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Morals, Medicine and Mussolini:
Dr. Herbert Moran's public
narratives in inter-war Australia

Anne Thoeming

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Supervisor: Dr Mark Hearn

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the narrative influence of Herbert Michael Moran, also known as ‘Paddy’ Moran, on Australian history and shows how he responded to the inter-war events of his time in Australia. Moran captained the first Wallabies football team to tour overseas in 1908 and as a cancer surgeon, pioneered the introduction of radium needles as a cancer therapy treatment. He was of Irish Catholic background and three areas dominated his life in Australia - the Catholic Church, his medical career, and his passion for Italy. He published numerous medical articles, commentary pieces and three memoir-inspired books in which he represents and justifies his life experiences and actions. Narrative identity is the theoretical approach used to investigate and illustrate how Moran presented himself biographically, and how he represented his experiences and his actions in his publications. His values and beliefs, as well as his thoughts about himself, and other aspects of his life are examined in a way that enhances our knowledge of inter-war history. Moran’s works shine a light on Australia’s past in a time of flux and the social change resulting from World War 1. They show the impact of these social changes on the life of Moran, and the people around him.

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To my family for your constant encouragement and patience, for enabling me to just get on with the work when I needed to, and for asking questions about its progress when I needed to talk about it - thank you with all my love.

DECLARATION

I, Anne Thoeming, certify that the work in this minor thesis entitled 'Morals, Medicine and Mussolini: Dr Herbert Moran's public narratives in inter-war Australia' has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are acknowledged in the thesis in relevant footnotes and endnotes.

The thesis is within the recommended word limit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anne Thoeming". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Introduction

When Herbert Michael Moran first glimpsed Ireland from the ferry sailing between the towns of Fishguard in Wales and Rosslare in Ireland, it was the result of an impulsive decision to visit ‘the land of my father’s birth’.¹ The year was 1908 and Moran was touring Great Britain as captain of the Australian Wallabies football team. This was the first Wallabies tour ever taken overseas, and Moran’s first chance to travel outside of Australia - something he would do many times throughout his life. The team had finished its game against Wales, and that same night, Moran took the short crossing to Ireland. He had always looked forward to visiting Ireland and was excited by the trip. He felt ‘a spiritual glory and the shame of a race unconquered even by themselves’.²

Although best known as a Wallabies captain and cancer surgeon, this work explores other sides of Moran and shows how he responded to the events of his time, and influenced change. Three areas dominated the practical aspects of Moran’s life in Australia in the inter-war period, and also informed vital elements of his inner life - the Catholic Church, his medical career, and his passion for Italy. Narrative theory, and specifically narrative identity, is used to investigate and illustrate how Moran saw himself, and how he represented his experiences and his actions in his publications. These publications reflect an intensity of belief and sometimes a conflict of purpose, and they narratively explain events and actions to himself, as much as they explain them to others. This methodological approach helps unlock clues about Moran’s sense of self and identity, and sheds light on his interpretations of the events in his life, giving

¹ Herbert. M. Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon* (London: Peter Davies, 1939).p.168.

² Ibid.p.169.

us a greater understanding of his historical presence. It does this by examining his values and beliefs, as well as his thoughts about himself, and other aspects of his life. Our understanding of Moran as a historical actor is enhanced through this approach, but history also benefits. An exploration of Moran's perceptions and representations widens 'the spectrum of our understanding of the social world' of Australia during this period, implicitly recognising the fragmented nature of everyday historical experience, and adding to our collective understanding of the personal experience of history.³ It shows the actions of people who, in their own way, contributed to the history of Australia.

Moran's published works are a repository of narrative artefacts which he used to authenticate his experiences and establish an identity informed by time and place. Identity is in constant flux and the historian Mark Hearn reinforces this in his comment that 'personal and social identity is a time-based, historical process, an unceasing dialogue of the self and the social'.⁴ Moran's narrative identity is no different, and his publications - written across a span of a dozen years - represent this flux. They reveal the inherent messiness of negotiating life and of thinking as well as acting across different and sometimes contradictory dimensions.⁵ A more realistic understanding of the tensions inherent in these conflicting and contradictory experiences can be obtained when examining narrative works. The historical experience can be seen more broadly because the same events are captured and recorded by people of different subjectivities and mentalities.

This work also strengthens and extends the public knowledge of Moran in a way that has not been done before, providing insights into his intellectual contributions to

³ Dominique Kalifa and Michael Kelly, "What Is Cultural History Now About," in *Writing Contemporary History*, ed. Robert Gildea and Anne Simonin (London: 2008).p.55.

⁴ Mark Hearn, "Writing a Life: John Dwyer's Narrative Identity," *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice* 10, no. 1 (2006).p.112.

⁵ Ibid.p.117.

religion, medicine and politics. Brief historical references to Moran's sporting and surgical contributions abound in the public history domain. The historian Roslyn Pesman Cooper has written about his interest in Mussolini and Italy, and he has been mentioned in numerous other public texts, some of which are referenced in this work, but otherwise no substantive and scholarly biographical examination of Herbert Moran has been written.⁶ This work addresses that gap and contributes to a more detailed understanding of his identity, and the expression of its variations, as well as his contributions within the multiple discourse worlds he inhabited.

Although of Irish background, Moran was fiercely loyal to Britain and strongly Australian in sentiment. He was also a pragmatic and enigmatic person and full of contradictions. The memories of his first visit overseas includes the story of an Irishwoman related by marriage who, when visiting the tomb of Henry VIII in Westminster Abbey London, spat on the tomb. Her annoyed daughter commented 'Och, Mother...I wouldn't have done that; he might be glad of the moisture'.⁷ Moran used the description of this event to contrast the way he had been raised as an Irish Australian. His father wanted the family to be good Australians, and leave Irish animosities behind in Ireland.

Nevertheless, the blood ran thick through Moran's veins, and although he always felt the call of his Irish race, his sentimentality was driven by a scientific brain which looked for symptoms, before trying to diagnose and treat problems. He considered those living in Ireland to be too preoccupied with religious fatalism; lazy and consumed with a sense of hopelessness about Irish affairs; and 'sensuously

⁶ Roslyn Pesman Cooper, "An Australian in Mussolini's Italy; Herbert Michael Moran," *Overland*, no. 115 (1989).

⁷ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.168.

sunbaking in religion'.⁸ Despite this, there was an acknowledgment of their suffering in the hands of the English, and Moran noted the comment of an American colleague that 'the English seem to have left the people nothing but the Pope'.⁹

Moran authored numerous medical articles, miscellaneous works, and three memoir-styled books. These theme-based publications reflected his professional and personal interests, as well as his thoughts about the events and people in his life, and the institutional structures in which he worked. They form the scaffold of his life story and provide historical insight into Australia's inter-war period, addressing the impact of historic events. The works reveal the tensions and challenges of the people experiencing these events: his fellow Catholics, his patients and medical peers. This is most evident in the first of his memoirs, *Viewless Winds*, in which he reflects on his life before his retirement in 1935. His memoirs substantively served a personal and perhaps even restorative function for Moran himself. They highlight his unexpected behaviours and provide a frame for viewing the inherent contradictions seen through the actions and behaviours of one person's life story.

The works provided a means for Moran to simultaneously influence and inform his professional and personal peers about events outside of what he considered to be their narrow world. In the medical realm, he published his findings on the treatment of cancer and was applauded and acknowledged for his expertise. He had a keen interest in medical as well as contemporary social history, and contributed articles about these matters to various journals.

His contribution to the development and shaping of an Australian medical history was also realised through the 'Herbert Moran Memorial Lecture in Medical

⁸ Ibid.p.170.

⁹ Ibid.p.169.

History' offered by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. It still provides a forum for the continuation of his legacy.¹⁰ Since the founding of this lecture series in 1947, forty lectures have been presented about topics as diverse as medical practice in the Wimmera region of Australia (1972), and medieval intellectualism and scientific method (2012).¹¹

In the personal realm he was fascinated by the culture and literature of Italy, but frustrated by the attitude of Britain to Mussolini, and Australia's lack of engagement with international politics. In late 1935, he travelled to Italy where he wrote a series of reflective letters about his views on Mussolini. These letters were soon published as *Letters from Rome*.¹² They are a personal response to the impact he saw Mussolini making on everyday Italian life.

This biographical analysis of Moran's contributions across the three elements commences in 1916 when he returned from war, and concludes around 1939 when *Viewless Winds* was published. There are minor references to the period of time he lived in Europe between 1936 and 1939, but the focus of the work is Australia and Moran's narratives about Australia.

Chapter One discusses Moran's complex relations with the Catholic Church. He never doubted his faith, but he did the Church. Moran's thoughts about its clergy, and his views on the role of the Melbourne-based Archbishop Daniel Mannix in the conscription debate and his responsibility for stirring sectarian anxiety were not necessarily known at the time. However the publication of *Viewless Winds* in 1939 caused widespread indignation among his fellow Catholic doctors for these insights,

¹⁰ Full details are at http://www.surgeons.org/member-services/scholarships-awards-lectures-prizes/lectures-and-prizes/#herbert_moran

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Herbert. M. Moran, *Letters from Rome: An Australian's View of the Italo-Abyssinian Question* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1935).

and other matters of morality. This work illustrates how the Church, through its association of doctors, responded to Moran's criticisms and attempted to minimise any reputational damage.

Chapter Two looks at Moran's medical engagement, his career in cancer surgery and his work in advancing its treatment. It illustrates a determined Moran, whose aspirations for enhanced cancer treatments and improved medical systems and practice provide a catalyst for lasting change. But it also highlights his tendency to engage independently and give up on projects when life became a little awkward, and his sensitivity in the face of criticism.

Chapter Three highlights Moran's fascination with Mussolini and Italy, as well as the consequences of this in the light of emergent Italian fascism. His move to Italy was the confluence of a personal and national anxiety and shows a man determined to make a last stand and free himself from the behavioural expectations of life in Australia. Moran's international engagement can be seen in his discussions about immigration policy and his personal determination to see Australia engage more actively in world events.

The final Chapter Four draws together the notions of Moran's narrative identity that have been revealed in this examination. It reflects on the identity he crafted and the significance of his contributions to our knowledge of inter-war events in matters of religion, medicine and international politics. These contributions are positioned within the context of Moran's authorial identity, illustrating the value of a deeper biographical investigation of Herbert Moran.

a) Herbert Michael Moran: a brief biography

Moran was born in Darlington, Sydney in 1885 and his mother Annie died when he was five. He was the third of four children and although his father ceased to practice his faith after her death, the children were raised as Catholic.¹³ Moran attended Catholic schools, completing his secondary education at the Jesuit-run St. Aloysius in Sydney. The combination of his intellectual abilities and the family's business success ensured a good education, and Moran graduated in medicine from the University of Sydney in 1907.

In 1876, his father Michael arrived virtually penniless in Australia from Ireland, but by 1916 he had a bakery business which was considered 'the largest private business of its kind in the State'.¹⁴ As a prosperous family-owned company, the bakery enterprise provided well financially, enabling Moran to travel and pursue personal interests.¹⁵ The Moran family typified the success of many Catholic and Protestant Irish in Australia - people whose power and influence were disproportionate to their number.¹⁶

Although interested in sport at school, a lack of coaching and an apparent emphasis on brute strength rather than tactics meant that when Moran reached university, he felt there were limited opportunities to participate in sport, and 'there was almost no chance for a mediocre or an inexperienced player to get a game'.¹⁷ Describing himself as a 'miserable, stooped, poring, introspective sort of fellow in my third year at the University' he nevertheless decided to take up an opportunity offered by a family

¹³ M.P.A. Moran, "Irish and Australian," *Offaly Heritage: Journal of the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society* 5 (2007-2008).p.227.

¹⁴ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.8.

¹⁵ Herbert M. Moran, "Letter to V.J. Kinsella," in *Papers relating to Herbert Michael Moran, 1926-1945* (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales). H.M. Moran, 29 September 1945.

¹⁶ Mark Finnane, "'The English Have No Altruism': J. V. Barry and Irish Identity in Twentieth Century Australia," *History Australia* 4, no. 2 (2007).p.419.

¹⁷ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.33.

friend to play a game of Rugby and 'five years later I captained the first Australian Amateur Rugby team which visited England'.¹⁸

In *Viewless Winds*, Moran represented himself as the outsider at university, both physically and socially. The opportunity to play with the Rose Bay Football Club was formative as within this group 'of men from offices and banks who played in no competition and for no cup' his yearning for acceptance and perhaps recognition was realised.¹⁹ At the end of season celebrations, the Club gave him 'a black velvet cap with silver tassels: the special honour cap for forward play'.²⁰ Reflecting back some 36 years later, he said 'This was the proudest moment of my life – all after that was anticlimax'.²¹ The award from the Club was based on his own achievements and efforts, and this acknowledgement from his peers seemed more significant to him than his selection as captain for the representative rugby tour overseas. It represents the pre-war mentality of a young man unaffected by the war that was yet to come, and reflects a simpler life where roles, identity and purpose were more defined.²² But this comment also typifies the sense of hyperbole that sometimes pervades Moran's narratives, and reflects a sense of the value he attached to a past, more simple life. Paradoxically, this was a vastly different life to the one that was to come, and not one that really resonated with his later actions and decisions, or his personal ambition.

As captain of the first Wallabies team to tour Britain in 1908/1909, Moran was well aware of the intensity of national sentiments associated with such a tour. His reflections show the transition in the team's attitude from that of deference to Britain to

¹⁸ Ibid.p.33.

¹⁹ Ibid.p.34.

²⁰ Ibid.p.34.

²¹ Ibid.p.34.

²² Laura Beers and Geraint Thomas, "Introduction: Nation and 'Nations' in Inter-War Britain," in *Brave New World: Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building in Britain between the Wars*, ed. Laura Beers and Geraint Thomas (London: University of London, 2011).p.2.

one of 'thwarted imperial loyalty' according to sports historian Tony Collins.²³ The Australian players were not 'brothers over sea' in England but instead fair game, and thoughts of empire and power seemed to inform the carping criticism by the British press.²⁴ The 'magnification of minor incidents (wilted) their British patriotism' and resulted in 'a dislike for everything English'.²⁵ Although Moran's comment shows a sense of naivety and innocence on the part of the Australian players, his own loyalty to Empire was not diminished by these nationalistic criticisms. He understood the heightened emotions of his players determined to win and was able to quarantine any ill feeling he may have felt himself.

Towards the end of 1908, Moran left the team to undertake post graduate medical training in Great Britain. He returned to Australia in 1910 and worked as a medical practitioner in the working class suburb of Balmain in Sydney. Four year later, at age 29, he married Eva Mann who was from a family of wealthy Sydney hoteliers with an Irish convict background. Her family had prospered in Australia through a series of successful business enterprises and Eva's business, family and social connections were advantageous to Moran's social and professional life.²⁶

Within a year of his marriage, Moran enlisted for war service. His impatience to see active service sooner rather than later, led him to sail to London where he signed-up with the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) of the British Army. At this time, the Australian Army Medical Corps was a 'small part-time specialised addition to the British Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC)' rather than an independent entity, so it

²³ Tony Collins, "The Tyranny of Deference: Anglo-Australian Relations and Rugby Union before World War I," *Sport in History* 29, no. 3 (2009).p.442.

²⁴ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.69.

²⁵ *Ibid*.p.69.

