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Masters in Media Studies: Comparative Literature and Literary Theory

Contained Behind Glass Walls:

The Exclusion and the Exposure of the Madman

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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

When I was still in my teens I met this girl who was incredibly loud and outgoing. She said things that I thought and did all the things I thought of doing, but always talked myself out of. She made friends very quickly and was always the center of attention. She made me laugh with her blunt and rash comments that we were all thinking, but never said. I remember someone questioned her sanity once and asked why she was like that. I thought they just did not understand her. But someone else explained to me that she had been in a car accident and had damaged a part in her brain that thought things through, her "censorship area" as they called it. And that was enough of an explanation. People understood and did not judge, and she went on saying whatever came to her mind, without ever so much as blushing up her cheeks. This was when I realized that social deviance was deemed acceptable if you had a medically explained reason for why you did what you did, and that the ideas of "social deviance" and "madness" can be connected. I became aware that social acceptance played an important part in the concept of insanity. This taught me that madness is not an absolute concept, but a relative one. I believe that if we can look at how societies in the past looked at the insane that maybe we can figure out why we see them the way we do today. I wonder if we are headed in a direction that will allow acceptance or if those with mental disabilities are still being ostracized and removed from society. With this question in mind I will embark on a study of who the figure of the fool or the 'madman' (I tend to use the figures interchangeably throughout this paper) once was and if that image was the same as it is now.

I hope that the light I can shed on who this figure is can reveal both negative and positive aspects in order to escape any dichotomy between sanity and madness. Michel Foucault's study on madness has been to illustrate that madness is an entirely relative concept. On the one hand, the 'madman' can be seen as a villain who desires to break down the walls and rebel against his expectations to entertain, and on the other hand he is a man who is confined by the culture surrounding him, that has found a way to be closer

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to a level of 'truth' and understanding, but simply lacks the words to explain himself. I want to see if who he was in the time of Shakespeare, has changed to who he was when Michel Foucault examined him, and more importantly if he changed into what we see now. I will be looking at two films, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and *The Dark Knight*. I will focus on the figure of the Shakespearian Fool, because his work offers a great entry to a 'positive' evaluation of the madman as not just 'mad'. In this thesis I will address the re-emergence of this fool in the entirely different context than Foucault. My actual aim is to examine how this 'Shakespearian Fool' manifests itself in a much more modern fashion: First on the basis of a hugely popular film in which the 'madman' has been confined into an institution (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest)*; and second on the basis of a tremendously popular film in which the 'madman' roams around freely (*The Dark Knight*). The popularity of these films is an indication that the madness represented in the two movies, has apparently struck a chord among a great audience[1]. Inspired by Foucault's archaeological endeavor in his pursuit to find moments in time when these characteristics can be observed, I aim to read the two films in tandem; the one with a focus upon a 'madman' who is confined in an institution (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest)*; and the other where the 'madman' is immersed in an already corrupt society.

Chapter 1

1.1. Discourse, Structures, and Archeology

In his inaugural lecture, entitled *L'ordre du discours* [*The Order of Discourse*] (1970), Michel Foucault discusses the subject of logophobia, that is, the fear of words. Foucault believes that discourse is required to mediate between words and things and that one should not fear a 'free discussion of things'. He finds a solution for this with discourse. "In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous,

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[1] Imdb.com rates *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* at a 8.8/10, and *The Dark Knight* at a 9.0/10.

awesome materiality" (Foucault, *The Order of Discourse*, p. 52). Institutions allow for a discourse that can both honor and disarm logophobia. Furthermore, he characterizes Discourse as a "delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixings of norms for the elaboration of concepts or theories" (*Discipline and Punishment,* p. 199). Discourse is what allows us to use words to discuss things. It is an amalgam of preconceived notions, but with the proviso that these notions can fluctuate, can change over times, and that enables us to look at and understand different things in different times. With discourse we are able to put things into perspective and find where they fit and do not fit into a determined mindset, and a determined period of time. What those before us have said should be a way to understand a pattern, in order to understand a phenomenon one has to have some understanding of the discourse at a given time.

> "Discourse are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 100-1)

In *Madness and Civilization* Michel Foucault did an extensive amount of research in tracking the movement of madness through society from the classical period to the 19th century. He manages to find and use the cultural-historical connection between 'social deviance' and 'madness'. To respect madness is not to interpret it as the involuntary and inevitable accident of disease, but to recognize this lower limit of human truth, a limit not accidental but essential " (Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, p. 81).

Thanks to his introduction of the concept of discourse Foucault was able to examine the relationship of power to madness and insanity through the appearances of institutions. This is where I will be focusing the first part of this thesis, on the institutions. Foucault did the same. I intend on following his work and seeing if the same exclusion of the

insane is still happening in our society today, and what this segregation looks like.

