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# The Golden Chariot: Quacks, Quackery and New England Newspapers, 1889–1893

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## ABSTRACT

Quack advertising was widespread in pre-Federation newspapers including those in rural New England (northern New South Wales). Between 1891 and 1892, Madame and Dr Paul Duflot and their Golden Chariot visited the New England area and attracted large crowds. At the same time, the practice of medical science was striving to establish its credibility and set itself apart from alternative health providers. They did this by pejoratively labelling alternative medicine providers as “quacks”. This article contributes to the New England media-history and news-framing literature on quack reporting. It draws on the framing theories of Robert Entman and Paul D’Angelo, alongside Zygmunt Bauman’s concepts of the “stranger” and “strangerhood”. The analysis reveals a striking hypocrisy among local newspapers: while they prominently advertised the quacks and their cures—including the Duflots’ public appearances and private consultations—they simultaneously ran anti-quack news stories. Notably, the popularity of the Duflots suggests that New Englanders were not entirely won over by medical science. Instead, they prioritised personal autonomy, human agency and control over their healthcare decisions.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

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As early as 1880, Australian newspapers warned readers of Madame Duflot, calling her a “female charlatan”, “female Dulcamara”, “female quack”, and one “who takes her ‘rides abroad’ to heal the sick”.<sup>1</sup> Syndicated news ensured that country NSW communities were aware of Madame Duflot’s quackery. The news story described her healing practice as

done in true Dulcamara style—a large carved, gilded, and decorated chariot, drawn by three horses abreast, fantastically caparisoned, receives the lady, as well as eight bandsmen, who are disposed in the back part of the chariot. Attired in ruby silk and cloth of gold, a tiara of pearls and silver on her head, and attended by M. Duflot, she drives down to the ground

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<sup>1</sup>“An Extraordinary Quack”, *Evening News* (Sydney), 2 February 1880, 4. The same article and title was published in 25 other newspapers across the nation. The term “Dulcamara” pejoratively applied to quacks refers to a plant called *Solanum dulcamara* commonly used by herbalists to treat various conditions including skin rashes, colds and blood disorders. In Latin, *dulces* refers to an initial sweet taste followed by bitterness. “Dulcamara” was also the name of the quack character and figure of ridicule in W. S. Gilbert’s 1866 opera *Dulcamara, or the Little Duck and the Great Quack*.

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selected for her operations, where she covers her gorgeous attire with a professional Mackintosh apron with pockets, arranges instruments, lint, and other necessities, and then announces her willingness to extract teeth without fee or reward. On the occasion described, we are told that, for more than one hour, she was extracting teeth as fast as people could open their mouths to receive the forceps. All this time an enormous mass of patients are waiting their turn, including poor creatures afflicted with deafness, blindness, rheumatism, tumours, and various enlargements of the head and neck. Now comes the tug of war, or rather the means of providing its sinews. Madame begins to speak in French, which is interpreted sentence by sentence as she goes on. In it she vaunts the “Indian Malachite”, contained in small bottles, as a cure for toothache, inflammation of the lungs, loose teeth, headache, neuralgia, dizziness, cuts, burns, scratches, rheumatism, ear-ache, and *hoc genus omne* [everything else of this kind]. Nor does she content herself with simply vaunting its virtues; she borrows a knife, cuts her finger, places on it some lint steeped in “Malachite”, and in a few minutes shows the cut to be quite healed. She then proceeded to make an apparently lame man walk; removed a tumour from a man’s head, after an application of “Malachite”, to the intense admiration of the crowd, who, it seems, were full of tales of wonderful cures effected by Madame Enault. And now came the moment to reap the harvest produced by all these gratis wonders. Hundreds of buyers are eager for a bottle of “Indian Malachite”, at the low price of 2s; and, to show the immense extent to which this so-called remedy is sold and these poor people are duped, the manufacturers of the bottles in which it is put up state that they have delivered upwards of 50,000 of them to Madame Enault during the last few weeks.<sup>2</sup>

Australian newspapers reported on the Duflots’ travel from the United Kingdom to Canada and in 1887 to Australia and New Zealand. On 6 April 1887, Adelaide’s *Express and Telegraph* informed of their arrival from Melbourne.<sup>3</sup> Like all travelling quacks, the Duflots moved from community to community and stayed as long as demand or interest remained. One such community was the New England region, located in New South Wales and comprising Armidale, Glen Innes, Tenterfield, Inverell, Uralla, Guyra and Walcha. New England newspapers provide an illuminating perspective on the reporting of the Duflots’ visit between 1891 and 1892.<sup>4</sup> The news reporting of the Duflots and their Golden Chariot shows that local rural and regional community newspapers framed alternative medicine pejoratively as “quackery” while lauding medical science as advanced, progressive, effective and credible. This article scrutinises the extent to which this framing represented the views of the New England populace: the popularity of the visiting quacks and their medicines and the persistent advertising of mail-order remedies suggests that the local communities were not entirely won over by established medical science despite the inroads made by journalist support, progressive changes to morbidity and mortality in the population, and its differentiation from quackery.

## Local Press

Local newspapers play an important role in informing residents about local events, including politics, community issues and achievements. They serve and reflect the interests, concerns and values of the communities they cover. As I’ve noted elsewhere, local

<sup>2</sup>“An Extraordinary Quack”, *Evening News* (Sydney), 2 February 1880, 4.

<sup>3</sup>“Latest Shipping”, *The Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide), 6 April 1887, 4.

<sup>4</sup>Much could be made of other NSW areas such as the Hunter region and Central and Southern Tablelands along with metropolitan locations like Sydney and Adelaide, but scope is restricted for reasons of brevity and interest in the Duflots’ time in northern New South Wales.

papers “have historically played a vital role in telling news; they are a powerful political and social medium, shaping reader attitudes with their content”.<sup>5</sup> Kathryn Bowd argues that the community relevance and contributions of regional newspapers depend on their “localness”: “They cover mostly, or entirely, local news; they promote and advocate for the interests of their region; and they foster a close relationship with their readers. They are not only a valuable source of local news and information for their readership, but also help to connect people within their circulation area and reinforce community identity.”<sup>6</sup> Andrew Hobbs observes that visible relationships that bind a community together, such as sense of place, loyalty, attachment and belonging—as expressed in family, class, religion, race, mores and morals—shape local identity and *genius loci* (the spirit of the place).<sup>7</sup> In 1890s Australian communities, the local newspaper played an important role in reinforcing and shaping community culture through gatekeeping and framing news. I have noted elsewhere that for local newspapers to remain solvent, respected and attractive to readers and advertisers, they had to reflect “the community’s worldview, demography, beliefs and attitudes” by, for instance, featuring local events, reporting on issues that matter to the community and aligning with the community’s values.<sup>8</sup>