²⁶ Michael Moran has published an account of his grandfather Herbert and his work has provided background information for this project. Moran, "Irish and Australian."

was possible for Moran to go to England and enlist there.²⁷ The surgeon John Loewenthal noted that 'war seems to have challenged him intellectually and spiritually' and this is evident in his vivid descriptions of his experience.²⁸ His reflections on the war in *Viewless Winds* include references to the months he spent at Aldershot waiting for call-up and explicit on-site descriptions of his work with the war wounded, as well as characterisations of people he met during his short period of service which ended in 1916.

Dysentery and other communicable diseases were pervasive in the Dardanelles during the war due to poor sanitary conditions and overcrowding. It was easily contracted by the war-wounded and those treating them – doctors like Moran.²⁹ Moran's own case of dysentery shortened his war participation. It was something he later regretted, as it left him 'profoundly self-conscious of how little I had done'.³⁰ He returned to Sydney, and by 1917 left suburban general practice to work from Macquarie Street in Sydney, a sign that he was now mixing and working within an influential city-based medical community.³¹

Eva gave birth to their first child Patrick later that year. Although there were a number of pregnancies for the couple, Patrick remained their only surviving child due the presence of rhesus disease which was untreatable at that time. One daughter named Anne survived just three days after her birth in 1931 when Moran and his wife were in

²⁷ Australian War Memorial, "1918: Australians in France - Unsung Heroes - Australia's Medical Personnel," Australian War Memorial, <https://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/1918/medical/>.

²⁸ John Loewenthal, "The Herbert Moran Lecture in Medical History," *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Surgery* 45, no. 2 (1975).p.126.

²⁹ Leonard S. Dudgeon, "Personal Experiences on the Gallipoli Peninsula and in the Eastern Mediterranean While a Member of the War Office Committee for Epidemic Diseases and Sanitation," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 9 (1916).p.106.

³⁰ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.154.

³¹ "Register of Medical Practitioners for 1917," Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales (Sydney: William Applegate Gullick, 1917).p.334.

the mid-forties, and it is easy to imagine the anguish the deaths of these babies caused the couple.

His private life is veiled in *Viewless Winds* and there are few references to his family, an absence which led one book reviewer to comment that 'Tragedy seems to lurk somewhere between the lines'.³² Married life was punctuated by many trips overseas, mostly for the purpose of Moran's career. There were tensions at home and the travel was disruptive to family life.³³

After retirement in 1935, Moran created a new life for himself. He left Australia and his family to live in Europe, and from 1936 to 1939 he lived in Italy with Giulia Torrigiani, a niece of his Australian friend Dr Pietro Fiaschi.³⁴ The estrangement with Eva continued until about 1945, but he maintained his relationship with Patrick. Patrick enrolled at the University of Cambridge in 1937 to study mathematics, and remained in Britain throughout World War 2 working on various war-time projects where he kept in contact with his father.

At the outbreak of WW2 and dismissed as being too old to join the Australian forces, Moran re-joined the Royal Army Medical Corps and spent five years on a military Medical Board in England where he assessed troop fitness for service. His comment that 'a determined soldier could always in the end get his discharge by malingering or exaggerating his symptoms' reflected Moran's mentalities about the work and provides a sense of his own authorial and reflexive agency signifying tensions this may have created within himself and with others.³⁵

³² B.M., "Viewless Winds," *Australian National Review* 6, no. 31 (1939).p.83.

³³ Moran, "Irish and Australian."p.238.

³⁴ Patrick Moran, "The Fiaschi Family," (1983).p.3.

³⁵ Herbert. M. Moran, *In My Fashion: An Autobiography of the Last Ten Years* (London: Peter Davies, 1946).p.108.

Following a diagnosis of malignant melanoma, Moran left the army in April 1945. Patrick was of some influence in achieving reconciliation between his parents, and noted after being told of his father's cancer diagnosis, 'In Cambridge, I found a flat for him, myself and my mother, since they were now reunited (a reunion for which I can claim some credit)'.³⁶ Moran died about nine months after his diagnosis and is buried in Cambridge.

b) Biography as a Journey

*We are all fugitive far, far along our Appian Way*³⁷

Moran's life writing reveals a sense of his agency as author, and narrator of self as well as history. Although he had a scientific demeanour and had little time for the then new field of psychology, his narratives occasionally contain poignant and self-reflective disclosures of himself and others suggesting a deep understanding of the complexity and ambiguity of life.

Biography offers a meaningful and justifiable platform to explore Moran's own complexity and ambiguity, as well as his relationship with the world. The scholarly rigour of biography has resulted in greater academic acceptance of it as a form of history. Biographer Michael Holroyd speaks to the need for a history which shows lives are not 'novel-shaped' or poetic, but instead real and 'inartistic'.³⁸ This messiness of life is confirmed by historian David Nasaw who asserts the need for integrity in saying that history's concern is not with simply 'charting the course of individual lives' but

³⁶ Patrick Moran, "My Family," (1976).p.10.

³⁷ Moran, *In My Fashion: An Autobiography of the Last Ten Years*.p.306.

³⁸ Michael Holroyd, "The Case against Biography," *The Threepenny Review*, no. 79 (1999).p.11

more with examining the relationships within 'the multiple social, political and cultural worlds they inhabit and give meaning to'.³⁹

In addition to providing insights into Moran's society, *Viewless Winds* intimately portrays the 'perceptions of place, personalities, peoples and events' he engaged with, and renders the period with a richer story compared to official historical accounts.⁴⁰ Historians Mark Hearn and Harry Knowles acknowledge and take this concept further in noting the nexus between biography and history, and the agency of individuals in moments of social renewal.⁴¹

Biography helps us to understand the role and response of individuals in moments of historical change, and as an individualist ontology, it is effective as a means for understanding society through its component parts – its individuals in disaggregated form. It helps build an aggregated picture of society and social change.⁴² The individuality and subjectivity of people can be seen through their individual actions and statements. These actions and statements together provide a more realistic picture of social reality and this in turn helps to understand interpretations of the dominant discourse. For example, when Moran criticised Catholic priests for their misbehaviours, he was not just criticising the power of the Church and its doctrine, but also its unrealistic expectations of clerical life in matters of sexuality, alcohol and gambling. Priests were expected to be celibate and temperate. His public criticisms also

³⁹ David Nasaw, "Introduction" Ahr Roundtable: Historians and Biography," *The American Historical Review* 114, no. No. 3 (2009).p.574.

⁴⁰ Kay Walsh and Joy Hooton, *Australian Autobiographical Narratives: An Annotated Bibliography*, vol. 1: To 1850 (Canberra: Australian Scholarly Editions Centre and National Library of Australia, 1993).p.2.

⁴¹ Mark Hearn and Harry Knowles, "Representative Lives? Biography and Labour History," *Labour History* 11, no. May (2011).

⁴² Christopher Lloyd, "The Methodologies of Social History: A Critical Survey and Defense of Structurism," *History & Theory* 30, no. 2 (1991).

challenged discursive behavioural expectations, where criticisms were expected to remain private and within the structure – not for public gossip.

Narrative identity facilitates an interpretive understanding of Moran's interactions, what they meant to him, and how he and others responded to their consequences. Hearn describes the historical value of this narrative lens as a methodological tool because it is additive, and providing 'a significant methodological tool for analysing the lives of historical actors, enriching traditional, materialist interpretations while avoiding the disconnection from historical experience'.⁴³ Such historical experience needs to account for temporal and human variations. The hermeneutical capacity to examine the unsaid and the silences enriches these interpretations, as can be seen in Chapter Two which discusses the actions of various intermediaries who tried to reduce Moran's impact.

Philosopher Paul Ricoeur's construction of narrative identity as 'the kind of identity the human subject attains through the *mediation* [original italics] of the narrative function' also recognises the similarities to and differences from others which narrative affords.⁴⁴ This sense of innate uniqueness is in relation to others as well as self, and also functions temporally. It is relational and not immutable. Hearn and Knowles attest to this when they describe identity as a 'process by which individuals construct a personal identity and a relationship with the culture they inhabit'.⁴⁵ Such an identity is malleable and conditional in both temporal and human terms.

The identity of the inter-war Moran is not the same as that of the pre or post-war Moran because his relationships, culture and circumstances changed. Ricoeur

⁴³ Hearn, "Writing a Life: John Dwyer's Narrative Identity." p.109.

⁴⁴ Johann Michel and Jérôme Porée, eds., *Philosophical Anthropology / Paul Ricoeur*, English ed., vol. 3 (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016). p.229.

⁴⁵ Mark Hearn and Harry Knowles, "Struggling for Recognition: Reading the Individual in Labour History," *Labour History*, no. 87 (2004). p.3.

acknowledges the importance of the influence of others in the way we see ourselves and accordingly, the way we construct views of biographical subjects.⁴⁶ He disputes the presence of fixity saying 'there is nothing in our inner experience that cannot change' and 'everything in our human experience contradicts this immutability of a personal core'.⁴⁷

In his writings, Moran crafts a narrative identity which is at times contradictory. This speaks to the variability of identity particularly in viewing political subjectivities. Historian Leigh Boucher talks of 'malleable negotiations rather than concrete expressions' evident in examining moments of social change and this invites a broader view of Moran whose subjectivity reflects not only his idealised beliefs, but also his pragmatic and sometimes contradictory approach to politics and society.⁴⁸

c) The Viewing Window

*I never write to please anyone but myself, and except for my father's and my sister's, have never been concerned by appreciative letters....*⁴⁹

Political challenge, scientific advancement, and new expressions of individuality disrupted the inter-war period in Australia that frames Moran's writing. Australian society felt the impact of these events in conflicting ways. While the Depression created large pockets of unemployment, Australia experienced an emerging consumer culture, a more leisure-centred one which gave people greater access to American films and magazines as well as home radio.

⁴⁶ Paul Ricoeur, "History and Hermeneutics," *The Journal of Philosophy* 73, no. 19 (1976).p.689

⁴⁷ Michel and Porée, *Philosophical Anthropology / Paul Ricoeur*.p231.

⁴⁸ Leigh Boucher, "Old Questions and 'New Biography': Labour Activism, William Murphy and Racialisation in 1880s Victoria," *Australian Historical Studies* 43, no. 1 (2012).p.97.

⁴⁹ Herbert. M. Moran, "Letter to E.H. Molesworth," in *Papers relating to Herbert Michael Moran, 1926-1945* (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, 1945). Letter dated 4 July, 1945.

Class concern about the ‘Americanization’ of Australia resulting from this influence created class division in Australia. Working-class acceptance of the new cultural influence increased, but acceptance by others was low, at least for a while.⁵⁰ The economy grew and mass production techniques as well as new technologies from both home and abroad helped to drive down production costs. However strikes (particularly in the 1920s) coupled with gradually increasing urbanisation and intense competition for a smaller number of jobs affected the working class severely. The historian Frank Bongiorno noted that with an unemployment rate ‘never below 7 per cent’ after 1923, working-class people would have barely noticed the shift from 1920s prosperity to the ‘hungry’ 1930s and through the depression years of 1929 to 1932.⁵¹

Moran’s medical experience in working class areas gave him a real understanding of what unemployment meant to family life, but he felt Australia was going backwards in other ways. His concern had a cultural as well as a social focus, reflecting his religious and class sentiments. He abhorred the new culture and its perceived effect on morals and manners, commenting in 1933 that ‘the things of the mind and the spirit are relatively too little prized’.⁵²

Viewless Winds is a theme-based chronicle of Moran’s life until his retirement. He wrote about events of direct relevance and impact, and the chapters focus on his engagement with rugby football and WW1; his training and practice as a medical doctor and later cancer surgeon; his work with the Cancer Research Committee; his opinions about Ireland as well as Irish independence; and his attitudes toward the

⁵⁰ Stuart Macintyre, *1901-1942: The Succeeding Age*, ed. Geoffrey Bolton, 5 vols., vol. 4, *The Oxford History of Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986).p.206.

⁵¹ Frank Bongiorno, "Search for a Solution, 1923-39," in *The Cambridge History of Australia: The Commonwealth of Australia*, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013).p.72.

⁵² Herbert M Moran, "Random Reflections," *The Aloysian* 1933.p.16.

Catholic Church clergy and the actions of the church in Australia. These are all seen through his eyes, the institutions within which he worked, and the people he knew. The world Moran describes is his public space where he works and worships, and *Viewless Winds* in particular shows his responses to the changes occurring around him and the shifting subjectivities across multiple areas of interest. Each area is worthy of detailed review and will be valuable additions to a more extensive scholarly biographical engagement with Moran.

After its publication in 1939, the *Australian National Review* described *Viewless Winds* as ‘distinctive for its finely chosen words’ also noting ‘The main strands of the cloth of his memory are Catholicism (Roman), the Irish, sport (Rugby), and medicine. These subjects run from cover to cover – the warp.’⁵³ The reflections represent Moran’s repository of memory about his agency and subjectivity, and an identity very much formed by these elements. He attested to writing the book for pleasure rather than duty, relishing a chance to break free from the expectations of others.⁵⁴

His comments in *Viewless Winds* on eugenics, modernism, abortion and individual responsibility are largely informed by his Catholic faith and the principles upon which it is based. They also reflect a scientific mentality consistent with his medical training and education. His institutional engagements show a man at odds with authority and impatient for improvement, someone whose sincerity and sense of public spirit were accompanied by a need to ‘point out bluntly and unsparingly the evils that his keen eye observes’ according to the literary historian H.M. Green.⁵⁵

⁵³ B.M., "Viewless Winds."p.81.

⁵⁴ Moran, *In My Fashion: An Autobiography of the Last Ten Years*.

⁵⁵ H.M. Green, *A History of Australian Literature*, Revised ed., 2 vols., vol. II (Sydney: Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1961).p.1361.

The book contains a series of contentious case-studies about people whom Moran knew and medically treated. These case studies bring the privacy of the consulting room into public view and this indiscretion was noted by a reviewer who commented 'There is in these subjects a good deal more of blame than of praise, of criticism than of construction'.⁵⁶ Moran also criticised the Catholic Church and, in some cases, people easily recognisable at the time. As an Irish Catholic, he was well aware of the concern his works would cause among his Catholic contemporaries, but somewhat defensively and vainly maintained that he wrote only to please himself.⁵⁷ *The Bulletin's* Red Page review of the book highlighted Moran's complexity and transgressive style, commenting 'Dr. Moran nowhere shirks controversy'.⁵⁸

The narrative theme-based structure of *Viewless Winds* is reflective of what the literary scholar David McCooey describes as an emergent form of mid-century modern Australian autobiography which had become 'increasingly 'literary' in status' and echoed 'post-colonial thinking about place and identity in settler cultures'.⁵⁹ Moran's memoirs reflect the tension of negotiating boundaries between public and private identities and place. They also speak to a need for Moran to have his thoughts laid down and distributed for posterity. He had the time, the money and the means to do this.

His last publication *In My Fashion* did not achieve the acclaim or the print-run of *Viewless Winds*. It was written while dying of cancer in 1945 and finalised by his son for publication shortly after Moran's death.⁶⁰ Although concerned with social issues

⁵⁶ B.M., "Viewless Winds."p.81.

⁵⁷ Moran, "Letter to E.H. Molesworth."

⁵⁸ "The Red Page: Irishmen at Large," *The Bulletin*, 18 May 1939.p.2.