The institutions that he discusses were made possible after the elimination of leprosy. They were initially intended to separate the sick from the rest of the healthy society, and you will notice later on in this thesis, that they still have a similar function. This separation allowed society to not be subject to the disease and not have to interact in any way with the sick, but it also kept the sick confined to one place, dividing the productive from the unproductive and eventually society, from the "outsiders". Society would no longer include the sick, but only be formed by the healthy and productive. Everyone that was a part of society then was contributing to the improvement and betterment of the society that they lived in. Those who were a part of society were better, which in turn, would make society better and better. This was done, simply, by eliminating those who made it worse. This elimination of leprosy can be registered in Paris, where they had the two largest 'leprosariums': Saint-Germain and Saint-Lazare. By the fifteenth century they were empty, and "in the next century Saint-Germain became a reformatory for young criminals" (Foucault, p. 4). After the elimination of leprosy by excluding those infected and sending them to separate institution, these institutions were, initially, controlled by the military, but twenty years later the houses were "assigned to other hospitals and welfare establishments" (Foucault, p. 5).

Foucault describes discourse as "not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is a struggle" (Foucault, *The Order of Discourse,* p. 211). The standards of reason and madness can, of course, vary from one era and society to another. This is why he does not use analysis, which is continuous, but discourse, which allows for gaps and discontinuities, as it is explaining one thing in relation to another. So why are we looking at discourse and archeology in a discussion about madness? Discourse discusses patterns that are observed in relation to structures and are only made possible by the connection of knowledge and power. These relationships allow one to better understand how a certain society worked, and how people, in that time and place, viewed the world, like for example, what language they used to describe something.

The discussion we are having is what makes the study of madness possible. Discourse means to connect language, social institutions, subjectivity, language and power through

the search for a truth. This truth is thought to be the goal of discussing one thing in relation to several others. Like for example, madness can be discussed in relation to the evolution of the institutions that looked to hold the mad. Furthermore, Foucault uses the archaeological method to discuss madness in relation to the institutions. This method takes an approach to history in relation to something else. For him archaeology:

> "does not imply the search for a beginning; it does not relate to geological excavation. It designates the general theme of a description that questions the already-said at the level of its existence, of the enunciative function that operates within it, of the discursive formation, and the general archive system to which it belongs. Archaeology describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive" (Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 131)

Why is the Archeology of discourse so important for this paper? In other words, this quote by Foucault, says that everything is relative to something else, and when looking at a time and place you can take these decisive structures, the power structures, and find a concept in relation to them. What Foucault did was open up room for a discussion on madness and how it was perceived in a society at a certain period in time. Carla Yanni, in her book *The Architecture of Madness: Insane Asylums in the United States*, says that "Michel Foucault drew attention to the dialectical nature of reason and madness, stating that each was defined in terms of the other" (p. 10). One of the most important things that this way of thinking brought us was this ability to discuss things in relation to others. Things could be determined by contrast and comparison to one another. This contrast will flow through the entire thesis, as it is this relationship that we will contantly be looking at. Yanni continues by saying "In sympathy with Foucault, most historians, including this one, agree that insanity exists in a dialectical relationship between reason and unreason, and that it is more than a medical disease marked by physiological signs that lead to a clear diagnoses" (p. 10). Her study on the structures and the insane asylums that held the sick and mentally unwell is helpful for us because it demonstrates how a structure can influence and at the same time define how, in this case, madness was being perceived at the time. She says that what Foucault's study demonstrated how "The age of reason, […]

was not at all reasonable, but was rather a fierce regime of oppression that subjected those who had their reason to a massive confinement based on trumped-up moral grounds" (p. 10). Although Yanni believed much of the conceived notions of madness by Foucault were, at times, in his own imagination, she believed, as did many other scholars, that was Foucault's discussion did do was force them to look for other answers and ask new questions.

Continuing on with the idea that comes from the Middle Ages, the idea that language is used to describe something in comparison to something else in order to find the truth, the mad person was venerated and considered to be powerful and closer to God. They were thought to have a superior knowledge of things. It was believed that the closer you got to the truth, the madder you could get. This demonstrated the inability to achieve the ultimate truth because once you went mad with the knowledge the madness would remove your ability to define it and speak it in terms of reason for others to understand. Though during the Renaissance, discourses, or the language used to discuss madness changed. Reason and unreason became opposing forces and the madman was ostracized from society, and this is what we will be focusing on.

If you look at the 17th century, the language changed again. It became a part of medical and legal discourse, as a disease that required a cure. Unfortunately, this also contributed to even further separation of the madman from society. The term "mad" was in constant transition. At times it was a positive word and went hand in hand with passion and enlightenment, and at other times it was associated to savagery and a lack of control and reason. This fluctuation is observed thanks to discourse, piecing together meanings through recounts of a time and place. "[This] approach inspired many historically minded authors to study insanity in detail, with an eye toward its shifting and socially constructed meanings" (Yanni, p. 10). Because of its constant change we can land on a time and a place and find madness as positive, and another time and place and find it is negative. Foucault strongly believed that through discourse we could arrive at a conditional Truth. For Foucault the power structures he studies and the discourse he uses are decisive in the determination and understanding of something, in this case the concept of "madness". Part of its nature is to include gaps and shifts, it is not meant to be linear, but relative. To