Lucy Maynard Salmon urges us to view newspapers as having personalities that are “indicated not only by [their] external appearance but also [their] beliefs and opinions”<sup>9</sup>—for example, etched in names like *Examiner*, *Witness* and *Advocate*, or in their mottos. The *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*’s motto was “Sworn to no Master, of no Sect am I”,<sup>10</sup> reflecting the newspaper’s independence and commitment to serving the community; similarly, the *Bundarra and Tingha Advocate* used the motto “Truth, ever lovely since the world began, The foe of tyrants, and the friend of man”.<sup>11</sup> This motto underscores the newspaper’s dedication to truth and its significant role as a promoter of social capital. Salmon observes that personality in the country newspapers differs from their metropolitan counterparts: where “the provincial press ... serves as a medium of communication among the neighboring places and as a clearing house for the local news of all the surrounding country villages”, there is an “impersonal, coldly critical, masterful personality” in metropolitan papers.<sup>12</sup> Importantly, Salmon notes that common to all country newspapers was a community-centric approach reflecting local identity and place.<sup>13</sup>

Edward Royle and Kathryn Bowd highlight the importance of the local newspaper in promoting social capital.<sup>14</sup> Bowd defines social capital as connections between people or a network composed of a cluster of norms, values, expectations and sanctions.<sup>15</sup> By emphasising “localness”, local newspapers reinforce what regional residents have in

<sup>5</sup>Belinda Beattie, “Reporting Kalgoorlie and Broken Hill Prostitution 1896–1903”, *Media History* 30, no. 4 (2024): 6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2024.2366188>.

<sup>6</sup>Kathryn Bowd, “Reflecting Regional Life: Localness and Social Capital in Australian Country Newspapers”, *Pacific Journalism Review: Te Koako* 17, no. 2 (2011): 72–91, <https://doi.org/10.24135/pjr.v17i2.352>.

<sup>7</sup>Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provisional Press in England, 1855–1900* (Open Book Publishers, 2018), 267–68.

<sup>8</sup>Beattie, “Reporting Kalgoorlie and Broken Hill”, 6.

<sup>9</sup>Lucy Maynard Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian* (Oxford University Press, 1923), 41.

<sup>10</sup>*Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 12 October 1874, 2.

<sup>11</sup>*Bundarra and Tingha Advocate*, 8 December 1900, 2.

<sup>12</sup>Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian*, 63.

<sup>13</sup>Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian*, 197.

<sup>14</sup>Edward Royle, “Introduction: Regions and Identities”, in *Issues of Regional Identity in Honour of John Marshall*, ed. Edward Royle (Manchester University Press, 1998), 1–13; Bowd, “Reflecting Regional Life”, 72–91.

<sup>15</sup>Bowd, “Reflecting Regional Life”, 72.

common, what characterises local identity, the standards and expectations that are part of regional life, and the concerns and interests of people in their circulation area.<sup>16</sup> Of note, Kate Pretty aligns localised social capital with community wellbeing, where valuing “local community feelings, coherence or unity” is what distinguishes the country from the metropolitan press<sup>17</sup>—a concept Rod Kirkpatrick calls “country conscience”.<sup>18</sup> An editor who strayed from this consciousness risked the newspaper failing.

## News Framing

At the turn of the 20th century, news items that combined localness and wellbeing circulated social capital in ways that made them newsworthy. The New Journalism of the Federation period favoured the emotional aspect of news writing because it forged a human connection between the journalist and the reader, making the news more relatable and engaging. Henry Mayer observes that by 1884, New Journalism was growing in popularity in Australia; proposition, reaction and sensational writing were favoured by editors and proprietaries as they boosted profits.<sup>19</sup> Public interest stories focused on events, debate within the community and pressure from outside but were nonetheless subject to news framing. Robert M. Entman defines news framing as “a way to describe the power of a communicating text ... that involves *selection* and *salience* ... To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and /or treatment recommendation* for the item described”.<sup>20</sup> Frames “simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects. Notably, most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include, and the omissions of problem definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience”.<sup>21</sup> In brief, frames are powerful tools of communication, especially with respect to how they “diagnose, evaluate and prescribe”.<sup>22</sup>

Entman and Kimberly Gross show how media framing can influence public perception of crime by emphasising race in crime reporting.<sup>23</sup> Crime then becomes a central theme in the narrative leading to what Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr and Shanto Iyengar describe as a “script” of repeated and reinforced negative stereotyping.<sup>24</sup> Paul D’Angelo suggests similarly that framing devices or strategies of reporting and commentary can import “stock narratives to new topics”.<sup>25</sup> Hence, stereotypes, generalisations,

<sup>16</sup>Bowd, “Reflecting Regional Life”, 87.

<sup>17</sup>Kate Pretty, “Dusting Off the Grassroots: A Survey of Australian Country Journalists”, *Australian Studies in Journalism* two (1993): 75, 118. See also Royle, “Introduction”, 1–13.

<sup>18</sup>Rod Kirkpatrick, *Country Conscience: A History of the New South Wales Provisional Press: 1841–1995* (Infinite Harvest Publishing, 2000).

<sup>19</sup>Henry Mayer, *The Press in Australia* (Lansdowne Press, 1968), 22–23.

<sup>20</sup>Robert M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm”, *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 51, emphasis in original.

<sup>21</sup>Entman, “Framing”, 51.

<sup>22</sup>Entman, “Framing”, 51.

<sup>23</sup>Robert M. Entman and Kimberly A. Gross, “Race to Judgment: Stereotyping Media and Criminal Defendants”, *Law and Contemporary Problems* 71, no. 4 (2008): 93–133, <https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/lcp/vol71/iss4/6>.

<sup>24</sup>Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr and Shanto Iyengar, “Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public”, *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 3 (2000): 560, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669264>.

<sup>25</sup>Paul D’Angelo, “Framing: Media Frames”, in *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, ed. Patrick Rosseler, Cynthia A. Hoffner, and Liesbet van Zoonen (Wiley, 2017), 641.

biases and so on may be brought to bear on journalist reporting to reinforce reader resonance and salience. D'Angelo explains that this can be observed in other framing devices such as "amplification and deamplification, illustrated in situations where journalists reflexively [or instinctively] associate a culturally resonant or politically charged keyword or phrase with a particular topic",<sup>26</sup> shaping how information is framed and perceived.

In editorial gate-keeping, similar processes of judgement are applied to the selection of news stories and topics for audience relevance to ensure that they uphold community and reader expectations in reflecting locally acceptable and appropriate content. Not doing so would run the risk of alienation and thus a loss of profit and business solvency. Hence, the New Journalism's remit to build an emotional connection with audiences meant that for the local press, choices about news stories and framing devices needed to demonstrate some kind of active engagement with what mattered to the local readership. For instance, at the time of Federation, regional Australian readers of local papers would have been receptive to stock narratives that supported a White Australia policy favouring the immigration of British people. As I explain later, the local news stories about visiting quacks surveyed in this article resonated strongly with White Australian fears of the foreigner.