⁵⁹ David McCooey, "Autobiography," in *The Cambridge History of Australian Literature*, ed. Peter Pierce (Cambridge University Press, 2009). pp 327-329.

⁶⁰ Moran, *In My Fashion: An Autobiography of the Last Ten Years*.

and WW2 matters, it was also a testament to his determination to achieve a form of reconciliation with himself, his religion and his family.

Moran's works show his openness to new ways of thinking about the world. They reflect an intellectual engagement that the social scientist Brian Head describes as an engagement 'in the production, transmission and adaptation of ideas about society and culture'.⁶¹ These ideas embrace multiple jurisdictions and highlight a level of activity that contributes to the body of knowledge about Australian intellectual life.

The Catholic Church was one such jurisdiction and Moran's discourse reflects the tensions he and others experienced when doubting its organisational elements, as the following chapter illustrates.

⁶¹ Brian Head, "Introduction," in *Intellectual Movements and Australian Society*, ed. Brian Head and James Walter (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press Australia, 1988).p.3.

Chapter 1 Troubles with the Australian Church

I never worried over the small print in our Faith, but I never once doubted however much I criticised.¹

Moran had a complex relationship with the Catholic Church. He was intellectually rather than practically steadfast in his faith but the Australian Church and its clergy disappointed him. He expressed ambivalence about the operations of the Church in Australia but noted that 'rare is the man who as he grows up does not sometime feel the jar of disillusion in his religious loyalties'.² He also wrote privately that 'I never worried over the small print in our Faith, but I never once doubted however much I criticised'.³ He was active in the Church, and the Catholic historian Edmund Campion described Moran as 'a prominent Catholic, one who had carried the canopy in the 1928 Eucharistic congress procession', an international Catholic gathering held in Sydney.⁴ Noting the absence of a Catholic clerical presence at the University of Sydney, Moran was also one of the founders of the Catholic Newman Society in 1928 and was a fellow at St. John's College, the residential Catholic men's college.⁵

However, when he disagreed with church-related issues, his tendency was to speak out rather than accept the status quo. The Melbourne-based Archbishop Daniel Mannix was a particular target in *Viewless Winds*. Moran viewed both Mannix's support for conscription and attitude towards sectarianism as dangerous. Mannix was aware of such views by prominent middle-class Catholics like Moran, but was not

¹ Herbert M. Moran, "Letter to W.T. Coyle," in *Papers relating to Herbert Michael Moran, 1926-1945* (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales). Letter dated 7 September, 1945.

² Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.324.

³ Moran, "Letter to W.T. Coyle."

⁴ Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics* (Ringwood: Viking, 1987).p.108.

⁵ *Australian Catholic Lives* (Kew East Victoria: David Lovell Publishing, 2014).p.86.

much concerned and noted that bigotry and sectarianism predated his presence in Australia, and was not confined to Australia.⁶ However, Moran's criticisms of Mannix and the use of explicit and confidential material in the *Viewless Winds* case studies caused indignation among his Catholic colleagues. This chapter discusses selections of Moran's narratives. It illustrates some of the criticisms he made, what informed them, and how an association of Catholic doctors responded to the criticisms in an attempt to minimise reputational damage to the Church.

1.1 Faith and Religion

Moran's Catholic faith was an integral part of his life journey. As a moral compass, it informed his philosophical approach to the practice of medicine. It also provided a cultural platform and his interest in the language and culture of Italy encouraged him to visit the seat of his faith, the Vatican in Rome. There, he relished the opportunity to visit the Vatican Library and view historical medical manuscripts.⁷ The Mass he attended at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican and the prayers he said there were the same as in Australia. St. Peter's signified home on alien soil. As 'a humble pilgrim in quest of an abiding peace' he seemed to draw comfort and maybe forgiveness for the private turmoil he left at home following his departure from Australia.⁸

More pragmatic than scrupulous in his adherence to the practice of his faith, and taking comfort from its theology and history, Moran was not impressed by the dominant Irish influence in the Australian Catholic Church or the action of some of its

⁶ "The Archbishop Resumes His Lecture," *Advocate (Melbourne, Vic. : 1868 - 1954)*, 03 November 1917.p.7.

⁷ Herbert M Moran, "Extract from a Letter from Dr. H. Moran to Dr. R.B. Wade," in *Papers tabled in RACS Executive Committee August 1936*, Archive (Melbourne: Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, 1936).

⁸ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.351.

leaders. Both intellectually and practically, he separated the faith and belief elements of his church from the organisational and behavioural ones – affirming one and criticising the other.

Whatever the notoriety he earned through his criticisms of the Australian Catholic Church and its clergy following the publication of *Viewless Winds*, he never doubted his faith or his keenly-felt responsibility to highlight wrongdoings. Close to death, he took great pride in the fact that the Vatican Library held a copy of *Viewless Winds* and that Pope Pius XII had sent him a blessing.⁹

For all his criticisms of the Catholic Church, Moran was considered ‘a staunch Catholic’ by his friend Pietro Fiaschi in a review of *Viewless Winds* written for the Sydney Italian newspaper *Il Giornale Italiano*.¹⁰ Fiaschi’s comments were clearly an attempt to counter an emerging view of Moran as being anti-clerical, a view also promulgated by his peers in the Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke.¹¹

Although there is a sense of his solidarity with the Church’s social justice concerns; with the powerless poor, humble and sick; the hard workers and people from Moran’s working class background, his was a solitary solidarity within this common world. Socially and economically, he had moved from working-class to middle-class, but his personal and professional experience ensured he was empathetic to any suffering caused by poverty or ignorance. As an independent thinker, he largely distanced himself from the group behaviour and thinking expected from Catholics at the time, and held in contempt those who did not implement Church social justice doctrine as he thought appropriate – knifing them with his pen. Moran challenged

⁹ Moran, "Letter to W.T. Coyle."

¹⁰ Pietro Fiaschi, "Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digression of an Australian Surgeon by H.M. Moran," *Il Giornale Italiano*, 14 February 1940.p.1.

¹¹ Letter to His Grace the Most Reverend N.T. Gilroy, D.D. From the Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke, 15 May 1939.p.3.

notions of group identity and what it meant to be a Catholic doctor, and created the conditions for him to think and independently without the shackles of group-imposed obligation.

1.2 Sectarianism and Mannix

When Moran returned to Australia from World War 1 in 1916, Australia was in the middle of what Moran called a sectarian brawl where ‘In one corner was William Hughes, the Federal Prime Minister, in the other the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, the Most Reverend Doctor Mannix’.¹² He returned to a country where sectarianism flourished and was further inflamed by the national conscription debate. The two plebiscites held in 1916 and 1917 which resulted in a vote against conscription, were generally characterised by religious and class antipathy – Catholics against Protestants, and pro-Irish against pro-British.

As a social entity, religion was important and ‘the conservative political establishment was overwhelmingly sympathetic to the preservation of religious values and their identification with loyalty to the nation and the Empire’.¹³ Personal, social and political affiliations were shaped by denominational loyalty in Australia’s earlier history and still evident within the immediate post war period, particularly in the various professional networks.¹⁴

As an Irish Catholic, Moran’s support for conscription and his belief that ‘those who enjoy the privileges of peace in a State should bear equally the burden of war’ was

¹² Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.155.

¹³ Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand* (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1987).p.203.

¹⁴ Graeme Davison, "Religion," in *The Cambridge History of Australia*, ed. Alison Bashford and S Macintyre (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013).p.219.

challenged by working class Catholic opposition to it.¹⁵ Dr Mannix's influence on Catholic working class voters in particular rankled with Moran. Biographer Brenda Niall describes Mannix's strategic appeal to working class Catholics when he identified himself as one of them, but in *Viewless Winds* Moran disputed Mannix's assertion that these Catholics would 'pay the highest price in the war and be forgotten by the wealthy'.¹⁶

In his role as a doctor, Moran's support for conscription was grounded in his concerns about war mortality. In a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald just one day prior to the first conscription vote in October 1916, Moran and twenty three other doctors signed a statement in support of conscription, asserting that with conscription there would be an assurance that sufficient reinforcements could be available on the western front in France, and that 'every man sent to support our Anzacs in France will materially lower the rate of mortality among our soldiers by giving another man a chance to recuperate'.¹⁷ Moran and another doctor John Nash were the only Catholic doctors to sign this manifesto according to the historian Ursula Bygott who also noted that Moran took no further public part in the conscription debate until the publication of *Viewless Winds*.¹⁸

Moran saw Mannix's overt intrusion into the conscription debate as inflammatory in sectarian terms and ultimately bad for the Catholic worker, penalising severely 'the poorer Catholics and the little Catholic tradesmen' and causing 'social ostracism of the professional Catholics'.¹⁹ He believed Catholics would suffer because

¹⁵ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.175.

¹⁶ Brenda Niall, *Mannix* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2015).p.89.

¹⁷ "Doctor's Message," *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 - 1954), 27 October 1916.

¹⁸ Ursula M.L. Bygott, *With Pen and Tongue: The Jesuits in Australia 1865-1939* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980).p.141.

¹⁹ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.159.

of Mannix's anti-conscription stance which was being condemned by others as disloyal, and implicitly supportive of Germany. Jeff Kildea notes that earlier in 1914 there was hope in Catholic circles that their participation in the war would engender their greater acceptance but this hope was crushed when the Church's opposition was made more explicit by the time of the second conscription referendum in 1917.²⁰

Moran applauded Mannix's skills of persuasion and oratory, but he viewed him as duplicitous. He was incensed that when in Australia and speaking out against conscription, Mannix claimed he was speaking as a citizen not as a clergyman, but when in the United States in 1920 he described England as an enemy 'England was your enemy, is your enemy, will be your enemy for all time'.²¹ Moran denounced his disloyalty and believed he could not have been speaking as a loyal Australian citizen calling him 'unstatesmanlike' and uncharitable.²² Such forthright criticisms of Mannix challenged the prevailing view of Catholic behaviour which required, at a time of continuing sectarianism, commitment and loyalty to the Church both as an institution and a religious faith. Along with other middle-class Catholics Moran presented a different set of political and social values, where empire was every bit as important as church.

A consequence of constructing his own authorial identity was that Moran transgressed behavioural norms. He broke the accepted standard that Church criticisms stayed within the fold. His criticism of Mannix mirrored the concern expressed by other, particularly Sydney-based middle class leaders of the Catholic community who more vocally disagreed with Mannix about conscription. Not that this appeared to

²⁰ J. Kildea, "Australian Catholics and Conscription in the Great War," *Journal of Religious History* 26, no. 3 (2002).

²¹ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.158.

²² *Ibid.*p.158.

matter much to Mannix. Niall highlights the disregard that Mannix felt for these Sydney Catholics, when he said their numbers were so few that they ‘would comfortably ‘fit in a lolly shop’’.²³

His thoughts about Mannix irritated Moran’s Catholic colleagues but the disclosures of consulting room information in *Viewless Winds* were more alarming to them, and amounted to a betrayal of professional and religious privilege. This set him on a collision course with the Church and its Catholic doctors. However, they brought into the public gaze examples of private human behaviour otherwise hidden, and contributed to a greater social awareness of behavioural complexity.

1.3 The Strict Inviolability of Professional Secrecy

Moran’s five case studies in a *Viewless Winds* chapter called ‘Under the Seal’ are about people, rather than events or processes, and draw general attention to behaviour that does not fit the cultural expectations of the time. It is performative in two ways. The case studies are an intimate reflection of Moran’s subjectivities as he writes about, comments on, and responds to the people he has chosen to include. They also bring into the public sphere information about public and private events from an earlier period about sex, gender, mental disorders and ethical behaviour, wrapped in entertaining stories about redemption, deception and forgiveness - stories that perhaps reflect a modern mind of which he had been quite critical earlier.

There is a sense of agency and power implicit in Moran’s revelations, as noted in his foreword to the chapter.

²³ Niall, *Mannix*.p.96.

These facts were learnt under the seal of a doctor's confessional, but I have taken advantage of the licence which permits us to record in medical journals a history or a case, provided we suppress the name and conceal the personality of the individual concerned.²⁴

The exposure by Moran in these case studies was both condemned and applauded in press reviews. *Desiderata*, the literary review journal, described these stories as 'a sore place in the book...inartistic...in bad taste...sordid and grizzly tales, and no good can be done by the telling'.²⁵ *The Bulletin's* Red Page on the other hand attests that the stories give the book 'curious if not 'light' relief'.²⁶ These reviews show the complex nature of Moran's engagement across his multiple regimes and the tensions that disparate points of view can create.

Moran's colleagues in the Medical Guild of St. Luke criticised his approach and condemned him for these revelations, 'We deplore his callousness in publicly displaying the sufferings of his patients some of whom may still be living or who have friends and relations to suffer again the ignominy of their trials'.²⁷ The case studies bring to light the daily life of a doctor in very real and public terms. They also reflect the reality of modern life in Australia, a life comprised of people of diverse behavioural backgrounds. In writing about these behaviours, Moran provided professional insight into the circumstances and behaviours of people perhaps different from and rejected by society at large.

One case study called 'The Artifice of a Novice' describes how a novice – a woman training to become a religious sister, also called a nun - is brought to Moran by

²⁴ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.200.

²⁵ J.L.P., "Dr. Moran's Restless Violence," *Desiderata*, no. 40 (1939).p.17.

²⁶ "The Red Page: Irishmen at Large."p.2.

²⁷ Letter to His Grace the Most Reverend N.T. Gilroy, D.D. From the Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke.p.2.

two sisters in her religious community for treatment of ulcers on her arm. Following an examination, he describes the wound as self-inflicted, and the diagnosis is confirmed by a dermatologist. The denial by the novice that she herself was responsible for the wounds complicates Moran's determination to find a medical cure.

While the case itself is of interest in terms of its mental health elements and the insights it provides into the operations of the order of religious sisters, the narrative highlights Moran's idealisation tendencies as he describes the young twenty year old novice, 'The patient was a soft-spoken reserved young woman with a perfect Madonna face and large childlike eyes'.²⁸ His description of the accompanying nuns as old, harassed and humble alludes to the idealised social justice notions of nuns helping people, unlike his description of the head of the religious community who comes to discuss the novice. The description of her highlights his personal challenge with authority and women in power; 'the mother superior of the whole order came to see me, sweeping into my room in a cloud of great majesty'.²⁹

Moran was thwarted in his attempts to resolve this case by the actions of the novice, and the nuns in protecting their novice. This was a different jurisdiction to navigate, one that he was powerless to affect. Megan Brock's study on the subjectivity of Catholic nuns in religious orders in Australia highlights the autonomous nature of nuns in religious orders and of their exercise of personal agency and not working necessarily for their Church, but 'for the poor and the marginalised in the world'.³⁰ It is not clear that Moran had much experience of nuns in his life and any such experience was likely to be mostly confined to seeing them at church and as patients, and working

²⁸ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.212.

²⁹ *Ibid.*p.215.

³⁰ Megan P. Brock, "Force of Habit: The Construction and Negotiation of Subjectivity in Catholic Nuns" (Western Sydney University, 2007).p.3.

in hospitals. The general church representations of nuns saw them as saint-like women, passive, spiritual and docile, committed to perfection and sacrifice.³¹

Moran inter-war male representation of Catholic nuns is challenged in this story. Although broadly framed by expectations of humility, obedience and truth, he implicitly reveals their imperfect normality when his recommendations are not followed. The nuns are behaviourally normalised and are seen as powerful and humble; young and old; reserved and ruthless; both physically and mentally healthy, as well as sick - much like the rest of society.