conduct a discursive analysis one must be engaged in a study of relations that emerge and shift and require something to interact with. It is interactive and communicative. Discourse would presume that the definitions you are searching for have to have several elements and cannot be determined on their own, but in comparison and relation to something else. For example, madness can be presumed to have a negative connotation and to be associated to social deviance, if we look at the structure of the prisons, where madmen were put in the same cells as criminals. But, if we find a structure more like a hospital, where madmen are put in to find a cure, then madness is not seen as negative, but as an illness that can be cured or controlled. By looking at the structures that contain them, we can determine how society viewed the madman, as someone who was to be condemned and treated like a criminal, or as someone who was to be understood and fixed. We will be doing this with the help of two films, to show two different kinds of criminality.

There are, of course, many difficulties in defining a thing such as madness, which is why Foucault believes that discourse is the best way to understand madness, by discussing it. It does not search to define it, but through its relationships with power and institutions, to figure out how it is being viewed by society. It is easier to define madness in relation to many other things, as opposed to survive on its own terms. In Foucault's study of madness, he takes into account several socioeconomic factors, and looks at the role of power within a certain society and how they excluded, confined, looked to discipline, and correct this condition. Discourse helps to communicate how each of these related to each other. In result of this, we are only able to understand how society reacted to the problem of madness at different points within the discourse. This is not a form of study that tracks social progress, but finds moments in time and relates one thing to another, in this case, institutions of power to madness and insanity.

1.1.1   Archeology of Discourse

Foucault demonstrates how different periods can reveal different definitions of a concept. In the case of madness, there is a period when the madmen are seen as criminals, but there is also a period when they are seen as the ones with the closest knowledge of "truths". Wanda Strauven, in her article 'Media Archaeology: Where Film History, Media Art, and New Media (Can) Meet', Wanda Strauven shows how Foucault's project can be seen as an attempt "to capture madness as an object of knowledge through time, or rather how madness, as an object of knowledge, is constituted differently in different times, in order to understand the conditions of (and reasons for) exclusion of mad people" (p. 60). It is in relation to the structures that are present in society that we can look at these changes. Foucault used letters, and historical gatherings of information to find these structures and interpret madness in relation to them. In the period of naturalism, in the 19th century, photography became quite popular with the idea that what was seen on the exterior was enough to determine who the person was. The importance was put on the outward appearance; one could catalogue people, and thus distinguish them by what they were and what they were not, if they were sane, or insane. The arrival of this medium (photography) had a direct impact on madness and how it was perceived. Photography predominantly was put to 'scientific' ends, as a means to classify people and their concomitant diseases, to define the madmen and the criminal minds, solely on the basis of their exterior.

When cinema arrived on scene at the turn of the century, it was not so much taken as a medium for science, as photography had been, but rather as a 'fairground attraction': it was considered fit, if we restrict ourselves to the early experiments by the French pioneering director Georges Mélies, for impossible travels (to the moon), for fairy tales, and magic tricks – of pumpkins turning into a coach (in Cinderella). And within a decade of its existence, film would turn into a 'storytelling machine', with more of a focus upon (fictional) narratives about madmen than the classificatory focus that had characterized photography. So what does film show us about the progression of the understanding of madness? If photography could be used to clearly define madmen and the criminal minds, based solely on their exterior, than there is a possibility that cinema can do the opposite. I

am mainly preoccupying myself with two films that blur and complicate the distinction between one or the other.

This chapter will focus on the idea of exclusion that is represented in films, and the blurring of these boundaries and of the labels forced upon someone, and the second chapter will demonstrate the exposure of madness through film. The exclusion of the madmen, by putting him in an asylum and taking him out of society, and his exposure, our search to understand his voice and the message of his 'truth'. The asylums and institutions both excluded madmen from society, and at the same time exposed them as "others", as someone different, and drew attention to who was in each category, productive, or unproductive. It is in the absence of sanity, of reason, of stability, and so on that madness seems to find its existence. "Thus, in order for the big centres of internment to be opened at the end of the seventeenth century, it was necessary that a certain knowledge of madness be opposed to non-madness, of order to disorder, and it's this knowledge that I wanted to investigate" (Foucault 200: 261-2).