## Quacks and Quackery

S. D. Tucker and Peter Phillips define quacks as people fraudulently posing as doctors who pretend to have genuine medical skills or qualifications.<sup>27</sup> However, Lydia Kang and Nate Pedersen challenge this approach by suggesting that not all quackery is about deception, as it includes situations where people tout what they believe works and the patient/customer accepts it.<sup>28</sup> Like mainstream scientific medicine, quackery taps into the human desire to be healed and to continue living. Indeed, Quack medicine persisted in its defiance of scientific facts because of its populist appeal.<sup>29</sup> Philippa Martyr describes the relationship between scientific practitioners (hereafter referred to as medical professionals/practitioners) and quacks as a war waged in terms of "good doctor, bad quack".<sup>30</sup> Likewise, Roy Porter argues that medical practitioners "have been the heroes of historians and fringe and folk medicine have had their followers; but few scholars have chosen to champion the quacks, and the result is that we know little about them".<sup>31</sup>

Porter asserts that healers outside the Western medical-science tradition reflected "much ingenuity ... [and] introduced many new and beneficial modes of alleviating and ... curing diseases",<sup>32</sup> and that medical professionals and the media have morally condemned this group as "openly, and sometimes unashamedly, making a living out of ... the sick trade".<sup>33</sup> Janet J. Lieberman and Stanley J. Lieberman write that "the

<sup>26</sup>D'Angelo, "Framing", 641.

<sup>27</sup>Peter J. Phillips, *Kill Or Cure: Lotions, Potions, Characters and Quacks of Early Australia* (Rigby, 1978), 7; S. D. Tucker, *Quacks! Dodgy Doctors and Foolish Fads Throughout History* (Amberley Publishing, 2019), 1.

<sup>28</sup>Lydia Kang and Nate Pedersen, *Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Everything* (Workman Publishing, 2017), v.

<sup>29</sup>Kang and Pedersen, *Quackery*, v.

<sup>30</sup>Philippa Martyr, *Paradise of Quacks: An Alternative History of Medicine in Australia* (Macleay Press, 2002), 5, 8.

<sup>31</sup>Roy Porter, *Quacks: Fakers and Charlatans in Medicine* (Tempus Publishing, 2003), 14.

<sup>32</sup>Porter, *Quacks*, 14.

<sup>33</sup>Porter, *Quacks*, 14.

traveling quacks were the doctors of the common people. Originating in Europe ... they travelled with their wagons and carts from one village to another”,<sup>34</sup> where crowds gathered for amusement and the sale of remedies.<sup>35</sup> Notably, opponents of quackery overlooked the importance of human agency, autonomy and control over personal healthcare decisions. Journalists, for instance, labelled those who consulted quacks and placed greater value on their claims to fact as “fools”, “gullible” and “duped”, which left no room for consideration of consumer choice or divergent beliefs and worldviews about health and illness.<sup>36</sup>

Like mainstream scientific medicine, consumer choice taps into the desire to be healed and live. The “corporate quacks”, purveyors of the “cure-all analgesic” found, for instance, in mail-order advertisements, were, along with the travelling quacks, framed as an ongoing annoyance to the medical profession, who were their financial and professional competitors. Journalists preferred and venerated medical professionals by highlighting the harms to consumers dealt by a “dangerous class of imposters” who practised “fake medicine”.<sup>37</sup> For this article, reference to quacks is, as Porter asserts, a means of distinguishing between the practice of “orthodox” medicine in the medical-science tradition and alternative or other medicine, commonly and pejoratively referred to as “quack” medicine.

## Framing Quacks as Strangers

In “Making and Unmaking of Strangers”, Zygmunt Bauman explains that every society produces “strangers”—people “who do not fit the cognitive, moral, or aesthetic map of the world” and “befog and eclipse the boundary lines which ought to be clearly seen”.<sup>38</sup> Strangers exist beyond a community’s established values, beliefs and practices, embodying a different worldview and behaviours that challenge or disrupt hegemonic norms. Bauman’s argument is particularly striking when the stranger is framed in “specific, embodied encounters ... The stranger is a relational figure, constituted in a special ambivalence between proximity and distance, and in this way he/she can take different shapes and different roles depending on the context in which it is performed”.<sup>39</sup> Journalistic representations of medical science as valid, true and progressive and of quackery as illegitimate and strange advanced a praxis of healing hierarchisation and social marginalisation.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, newspapers relegated quacks and quackery to the

<sup>34</sup> Janet J. Lieberman and Stanley J. Lieberman, “A Short History of Quackery and Byways in Medicine”, *The American Biology Teacher* 37, no. 1 (1975): 43, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4445041>.

<sup>35</sup> Lieberman and Lieberman, “A Short History”, 43.

<sup>36</sup> Kang and Pedersen, *Quackery*, v; “Quack Doctors”, *Sydney Punch*, 18 February 1865, 2; “Quack! Quack!! Quack!!!”, *Lone Hand* 2, no. 10 (1908): 138; “Not a Swindler”, *Truth* (Sydney), 28 October 1900, 5; “A Cue Quack Dubs Himself Doctor”, *Truth* (Perth), 27 February 1904, 2.

<sup>37</sup> “Medical Quacks”, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 15 March 1892, 2; “Truth’s Troubles. Kigelmann v Northon. £1000 Damages Claimed”, *Truth* (Sydney), 25 February 1900, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, “Making and Unmaking of Strangers”, *Thesis Eleven* 43, no. 1 (1995): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1177/072551369504300102>.

<sup>39</sup> Lasse Koefoed and Kirsten Simonsen, “‘The Stranger’, the City and the Nation: On the Possibilities of Identification and Belonging”, *European Urban and Regional Studies* 18, no. 4 (2011): 343, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776411399343>.

<sup>40</sup> Niclas Månsson, “What It Means to Become a Stranger”, in *Voices from the Margins: School Experiences of Refugee, Migrant and Indigenous Children*, ed. Eva Alerby and Jill Brown (Sense Publishers, 2008), 8; Stephen J. A. Ward, “Journalism Ethics”, in *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. Karin Wahl Jørgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch (Routledge, 2020), 301.



fringe of the healing profession in favour of the dominant scientific explanations for the causes of disease, which in turn determined the treatment. For example, late 19th-century local media ran stories that explained germ theory and how communicable bacterial diseases like diphtheria were prevented by antitoxin vaccines that had been empirically tested instead of quack remedies—like Hop Bitters, which purportedly “prevent[ed] the accumulation of deadly spores of contagion”<sup>41</sup>—that relied on unverified anecdotal evidence for their claims.