Efforts to control the novice's behaviour through discussion, lecturing and plastering the area so she could not repeat the action had no impact, and the injuries continued. She was watched by her order and by Moran - effectively under surveillance so as not to reoffend, and from the perspective of the religious order, to ensure she had the appropriate disposition for being a nun.³²

The novice was treated discursively as a patient under Moran's care and expected to be obedient to him, but ultimately she exercises her own agency and personal power. In the end, despite Moran's comment to the Mother Superior that the novice was unsuitable to be a nun because she was 'psychically ill', and should be sent home, she stayed in her religious community.³³ Moran's final words accentuate his expressive scientific demeanour that she would ultimately be powerful in a way he sees as negative, or powerless in terms of her compliance. It also expresses a mentality where he judges the dispositions of others.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. Brock's thesis contains more detail about these dispositions.

³³ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.216.

The novice continued her vocation and in due course took her vows. There my knowledge of her ends. Who knows, she, too may now be a great mother superior vested with enormous power. Or does she in a humble little cell treasure those white scars on her arms as stigmata of her own hot passions?³⁴

Moran's speculation that nuns could have behavioural problems challenged the thinking about nuns. As Brock suggests, theirs was a powerful agency but the public discourse was one of holiness and obedience, and Moran breaks new ground showing a different view.³⁵ Again, he antagonises and disrupts the current thinking, producing new disclosures.

1.4 Being Prepared to State and Defend

In 1933, Moran was instrumental in setting up a representative body of Catholic doctors, The Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke, whose aim it was to state and defend the teachings of the Church as they related to the practice of medicine, and to

afford members the opportunity of discussing the problems – theoretical and practical – that arise in the practice of Medicine, to discover the points of contact between Medicine and Theology and to acquaint themselves with the most recent teachings of the Church relevant to the practice of Medicine.³⁶

Australia at this time did not have a Catholic medical network of this kind, and it wasn't until early 1934 that the first meetings were held.³⁷ The Catholic historian Edmund Campion describes how this local guild was co-founded by Moran and the Jesuit priest Father Richard Murphy, but Moran took personal credit saying 'I had,

³⁴ Ibid.p.217.

³⁵ Brock, "Force of Habit: The Construction and Negotiation of Subjectivity in Catholic Nuns."

³⁶ Richard Murphy, "Inaugural Address to the Catholic Medical Guild of Saint Luke N.S.W.," (Sydney: The Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke, 1934).pp.4-5.

³⁷ Campion, *Australian Catholics*.p.139.

indeed, founded the first Guild of St. Luke in Australia'.³⁸ Campion's words acknowledge the Catholic nature of the Guild and the importance and credibility associated with having the imprimatur of the Church through the guidance of Murphy, who gave credit to Moran for this founding work. As editor of the *Transactions* journal published by the Guild in 1935 Murphy noted 'It is to Dr. Moran's enthusiasm and to his personal efforts that the Guild owes its existence. We must look to him as its founder'.³⁹ Moran had a close relationship with the Guild and Campion notes that its monthly meetings were held at his home for a time.⁴⁰ But Campion also notes that once *Viewless Winds*, with its criticisms of the Church and its clergy, was published 'guild members repudiated it in a statement to Archbishop Norman Gilroy and Moran moved to the edge of guild activities'.⁴¹ His narratives about clerical alcoholism, vice and greed certainly raised the hackles of Catholics, especially those in the Guild.

However, one of Moran's fellow medical colleagues, the Calvinist Robert Scot Skirving, felt differently about these revelations, perhaps rather unfortunately rendering some justification for them, saying 'he righteously slated many degenerate priests and frisky nuns'.⁴² Campion later commented that although Moran's comments about self-indulgent priests and harsh nuns was probably true, Catholics 'resented his saying it in public, where non-Catholics could read it'.⁴³

Moran's criticisms of the Church were a red flag for the local Catholic doctors who read *Viewless Winds* in 1939. Here was one of their own - a Catholic doctor -

³⁸ Ibid.; Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.339.

³⁹ "The Transactions of the Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke," (Sydney: The Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke, 1935).September, 1935. p.8.

⁴⁰ Campion, *Australian Catholics*.

⁴¹ Ibid.p.139.

⁴² Ann Macintosh, ed. *Memoirs of Dr Robert Scot Skirving 1859-1956* (Sydney: Foreland Press, 1988).p.297.

⁴³ Edmund Campion, *Rockchoppers: Growing up Catholic in Australia* (Ringwood: Penguin Books Australia, 1982).p.164.

daring to criticise a Church which had enabled him to prosper, and challenging essential notions of what it was to be a Catholic doctor. They considered that his actions betrayed the institution in which he 'built up a considerable part of his income through his Catholic Hospital associations' making free use of the Catholic private hospitals.⁴⁴ Twelve members each signed the formal letter sent to Archbishop Gilroy in May 1939 condemning Moran for his comments about the Church.⁴⁵ Among the twelve to sign was Moran's brother-in-law Walter Burfitt, a Catholic doctor at St Vincent's who was married to Eva's sister.

Moran's views had apparently been unknown to them at the time of these events, and perhaps even unknown to himself when working with these colleagues. It wasn't until 1939 that his more subversive attitudes towards the Church came to light through *Viewless Winds*. Murphy was incensed by the criticism he made of the Church, its nuns and its priests in the book and maintained, along with his colleagues in the Guild, that 'His spurious plea of preserving anonymity is the more contemptible because from behind the veil of anonymity, he ejects a more poisonous attack upon a body of men and women who collectively and individually are unable to reply'.⁴⁶ They described Moran as rancorous and anti-clerical, and in a note attached to the letter proclaimed that his membership of the Guild was withdrawn.⁴⁷

His narration reflects an emerging single-mindedness to which others within his faith circle seemed oblivious, and which contrasted with expected behavioural propriety. To some, his highly individualistic narrative may have reflected a more Protestant view of the world which was seen as having a focus on capitalism, and this

⁴⁴ Letter to His Grace the Most Reverend N.T. Gilroy, D.D. From the Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke.p.2.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.p.3.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

raised issues of propriety in terms of his personal behaviour. These concerns extended to Moran's criticisms of local clergy for their failure to follow the social justice principles of the Church.

1.5 The Disease of Individualism

In his 1937 address to the Melbourne branch of the Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke on the Philosophy of Communism, the Jesuit priest Father W. Keane, referred to the wish of the Pope for Catholic doctors to engage with the social issues of the day.⁴⁸ For the Catholic Church in Europe, the modern age heralded particular changes to Catholic identity which shifted from the church-based parish and religious identity, to one more stridently influenced by social justice, workplace and class concerns.⁴⁹ For Keane in 1937, Communism wasn't the only enemy – it was 'the logical issue of Materialistic Capitalism' and it was the modern world with its Protestant focus on materialism and individualism that was a threat to the 'Catholic doctrine of life and society'.⁵⁰

Earlier, in 1931, Pope Pius XI released an encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, a letter about Catholic doctrine.⁵¹ It was an affirmation of the Church's social rather than religious principles on matters of property and the right of ownership; social justice and charity; subsidiarity and civil society. This encyclical reaffirmed the earlier 1891 *Rerum Novarum* which dealt with the rights and duties of capital and labour, and in which 'Leo defends the interests of the working class by condemning both unfettered

⁴⁸ W. Keane, "The Philosophy of Communism" in *Transactions of The Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke* (Sydney: The Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke, 1937).

⁴⁹ Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society: And Catholic Social Militancy in Australia 1929-1939* (Sydney: Harpham Limited, 1986).p.6.

⁵⁰ Keane, "The Philosophy of Communism".p.36.

⁵¹ Pius XI, "Quadragesimo Anno: Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Reconstruction of the Social Order," <http://w2.vatican.va>.

capitalism and state socialism'.⁵² Both documents implicitly include allowance for the possibility of 'limited state intervention on behalf of working people and the demand for a just minimum wage'.⁵³

Moran actively engaged with these social justice notions in *Viewless Winds* and his comments reflect a Catholic eugenicist perspective which protected and supported life regardless of age and physical, behavioural or economic circumstances. In *Viewless Winds*, he vented despair that the Australian Church largely ignored social justice issues, saying 'It is our misfortune that, though we have a Catholic system of social justice, few of our leaders expound it'.⁵⁴ A few years earlier, the Church had tried to address these concerns about social and state reconstruction and these attempts resonated with Moran. However, seeing a failure at the local level, Moran could not help but speak out in *Viewless Winds* against the ineffectiveness of the Australian Church in addressing these matters.

In speaking out against birth control, Moran seemed torn between the idealisation of his faith and its doctrines, noting the reality of life where 'those who were in the midst of poverty were trying to find some compromise between their religious beliefs and the realities of their marital life'.⁵⁵ However, he publicly invoked Catholic teaching and opposed sterilisation as a eugenic or race control measure, noting in April 1934 that mental deficiency was neither a single disease nor a predominantly hereditary disease.⁵⁶ These views put him into opposition with the non-Catholic medical colleagues who supported sterilisation as a eugenic control measure.

⁵² Robert P. Kraynak, "Pope Leo Xiii and the Catholic Response to Modernity," *Modern Age* 49, no. 4 (2007).p.534.

⁵³ Ibid.p.534.

⁵⁴ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.340.

⁵⁵ Ibid.pp.339-340.

⁵⁶ "Sterilisation," *Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954)*, 25 April 1934.p.13.

Moran's sentiments regarding greater social justice engagement were not as keenly felt by others locally, and perhaps this ignited his interest in pursuing a more international audience for his views. Unlike Europe, Australia as an isolated country with few non-British migrants had little interest in non-British matters beyond its shores. For Australian Catholics, it was sectarianism that continued as the main local concern rather than European politics. It posed threats to the wellbeing particularly of the Irish mainly working-class population, and to manage these threats, the Church became more concerned about local issues and its own social, political and economic integration into an emerging secular society.⁵⁷

1.6 An Affront to Modesty and Mind

As a Catholic doctor, Moran worked across a network of Catholic private and public hospitals in Sydney. His work was valued, and he benefited professionally and personally from these links, so his criticisms in *Viewless Winds* of both the hospitals and the nuns who ran them is perplexing, although not surprising given his behavioural and verbal inconsistencies. Robert Scot Skirving noted that aside from being 'an excellent surgeon', Moran didn't know when to hold his tongue and once read aloud in an operating theatre, private letters Scot Skirving had written to Moran about Ireland.⁵⁸

Perhaps targeting St. Vincent's Hospital in Sydney, Moran bemoaned what he considered to be uncharitable treatment of the poor:

⁵⁷ Jory, *The Campion Society: And Catholic Social Militancy in Australia 1929-1939*.p.11.

⁵⁸ Macintosh, *Memoirs of Dr Robert Scot Skirving 1859-1956*.p.296.

In every Australian city there have risen great palaces, luxuriously furnished and admirably equipped. They are the modern hospitals owned and directed by different Orders of nursing sisters. The architecture is magnificent; in their elaborate specifications they have economised only on their charity. In my last ten years of medical practice I found the poor Catholics had always to seek refuge in Government institutions. Since they had no money they could not get admission to the hospitals of their own religion except as accident cases delivered on an ambulance.⁵⁹

The justification for these comments perhaps lies in the sensitivities that seem to beset Moran, as little factual evidence appears to support his claim. His colleagues in the Medical Guild stridently defended their commitment to serving the poor and used data submitted to the National Insurance Commission to support their argument against Moran.⁶⁰ Moran had overlooked government hospital policy and the public and private patient responsibilities these hospitals had. He had also ignored the role the Church was playing in developing its social foot print through an expansionist program of investment in churches, school and hospitals to meet growing population needs. Substantial financial contributions for the private hospitals in particular were provided by benefactors, and St Vincent's launched a number of successful fund raising drives to finance its building developments.⁶¹ This infrastructure investment helped to foster a more solid sense of social and economic attachment for Australian Catholics feeling alienated from mainstream society by class and race.

Moran's disloyalty must have hurt many of his peers. From the perspective of medical management, it is also curious. In his review of medical politics from 1920 to 1945, the health policy researcher, James Gillespie, notes the availability of fee-for-

⁵⁹ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.341.

⁶⁰ Letter to His Grace the Most Reverend N.T. Gilroy, D.D. From the Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke.p.2.

⁶¹ Douglas Miller, *Earlier Days: A Story of St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson 1969).pp.34-35.

service medical treatment through local doctors, in addition to the more common lodge service provided by companies.⁶² The lodge system enabled employed patients and their families to seek limited forms of medical treatment through contracted doctors, but these systems were largely unaffordable for poorer patients.

Hospital out-patient departments were the main medical resource for poor people and were complemented by 'the advice of local pharmacists or, in some urban areas, clinics funded by charitable contributions. It was the free, means-tested public hospital services which provided the most rapidly growing sector of health care between the wars.'⁶³ Moran was contracted in an honorary capacity to some of these Sydney public hospitals and would have been aware of these arrangements. His comment betrays a sense of significant animosity towards Catholic hospitals, despite a continued association with them.

Moran's broader interest in social and political matters reflects the strength of his attachment to the Catholic Church, critical though he sometimes was. It also reflects an ability to separate out what he sees as problematic and unedifying temporal behaviour from the theological role of Church and its enduring theological principles.⁶⁴ His criticism of the Church in Australia focused on these temporal elements:

The evil in Australian Catholicism may be summed up in this way: there is an alarming percentage of unedifying failures among our clergy. A commercial spirit pervades many of the secular priests and nearly all the nursing orders. The prelates who have always been distinguished by virtuous behaviour have usually a profound distrust of their own laity. In accordance with the Irish tradition the methods employed are those suitable rather for a religious kindergarten. Only two duties are assigned

⁶² James Gillespie, "Medical Markets and Australian Medical Politics, 1920-45," *Labour History*, no. 54 (1988).p.34.

⁶³ *Ibid.*p.37.

⁶⁴ Kraynak, "Pope Leo Xiii and the Catholic Response to Modernity."

to a layman: those of practising his religion and subscribing liberally to the Church.⁶⁵

Both his medical career and his reputation benefited from the Catholic partnerships he had built up. The narration of his relationship with the Church highlights his highly individualistic approach to life. His Church narrative shows his disinclination to honour the behavioural values implicit with his membership of it, and a determination to expose what he considered to be seamier side of life within a broader Church and social community. His criticisms of the nuns in these hospitals and the nursing sisters were described as ‘unmanly’ by Guild members and by 1939, his absence from Australia meant he was not directly exposed to the fallout from his words.⁶⁶ He was found guilty in absentia and the Church moved to silence his impact.

Two forces were at play to achieve this silence but the first was not especially successful. The Catholic Papal Countess Eileen Freehill allegedly purchased all stock copies of *Viewless Winds* in an attempt to minimise its influence.⁶⁷ As a result of this interception, many more copies of the book were printed and circulated. It had originally been printed in March 1939, was reprinted twice in April 1931, again in June 1939 and at least once more in February 1941.⁶⁸ In addition, the then Archbishop (and later Cardinal) Gilroy of Sydney recommended that no attempt be made by the Medical Guild to publicly refute Moran’s allegations, ‘The less notice taken of the book, the less advertisement it will receive’.⁶⁹ But the silence the Church wanted was not achieved, if the multiple print-runs of *Viewless Winds* are any indication.

⁶⁵ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.326.