As an archaeological approach will attest to, many things and mentalities, end up repeating themselves just with different words to describe them. Institutions became asylums, medical centers, group homes, halfway houses, although these structures present many similarities, they go under different names, and the differences are what we are going to take a look at. The new "patients" may not have been treated like animals, but if they had a seizure, or an episode of violence, they were locked up and changed just like an animal would be. Madness became a medical illness, which gave way to attempting to find a cure, but there were times when that cure included suppressing feelings and numbing the patient through drugs and different cocktails of medication, hypnotherapy, and even a complete change to their character and personality, a lobotomy. Inspired by Foucault's archaeological approach I aim to discuss madness in a two films, which go to great lengths to complicate preconceived ideas about a clear-cut division between common sense and insanity. He is studying how madness was being viewed by the society. Film can help us to see the same thing. It is important to note that I am not taking a medical approach to understanding this, but through film I am demonstrating what is being seen, what the audiences are being exposed to while observing madness. The accuracies may or may not be on point, but merely what films state to be happening,

either as a gimmick or as a representation of madness in cinema.[2]

1.2. Structures of Madness

In order to illustrate how discourse functions, we are going to take a look at two different periods that reflect the positive and negative views on madness in the society they affected. With the disappearance of Leprosy, thanks to the isolation from the rest of society, those who were infected died or healed away from the healthy, but the structures that retained them still remained after the 17th century.

> "Once leprosy had gone, and the figure of the leper was no more than a distant memory, these structures still remained. The game of exclusion would still be played again, often in these same places, in an oddly similar fashion two or three centuries later. The role of the leper was to be played by the poor and by the vagrant, by prisoners and by the 'alienated', and the sort of salvation at stake for both parties is the matter of this study" (*History of Madness,* Foucault).

Even with the elimination of leprosy these structures could still be used to distance the unproductive from the productive. Those who were seen as idle were all put into confinement. There was no discrimination between criminals, cripples, or madmen. They are all ostracized in the same way because they are deemed equally as useless. One of the solutions to the existence of idle and ill members of society was to separate them from those who were succeeding in contributing to the well-being and progression of the society you live in. "Something new appears in the imaginary landscape of the Renaissance; soon it will occupy a privileged there: the Ship of Fools, a strange 'drunken boat'…" (Foucault, p. 7) The *Narrenschiff* is the name of the ship that actually existed. They held a cargo of the insane and they were sent on their merry way, anywhere, as long as it was far from shore, and from society. Foucault is looking at the structure of art, at

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[2] Consistencies with Foucault's work, and the centuries he studied will appear, and that is the cyclical nature of his findings, but the centuries that are being depicted in film are the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century.

this painting from the renaissance, and interpreting what people of the time would have been thinking about madness. This is what I will be doing with the two films I will be introducing. Foucault makes several educated guesses as to what they actually meant. "One might suppose it was a general means of extradition by which municipalities sent wandering madmen out of their own jurisdiction; a hypothesis which will not in itself account for the facts, since certain madmen, even before special houses were built for them, were admitted to hospitals and cared for as such" (Foucault, p. 9). It was difficult to determine because the documentation of these ships were always equally unspecific and it was unclear as to what their purpose may have been. Furthermore he says that "it is possible that these ships of fools, which haunted the imagination of the entire early Renaissance, were pilgrimage boats, highly symbolic cargoes of madmen in search of their reason" (Foucault, p. 9).

Two things can be taken from this statement, one is that there is already a separation of unreason and reason, since the madman is searching for reason, he must not already be in possession of it. Number two is the word "pilgrimage", as in a quest for something higher, giving the possibility that this madness is what made them want to go in search of something more, which brings us back to the Unconditional Truth that he had mentioned before. There are innumerous amounts of possibilities with this image, but one that is overwhelming is the exclusion and separation of the madman, whether by choice or by force, madmen were grouped together away from non-madmen, away from the sane. "Interest in cure and in exclusion coincide: […] – a shrine that became a ward, a holy land where madness hoped for deliverance, but where man enacted, according to old themes, a sort of ritual division" (Foucault, p. 10). With the Renaissance came the romantic notion that madmen knew more than the normal men. It was thought that the darkness that they experienced brought them closer to truth and knowledge, things that a sane person just could not see in its entirety. Madness was much more a result of enlightenment than as a malady or illness. "Madness and the madman become major figures in their ambiguity: menace and mockery, the dizzying unreason of the world, and the feeble ridicule of men" (Foucault, p. 13). Art and Literature continued to toy with the concept of madness and with this romanticism also came an idea of desperation, weakness, and insecurities quickly became tide-up in insanity. Shakespeare's plays

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brought both a fool that knew too much [" he stands center stage as the guardian of truth" (Foucault, p. 14)], the entertainer and the comic, ["He speaks love to lovers, the truth of life to the young, the middling reality of things to be proud, to the insolent, and to the liars" (Foucault, p. 14)]. Later I will bring this fool up again when mentioning Shakespeare and his influence on madness being portrayed on stage for entertainment. We will look very closely at his work to demonstrate the relationship between the structure of an institution and the stage.

Alongside this fool or court-jester there was also a leading man who would slowly lose his mind, act desperately, and succumb to tragedy as a direct result. The fool was the character that was closest to the truth, and very often he spoke just that. In a twist of irony he was also the one most ignored. Because of his title as "a fool" what he said had a tendency to get mixed up with his occupation, which is one of entertainment and jest. If what he said had the goal to entertain then the truth in his words would take second tier.