The *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser* “insist[ed] on the authority of medical science” by alerting readers to the dystopic and harmful nature of quackery, contesting spiritualist healing practices (including mesmerist and psychic approaches) and exposing toxic or ineffective treatments.<sup>42</sup> Such stories warned the reader that consulting a quack amounted to enriching their fortune like Count Cagliostro, whose “occult science” medicines enabled him to live in grandeur.<sup>43</sup> One newspaper advised readers of its mission to “studiously avoid padding up our columns with [quacks’]... notices” and another published a government recommendation that if one were sick, “the safest course to adopt is to consult a properly qualified medicinal man and to leave charlatans severely alone”.<sup>44</sup> In this way, journalism helped to normalise the practice of medical science as genuine, trustworthy, effective and respectable while making a stranger of the quack, which became a stock narrative.

Travelling quacks, who engaged in spectacle or exhibition to rouse attention and attract crowds,<sup>45</sup> or who plied their trade in public spaces like town halls, show-grounds and empty lots, were subject to an additional stock narrative describing their practice as profit-driven “entertainment” that used costumery and theatre to sell products.<sup>46</sup> By comparison, travelling medical practitioners gave “lectures” that provided “very wholesome and reasonable advice” and “rational” and “sound information”;<sup>47</sup> these respectably dressed men educated their audiences through the use of slides, diagrams and technologies of their profession, such as the oxy-hydrogen microscope.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, medical practitioners confined themselves to consulting with their patients away from the public eye in designated rooms (or offices) or through private house calls.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>41</sup>“Lovely Climes”, *Eastern Districts Chronicle*, 20 July 1883, 3.

<sup>42</sup>“Medicinal Food”, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 7 August 1883, 4; “Quack Medicines”, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 31 October 1893, 3.

<sup>43</sup>“The Quack of Quacks”, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 25 September 1906, 5.

<sup>44</sup>“Local and Other Notes”, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 27 September 1881, 2; “Quack Medicines”, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 31 October 1893, 3.

<sup>45</sup>“The Golden Chariot”, *Corowa Free Press*, 19 May 1903, 2.

<sup>46</sup>For example, “An Itinerant Quack”, *Morning Bulletin*, 22 November 1878, 2; “Tarasco the Healer”, *Tasmanian News*, 9 September 1902, 4; “An Extraordinary Quack”, *Leader* (Melbourne), 10 January 1880, 3.

<sup>47</sup>See, for example, “Medical Lecture”, *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 5 October 1895, 2; “Medical Lecture”, *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate*, 12 August 1893, 4; “Lecture on Smallpox”, *Brisbane Courier*, 24 June 1881, 3; “Children’s Hospital Lecture”, *South Australian Register*, 25 November 1880, 1.

<sup>48</sup>“Medical Science Lecture”, *Evening News* (Sydney), 15 March 1881, 3.

<sup>49</sup>For a greater discussion on the 1890s doctor–patient relationship, see Sally Wilde, “The Elephants in the Doctor–Patient Relationship: Patients’ Clinical Interactions and the Changing Surgical Landscape of the 1890s”, *Health and History* 9, no. 1 (2007): 2–27, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hah.2007.0020>.



## The Duflots: The French-Canadian Medical Wonders and Their Golden Chariot

One reported quack couple was Madame Joséphine Cariboni Duflot (formerly Enault) and her husband, Dr Paul Duflot. Newspapers reported on the “French-Canadian Medical Wonders” and their Golden Chariot<sup>50</sup>—a stage prop on which the pair made their entrance and performed their cures—who in 1887 travelled from Adelaide to Melbourne and then on to New Zealand.<sup>51</sup> They returned to Australia in September 1888 after the unexpected death of Madame Duflot’s son, Jules, which left her deeply distressed.<sup>52</sup> In January–March 1889, advertisements in the *Sydney Morning Herald* informed readers of their private consultations in Elizabeth Street, Sydney.<sup>53</sup> Between July 1889 and February 1890, the Golden Chariot appeared in Newcastle, Bathurst and Goulburn; during July to November, it was in Wagga Wagga and Grafton; in February–July 1891, it visited Maitland and Singleton; and in November–June 1892, it toured Armidale, Inverell and Glen Innes (collectively known as the New England area of New South Wales). The next instance of newspaper reportage is in May 1894 and concerns Paul Duflot’s consultation of patients in Launceston, Tasmania.<sup>54</sup> Madame Duflot had died earlier that year on 3 January 1894 in Prahran, Melbourne (of heart disease and complications).<sup>55</sup> The Duflots’ prior two-year absence may be explained by medical problems or retirement, as the death certificate shows that Madame Duflot was a housewife residing at the luxurious, newly built Arcade Club hotel.<sup>56</sup> The missing two-year period was also a time when the Duflots were subject to a number of legal challenges, which included petty session claims like false promise of cure and practising as a doctor in Victoria without registration, followed by the serious charge of manslaughter (found not guilty).<sup>57</sup>

Never staying in one community for long, quacks like the Duflots went from one place to another. On their departure, local newspaper advertisements would notify readers that their remedies were available at a local chemist. New England newspaper coverage of, and advertisements about, the Duflots and their Golden Chariot between 1891 and 1892 provides a useful case study of how quackery was framed by regional local journalists in this period and raises a series of questions: how did the press present the Duflots to the reader, what did it say about their quackery, and what was the community response to their presence?

<sup>50</sup>Self-advertising title. See, for example, “Come and See the French Medical Wonder”, advertisement, *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 20 November 1891, 8.

<sup>51</sup>For example, the *Auckland Star* reported that the Duflots had arrived in Dunedin, November 1887, travelled to Christchurch and then Auckland. “The Canadian Doctors: What They Are Doing”, *Auckland Star*, 20 June 1888, 8.

<sup>52</sup>Duflot’s 21-year-old son drowned at Lake Ellesmere near Christchurch. The incident left her “heartbroken”. Caroline Rance, “The Wonder-Worker Madame Enault”, *The Quack Doctor* (blog), 4 November 2023, <https://thequackdoctor.substack.com/p/the-wonder-worker-madame-enault>.

<sup>53</sup>For example, “Golden Chariot”, advertisement, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 January 1889, 13.

<sup>54</sup>“A Wonderful Culture”, advertisement, *Launceston Examiner*, 19 May 1894, 7.

<sup>55</sup>Josephine Duflot, death certificate, Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria. Registration Number: 3452/1894.

<sup>56</sup>Duflot death certificate.

<sup>57</sup>“Dr. and Madame Duflot”, *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 3 May 1892, 2; “Dr. [Paul] Duflot in Trouble”, *Bendigo Independent*, 26 April 1893, 2; “News and Notes”, *Tarrangower and Maldon, Newstead, Baringhup and Muckeleford Advertiser*, 5 July 1893, 2. In New South Wales, at the same time, there was no like Medical Practitioners Act that listed Medical Board certified physicians.