⁶⁶ Letter to His Grace the Most Reverend N.T. Gilroy, D.D. From the Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke.p.2.

⁶⁷ Patrick O’Farrell, *The Irish in Australia: 1788 to the Present*, 3rd Edition ed. (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 1986).p.171. This event is also mentioned in "Cancer Research," *Auckland Star*, 21 July 1939.p.15.

⁶⁸ These dates are on the edition page of a 1941 print.

⁶⁹ Letter from the Coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney to Rev. R.J. Murphy, 28 April 1939.

The criticisms of the Catholic Church surprised many who had no idea he felt this way and little evidence is available to explain or justify his behaviour. This evidence is not unusual, as the historian David Carr explains. He describes the challenges historians face in deriving 'a satisfying account of the actions...or just descriptions, which somehow tells us more than we knew before' and recognises different subjective realities.⁷⁰ Carr also alludes to the influence religious beliefs can have in trying to understand the agency of individuals like Moran and what the world was like for them – what they said and what was left unsaid, and how others responded to this. Moran's intentionality and desire for the reform of the Catholic Church in Australia was clear to his contemporaries in 1939 but not earlier, and we can only speculate about his true intention and anticipated outcome. Perhaps, as Carr suggests in his discussion about agency and motivation, what resulted was different to the intended consequences and this 'act of revenge – personal, family or community - or an act of ritual commemoration' so limited Moran's influence after the event, that it ultimately rendered him unable to further engage in the treatment and repair of Church maladies as he saw them.⁷¹ Moran discursively walked away from the chaos he had created.

Moran's medical life like his church life was propelled by a determination to explore, diagnose and treat not only physical wounds, but also institutional and behavioural ones. His relations with the medical community show a man of independent spirit and intellect, and in the following chapter this drive and ambition sees him leading the charge to improve cancer treatment in Australia.

⁷⁰ David Carr, "Place and Time: On the Interplay of Historical Points of View," *History & Theory* 40, no. 4 (2001).p.154.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*p.160.

Chapter 2 Writing a Medical Life

There is always a prejudice against medical men who write anything but strictly medical articles.¹

Moran's dispositions were not just to the practice of medicine and cancer surgery, but also to medical authorship. On his return from war saw, he began writing professionally and while most articles related to cancer, some had an historical flavour providing an early indication of his wider intellectual interests including medical history. The medical history pieces were generally published in a range of journals, and articles with intriguing titles such as *Lister: The barber-surgeon of the XVII century*; *The enema through history*; *On the History of Blood-Letting* appeared in nursing journals.² Throughout his life, Moran retained this interest in the history of medicine and donated £250 each to Newman College at the University of Melbourne and to the University of Sydney for an annual essay prize about the history of medicine and science.³ His father likewise donated funds to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons for a Herbert Moran Memorial Lecture in Medical History.⁴

His own narratives and general reflection pieces disclose the unease Moran felt with authority and they represent him as an independent thinker. This enabled him to challenge class and institutional power in his medical professional life as he made his mark as a thinker and innovator in cancer treatment in Australia.

¹ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.114.

² Herbert M Moran, "Lister," *Pacific Coast Journal of Nursing* XV (1919); "A Barber-Surgeon of the Xvii Century," *The Australasian Nurses' Journal* XXIII (1926); "The Enema through History," *The Australasian Nurses' Journal* XXIV (1926); H.M. Moran, "On the History of Blood-Letting," *ibid.* (1930).

³ Moran, "Letter to W.T. Coyle."

⁴ *Ibid.* See also <http://www.surgeons.org/member-services/scholarships-awards-lectures-prizes>

2.1 A Predisposition Towards Authorship

Moran was one of the many doctors who gained experience in treating the new types of injuries resulting from WW1 and shared their reflections through articles printed in the *Medical Journal of Australia (MJA)*.⁵ The first of Moran's articles appeared in January 1917 when he wrote about septic compound fractures, commenting that doctors were effectively fighting a war on two medical fronts – treating fractures resulting from bullets and explosives, and treating any associated sepsis.⁶ But between 1917 and mid 1935 Moran published at least 28 medical articles of which 22 related to cancer and its treatment.⁷ The first cancer article appeared in 1923 and referenced the use of radium therapy - an emerging research passion for him.⁸

The *MJA* had been founded in 1914 shortly before the outbreak of WW1. The journal was a vehicle for doctors to contribute to public discourse particularly about medical matters generally, and also those specifically related to the war.⁹ Henry Armit, the English editor, encouraged doctors to volunteer for service and the historian Joy Damousi notes that for Armit 'the outbreak of the war was a medical issues not a political one' and the self-sacrifice of doctors for reasons of humanity and patriotism was critical.¹⁰

⁵ Joy Damousi, "Australian Medical Intellectuals and the Great War," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 53, no. 3 (2007).

⁶ H.M. Moran, "Some Notes in the Treatment of Septic Compound Fractures," *The Medical Journal of Australia* 1 (1917).

⁷ Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, "List of Articles Written by Herbert Michael Moran M.B., Ch.M., F.R.C.S., F.R.A.C.S.," (Melbourne); H.M. Moran, "Reprinted Articles," (Sydney: The Australian Medical Publishing Company, 1930).

⁸ Herbert M Moran, "The Problem of Malignant Disease, with Special Reference to Radium Therapy," *The Medical Journal of Australia* 1 (1923).

⁹ Damousi, "Australian Medical Intellectuals and the Great War."

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p.440.

Discussion about conscription continued throughout the referenda years, and by the time Moran returned from war, he too was able to voice his opinion in the *MJA*. Moran disagreed that doctors should feel compelled to volunteer for war service and by 1917 with a second referendum looming, the *MJA* discussion became a little more heated. The editorial of 14 April asserted that ‘until every suitable medical man in the Commonwealth is available for duty at home or abroad, the medical profession has not fulfilled its duty to the country’, but Moran thought differently.¹¹ Even though he supported conscription and the war effort, in a reply one week later he asserted the right of doctors to each decide for themselves, and condemned those who ‘glowing with patriotic fire...decide what was the duty of those others’.¹² The letter sheds light on Moran’s personal subjectivities, and his independent leanings as well as strength of opinion regarding the individual right to act according to personal conscience, particularly in relation to war service. But it also shows his contradictory side. Loyalty to Empire justified his support for conscription, but personal conscience equally justified an anti-conscription stance.

His rejection of the ideal of privilege, and of a pervasive authority of privileged and powerful people determining the best action for others, is a recurring theme throughout Moran’s published works. It demonstrates his unease with authority. His approach was informed by the teachings of his Catholic faith about matters of conscience, and there is an ongoing reference to his belief systems in his reflections of personal behaviours in this conscription debate.

¹¹ "A Moral Obligation," *The Medical Journal of Australia* (1917).p.315.

¹² H.M. Moran, "Correspondence," *ibid*.p.348.

The question as to whether a medical man should enlist is entirely his own affair; it is a matter for himself and his conscience. He alone knows the intimate personal reasons which may justify his standing back. There never, under any arrangement, can be equality of sacrifice.¹³

Moran's views on the primacy of conscience, as reflected in this *MJA* letter, changed by the time *Viewless Winds* was published in 1939. At this later time, his support for pacifists was conditional, 'I respect men who profess a philosophy of non-resistance, but in all consistency, they should refuse to enjoy the profits of citizenship which have been accumulated in many wars'.¹⁴ Moran seemed largely oblivious to the reality of how such an action could be implemented. His intent seemed more to voice his concern about the expression of such individuality in national matters.

2.2 Hospital Life

The continuing reference to aspects of his Church and faith throughout his memoirs reinforces the strength of Moran's identity as a Catholic doctor, and the importance of the appointment he held at St. Vincent's Hospital. For doctors like Moran, hospital appointments reflected these affiliations and he held a surgical appointment to St. Vincent's Hospital in Sydney for ten years from 1914, except as interrupted by WW1.¹⁵

Retrospective descriptions in *Viewless Winds* of the idiosyncrasies of medical staff are at times entertaining as well as biting. Moran considered that some members of the religious orders responsible for the privately funded Catholic hospitals were

¹³ Ibid.p.348.

¹⁴ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.175.

¹⁵ Miller, *Earlier Days: A Story of St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney*.

intoxicated with power, venal and dismissive of the poor. One Mother Superior of a religious order he described as 'ruthless and severe...the poor were nothing to her'.¹⁶ These negative notes however were balanced by quite heartfelt reflections of other senior and junior order members who faithfully lived their religious lives and were 'humble before the awful responsibility of their mission'.¹⁷

Moran resigned suddenly from St. Vincent's in 1924. Although applauded for his skill as a 'master of beautiful English', it was also later acknowledged that he had a reputation for being overly sensitive himself to criticism, and had a career 'punctuated by resignations', as well as a personal life of 'warm friendships easily broken'.¹⁸ The writing of *Viewless Winds* may have helped heal old wounds in terms of any personal antipathies he had earlier felt with St. Vincent's and its staff. They also show an expression of personal power which is mediated through Moran's own insights as well as his personal knowledge of significant public events, for example his representation of the events that plagued the University of Sydney Cancer Research Committee.

The departure from St. Vincent's did not appear to be detrimental to Moran's medical career as he held honorary appointments at other public and private Sydney hospitals. The access to hospital facilities and professional networks provided by these other appointments enabled him to pursue his growing interest in the use of radium therapy for the treatment of cancer, and contributed to the development of his career as a cancer surgeon.¹⁹

¹⁶ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.344.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*p.324.

¹⁸ Miller, *Earlier Days: A Story of St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney*.p.42.

¹⁹ G.P. Walsh, "Moran, Herbert Michael (1885-1945)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Australian National University, 1986).

2.3 The Growth of Cancer Treatment

Until the end of the nineteenth century when scientists discovered that ionizing radiation might have therapeutic benefits, deep body cancers were medically treated by surgery.²⁰ In Australia, as Francis Smith notes, non-surgical cancer treatments in colonial times varied depending on the type of cancer, ranging from the simple home remedy to more complex procedures. Although home remedies and quackery were prevalent in colonial Australia 'quacks generally kept clear of cancer'.²¹ However more unorthodox forms of cancer treatment were undertaken by unqualified practitioners, such as the use of caustic substances for skin and other external cancers particularly when medical hope of a surgical cure had vanished.²²

Cancer rates began to increase and between 1881 and 1918, and the proportion of deaths from cancer compared to all deaths increased from 1 in 43 to 1 in 10.²³ Moran noted the importance of cancer as a social and medical problem and surmised that 'one out of every four women aged between forty-five and fifty-nine dies from cancer'.²⁴ By 1925, the Commonwealth Department of Health had realised the gravity of the problem and for the first time, published a statistical study which confirmed a serious and substantial increase in Australian cancer mortality rates.²⁵ This report showed that the mortality rate per 10,000 deaths between 1909-1913 and 1919-1923 increased by an alarming 21% from 694 to 843.²⁶ Cancer became a public health matter in Australia.

²⁰ H. Hamersley, "Cancer, Physics and Society: Interactions between the Wars" in *Australian Science: In the Making*, ed. R.W. Home (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

²¹ F.B. Smith, *Illness in Colonial Australia* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011).p.152.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.p.150-151.

²⁴ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.251.

²⁵ M.J. Holmes, "Cancer Mortality in Australia: A Statistical Study 1925," ed. Commonwealth Department of Health (Melbourne: Department of Health, 1925).

²⁶ Ibid.p.29.

Although new treatments were under investigation elsewhere in Europe and America, according to medical health historian Peter Hobbins, the absence of research facilities in Australia up to WW1 'had enduring ramifications for public, political and professional perceptions of scientific medicine'.²⁷ The bar for medical research was low and it took the impact of WW1 and the 'exposure of Australian doctors to modern British methods of hygiene, bacteriology, surgery and research whilst serving overseas' to realise the medical research opportunities.²⁸ By 1920, new forms of deep radiation therapy applicable to a greater range of cancers were coming into use in Australia and elsewhere, and Moran's role as a general surgeon exposed him to these treatment possibilities.

During this period, cancer treatment and the use of radiation therapy were implemented at the discretion of the surgeon and other medical professionals. The role of the Commonwealth in overseeing or monitoring this work was limited and treatment was mostly undertaken in universities and hospitals using their own equipment and radium supplies.²⁹ A 1935 review conducted by M.J. Holmes of Australian cancer organisations noted the absence of interest by the government in cancer research and treatment, and that 'up until the year 1927 no action was taken to deal with the control of cancer in Australia as a national question'.³⁰

Moran saw the difficulties associated with the local research and practice model in relation to cancer and sought also to address what he considered to be the rigid form of thinking which had prevailed in his professional community. His sense was of the

²⁷ Peter Graeme Hobbins, "'Outside the Institute There Is a Desert': The Tenuous Trajectories of Medical Research in Interwar Australia," *Medical History* 54, no. 01 (2010).p.1.

²⁸ Ibid.p.3.

²⁹ Hamersley, "Cancer, Physics and Society:Interactions between the Wars ".p.202.

³⁰ M.J. Holmes, "Review of Cancer Organisations in Australia and of the Position Regarding Facilities Provided for Investigation, Examination and Treatment," ed. Commonwealth Department of Health (Canberra:L.F. Johnson Commonwealth Government Printer, 1935).p.34.

existence of a 'rigidity of the mind which is very characteristic of many medical men' so he extricated himself from this and independently followed his own medical research interests which involved several overseas trips.³¹

Moran's humanity is revealed in his narration of the impact of the disease on family, doctors and others, and he provides vivid insights into the ways cancer surgery affected patients and practitioners alike. Moran, the medical authority, showed a vulnerability to the suffering and needs of patients and empathy for those like him, managing its treatment.

Yet there were few surgeons who at one time or another were not depressed by their daily futilities. It needs a great spring of optimism to go on operating on patients, say, with cancer of the stomach, in whom scarcely one per cent of all survive five years. And what surgeon is happy in the presence of an individual on whom, because of an obstructing inoperable growth of the bowel, he has performed an operation for an artificial anus? The very mucus membrane pouts in irritable nostalgia and the patient, conscious that he is offensive to all round him, longs for that last odourless segregation in the earth.³²

A self-funded medical research trip to France and then England in 1921 enabled Moran to investigate developments in cancer treatment. The trip seemed to consolidate his medical view that new therapies were needed in Australia and that needle therapy was sufficiently advanced, as well as reputable and reliable, for use on his patients. His motivation for this trip may well have been personal as well as professional, as he and Eva found ways to deal with the legacy of rhesus disease. His son Patrick, who was four years old at the time, said his early life was 'unsettled and unhappy' for a number

³¹ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.261.

³² *Ibid.*p.258.

of reasons including 'the travels of his father, who took the family to Europe several times while pursuing cancer studies'.³³

Like others of that time in Australia, these travels represented what Hobbins and historian Kathryn Hillier describe as 'the connections and exchanges that have characterised western science since Francis Bacon's 1620 injunction that 'Many will go to and fro and knowledge will be increased'.³⁴ Moran seemed to draw passion and justification for his ensuing cancer work from the social and medical significance of the disease at this time, implicitly fostering a sense of his medical authority and importance.