> "This knowledge, so inaccessible, so formidable, the Fool, in his innocent idiocy, already possesses. While the man of reason and wisdom perceives only fragmentary and all the more unnerving images of it all, the Fool bears it intact as an unbroken sphere: that crystal ball which for all others is empty is in *his* eyes filled with the density of an invisible knowledge" (Foucault, p. 22).

The Fool knows more, but those around him refuse to accept his words as knowledge, what makes him closest to the truth is also what hinders his ability to convey it to others, his madness. In the chapter on Shakespeare, the Fool, passion, and art will be discussed in a bit more detail, shedding light on the positivity in madness and insanity. But these oscilations between positive and negative views on a concept such as madness are exactly why an understanding of discourse is necessary. "In the Renaissance, Folly leaves the modest place and comes to the fore" (Foucault, p. 24). With the light back on madness, again the madman was seen to be missing something, and the fear returned, and with this fear the need to cure and separate the insane altogether. There was a fear of danger to the rest of society, that you could "catch" insanity. Thus the Asylums were introduced and "confinement" necessary. This allowed empowerment over the insane and a way to

master and attempt to control them. Domination over the madman was seen as the best way to preserve order and the wellbeing of the people in the society.

1.2.1 Structures that Exclude and Confine

During the 17th century with the idea of confinement and keeping the insane excluded from the functioning part of society also came the search for a cure, and the treatment of madmen as "patients" with a medical condition. Foucault refers to this period as the "Great Confinement", when those who were a threat to a productive and developing society were institutionalized. Amongst those in the institutions were not just the madmen, but also criminals, social deviants, the crippled, and the unemployed. "In a hundred and fifty years, confinement had become the abusive amalgam of heterogeneous elements" (Foucault, p. 45). To Foucault what these institutions do is "they give a meaning to this ritual, and explain in part the mode in which madness was perceived, and experienced, by the classical age" (Foucault, p. 46). It is this association to the structure of confinement that gives us a glimpse into who the madman was seen to be. At this time, madness was to be kept away from the rest of society, because it was seen as something that should be hidden, as if it was tainted or something was broken. Power was enforced over these institutions, which brought those who were confined down, and those who chose who was to be confined were brought up. There was an overwhelming amount of gaps in the power structure between the wardens of these institutions and those who were forced to remain between those four walls. If you take a look at the Asylums and mental hospitals of the 20th and 21st centuries you will see a difference in terms of "confinement". "Before having the medical meaning we give it [now], or that at least we like to suppose it has, confinement was required by something quite different from any concern with curing the sick" (Foucault, p. 46). Only later did these confinements become medical institutions, until then, they were seen as forms to demonstrate and exercise power over the unreasonable. It is visible, through Foucault's studies that the idea of exclusion and separation is a very dominant idea when dealing with madness. It seems to be embedded deep into the minds of most societies that keeping the madness at bay, and out of reach, or view, is the best way to deal with it.

When these structures of power turned to medical institutions and the madman turned into a "sickman", methods of treatment for this "disease" became more and more prominent. There was a search for the "cure", and madness was studied closer as part of what makes someone human was thought to be missing in the madman. Medical diagnosis and medicine were being made. Some methods of treatment were highly invasive, painful and incredibly useless. These procedures were borderline torture and a clear invasion of privacy[3].

The appearance of Asylums finally made the separation of the mentally ill from the physically ill and the criminals. Foucault says this of confinement:

> "This gesture, which banished madness to a neutral and uniform world of exclusion, did not mark a halt in the evolution of medical techniques, nor in the progress of humanitarian ideas. It assumed its precise meaning in this fact: that madness in the classical period ceased to be the sign of another world, and that it became the paradoxical manifestation of non-being. Ultimately, confinement did seek to suppress madness, to eliminate from the social order a figure which did not find its place within it; the essence of confinement was not the exorcism of a danger. Confinement merely manifested what madness, in its essence, was: a manifestation of non-being; and by providing this manifestation, confinement thereby suppressed it, since it restored it to its truth of nothingness." (p. 115)

From the point of view of those still in society, the mad and insane were just eliminated, and taken out of proximity. By never being exposed to them and by qualifying them as not relevant they removed their power and never put any more thought into their existence. They became "out of sight, out of mind". What and who was not a part of a productive society was considered to be nothing. It was believed that those who had become mad had lost something, their identity or their mind, one or the other went first and eventually, both would be gone. Their mind was taken from them due to the illness, but their identity was taken by removing them from society. They no longer served a practical purpose therefore they were discarded and being locked away was the same as

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[3] This can also be seen very evidently in Stanley Kubrick's film *A Clockwork Orange*.

excluding them. What asylums also did though, simultaneously, was work as a beacon to those who were considered insane. Because the mad and the insane did not walk the same halls as the "normals" the halls that they did walk were illuminated for others to see. Their exclusion became intense exposure as well. All the insane could be found in the same place, under the same roof, regardless of their disease. There was no distinction in the different forms of illness. The suicidal and depressed were put in the same institution as the sociopaths and psychopaths. One of the main reasons that seemed to fuel the exclusion of the insane in the earlier centuries was the shame of having a less-than-functional person in one's family and household. "Even late in the eighteenth century, Malasherbes[4] would defend confinement as a right of families to escape dishonor" (Foucault, p. 67). In fear that their association with the insane would somehow be detrimental to them, they requested to have them sent away, continuing with the idea of 'out of sight, out of mind'. What was happening at the same time, however, was very much the opposite of the desire of keeping them away from the family and hidden from the rest of society. "Confinement hid away unreason, and betrayed the shame it aroused; but it explicitly drew attention to madness, pointed to it" (p. 70). The lack of understanding what exactly was going on in the mind of an insane person became something to look at, something others were very curious about seeing for themselves. The institutions provided society with a front seat to the lives of the insane that they had excluded.

