Place Home, and afterwards to the Asylum.

No.4.—Was found in a disreputable house in town! The woman of the house asked the missionary to take her away, as she had been crying night and day. She was led to go there, in ignorance of the true nature of the house while in search, of lodgings, at a time when she was out of a situation

This is, by no means an uncommon occurrence.

[10] Both with reference to the London Magdalen house.

[11] Extracts from the hymns are cited in the report.

[12] Citing from Dodd's *The Magdalen, or History of the Penitents* (1780).

[13] This was the lowest paid, hardest type of domestic labour.

[14] With reference to fiction in organization theory.

[15] See for example the 'real stories' section on the website of *Barnardos*, the British children's charity (http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_projects/young_carers/young_carers_real_stories.htm), or the website of the *Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (http://www.rspca.org.uk/home).

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REPORT,

READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING,

DECEMBER 7. 1835.

THE proceedings of the past year cannot fail to be gratifying to every friend of the Institution.

Every exertion has been made to instil into the minds of the inmates *sound religious principles*, and to qualify them, *by habits of industry*, to earn an honest living, if so inclined, when their period of remaining in the Asylum shall expire. Experience has shewn that a longer residence than two years induces habits of dependence, and disqualifies them from again entering on the active duties of life. Under this view, means are used at the expiry of this period to effect a reconciliation with their friends, or to procure suitable situations for them; while no female is received who has been an inmate *previously* of this or any similar Institution, and, except in very urgent cases, none are received above twenty-six years of age.

Figure 1 Extract from EMA Annual Report 1835. By kind permission of Edinburgh City Libraries and Information Services.

REPORT.

THE following statistics, exhibiting the results of the past year's work in connection with the Asylum, form in themselves a report which can scarcely fail to be interesting and suggestive to its many friends and supporters :—

STATISTICS—1881.

Number of inmates at the close of last year, . .	80
Admitted since (exclusive of seven, who left in a few days, being either unsuitable or unwilling to stay), .	77
	157
Placed in Service during the year, . .	42
Sent to other Employment, . . .	2
Restored to Friends, ...	16
Sent to Infirmary, ...	4
Sent to Poorhouse, ...	1
Left of their own accord, . . .	6
Absconded, ...	5
Dismissed, ...	4
Number of Inmates at close of this year, .	77
	157

Figure 2 Extract from EMA Annual Report 1881. By kind permission of Edinburgh City Libraries and Information Services.

Tables

Table 1: EMA mean income from inmates' work and other sources for 20-year periods, and mean length of narrative reports

	1801-1820	1821-1840	1841-1860	1861-1880	1881-1900	1901-1914**
Work done (£ indexed)	487	357	342	1,634	4,303	7,037
Legacies, donations, subscriptions & collections (£ indexed)	948	421	404	695	612	140
Word count of narrative reports	1436	3289*	1602	1410	653	617
Number of years for which financial results and inmate statistics available	5	17	16	16	20	12

* For this period, financial statements and inmate statistics for 17 years survived, but only seven narrative reports, since in five instances accounts and the accompanying narratives were only published triennially. The dramatic increase in the length of the reports between 1821-40 however is not due this, since the narratives say little about the financial statements and do not contain repetitive statements about the asylum's activities for each year or comparisons between the years; in fact their content is substantially similar to that of other annual reports. The reports for 1827-29 and 1830-32 however stand out with over 5000 words; this follows a drop in donations from the previous three-year period.
** This last period covers 15 years, for which 12 reports were available.

Table 2: mean number of resident inmates at start of year, admissions and leavers during year, and number remaining at end of year for 20-year periods

Inmates	1801-1820	1821-1840	1841-1860	1861-1880	1881-1900	1901-1914
Resident at start of year	59	29	46	55	88	99
Admitted	11	26	39	64	97	115
Total leaving	38	25	42	62	97	116
of which:						
Left to go into service including positions abroad, do good work, for employment	*12*	*4*	*8*	*23*	*41*	*46*
Reconciled with friends or family	*7*	*4*	*13*	*8*	*14*	*22*
Absconded, eloped, left of own will	*7*	*13*	*14*	*22*	*30*	*33*
Sent to the poor house, admitted to hospital and/or died	*1*	*2*	*4*	*5*	*7*	*11*
Dismissed	*11*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*4*
Remaining at end	32	30	43	57	88	98