The 1921 visit to Paris enabled him to see and be inspired by the work of Claudius Regaud, a physician and colleague of Marie Curie.³⁵ Regaud had started using radiation as a successful cancer treatment for deep body and other cancers in 1911 and continued to do cancer research work in association with the *Institut Curie* in Paris.³⁶ Moran visited England after Paris only to find the local surgeons dismissive of the French initiative. Their criticisms of Regaud's work seemed to ignite a sense of hostility in Moran, particularly because the comments represented to him an old view that surgery was the only treatment for cancer:

Medicine would be a poor science if we did not learn sooner or later how to prevent or thwart an attack on health and if we could not, sooner or later, offer something better than the sacrifice of a member or an organ.³⁷

³³ Moran, "Irish and Australian."p.238.

³⁴ Peter Hobbins and Kathryn Hillier, "Isolated Cases? The History and Historiography of Australian Medical Research," *Health and History* 12, no. 2 (2010).p.10.

³⁵ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.

³⁶ N. Foray, "[Claudius Regaud (1870-1940): A Pioneer of Radiobiology and Radiotherapy]," *Cancer Radiotherapy* 16, no. 4 (2012).

³⁷ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.257.

This trip to Europe and the insights Moran gained show a counter narrative to the view that Australian medical research was stymied by the absence of acceptable and supportive structures to enhance research implementation. There was a 'Dominion fealty to Britain' and, according to Rod Home, 'an empire-wide system of scientific patronage and reward that helped keep colonial science firmly bound to that of the metropolis'.³⁸ A visit to America in 1916 by A.H. Thwaites, a cancer research scholar attached to the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne, also exemplifies an exception to this notion of empire fealty. Thwaites visited the Harvard Medical School to investigate treatment options and compiled a report for the Department of Trade and Customs.³⁹ The report on his findings however, reflects Hobbins and Hillier's conception of Australia as a reception site for the medical ideas of others from elsewhere.⁴⁰ A greater focus on clinical research and surgical innovation did not happen in Australia until after WW2.⁴¹

In 1921 Moran brought new knowledge about these surgical treatments back to Australia and he actively participated in efforts in Sydney to improve cancer treatment through the application of a new treatment method, the insertion of radium needles directly into tumour sites. It is unclear exactly when Moran started using the radium needles as a novel treatment technique in Australia, but with a stock of radium in his possession, it is probable he used it in 1923 following a trip to North America. He was certainly using it by September 1923 when advertisements for the purchase of radium appeared in *The Medical Journal of Australia* in July and September of that year. The

³⁸ Hobbins, "'Outside the Institute There Is a Desert': The Tenuous Trajectories of Medical Research in Interwar Australia."p.4.

³⁹ A. H. Thwaites, "Report on Cancer Research " in *Service Publication* (Melbourne: Department of Trade and Customs, 1916).

⁴⁰ Hobbins and Hillier, "Isolated Cases? The History and Historiography of Australian Medical Research."

⁴¹ *Ibid.*p.10.

July 21 advertisement noted a general reduced price – for a limited time - of £17 per milligram of radium element, and by September, the advertisement included reference to the purchase of radium needles by ‘a large Hospital and by several prominent Doctors in Australia who recognise the superiority and wide range of usefulness which characterise this approved form of applicator’.⁴²

The eager Moran had purchased his own supply of radium sourced locally from Colorado, ‘100 milligrammes of radium at £17 per milligramme’ and this purchase probably influenced the reduced price advertised in *The Medical Journal of Australia* in September 1923.⁴³ Financially, he and the other doctors purchasing radium must have had ready access to funds. The price was high and the current value of this stock is estimated to be within the range of \$2 million to \$3 million dollars today.⁴⁴

The trip to North America in late 1922 also enabled Moran to observe and learn from the team approach used in clinical treatments for cancer at the Memorial Hospital in New York where ‘A jury of doctors, representing different special interests, deliberated on each case and by their verdict the form of treatment was decided’.⁴⁵ This approach was new to Australia where medical specialities were still evolving, and where senior doctors had an imbued sense of individual authority and ‘a monopolistic possession of expert knowledge’.⁴⁶

⁴² "Radium in Needles," *The Medical Journal of Australia Advertiser* (1923).p.xi.

⁴³ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.259.

⁴⁴ <https://www.measuringworth.com/australiacompare/>

⁴⁵ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.258.

⁴⁶ Robert G. Evans, "The Transformation of Australian Hospitals between the 1940s and the 1970s," *Health and History* 7, no. 2 (2005).p.103.

2.4 Cancer Research and Funding

Moran's earlier experience in Paris with Regaud coupled with the limited perspectives provided by his British counterparts on cancer treatment options contributed to his criticisms of the laboratory-based research approach adopted by the extant Cancer Research Committee, which had a modest operation under the auspices of the University of Sydney. Rather than a treatment focus, its funds were invested in laboratory research programs but this soon changed once Moran became actively involved in the Committee. Resorting to his sense of subjective authority, and in recognition of the contribution of his friend the radiologist E.H. Molesworth, Moran noted in *Viewless Winds*:

The university's interest was, at first, in research only; the initiative taken by Molesworth and myself ended ultimately in our becoming members of the Sydney Cancer Research Committee which ultimately widened its activities so as to take in also the treatment side.⁴⁷

Australia was not alone in its public health concern about rising cancer rates and 'in all colonies cancer grew into a major killer in one generation, especially those with ageing large British-born populations'.⁴⁸ In 1923 Britain responded to the scourge of cancer by forming the British Empire Cancer Campaign.⁴⁹ The form of the British appeal was to raise funds to search for the cause of cancer, as well as develop prevention mechanisms and improve clinical treatments.⁵⁰ In Sydney, on hearing news of the British campaign and the likelihood that Australia and other Dominions would be asked to contribute to the Empire campaign, the Cancer Research Committee decided

⁴⁷ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.263.

⁴⁸ Smith, *Illness in Colonial Australia*.p.150.

⁴⁹ Hobbins, "'Outside the Institute There Is a Desert': The Tenuous Trajectories of Medical Research in Interwar Australia."p.21.

⁵⁰ "British Empire Cancer Campaign," *The Lancet* 201, no. 5205 (1923).p.1117.

that Australia's need for its own approach and associated funding took precedence over the Empire approach, and in November 1923, determined it would be advisable 'to prevent money being diverted to Great Britain which would be so useful here'.⁵¹

Accordingly, a public fundraising drive was launched in April 1925. The aim was to raise £100,000 and 'to offer the attraction of improved methods of cancer treatment as an incentive to subscribers'.⁵² The funding appeal closed in July 1927 with total donations well in excess of the target, and close to £134,000. The appeal promised that cancer treatment clinics would be funded with the proceeds and this meant that Moran had achieved his goal of extending the work of the committee to include cancer treatment as well as research.

The success of the appeal is implicitly attributed to the inclusion of cancer treatment as well as cancer research. It changed the focus of the Australian medical endeavours which then concentrated on addressing communicable disease and environmental health requirements.⁵³ A university-based medical research culture was unusual in the inter-war period, and deference to Britain in medical matters was prevalent, so the scene was now set for the adoption of a different approach.⁵⁴ The local fundraising success of the Cancer Research Committee and the efforts of Moran to include cancer treatment in its remit signalled a greater level of independent thinking. Australia was now determined to raise its own funds and undertake its own approach to cancer treatment and research. The knowledge gained by Moran during his earlier trip to observe Regaud in Paris, and his visit to America in 1923 where he observed the

⁵¹ Cancer Research Committee, "Minutes of a Meeting of the Cancer Research Committee," University of Sydney Archives (Sydney: University of Sydney, 1923).p.2.

⁵² Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.264.

⁵³ Alison Bashford and Peter Hobbins, "Science and Medicine," in *The Cambridge History of Australia: The Commonwealth of Australia*, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁵⁴ Hobbins, "'Outside the Institute There Is a Desert': The Tenuous Trajectories of Medical Research in Interwar Australia."

success of new needle insertion therapy, was significant in achieving this. His fresh approach was an example of one person who, unlike others in the area of medical research, was unconstrained by any feelings of 'fealty to Empire' and acted independently.⁵⁵

The story of the Cancer Research Committee was for Moran an intensely political and personal one, and is described by Hobbins as also encapsulating an 'associated tale of adultery, misappropriated funds and scientific myopia'.⁵⁶ Moran resigned from the Committee in 1929 because of his dissatisfaction with its decisions and structures. Perhaps his sensitivity to criticism also led to this decision. Certainly his reflections about the workings and operations of the Committee, as well as some of its decisions, had a personal focus and temporarily affected his friendship with Molesworth, as well as his relationship with the university. His justifiable concern about the lack of research and clinical protocols regarding the use of radium did not appear to be taken seriously, and contributed to his decision to resign from the Committee.

When it was published in 1939, *Viewless Winds* exposed in a very public way the inner politics and problems with the Cancer Research Committee. Moran's unique perspective gave the general public an insight into its workings, and exposed not just its weaknesses but also the mismanagement of the public funds raised in the appeal - information that had received little publicity at the time.

The determined pursuit of Moran's own research interests had several interesting outcomes for Australia. His quest for the scientific improvement in cancer treatments resulted in the first use of radium needles for deep body cancers in Australia.

⁵⁵ Ibid.p.1.

⁵⁶ Ibid.p.6.

His contribution to the medical literature in describing existing and new cancer treatment types was substantial, despite there being a gap in our understanding of its impact at the time and its overall significance. Moran's determination that the funds of the Cancer Research Committee be spent on treatment clinics rather than only supporting cancer research was realised through his efforts. X-ray equipment was purchased and installed, and by 1928 radium treatment centres were available at various hospitals and supported by the university.⁵⁷ Finally, his 1939 exposure in *Viewless Winds* of the internal conflict besetting the Cancer Research Committee, and apparent mismanagement of the £134,000 of public funds intended to address the cancer problem, highlighted concerns about the integrity of the partnership between the university and the hospitals appointed to use the remaining funds.

Moran's commitment to cancer treatment continued well into the early 1930s, but in 1935, he made a sudden decision to retire from medical practice. There are no clear indications of an impending retirement, although the Government Gazette reported a nine month leave of absence from the New South Wales Medical Board, and the relinquishment of his honorary position of Director of the Radium Department at Prince Henry Hospital, in October 1935.⁵⁸ However, he did go out on a high note. In 1935, the British Medical Association held its first international conference in Australia, and the Melbourne Catholic newspaper *The Advocate* reported that Moran was the only Australian 'to have the distinction of presiding over a section'.⁵⁹ The section was the Radiology and Radiotherapeutics, and *The Advocate*, in building

⁵⁷ Holmes, "Review of Cancer Organisations in Australia and of the Position Regarding Facilities Provided for Investigation, Examination and Treatment."p.5.

⁵⁸ H.P. Fitzsimons, ed. Department of Public Health, New South Wales Government Gazette (Sydney: New South Wales Government, 1935).No.173. Ibid.No.175.

⁵⁹ "For the British Medical Association Congress," *Advocate (Melbourne, Vic. : 1868 - 1954)*, 29 August 1935.p.17.

momentum for the significance of this event in Melbourne, noted that it was ‘the most important medical gathering that has ever taken place in his country’.⁶⁰

Now aged fifty, this decision to retire appears to have caught many by surprise, but in *Viewless Winds* Moran alludes to some depression which may have prompted the decision. His passionate interest in Italy, its culture and literature, as well as its politics may also have provided additional impetus and sense of excitement about a different future. Moran was becoming increasingly frustrated that Australia was ignoring the growing threat of war in Europe. He had achieved much in his medical life, and now there was an opportunity to make his mark elsewhere.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Chapter 3 Italian Passion

"And you, my young comrades, you will be in the front lines?" A thunder of voices responded "Si, Si, Si"...and they took up the cry "Duce, Duce, Duce"...It was the chant of his army and the challenge of young Italy to its destiny. And I knew then that had I been young and Italian, I, too, would have followed this leader. ¹

Moran's passion for Italian culture and literature drove him not just to Italy, but into Mussolini's world, and this world marked a new stage in his life. Life in Rome enabled him to divest himself of any reputational confines and just be himself. He was a free agent, unencumbered by the expectations of others, and could explore his own interests. His challenge was how to utilise this freedom in a way that matched his skills. The historian Roslyn Pesman Cooper commented that not only did this challenge reflect his 'considerable intellectual and cultural interests' but it served a wider national interest.² Italy provided him with a rich intellectual environment, one where he could become engaged in bigger world matters and where he found a responsive audience for his ideas. He also found a charismatic and energetic dictator who promised his people that he would mend a broken and disillusioned Italy.³ Mussolini seemed to represent the perfect leader and it surprised many that Moran overlooked the more damning of Mussolini's actions on the basis of these promises.

In contrast to what he considered to be the narrow and insular thinking of Australia, Moran's new home was vital and alive. Like other Australians who had made the journey to this land of history and culture, Moran's political lens was informed by

¹ Moran, *Letters from Rome: An Australian's View of the Italo-Abyssinian Question*.p.9.

² Pesman Cooper, "An Australian in Mussolini's Italy; Herbert Michael Moran."p.44.

³ Moran, *Letters from Rome: An Australian's View of the Italo-Abyssinian Question*.p.10.

inherited British and largely middle-class sensitivities.⁴ Prior to this time, other Australian professionals such as architects, educationalists, intellectuals and artists had made this journey, but unlike many others, Moran stayed and made a temporary home there.⁵ His fluency in Italian helped bridge social and political barriers, although like other Australians, his new world in Italy was largely an Anglo-based one.⁶

Italy provided an opportunity to become actively engaged and this helped to give Moran an intellectual focus to replace the one on medicine. This transition from Sydney cancer specialist to political activist and apologist for Mussolini surprised and disappointed peers and colleagues at home in Australia. However the relationship between the Catholic Church and Mussolini added depth and complexity to Moran's views. Mussolini's declaration in 1924 that 'a people will not become great and powerful if it does not embrace religion and consider it an essential elements of public and private life' resonated with many Catholics in Australia and elsewhere and aligned with Moran's profound personal belief that he had a duty to make a difference.⁷ He believed he had the capacity and responsibility to work for the good of society and culture, and take-up his Catholic duty, as promulgated by the Church.⁸ This engagement took on a particular political and sociological focus during the 1930s, and it illustrated the inevitable resulting tensions as public and private representations collided.

⁴ Ros Pesman, "Australians in Italy: The Long View," in *Australians in Italy: Contemporary Lives and Impressions*, ed. Bill Kent, Ros Pesman, and Cynthia Troup (Clayton: Monash University ePress, 2008).p.17.

⁵ Roslyn Pesman Cooper, "Australian Tourists in Fascist Italy," *Journal of Australian Studies* 14, no. 27 (1990).pp.20-21.

⁶ Pesman, "Australians in Italy: The Long View."

⁷ Emma Fattorini, *Hitler, Mussolini, and the Vatican: Pope Pius XI and the Speech That Was Never Made*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).p.x.

⁸ Jory, *The Campion Society: And Catholic Social Militancy in Australia 1929-1939*.p.9.