1.3 The Introduction of "Bedlam"

In the late 1500s and early 1600s, in England, there was a psychiatric Hospital called Bethlem, or "Bedlam" (meaning uproar and confusion), that belonged to both crown and city that housed the mentally insane. Bedlam is often associated to the stage because in the Jacobean era several plays were staged at the hospital.[5] This was also

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[4] Guillaume-Chrétien de Lamoignon de **Malesherbes** (1721–1794); French statesman, lawyer and defender of King Louis XVI

[5] Some plays included *The Honest Whore, Part I* (1604); *Northward Ho* (1607); *The Duchess of Malfi* (1612); *The Pilgrim (c.1621);* and *The changeling* (1622).

when the doors of the hospital were opened to the public in an attempt to boost charitable donations to help the patients and the hospital to keep functioning. Ken Jackson, in his book, *Separate Theaters: Bethlem ("Bedlam") Hospital and the Shakespearean Stage*, says this about the hospital:

> "the hospital was some sort of theater, a place of perverse and sometimes fashionable entertainment for Londoners, and the practice of visiting and viewing the mad for amusement was depicted or alluded to in a number of plays between 1598 and 1630" (Jackson, p. 1)

Visitation to the mental hospital was both to entice the public to feel empathy towards the patients and want to help the institute financially, but also to expose them as a spectacle and breech the division between the so-called sane and insane. These walls were broken down, the walls that once had made them so they were out of sight, and out of mind were gone, and suddenly, with insanity right in their face, the insane could not be ignored anymore, and possibly cured. With the exposure, seemed to come the best of intentions, but it also put the insane in a position to be mocked and ridiculed. It helped to shed light on them and brought their plight into reality, but at the same time it also illuminated the clear separation between the sane and healthy spectators and the unhealthy mentally insane. Duncan Salkeld, in *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* believes the strange form of entertainment to be merely that, just a form of entertainment and that

> "Bedlam scenes became popular in Renaissance drama probably because they depicted a single locus in which the spectacularity and strangeness of madness were contained. As kind of theatrespace itself, a place where tragic and comic fictions of the mind were painfully lived out, Bedlam furnished dramatists with a resource of spectacular material". (Salkeld, 1993)

And slightly more recently, William C. Caroll, in *Fat King: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* (1996), writes, "The 'Bedlam poor' are … just another form of popular entertainment, culturally equivalent to various urban curiosities, or to such

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theatricalized spectacles as bear – baiting or 'stage-plays'". The problem about this set-up would be that, although the intentions may have been noble, the results are an ostracized and exploited group of people who need serious help, and not to be gawked at and pitied. The separation of the mad and the non-mad can become much more evident when you put them side by side, but the governors of Bedlam seemed to want to bank on how different they were from the rest of society. By seeing them as humans, just like them, not some foreign monsters, it just may have scared their visitors into paying large sums to cure them, hoping that they would never become this same exact way. It is much easier to desensitize oneself from this affliction by believing that there is no way you could ever become that. Hoping that money would be the best way to "keep away the demons" they are more than happy to pay a large sum and call it 'charity'. Jackson quickly finds a connection between the theatrical stage and the "stage" of Bedlam. "As early as *The Comedy of Errors*, we see Shakespeare willing to give his dramatic world over to a certain madness, conceding the error, confusion, subjectivity, and complexity of life in a way that is intimately connected to his belief in "wonder, Magic, and Faith"'(p. 26). On the other hand, an academic like David Salkeld sees a spectacle like *The Comedy of Errors* as a beginning of a completely new understanding of how madness is interpreted. He says:

> "If madness in Shakespeare's plays in the 1590s took place in the visible public
> world, there were already signs of a more repressive attitude towards lunacy
> growing in England in the late sixteenth century and reflected in the drama.
> Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus are both bound and laid in a dark room under
> the orders of the absurd and ignorant Pinch. In *As You Like It* (1600?), madness
> and love are equated together and said to deserve a dark house and whip, a
> punishment and a cure. The language registers an alteration of mood. *Twelfth
> Night* (1601) offers evidence of this socially hardening attitude by identifying
> madness much more closely with individual and isolating the mad man in
> confinement at the dark periphery of the stage. The change, however, has not
> entirely evolved. The 'madness' of Malvolio is still sited unmistakably on the

body and takes place in the wider pattern of relationships that constitute the main plot of the play" (*Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, p. 72)