From 1880, Australian newspapers warned readers of Madame Dufлот's quackery, referring to her healing "done in true Dulcamara style",<sup>58</sup> as found in the 1880 syndicated news story "An Extraordinary Quack". Most telling about this news article was the author: the *British Medical Journal*. The newspapers reprinted the journal's 15 November 1879 paper, titled "An Extraordinary Empiric",<sup>59</sup> which perhaps signalled its sense of duty in forewarning the Australian colonies, including New Zealand, of the Dufлots and their likely appearance in colonial communities. The article cast doubt on Madame Dufлот's credibility as a female outsider both to the British colonies and to the medical profession at a time when women's access to university study and professional employment was limited. Madame Dufлот was a woman "who talks little or no English, but converses in French and Italian", and it was "alleged that Madame Enault ... has studied medicine in Paris, Belgium, and possesses the medical diplomas of these countries" but consults patients in public places and hotels and not private rooms and hospitals as those who have studied medicine do.<sup>60</sup> The journal had assigned Madame Dufлот the position of stranger who did not fit "the cognitive, moral or aesthetic map" of the English-speaking masculinist medical profession, thereby challenging its control over medical knowledge and interpretation and use of science. Madame Dufлот was rendered strange—in her medical practice and cures—as she had, as Bauman puts it, blurred "the boundary lines" of epistemological authority that "ought to be clearly seen".<sup>61</sup> The republication of the *British Medical Journal* article in nationwide newspapers highlights journalistic bias favouring medical science in opposition to quackery.

Tony S. Pensabene observes that, at the turn of the 20th century, "the professional status and power of the doctor ... was low, as evidenced by public questioning of the professional skill and expertise of the registered medical practitioner. Only after 1900 did ... professional status improve substantially".<sup>62</sup> The professionalisation and politicisation of the British Medical Association in 1832, and its Australian branches, influenced medical legislation, regulation and education, further ostracising quackery. Ayo Wahlberg observes this amounted to state-sanctioned "exclusion, subordination and limitation";<sup>63</sup> the monopolisation of medicine by medical practitioners thus rendered quackery as unqualified and illegitimate. Wahlberg and others argue that this hierarchisation of "good doctor, bad quack" continues today with, for example, medical practitioners dominating local boards of health, health administration and medical research.<sup>64</sup>

Milton Lewis explains that gains in medical knowledge about the relationship of bacteria and pathogens to communicable and chronic disease and improved sanitation reduced mortality and morbidity. Cell theory and cellular pathology, along with microbial germ theory, aided understanding of how diseases like anthrax and rabies

<sup>58</sup>"An Extraordinary Quack", *Evening News* (Sydney), 2 February 1880, 4. The same article and title was published in 25 other newspapers across the nation.

<sup>59</sup>"An Extraordinary Empiric", *The British Medical Journal* 2, no. 985 (15 November 1879): 786, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25252418>.

<sup>60</sup>"An Extraordinary Quack", *Evening News* (Sydney), 2 February 1880, 4.

<sup>61</sup>Bauman, "Making and Unmaking of Strangers", 1.

<sup>62</sup>T. S. Pensabene, *The Rise of The Medical Practitioner in Victoria* (Australian National University, 1980), 19.

<sup>63</sup>Ayo Wahlberg, "A Quackery with a Difference—New Medical Pluralism and the Problem of 'Dangerous Practitioners' in the United Kingdom", *Social Science and Medicine* 65, no. 11 (2007): 2308, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2007.07.024>.

<sup>64</sup>Martyr, *Paradise of Quacks*, 5, 8; Timothy Dyke and Warwick P. Anderson, "A History of Health and Medical Research in Australia", *The Medical Journal of Australia* 201, no. S1 (2014): S33–S36, <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja14.00347>.

are spread. Scientific advancements in medical knowledge also led to increased journalist and community respect for science and medicine practitioners.<sup>65</sup> Rapid developments in medical technologies like x-ray and electrocardiography (ECG), steam sterilisation (or autoclave) and microscopes, and the professionalisation of nursing enhanced the status of medical science. Newspapers played an important role in informing readers of such developments by framing medical science as a positive, superior and progressive practice.<sup>66</sup>

The quack response to the rapidly changing science of medicine, according to Dr A. J. Opie writing in the *Adelaide News* in 1914, was to produce and sell more nostrum bottles and thus expand business.<sup>67</sup> Doctors like Opie distinguished themselves by decrying quacks as strangers whose understandings, approaches and treatments were regarded as ineffective, dangerous and regressive. For instance, in New South Wales, in 1900, legislation was passed—after lobbying by the medical profession through its Medical Board—that restricted unqualified persons from practising medicine. Under this law, quacks became illegal practitioners who had “never gone through any proper course of study or passed any examination” and were thus a “threat to the public”.<sup>68</sup> Journalists continuously reported on “cruel, callous” quack medicine that failed to treat, charged exorbitant amounts of money and distributed dangerous medicines to trusting patients.<sup>69</sup>

## Advertising

A core element of newspapers was their advertising sections that enabled advertisers to reach local and far-afield audiences. Advertising provided a core component and significant source of income to 1890s newspapers, as is evident in the titles of New England’s *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*; *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*; and *Warialda Standard and Northern Districts’ Advertiser*. Robert Crawford shows that advertising provided communities with information about products, events and developments and could be both a “reliable source of information and profitable business expense”; advertisers were able to reach customers locally and beyond while “gaining an advantage over their competitors”.<sup>70</sup> The emergence of advertising agents meant that editors and proprietors could hand over the sales and administration of advertising to a speciality business, enabling them to focus on news reporting. By 1901, newspaper front pages were dominated by advertising—propelled by agent acumen to “buy space from newspapers on the wholesale plan and retail ... it at a profit”.<sup>71</sup> Advertising agents also offered customers access to advertising writers who

<sup>65</sup>Milton J. Lewis, “Medicine in Colonial Australia, 1788–1900”, *The Medical Journal of Australia* 201, no. S1 (2014): 55, <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja14.00153>.

<sup>66</sup>For a detailed discussion on medical profession politics between 1850 and 1901, see Milton Lewis and Roy MacLeod, “Medical Politics and the Professionalisation of Medicine in New South Wales, 1850–1901”, *Journal of Australian Studies* 12, no. 22 (1988): 69–82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443058809386972>.

<sup>67</sup>“Quacks and Quackery”, *Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser*, 3 July 1914, 2.

<sup>68</sup>NSW Legislative Council, “Medical Practitioners Bill, No. 2”, 4 October 1900, 3532; NSW House of Assembly, “Medical Practitioners Bill, No. 2”, 18 September 1900, 2978.