3.1 A Growing Italian Influence

Moran's interest in language and literature had seen him join several groups in Australia in the early 1920s and accordingly expand his exposure to European politics. He was a member of a Sydney French-speaking social dining club the *Complicqués*; the Modern Languages Association; and the French and Italian language and culture groups Alliance Française and the Dante Alighieri Society.⁹

The historian Roslyn Pesman Cooper notes that Moran's brother-in-law Furneaux Mann, his wife's twin, was also a member of these networks.¹⁰ Furneaux had a keen interest in politics and worked as a barrister in Sydney before moving to France with his French-born wife and son, following the death of his father in 1925.¹¹ This interest was not unusual in these circles and Pesman Cooper notes the local Australian support given to Mussolini by 'Europeanist right wing Catholic intellectuals' and others such as Carl Kaepfel, the Australian scholar, teacher, journalist, associate and contemporary of Moran.¹² In his 1935 article about Abyssinia published in the *Australian Quarterly*, Kaepfel said that aside from his great friend Furneaux Mann 'few (were) better acquainted with European affairs'.¹³

Moran's political interests complemented those of Mann who published a political commentary in 1913 called *The Real Democracy* which was considered to be

⁹ Pesman Cooper, "An Australian in Mussolini's Italy; Herbert Michael Moran."p.44.

¹⁰ Ibid.p.44.

¹¹ Michael Mann, "Furneaux Mann and Family," (1995).p.11.

¹² Roslyn Pesman Cooper, "'We Want a Mussolini': Views of Fascist Italy in Australia," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 39, no. 3 (1993).p.358. Ann G. Smith, "Kaepfel, Carl Henry (1887–1946)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Australian National University, 1986).

¹³ C. Kaepfel, "This Abyssinian Business," *The Australian Quarterly* 7, no. 28 (1935).p.56.

‘inspired by Belloc’s *The Servile State*’.¹⁴ Hilaire Belloc was a friend of Mann’s, occasionally staying with him and his family in France, as did Moran and his wife Eva.¹⁵ The biographer Bernard Bergonzi describes Belloc, who also wrote children’s books and poetry, as a Catholic apologist, describing *The Servile State* as a critique of modern society ‘which attacks both capitalism and socialism’.¹⁶ G.K. Chesterton’s review of the book was considered somewhat unflatteringly by Ursula Bygott to be ‘eugolistic’.¹⁷ Bygott describes how these connections between Australian Catholics and their British literary counterparts strengthened and widened, influencing local Australian Catholic social politics.¹⁸

Colin Jory suggests that the sentiments of *The Servile State* were considered by the Catholic Melbourne-based newspaper *The Advocate* to align with those of fascism, and that the more vital Melbourne Catholic press generally had a favourable view towards Mussolini, compared to the New South Wales Catholic press. These positive views of Mussolini largely stemmed from the successful negotiation in 1929 of a treaty between Italy and the Vatican which recognised the Vatican as an independent entity rather than subject to the control of Italy.¹⁹ However positive *The Advocate* felt about Mussolini, these feelings were equivocal and in September 192, it commented that ‘The very thing upon which the Fascist State prides itself [i.e. its totalitarianism] will yet prove the rock of its destruction’.²⁰

¹⁴ Mann, "Furneaux Mann and Family."p.4.

¹⁵ Ibid.p.13.

¹⁶ Bernard Bergonzi, "Belloc, (Joseph) Hilaire Pierre René (1870–1953)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; reprint, Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, January 2008.).

¹⁷ Bygott, *With Pen and Tongue: The Jesuits in Australia 1865-1939*.p.284.

¹⁸ Ibid.p.185.

¹⁹ Jory, *The Campion Society: And Catholic Social Militancy in Australia 1929-1939*.p.25.

²⁰ "Current Comment," *Advocate (Melbourne, Vic. : 1868 - 1954)*, 26 September 1929. quoted in *The Campion Society: And Catholic Social Militancy in Australia 1929-1939*.p. 25.

Positive views of Mussolini from within Catholic circles were not confined to Melbourne and reflected satisfaction not only with the new treaty and political status of the Vatican, but also with what the Church and Moran believed Mussolini had achieved in social justice matters. On his return from Rome in 1930, the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Archbishop Kelly, said in an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

Mussolini had restored order out of chaos. There was no unemployment, and, although many of the people lived frugally, they were contented. "If we had in Australia a Mussolini who knew how to give effect to his conclusions," said Dr. Kelly, "we would have no unemployment, we would have land made available, and every man would be required to fulfil his duties, whether workman or employer. We would have no supernumeraries. We would have the needs of the country supplied by national produce".²¹

These comments were alarming coming from a church leader who seemed to ignore concerns with social justice, democratic rights, and the frugality of life under Mussolini. However the sentiment was not much different for Moran when he later visited Mussolini in 1935.

In 1930 Moran donated £1,000 to the University of Sydney for the establishment of a lectureship in Italian and £10 annual prize in Italian, both in memory of his sister Beatrice who had died the year before.²² The £1,000 donation was matched by the Catholic papal countess Eileen Freehill and the University quickly began to implement Italian programs.²³ Up until this time, although the University included Italian in its language matriculation requirements for undergraduate entry and offered courses in the other languages of Latin, Greek, French, German and Japanese, Italian was not taught. The donations committed the university to this new venture and up

²¹ "An Interview," *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 - 1954), 10 October 1930.p.11.

²² "Sydney University Calendar," ed. University of Sydney (Sydney: University of Sydney, 1931).p.436.

²³ Ibid.

until at least 1955, Sydney was considered by W.P. Friederich to have 'the only flourishing Italian department in the country' in Australia's six universities.²⁴ Pesman Cooper notes that the first teacher of Italian to be appointed by the University was Antonio Baccarini, a local member of the Dante Alighieri Society who was 'most active in promoting of Fascist Italy in Australia'.²⁵ With Moran as a life member and President of the Society, the scene was set for a meeting of minds with regard to Mussolini.²⁶

3.2 The Politics of Migration

Moran's interest in Italy may well have been stimulated by Pietro Fiaschi and strengthened through his wider family connections. Fiaschi's father Thomas, who was born in the northern city of Florence, was a medical lecturer and examiner at the University of Sydney when Moran was enrolled as an undergraduate. He also worked for a period of time at St Vincent's Hospital, most recently in 1910.²⁷ Pietro appears as a friend in *Viewless Winds* under the pseudonym of Peter Burraschi, and Patrick Moran later confirmed that Pietro Fiaschi was his father's greatest friend.²⁸

The Fiaschi family did not fit the profile of the Italian settler in Australia. Thomas Fiaschi migrated to Australia from Italy in 1874 and was influenced by the Anglican rather than the Catholic Church.²⁹ Their son Pietro (sometimes referred to as Piero) was just six years older than Moran and was described by him as 'by hereditary

²⁴ W. P. Friederich, "The 1955 Meeting of the Australasian Universities' Modern Languages Association," *Revue De Littérature Comparée* 30 (1956).p.237.

²⁵ Pesman Cooper, "'We Want a Mussolini': Views of Fascist Italy in Australia."p.360.

²⁶ Walsh, "Moran, Herbert Michael (1885-1945)."

²⁷ "Sydney University Calendar," ed. University of Sydney (Sydney: University of Sydney, 1903); Maxwell Coleman, "Thomas Henry Fiaschi (1853-1927)," (St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, 2016); G.P. Walsh, "Fiaschi, Thomas Henry (1853-1927)" in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Online: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2016).

²⁸ Moran, "The Fiaschi Family."

²⁹ Walsh, "Fiaschi, Thomas Henry (1853-1927)".

predisposition, an anti-clerical'.³⁰ Australia with its broader religious and more secular base, compared to Italy which was dominated by the Catholic Church, must have provided a welcome sanctuary for the Fiaschi. The family was prosperous and firmly established by the time the profile of migration changed in the post-war period and large numbers of poorer, unskilled, Catholic Italians from the south migrated to Australia.

The 1921 and 1924 restrictions placed by the United States on southern Italians migrating to that country served as an impetus to change both the geographic composition and numeric incidence of Italian migration in Australia. Following the implementation of the new American measures, interest in Australia by southern Italians increased substantially with around fifty thousand Italians arriving in the post-war period up to 1933, most being from southern Italy.³¹ The 1933 census shows that Italy was the largest non-British contributor to Australian migration having overtaken the other major sources of Germany and China with 26,756 people born in Italy, around 3% of total migration.³²

The arrival of these southern Italians in Australia was not well received and there was 'an immediate upsurge of xenophobia' partly relating to labour and union concerns about jobs being taken from Australians, but this concern was also inspired by eugenic notions of behavioural distinctions between darker skinned Sicilians and their lighter skinned northern compatriots.³³ Echoing concerns about a possible dilution of Australia's white Australia policy, following the introduction of the 1902 Immigration

³⁰ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.336.

³¹ John S. Macdonald and Leatrice D. Macdonald, "Italian Migration to Australia: Manifest Functions of Bureaucracy Versus Latent Functions of Informal Networks," *Journal of Social History* 3, no. 3 (1970).

³² Parliamentary Library, "Migration to Australia since Federation: A Guide to the Statistics," ed. Janet Phillips, Michael Klapdor, and Joanne Simon-Davies (Canberra: Parliamentary Library, 2010).

³³ Macintyre, *1901-1942: The Succeeding Age*, 4.p.207.

Restriction Act, Rosario Lampugnani posits that reactions to these new migrants also spoke to Australian beliefs 'that Italians had (or accepted) a lower standard of living'.³⁴

These reactions perhaps also spoke to other political activity occurring in Italy at that time; the emergence of fascism and distinct regional and cultural differences within the Italian population. Historian John Davis, for example, notes 'geographically, Italian fascism was primarily a northern phenomenon'.³⁵ This is confirmed by the historian Michael Mann who notes the strength of fascism in the northern border regions of Italy, as well as the large northern cities, partly in response to the continuing disputes over revised post-WWI borders.³⁶ Alexander De Grand also speaks to the ongoing nature of contrast and conflict in Italy in his review of *Modern Italian History* noting the extant fractures between 'north-south, urban-rural, provincial-cosmopolitan, elite-mass, Catholic-anticlerical, fascist-antifascist' and the contributions these made to a sense of disunity rather than unity.³⁷

In linking the thoughts of Australians about fascism and their perceptions of Mussolini's impact in Italy, Pesman also notes the success of Mussolini in cleaning up the buildings, streets and the people of Italy, and that a more orderly and dignified sensibility was deemed to exist within the country.³⁸ There was a sense of support not only within the Catholic Church, but also within local Australian political circles about Mussolini's impact. Following a holiday to Italy, the Sydney barrister and politician E.J. Loxton commented 'Desperate times need desperate measures and although democratic Australia would probably demur, there is no doubt that a dictatorship would

³⁴ Rosario Lampugnani, "Postwar Migration Policies with Particular Reference to Italian Migration to Australia," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 33, no. 3 (1987).p.199.

³⁵ John A. Davis, "Rural Roots of Fascism in Southern Italy: Frank M. Snowden, Violence and Great Estates in the South of Italy. Apulia 1900-1922," *European History Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (1987).p.229.

³⁶ Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).p.106.

³⁷ Alexander De Grand, "Review Article: Modern Italian History," *European History Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (1998).p.405.

³⁸ Pesman, "Australians in Italy: The Long View."p.17.

clean up our troubles more rapidly than other forms of government'.³⁹ With respect to Mussolini's charisma, Loxton referred to him as 'Caesar and Napoleon combined, and probably the most romantic figure in history'.⁴⁰ Unlike Loxton and Moran however, some Australians felt differently, including the historian Keith Hancock. Pesman commented that he was politically outraged by Mussolini's speeches.⁴¹

3.3 Moran and Mussolini

Moran's links with Italy grew closer throughout the 1930s aided by his friendship with the Fiaschi family, and association with Sydney's elite Italian community through the Dante Alighieri Society. These strong links, coupled with his interest in Italian culture and grasp of the language, arguably were powerful incentives leading him to engage more actively with Mussolini and Italian politics. There is no doubting that Mussolini's success in cleaning up Italy would have appealed to Moran, but Moran's literary and language credentials already indicated a deep sense of attachment to that country. Moran was described by *The Sun* in Sydney as 'an intense Italian student, and should be able to translate Dante better than Sir Samuel Griffith' who was an Australian politician and Chief Justice.⁴² *The Advocate* also noted his proficiency, describing him as 'a fine Italian scholar, and an authority on Dante'.⁴³

Overseas travel had become a normal part of Moran's life and through it, he was able to conduct his research into cancer and deepen his interest in Italian cultural and political life. His earlier trip to Europe in 1927 was lengthy – about ten months – and

³⁹ "Italian Dictatorship," *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 - 1954), 15 September 1930.p.8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*p.8.

⁴¹ "Australians in Italy: The Long View."p.17.

⁴² "Men of Sydney," *Sun* (Sydney, NSW : 1910 - 1954), 16 March 1937.p.10.

⁴³ "For the British Medical Association Congress."p.17.

his family accompanied him at least some of the time with Eva taking the opportunity to visit her brother Furneaux Mann in France.⁴⁴ Moran visited Italy at least three times between 1932 and 1935 and met Mussolini in February 1932 as well as later in September 1935.⁴⁵ In return for his work in fostering an Australian engagement with Italy, Moran was recognised by the King of Italy and awarded a Chevalier of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus in 1933, travelling to Italy to receive the knighthood.⁴⁶ This honour recognised his work in advancing cultural relations between Italy and Australia and his sponsorship for the teaching of Italian at Sydney University. The prestigious award was noted by the Catholic newspaper *The Advocate* which referred to him as 'Cavaliere Dr. H.M. Moran'.⁴⁷

As an intellectual and Catholic, Moran intimately knew issues challenging the Catholic Church particularly in Italy, issues which were primarily temporal and reflective of what the political scientist Robert Kraynak describes as those 'historical cycles reflected in the rise and fall of nations and civilisations'.⁴⁸ These issues were overtly playing out in Italy in particular with the rise of Mussolini and fascism, anti-communist sentiment, and the role of the Catholic Church.

Given these pro-Mussolini networks, and considering the general support given to Mussolini by senior Australia Catholic Church clergy, it is easy to understand Moran's interest in promoting Mussolini's cause.⁴⁹ Endorsement by the Catholic Church of a Mussolini-styled implementation of its recent encyclicals relating to work and family life resonated with him. He drew strength from the knowledge that his ideas

⁴⁴ Mann, "Furneaux Mann and Family."

⁴⁵ "Mussolini," *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 - 1954), 29 September 1932.p.8. Moran, *In My Fashion: An Autobiography of the Last Ten Years*.p.4.

⁴⁶ "Personal," *Sydney Morning Herald N.S.W: (1842-1954)*, 21 September 1933.

⁴⁷ "For the British Medical Association Congress."p.17.

⁴⁸ Kraynak, "Pope Leo Xiii and the Catholic Response to Modernity."p.528.

⁴⁹ Pesman Cooper, "'We Want a Mussolini': Views of Fascist Italy in Australia."p.358.

about European events and thinking were giving some traction, even if not in Australia. For Moran, Europe had articulate, educated and thoughtful leaders, unlike Australia, whose own political leaders were not as well educated. This is partly attributed to the small number of universities in Australia at the time and the influence of particularly Irish working class engagement in labour politics. Education scholars Alison Mackinnon and Helen Proctor note 'Until World War 2 university students were a tiny minority: around 14,000 students in 1939, just 0.2% of the population'.⁵⁰

In October 1935, Moran travelled to Italy following his retirement from medical practice. His retirement at age fifty appears to have been unexpected, and there was no real indication of it in the press until an article appeared in September announcing that he was shortly to leave for England.⁵¹ He stayed briefly in Rome observing, reflecting and writing, and then briefly returned to Australia in 1936. While in Rome, he assumed the mantle of an expert expatriate in residence, writing a series of weekly letters about the broader questions arising out of Mussolini's October 1935 invasion of Abyssinia - now Ethiopia.