In the plays of the time, mainly Shakespeare, one can possibly find connections to how the patients of Bedlam were being treated, by interpreting their portrayal of the madman. But also, in the larger picture, how society was looking, or more like gawking at the mad. To take an archaeological view of how madness was changing we can look not just at the institutions, but also, at how institutions were being looked at. We can do this through art, just as Foucault did with the painting of the *Ship of Fools*, but also through theater and how the actors and playwrights were interpreting the plight of the madman. In Carol Thomas Neely's *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture*, she says that "Hospitals, prisons, and workhouses, the emergent of institutions of newly consolidating nation states, drew on diagnoses of madness as they sought prestige and funds to exercise their increased capacity to succor and to confine subjects" (p. 6). This explains what I have just glazed over about the access that the common-folk, the public, had to these institutions and the exploitation of that insight. Similar to Foucault, Neely calls her study "formalist as well as historicist – because it examines how the formal properties of all texts contribute to historical change" (p. 7), and although Foucault calls his an archaeological approach, his definition echoes in Neely's further discussion of her study, which is the illness in madness, as seen through the eyes of Shakespeare and early modern culture, that "they do not advance in tidy chronological order, and neither does this book" (p. 7).

In the next part we will take a microscopic look at one of Shakespeare's 'madmen', King Lear, in order to get an idea about how the madman was being regurgitated in to art. Madness was being mentioned in the same definition as wisdom and truth, as we will see. I will look to contrast the King who is driven to madness, and his Fool who carries the label already of insanity. "The Hospital does not confine mad persons cruelly or indiscriminately; but stage madhouses make spectacles of them as the hospital is imagined to do" (Neely, p. 1). What was exploited and made spectacle is what will draw patrons to the theater, and what drew those who did not have a family member at the hospital to visit them, in their own habitat, at the hospitals. The reason why

Shakespeare's work with madness and, more specifically with *King Lear* is so important for this paper is to serve as a stepping-stone to demonstrate where madness has become more of a spectacle and a show. "Here is madness elevated to spectacle above the silence of the asylums, and becoming a public scandal for the general delight. Unreason was hidden in the silence of the houses of confinement, but madness continued to be present on the stage of the world" (Foucault, p. 69).

1.3.1 Shakespeare's Fools and Madmen

Duncan Salkeld notes, "In the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, personal crisis is invariably linked to political crisis", whereas Kendra Preston Leonard in *Shakespeare, Madness, and Music: Scoring Insanity in Cinematic Adaptations* explains how "Personal crisis, in turn, frequently takes the form of 'distraction', or madness" (p. 1). It would seem then that both political and personal crisis' were being expressed or dramatized through the figure of a madman; one who cannot cope with the, either personal, or political chaos and decay. Salked continues by saying that madness:

> "seems to belong in English Renaissance tragedy. It lends a distinctive pathos of inexorable self-destruction to plays which might otherwise be merely violent. But madness in the age of Shakespeare was not merely a playwright's Senecan device. It was put to more sophisticated uses. In the first place, its personal and moral implications were enormous… Madness is not a consequence of sin, like judgement, but contemporaneous with it, deferring judgement even for the most determined villain. But the insane in Renaissance tragedy were not merely victims of brutal society; they were also violent, murderous and politically dangerous. Blood may have blood, as the revenge maxim went, but madness will have blood too "(*Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, p. 80).

It is clear how madness was a great state and device to be used in tragedies. The disease was at the same time an explanation to why things happened, and could be quite

entertaining because of its unpredictable nature. Audiences were engaged in the drama of a madman who could say all he wanted, and then blame his disease, therefore softening the blow of what was said. The truth a fool would speak would be brushed off merely by recognizing his title as a fool. Madness, at the time of Shakespeare, was a great moment to express things that could otherwise be deemed too taboo to be expressed (ex: Sexual desire). It had "other powers: the punishment it inflicts multiplies by nature insofar as, by punishing itself, it unveils the truth" (Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, p. 30) and it reminds "each man of his truth" (p. 14).

The one Shakespearean play I would like to take a closer look at is *King Lear*, not because he is the best representation of degradation into madness, but because there is such a contrast between the Lear character and his fool who carries this title as his name. *King Lear* is a play about an aging king with three daughters, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia. When he decides to step down from the throne, he gives his three daughters a test to see how much they love him. Goneril and Regan, both give heartfelt speeches about all the reasons and ways that they love him, but his youngest and favorite, Cordelia tells him that she cannot complete the task because there are no words to describe how she feels for her father, that the love is too large. He interprets her response as a lack of love and insolence so he banishes her. Lear realizes that he made the wrong choice by choosing his older daughter's kind, but fake words, over Cordelia's silent honesty, when he Goneril and Regan start plotting against him to take him out of power. The thought that his beloved daughters could ever be cruel to him drives slowly him insane. He runs from his daughters' and their false hospitality during a thunderstorm forever accompanied by his loyal fool. War breaks out over betrayal and jealousy amongst siblings and Cordelia, the banished, brings an army to save Lear. Cordelia is betrayed as well, which leads to her wrongful execution. The despair and grief over the death of Cordelia ultimately kills Lear. His fool is also killed for the same reason, for his unswerving loyalty to the King.