<sup>69</sup>“Cruel, Callous Quacks”, *Don Dorrigo Gazette and Guy Fawkes Advocate*, 5 February 1916, 3; “A ‘Quack’ in Trouble”, *Evening News*, 12 June 1889, 5.

<sup>70</sup>Robert Crawford, *But Wait, There’s More ... A History of Australia’s Advertising, 1900–2000* (Melbourne University Press, 2008), 6–7.

<sup>71</sup>Crawford, *But Wait, There’s More*, 9.

could create tailored advertisements for those wanting to “describe the advertised ware in such a way that the reader was then able to make an informed and rational decision to consume”.<sup>72</sup> A popular method was the use of bold type, font sizes and display layout to catch the reader’s attention; these fascinating techniques were commonly used in quack medicine advertisements—for instance, Dr Speer pills and Beecham’s Pills both used a mix of fonts, layouts, bold type, pictures and columns to create visual interest.<sup>73</sup>

Quack medicine proprietors were important clients of the advertising agent.<sup>74</sup> In *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, advertisements appeared for Dr and Madame Dufлот’s products and healing practices just before, during and after their Golden Chariot event in Armidale at which “teeth were drawn with lightning rapidity, eyes were operated upon, and a tumour was extracted ... People who had been cured testified and exhibited wounds that had been healed”.<sup>75</sup> There was even a “band in attendance”.<sup>76</sup>

Medical advertisements in newspapers told of life-changing cures, health and hope. Personal testimonials detailed the validity and legitimacy of the medicines along with the many qualifications of the doctors. Gillian Dyer asserts that quacks perfected the power of persuasion in advertising.<sup>77</sup> In a 1913 monograph, A. O. Richardson wrote that quack advertising was “the power of evil”, where newspaper proprietors were often unwittingly “used by sharpers whose only object is to transfer as much money as possible from the pockets of the papers’ readers to their own”.<sup>78</sup> Crawford argues, however, that pre-Federation newspaper consumers were in fact sagacious and willing to endure the advertisers’ messages in exchange for inexpensive and informative newspapers.<sup>79</sup> Dyer posits that although readers have learned to expect advertising in papers and can decide to ignore them, ads nonetheless exert some influence over how the content of newspapers is read, and that, for this reason, newspapers shouldn’t be regarded as entirely neutral or free from market pressure.<sup>80</sup>

## Case Study

Drawing on an online digital repository of newspapers held by the National Library of Australia’s Trove database, this article analyses the 1891–1892 reporting of Madame Dufлот’s Golden Chariot visit in New England newspapers. I searched all New England papers published over a four-year period from 1 January 1889 to 31 December 1893 using the terms “Golden Chariot” and “Madame”. The newspapers included in the search were *The Walcha Witness and Vernon County Record*; *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*; *The Armidale Chronicle*; *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*; *The Inverell Argus*; *The Inverell Times*; *Boggy Camp Tingha*

<sup>72</sup>Crawford, *But Wait, There’s More*, 11.

<sup>73</sup>See *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 1 January 1895, 7.

<sup>74</sup>Robert Crawford, “Advertising”, Dictionary of Sydney, State Library of New South Wales, 2008, <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/advertising>.

<sup>75</sup>“The Golden Chariot”, *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 27 November 1891, 5.

<sup>76</sup>“Come and See the French Medical Wonder”, *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 20 November 1891, 8.

<sup>77</sup>Gillian Dyer, *Advertising as Communication* (Routledge, 1992), 28.

<sup>78</sup>A. O. Richardson, *The Power of Advertising* (Lambert Publishing Co., 1913), 73.

<sup>79</sup>Crawford, *But Wait, There’s More*, 8.

<sup>80</sup>Dyer, *Advertising as Communication*, 65.

and Bora Creek; and *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*. The initial search of the 8 newspapers yielded 13 items in *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, including news stories and advertisements, and 1 news item in the *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*. A qualitative data analysis followed, where every article was read and classified according to the search terms. A list was then generated of news frames and framing devices.

Of the newspapers, it was the municipal *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser* that told in the advertising columns of the forthcoming arrival, presence and departure of the Golden Chariot “show” and available consultations with Madame Duflot and her husband, Dr Paul Duflot, from November 1891 to January 1892, and of their time in Inverell from April to June 1892. News stories reported on the show and its popularity. In contrast, coverage in the *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser* was minimal, with one advertisement informing of the Duflots’ time in Glen Innes on 7 June 1892. Perhaps the Duflots found the community preferred local apothecaries and providers of patent medicines like the local chemist, or the editor stopped further advertising, or was apathetic, or sided with the practice of medical science. Unlike Sydney’s *Evening News*, the New England newspapers did not provide detailed accounts of the Golden Chariot, suggesting that it may not have been as glamorous as depicted in the 1880 news article, or that the papers may have preferred to focus on the healing claims of the Duflots.

Quack medicine filled the advertising sections of *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*; *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*; and *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*. Items marketed included mail-order pills, mixtures, tonics and in-person consultations to buy medical aids. Of particular interest was the competitiveness of the quack market, where advertisements sought to differentiate and sway consumer interest toward their product.<sup>81</sup> A common feature was repeat advertising, which is designed to promote the product by improving salience and creating a sense of reader familiarity or consumer recall. For instance, in *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, Dr Llewellyn’s mail-order consultations appeared 62 times and Big G’s Cure Yourself medicine 38 times in the years 1889–1893. This marketing approach and consistent quack advertising suggest that the advertising agents and quacks knew its effectiveness in translating into sales. While Crawford may be correct in saying that newspaper buyers were sagacious and willing to endure the advertiser’s messages for a cheaper newspaper,<sup>82</sup> this emphasis on consumer agency overlooks advertising marketing tactics that aim to internalise the product and its message.

A decade before the Duflots arrived in Glen Innes and the New England area, they were the subject of a warning in an 1880 syndicated news item from the *British Medical Journal*. The language of the title, “An Extraordinary Quack”,<sup>83</sup> framed the Duflots as charlatans and reproduced a stock narrative pitting medical science against quackery, and familiar and trusted doctors against dubious foreign ones. Interestingly, the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser* published the 1880

<sup>81</sup>For example, “Do You Suffer”, advertisement, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 26 September 1893, 3.

<sup>82</sup>Crawford, *But Wait, There’s More*, 8.

<sup>83</sup>“An Extraordinary Quack”, *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*, 14 February 1880, 3.

article at the time,<sup>84</sup> but the *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser* and *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser* did not.