3.4 A Need to Let People Know

His defence of Mussolini, support for Italy, and remonstrations about the trade sanctions imposed on Italy by the League of Nations because of its invasion of Abyssinia were published in his 1935 publication *Letters from Rome*.⁵² The *Letters*

⁵⁰ Alison Mackinnon and Helen Proctor, "Education," in *The Cambridge History of Australia: The Commonwealth of Australia*, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013).p.438.

⁵¹ "Wallabies Captain Off to England," *Referee* (Sydney, NSW : 1886 - 1939), 05 September 1935.p.13.

⁵² Moran, *Letters from Rome: An Australian's View of the Italo-Abyssinian Question*.

were directed to an Australian audience and served as an apologia for Mussolini and an attack on the treatment of Italy by the League of Nations. The six letters focussed on post-war international events, fleshed out with items of significance to Australia. The detail of these letters is not a focus of this research. Roslyn Pesman Cooper has already written extensively about the fascist elements of this publication, Moran's engagement with and approach to fascism, and his attempts to improve British-Italian relations.⁵³ The *Letters* however reflected his concerns about Australia's non-engagement with international politics.

Moran believed that Australia too easily and uncritically accepted a British-based political perspective reflective of an inward looking post-war relationship and alignment with Britain, and did not accept what Mussolini had achieved. He noted 'No country in all the world is more susceptible to tendentious news; no people easier prey to propaganda. We have not the advantage of the compensating effect which comes from the reading of other opinions in other languages'.⁵⁴ Moran's concerns about Australian education levels, its lack of interest in cultural and literary matters all inform these comments, and Pesman Cooper also notes the importance he saw in Australians developing 'the skills necessary to understand and interpret the outside world for themselves rather than relying on the British version of events'.⁵⁵ Moran's reminder that Mussolini had drained the marshes, increased production and provided the people with the 'means of sustenance and the vitamins of self-respect' were a further reminder to Australia of its comparatively easy lifestyle, unlike Italy where 'life must be for the Italians a struggle, a discipline and an ordeal'.⁵⁶

⁵³ Pesman Cooper, "An Australian in Mussolini's Italy; Herbert Michael Moran."

⁵⁴ Moran, *Letters from Rome: An Australian's View of the Italo-Abyssinian Question*.p.33.

⁵⁵ Pesman Cooper, "An Australian in Mussolini's Italy; Herbert Michael Moran."p.44.

⁵⁶ Moran, *Letters from Rome: An Australian's View of the Italo-Abyssinian Question*.p.10.

Moran's other theme in this publication is his critique of Australian attitudes to population growth and immigration. He noted the post-war carve-up of Europe was disadvantageous to Italy 'while France took twenty-eight per cent and Britain sixty-eight per cent, she received but three per cent of the colonial territories'.⁵⁷ His Italy was a country under pressure from population growth, a country where a penalty had been 'extracted for the natural fertility of the nation's women. They had failed to practice that control which in the end means the subjugation of the white race'.⁵⁸ Australia on the other hand, had a vast continent, a small population, and policies aimed at preventing immigration from non-British countries. For Moran, Australia lacked the vision and energy to exploit the continent, and was not fulfilling its proprietorial obligations. He raised a question as to how long Australia could get away with this approach, and accused Australia of failing to realise it had its own place in the world, as well as a responsibility for greater international engagement.

The significance of these population comments is worth noting. The historian Alexander De Grand notes that in the late 1920s, Mussolini developed his own population policies with the aim of 'increasing the population from 40 to 60 million by 1950'.⁵⁹ Laws against abortion and contraception were implemented, large families were encouraged. Women were discouraged from participating in the workforce 'in the pursuit of the goal of raising the population'.⁶⁰ Not all of these intentions were realised, but they did accord with the general Catholic Church thinking of the time about birth

⁵⁷ Ibid.p.14.

⁵⁸ Ibid.p.34.

⁵⁹ De Grand, "Review Article: Modern Italian History."p.407.

⁶⁰ Ibid.p.407.

control, and Moran was strongly supportive of these ideas having in 1934 written about these matters.⁶¹

The *Letters* were quickly published in Australia with the financial help of a local Australian fascist branch.⁶² They were received by some with a sense of disbelief while others applauded his insights into the impact of the sanctions imposed by the League of Nations, and the role of Britain in Italian politics. Unsurprisingly, the Sydney-based *Il Giornale Italiano* ran a strongly supportive article about Moran's attempts to counter what it thought was 'a war propaganda of the virulent kind' against Italian politics, and that Moran had rendered 'a noble service not only to truth and Italy, but to the whole world and humanity at large'.⁶³ In the same edition it reprinted some of Moran's recent *The Bulletin* article which summarised the argument of the *Letters*. Moran was proud that *The Bulletin* had published his article on its leader page but again lamented the lack of Australian engagement with European politics.⁶⁴ Others like *The West Australian* newspaper were concerned at Moran's criticisms of the League of Nations, and noted that the publication poorly served as 'an apologia of Mussolini's tragic assault on the sovereignty of the ancient Empire of Ethiopia'.⁶⁵ *The Advertiser* in South Australia succinctly summed up the *Letters* argument by saying 'for the sake of a half-civilised country for which we really care nothing we are losing a good customer' of Australian wool.⁶⁶

There is no doubt that the *Letters* achieved their goal in alerting Australia to the complexities of European political life, and of presenting a different version of life

⁶¹ "Birth Control," *Catholic Press (Sydney, NSW : 1895 - 1942)*, 31 May 1934.

⁶² Pesman Cooper, "An Australian in Mussolini's Italy; Herbert Michael Moran."p.46.

⁶³ "Italy under Sanctions: Seen by an Australian "Man About Town".", *Il Giornale Italiano*, 26 February 1936.p.8.

⁶⁴ Moran, *In My Fashion: An Autobiography of the Last Ten Years*.p.36.

⁶⁵ "New Publications," *West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954)*, 15 February 1936.p.4.

⁶⁶ "In Defence of Italy: So Sadly Misrepresented," *Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954)*, 07 March 1936.p.12.

under Mussolini in Italy compared to that of the more British influenced press. The publication created a forum for a wider discussion about Australia's relationship with Britain and Italy, in the face of quite different local political and population dynamics particularly with the larger numbers of Italian migrants now living in Australia. But Moran considered the local emphasis on domestic issues was dangerous for Australia which was shutting its eyes to the 'clouds gathering a long way away' and that Australians were too busy enjoying their lifestyles to contemplate these important world events.⁶⁷ A virtuous life was required, and hard work and self-control seemed to Moran to be lacking in Australia. Mussolini and fascism seemed to offer what Australia could not: 'strong leadership, success not only in terms of material improvements, but also in enhancing moral fibre and in enforcing discipline, efficiency, effectiveness, patriotism' all values of significance to Moran and represented in his narratives.⁶⁸

Following publication of the *Letters*, Moran turned his attentions away from Australia both physically and intellectually, focusing instead on the inter-war relationship between Britain and Italy, and he had much to say about this in his later memoir *In My Fashion* published in 1945 after his death.⁶⁹ Although family reports indicated he lived in Italy for the period 1936 to 1939, there is some ambiguity as to his exact movements and it is probable that Italy became a base from which he visited Germany to study language and further cancer developments. Contacts with Australia were maintained through the occasional trips back, but little more was publicly heard about him until the publication of *Viewless Winds*. Its 1939 publication with its trenchant criticism of the Catholic Church and exposure of the misdeeds of the Cancer Research Committee brought him back into the Australian public eye and under the

⁶⁷ *In My Fashion: An Autobiography of the Last Ten Years*.p.36.

⁶⁸ Pesman Cooper, "'We Want a Mussolini': Views of Fascist Italy in Australia."p.362.

⁶⁹ Moran, *In My Fashion: An Autobiography of the Last Ten Years*.

microscope. With its publication, all hell broke loose, and representations of Moran within his Catholic community in particular, quickly changed. To them, and as we have seen, he became a betrayer.

Chapter 4 Reflection

Herbert Michael Moran wrote about his multi-faceted life and in the process constructed an identity which reflected the way he saw himself. His narratives provided the means to reflect on his behaviours and actions, and justify the decisions he made about his personal and professional life. The general absence of his private life from his narratives however, suggests continuing turmoil - even a lack of reconciliation with the personal decisions he made about his family life. The historical events that shaped his world scaffolded his personal behaviours and informed the way he negotiated these events and the regimes.

This exploration of the identity Moran constructed about himself within the regimes of his church, his career and his passionate interest in Italy has illustrated the tensions he experienced in trying to reconcile personal behaviours and beliefs, and achieve a sense of consistency or predictability. Moran's achievements across these regimes came at a time when society was still dealing with the disruptions of WW1. Institutions struggled to keep up with the challenges and opportunities that its members presented. Moran invoked the new public ways of communicating his thoughts and actions – through his publications and his behaviour.

Viewless Winds has a vein of destructive criticism running through it and it sheds light on the life of one person struggling to reconcile his inner drives with external and public behavioural expectations. Moran worked across a range of areas and was challenged in trying to reconcile his sense of purpose with the mentalities of those regimes. His sense of intensity and his conflicted attitude towards authority is revealed in his publications which illustrate the challenges he experienced in finding a

way to manage and meld his multifaceted interests. But the publications gave him the means to explain and justify these events and processes to himself, and help cast his own identity. The published works were performative in educating others about his life and life in general at this time. They shed light on a person who made a contribution to discussions of morality, medicine and politics.

His destructive narrative vein contrasts with his reputation as a valued cancer surgeon and devout Catholic. When published, his criticisms of the Catholic Church, medical peers and those in authority revealed a person publicly at odds with professed religious beliefs, and at odds with a well-articulated belief of the importance of loyalty. They showed a person prone to outbursts, of extreme sensitivity and of injudicious behaviour, but also showed a Catholic doctor committed to the sacredness of life and his duty. His views challenged the religious and medical jurisdictions whose expectations were based around notions of propriety, good behaviour and predictability, but they also revealed a person who saw a different reflection of life through his diagnostic glass, and needed to speak out.

Through his narratives and contributions to public debate, Moran has added substantially to the knowledge and representation of inter-war life in Australia. At this time, Australia was inwardly focused and expressed a fealty to Empire which limited its own progress in the medical domain; was dominated by traditional notions of clerical power and lay observance in its largely Irish-influenced Catholic Church; and withdrew from international political engagement in the lead-up to WW2. Moran challenged this inter-war local world on all of these fronts. His behaviours challenged the dominant church, medical and political discourses, and his narratives showed one individual's attempt to publicly challenge accepted behaviours, expose some hidden and uncomfortable truths, and reveal other life experiences.

Moran crafted an idealised version of himself in his publications which was personally empowering, and ultimately provided justification for the decision he took to leave Australia and his family. He constructed his own authorial identity - one which was ultimately challenged by his peers mostly because it transgressed behavioural thresholds. He did this by publicising conditions of the day which had otherwise remained private. He illustrated the inherent contradiction between his early actions and behaviours. He was applauded and recognised as a faithful Church member and an excellent Italian scholar, but to some, his criticisms and notional support for fascism amounted to betrayal.

This work has examined the narrative context informing Moran's life and positioned his contributions through the lens of several narrative themes. Rather than simply view Moran's works as an at-times destructive discourse around institutional and personal behaviour, intertwined with glimpses of a progressive Australia, the exploration has examined his narrative identity and accordingly led to a greater understanding of Moran's contributions to public discourse. In juxtaposing elements of his life within a brief period of time, the mutability of Moran's identity is revealed. This work illustrates the value of Moran's narratives for understanding 1920s and 1930s Australia - a value that the historian Stuart Macintyre attests 'the student of the period should not overlook'.¹

Through his actions and reactions to events around him Moran, like others experiencing the effects of WW1, was implicitly redefining society and the way it lived. Beers and Thomas have assessed the post-war social changes that Britain experienced, and Australia too was not immune to these.² New class and gender

¹ Macintyre, *1901-1942: The Succeeding Age*, 4.p.386.

² Beers and Thomas, "Introduction: Nation and 'Nations' in Inter-War Britain."

relationships and ways of negotiating these relationships evolved. The war and its effects on the Australian population engaged Moran's concern about a new moral and ethical trajectory which rejected discipline and the sacrifice of war. He keenly felt the apparent disregard for the returned soldier who had 'descended to the level of a public nuisance' in the eyes of the respectable citizen.³ As a returned serviceman and a doctor, he was familiar with the challenges of post-war life and understood the concerns of the day.

Viewless Winds gave Moran a vehicle to exercise influence. His criticism of the Australian Catholic Church was informed by his Italian experiences rather than being the result of long held grievances. In a history of Australia's engagement with Italy, Pesman described the different nature of religious observance in Italy compared to Australia.⁴ For one Australian in Italy, religion appeared very much alive and roomy and had 'people with many different ways of thinking within it' unlike 'that terrible bigoted ignorant Irish-ism that makes it so repellent in Australia'.⁵ Moran's criticisms of the Australian Catholic Church are easy to comprehend in the light of such statements. It seemed that Italy was returning an intellectual dividend to its adopted son, enabling him to experience the broader array of Catholic behaviours tolerated in Italy compared to those of Irish-influenced Australia.

The separation of Eva and Herbert Moran in 1936 was a curious matter and to all intents and purposes, at least in Australia at the time, Eva and Moran were still a couple. However, between 1936 and 1939, according to his son, Moran lived with

³ Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*.p.161.

⁴ Pesman, "Australians in Italy: The Long View." Roslyn Pesman Cooper was published as Roslyn Pesman.

⁵ Ibid.p.15.

Giulia, the niece of Pietro Fiaschi.⁶ She was twenty eight years younger than Moran and just four years older than his son Patrick. Regardless of the nature of the relationship, press report shows that Eva and Patrick met Moran in 1937 and they holidayed together in the south of France, prior to Patrick commencing his postgraduate studies in England.⁷ An earlier article reported that Eva was planning to join Moran in England and had donated all of her furniture to a Catholic charity. This suggests that this was not a separation, but part of a relocation plan to move the entire family to England, and that the estrangement had more flexibility than previously thought. Again, we see Moran's complex and contradictory nature which suggests ambiguity in the relationship, which perhaps Eva herself also felt. Such contradictions show us the messy and inartistic lives of people that the biographer Michael Holroyd describes as biography.⁸

Following army medical appointments in England during WW2, Moran published two further works, but neither enjoyed the commercial success of *Viewless Winds*. His death from cancer in England in 1945 was marked both in Australia and Great Britain with heartfelt tributes from his friends, as well as medical and military colleagues. His Australian medical colleague Robert Scot Skirving perhaps had his turn to backpay Moran for his earlier operating theatre indiscretions:

Paddy was a great chap, but I wish he had been otherwise in his heredity and upbringing...He got over his Irish manners and outlived his Italian ideas...Before he died, he told me that democracy was not the evangel of perfection that some people even today crack it up to be, but if I loved that part of his last letter to me, I hated his putting his neck under the princely yoke at the last...⁹

⁶ Moran, "The Fiaschi Family."

⁷ "Social and Personal," *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 - 1954), 01 June 1937.p.4.

⁸ Holroyd, "The Case against Biography."

⁹ Macintosh, *Memoirs of Dr Robert Scot Skirving 1859-1956*.p.297.

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