A decade after the *British Medical Journal* article's publication, the Golden Chariot and Madame Enault/Duflot appeared in New England. *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, in an advertorial published on 17 November 1891, told readers that the Golden Chariot and the Duflots had arrived and appeared in Armidale. Before a "great crowd assembled to witness the clever operations ... a tumour was extracted from the head of a well-known resident. People who had been cured testified and exhibited wounds that had been healed".<sup>85</sup> After successive appearances, the Duflots remained in Armidale, attending to their bustling private practice at the Imperial Hotel.<sup>86</sup> In April, the Duflots and their Golden Chariot left Armidale for Inverell. Their time in Inverell was short compared with Armidale, some seven weeks. Their departure notice was equally short—announced in a single-sentence news notice stating they had left Inverell on 30 May 1892.<sup>87</sup> The news reporting corresponded with advertisements appearing in the same newspaper editions.

The motivation of New Journalism to generate interest saw articles on quacks primed with narratives of wonder, drama and popularity through to sarcasm, belittling and mockery. In 1892, the Duflots were unsuccessfully prosecuted for a breach of promise in curing Naomi Giddings, a widow, of a breast lump.<sup>88</sup> In an exposé, *The Armidale Express and New England Advertiser* reported that the Tamworth Petty Debts Court had heard and dismissed the case. The Duflots, it was claimed, were "not permanent residents", unlike local doctors, and had "no medical skill and ... no right to practice the [medical] profession".<sup>89</sup> Although Giddings had paid the Duflots £8 for consultation and purchased lotion, the treatment had failed to eradicate the lump.

The New England newspapers took to publishing successful court cases to educate the reader on the fraudulent nature of quack-medicine ingredients and thus frame the quack as a parasite on their wallets, taking advantage of their trustworthiness and gullibility. *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser* did the same when the Duflots were no longer in the community, noting, for example, that Duflot, who had "styled" himself a doctor in advertisements and cultivated "a most lucrative business", was "fortunate in having previously escaped prosecution".<sup>90</sup> As figures that encapsulated Bauman's "stranger", quacks were portrayed by the papers as transient outsiders and excluded from the title of doctor, which had narrowed in meaning to refer only to medical practitioners with acceptable qualifications. The stock narrative producing an opposition between quacks and doctors, where quacks were framed as entertainers rather than serious healers, worked to further normalise and entrench the legitimacy of scientific medicine.

Taken as a whole, the comprehensive newspaper coverage evidences an editorial preference for the practices of medical science over quackery, particularly in its references to medical developments from scientific sources such as the *British Medical Journal* and

<sup>84</sup>"An Extraordinary Quack", *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*, 14 February 1880, 3.

<sup>85</sup>"The Golden Chariot", *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 27 November 1891, 5.

<sup>86</sup>"The Golden Chariot", *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 27 November 1891, 5.

<sup>87</sup>"Inverell", *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 3 June 1892, 4.

<sup>88</sup>"Dr. And Madame Duflot", *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 9 May 1892, 7.

<sup>89</sup>"Dr. And Madame Duflot", *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 9 May 1892, 7.

<sup>90</sup>"Dr. Duflot", *Armidale and New England General Advertiser*, 9 May 1893, 7.



*New York Medical Journal*.<sup>91</sup> By framing diseases and symptoms in medical-science nomenclature (where, for instance, “scarlatina” is used in favour of its common name “scarlet fever”),<sup>92</sup> journalists sought to distinguish proper medicine from quackery’s lack of discernment and reassure the reader as to the sagacity of medical science. The newspaper reportage also conformed to D’Angelo’s proposition that news frames import stock narratives, or, in Gilliam and Iyengar’s terminology, a “script” of repeated and reinforced stereotypes.<sup>93</sup> For example, the *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser* adopted a tone of scientific neutrality in “warning all persons to beware of quacks and quack medicines” and educating the public about the dangers of quackery.<sup>94</sup> It also reported on the precision with which medically trained doctors diagnose disease and discussed the importance of caring for the ill within the local community.<sup>95</sup>

It was clear that quacks were framed by the local papers as strangers in the New England area. An exception was *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, which reported public excitement about the visiting Duflots, who were greeted with “great” and “besieging” crowds at their Golden Chariot show.<sup>96</sup> Sales of quack medicine, including consultations and advertising, likewise reflected public demand. Quackery was profitable and thriving in the 1890s: the public, duped or not, demanded the Duflots’ products and advice. The newspapers carried significant quack-medicine advertising for mail orders and local chemist stockists.<sup>97</sup> Given that this advertising provided income for the newspapers, the gusto with which they negatively framed quacks in their columns was hypocritical. Newspaper editors and journalists might have claimed a separation between advertising, which was independently filled by the agent, and their own text, but it was a hard narrative to uphold, as advertising and the news had to be read together.

The association of quackery with strangerhood is, as Martyr suggests, evident in the newspaper reporting of foreign quacks speaking languages other than English; ethnic and racial difference made quacks more suspect and attracted attention.<sup>98</sup> In strongly homogeneous Anglo communities like New England, accented English—even among White Europeans—marked the speaker as ethnically other. *The Armidale and New England General Advertiser*, for instance, emphasised that Madame Duflot was a woman “who speaks French with a thorough Parisian accent, and for whom Dr. Duflot interprets”.<sup>99</sup> Perhaps to make themselves more ethnically acceptable, the Duflots advertised themselves as French-Canadian healers; but the newspapers challenged their claim to insist they were “posing as” such.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>91</sup>For example, “Everybody’s Medical Duty”, *Armidale and New England General Advertiser*, 27 September 1892, 7.

<sup>92</sup>For example, “Best Climate for Pulmonary Disease”, *Armidale and New England General Advertiser*, 3 November 1893, 6.

<sup>93</sup>D’Angelo, “Framing”, 634–49; Gilliam and Iyengar, “Prime Suspects”, 560.

<sup>94</sup>“Quack Medicines”, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 31 October 1893, 3.

<sup>95</sup>For example, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 31 October 1893, 3; “Glen Innes Hospital”, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 25 August 1891, 5.

<sup>96</sup>“News of the Day”, *Armidale and New England General Advertiser*, 27 November 1891, 5; “News of the Day”, *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 15 April 1892, 4.

<sup>97</sup>For example, “Holloway’s Pills”, advertisement, *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 2 December 1890, 3.

<sup>98</sup>Martyr, *Paradise of Quacks*, 70–79.

<sup>99</sup>“News of the Day”, *Armidale and New England General Advertiser*, 17 November 1891, 5.

<sup>100</sup>“Items of Interest”, *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 10 January 1894, 1; “General News”, *Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 13 January 1894, 15.



On the other hand, ethnic exoticism could work in the quack's favour. Marketing difference and making foreignness appealing for competitive advantage were popular strategies among quacks, as with "the celebrated" Professor Rosenthal,<sup>101</sup> a German oculist and aurist who advertised his training in Berlin, Vienna, Paris and London.<sup>102</sup> The Duflots' ethnic difference attracted a curious public, even though the pair visited New England at a time when the ideology of the White Australia policy meant that even Europeans could still be regarded as racially foreign. Visiting quacks could capitalise on their exotic origins, even as that foreignness became the basis of their strangerhood. The Duflots were well-travelled, knew to advertise and knew their market, and they obviously saw value in referring to themselves as French-Canadian.

Travelling strangers, as opposed to community doctors, could exploit people without consequence because they could move on; and they were depicted by newspapers as more likely to have a financial interest than a noble one, which distinguished them from the "legitimate" practitioners, for whom the virtue of helping people defined their profession.<sup>103</sup> The qualifications and wealth that quacks attained were viewed with suspicion and framed as fraudulently acquired.<sup>104</sup> For example, the *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser* reported that "Beaney", a high-profile Melbourne quack, had a professional income of £15,000 a year and that "a certain Sydney quack" boasted £150,000<sup>105</sup>—an enormous figure considering the basic wage, when first introduced in 1907, was £2 2s. per week.<sup>106</sup> The Duflots escaped a like response in the newspapers but if investigated would have been subject to like ire as in the early 1890s, they resided at the grand and prestigious Palace Hotel in Prahan, Victoria, described at the time as "one of the largest and most perfect hotels in the world ... furnished and fitted throughout by a lavish hand, and everything that money can procure".<sup>107</sup>

Madame and Paul Duflot's medical qualifications were also brought into question. *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser* reported that Paul Duflot "produced certificates which he had obtained in Belgium and Pennsylvania ... but these were of little value" in attaining medical practitioner registration.<sup>108</sup> Practitioners of scientific medicine were able to establish dominance through the formation of professional bodies, such as medical boards and associations, and by preventing access to registration to those who had trained outside the United Kingdom or Australia, which served to marginalise quack medicine. The New England newspaper reportage mimicked this hierarchy in stock narratives that valorised medical science and established strangerhood narratives about quacks despite community support for them, as was evidenced in reports of their popularity in *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*.

Quackery created a financial conundrum for New England newspapers. On the one hand, journalists were clearly averse to quackery in promoting the credibility of

<sup>101</sup>"Special Notice. The Sight Preserved", advertisement, *Pastoral Times* (Deniliquin), 15 February 1873, 3.

<sup>102</sup>"Special Notice", advertisement, *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*, 28 November 1871, 3.

<sup>103</sup>For a larger discussion on this see Hannah Forsyth, *Virtue Capitalists: The Rise and Fall of the Professional Class in the Anglophone World 1980–2008* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), chap. 3.

<sup>104</sup>For example, "Medical Quacks", *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 15 March 1892, 2.

<sup>105</sup>"General Intelligence", *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 15 February 1881, 4; "Cuttings from the 'Sydney Bulletin'", *Victorian Express* (Geraldton), 21 April 1893, 4.

<sup>106</sup>"What It Used to Cost", State Library Victoria, accessed 10 December 2024, <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/whatitcost/basicwage>.

<sup>107</sup>Palace Hotel, *Palace Hotel—Guide to Melbourne* (Melbourne, 1889), 12–13.

<sup>108</sup>"Dr. Duflot", *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 9 May 1893, 7.

medical science and its progress, success and improvement of public health; but on the other, the revenue from quack advertising was a significant source of income. And although remedies like those sold by quacks may have been for sale in local chemists, the local purveyors were not subjected to the same editorial scrutiny. This may be due to a fear of alienating members in the community as well as a mistrust of unfamiliar treatments proffered by strangers with no tangible investment in the communities they moved through. Henry Guy Mallam, “Chemist, Druggist, Dentist, Stationer, Seedsman and News Agent” who advertised “physicians’ prescriptions and Family Recipes faithfully and accurately dispensed”,<sup>109</sup> was a long-standing, well-connected and successful early British settler (1864) of Armidale.<sup>110</sup> Arthur James Dodd established Glen Innes’s first chemist in 1873. Eve Chappell, writing in 2018 on Dodd’s business, stated that he dispensed “doctor’s prescriptions ... [and] his own formula medicines” for which he became famous and “received requests from afar”.<sup>111</sup> He was also the oldest businessman in the town and probably the oldest practising pharmacist in New South Wales, as well as the oldest living member of many community organisations.<sup>112</sup> Mallam and Dodd, of British heritage, reflected their community’s demography: White, Christian and having put roots down in the community. These features distinguished them from the quack.

## Conclusion

This study contributes to scholarly knowledge as a first exploration of the nexus of pre-Federation New England local newspapers and quack medicine. I adopted a framing paradigm to conduct a detailed analysis of the challenges Federation newspapers, particularly those from New England, faced when handling the issue of quacks and quackery. Newspapers were caught in a bind in that they advertised quack medicine and depended on the revenue it provided them at the same time that they advanced the legitimacy of medical science and the progress it was making in individual and community health. The medical profession was keen to denounce the quack and relied on journalists and newspapers to do the same. New England newspapers provide evidence of this hypocrisy: they were prominent advertisers of quacks and their remedies—including the Duflots’ Golden Chariot public appearances and private consultations—and reported on their popularity while simultaneously running stories that demonised their practice and heroised medical science. In all probability, the newspapers believed they were protecting their communities (thus reflecting newspaper personalities and mottos) by educating the reader about the dangers of quacks, but evidently, quacks and quackery retained their popularity, as evident in the advertising and publicity around the Duflots’ New England tour. Above all, the tenor of the reportage highlighted a lack of acknowledgement of, and respect for, divergent beliefs and views about health and illness. The profit imperative also meant that newspapers, as businesses, sought revenue from any source.

Last, the presence of community chemists who also stocked quack remedies reflected a local conflict. Newspapers did not challenge the community chemist who produced their

<sup>109</sup>“H. H. Mallam”, advertisement, *Armidale and New England General Advertiser*, 15 January 1889, 1.

<sup>110</sup>John Ferry, *Colonial Armidale* (University of Queensland Press, 1999), 175–76, 208.

<sup>111</sup>Eve Chappell, “Healthy Start for Chemist”, *Glen Innes Examiner*, 27 September 2018.

<sup>112</sup>“Oldest Chemist Dead”, *Sun* (Sydney), 27 November 1923, 6.

own remedies and stocked quack ones, as they differed from the transient and foreign-speaking quack at a time when support for a White Australia was increasing. Nonetheless, the popularity of the visiting quack and the purchases of their medicines in person, through chemists and by mail order, suggests that local communities were willing to explore alternative treatments in spite of the strong support for medical science in newspaper editorials. People exercised personal autonomy, human agency and control over their healthcare decisions in consulting quacks even as they read of medical-science developments in their local newspaper.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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