Marjorie Garber in *Shakespeare After All*, writes about Lear's plight as a political figure driven to madness:

"Most evidently, and perhaps most importantly, madness permits the maddened

victim to speak the truth, like a licensed fool, and be *dis*believed. A madman or

madwoman is a sublime version of a fool – in the confines of the theater. He or

she can echo the prevailing madness of the world, speaking through the onstage

audience to an audience in the theater, asserting, proclaiming, or establishing

contestatory and unwelcome 'truths' about the human condition" (p. 678)

The audience could recognize what was being criticized about the political problems and the battle for power. But at the same time, the way the stage worked, and the title of madness protected the theater from any liability. The mad spoke many truths, and many listened, but ultimately responsibility could not be weighed upon the speaker, for he was mad and knew not what he spoke of. What creates a study-worthy aspect of the play is the dynamic between the real fool (The Fool), and the sane and powerful man who loses touch with reality and falls deep into insanity. In a twist of irony the Fool is the one who speaks the most wisdom.

"Have more than thou showest,
  Speak less than thou knowest,
  Lend less than thou owest,
  Ride more than thou goest,
  Learn more than thou trowest,
  Set less than thou throwest;
  And thou shalt have more
  Than two tens to a score." (Act I, Scene IV)

It is the Fool who demonstrates more power over reality and a higher level of wisdom. He speaks the truth with barely any consequence, except a tap on the head. What sticks out even more than his wisdom in a mad world full of betrayal, greed, and corruption is his intense level of loyalty towards his Master. Many times there is a contrast cast between the two characters, as they slowly seem to switch roles, the Fool to the role of sane and reasonable, and the King to the role of the fool who knows not and speaks with

unreason.

"*Fool.*   …   Prythee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie;
I would fain learn to lie.
Lear.   An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipp'ed.
Fool.   I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are; they'll have me whipp'ed for
speaking true, thou'lt have me whipp'ed for lying; and sometimes I am whipp'ed for
holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle;
thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing in the middle" (Act I, Scene IV)

The response of the fool to lying contains so much logic that his title does not seem to do
him justice. He gives an argument with such sound reasoning yet his title would declare
him a simpleton incapable of such reason. Yet it is this exact title that gives him a
purpose and a place. He knows who he is and how he is expected to act, and others
around him know how to address him and what to expect from his behavior, taking what
he says with enough 'grains of salt' to save his life. If he were any one else but a fool, all
of his mutterings and wiserys would be taken much too seriously and therefore be
dangerous to him. In the play the fool addresses his own title and the importance of
having one by showing the King what he has not "Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou
hadst no need to care for frowning; now thou art an O without a figure: I am better than
thou art now: I am a fool, thou art nothing" (Act I, Scene IV). He recognizes the power of
being able to hide behind a title that forgives every indecent thing he says, and just like
his title as a fool protects him, so did the title of King. But Lear was stripped of his title
and with that sense of unknown and not fitting into something he was driven insane. With
his search for another title he became 'The Mad'. "This is comedy brought into such
close relation with the great sorrows of life that it is transformed into deepest tragedy.
Combination and contrast! A king and a fool! Reverence and folly! Majesty and motley!
Weakness protecting strength! A clown defending a scepter, and a bauble shielding a
crown; and yet all of these contrast are harmonized by the holiest of human emotions,
fidelity and love" (Frederick Warde, *The Fools of Shakespeare*, p. 199). The contrast
between the two characters is undeniable: the witty fool, who is "more knave than fool"

(Goneril) and the witless king who "wouldst make a good fool" (Fool). Towards the end of the play it is quite difficult to distinguish who is the sane one and who is the insane. This blurring, crossing over, and sometimes clear distinction is what fluctuates and carries the play, until the final demise of both, for the same reasons, for fidelity and loyalty, the Fool to Lear and Lear to his favorite daughter, Cordelia.

Chapter 2

It is more than possible that the insane ideas of today could become the normal ones of tomorrow, or that's how it seems to be heading. But there are consistencies in the treatment and views of the insane. There will always be exclusion of them and subsequently there will always be their exposure. Patterns tell us that there will never be a day when no one is considered to be mad, at least not as long as there is the concept of "normal" as the dominant state. Madness fears the repressive stares of the sane and defies the way they think and act, and the sane fear becoming mad or even being exposed to those who already are.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest demonstrates how exclusion can come from both sides. It can come from the madman wanting to remove themselves from a way of acting and thinking that represses and revolts against them, and by the sane gladly accepting and enforcing this separation. This separation both hides and exposes the two sides, with or without intention, and cinema, as did theater, succeeds in drawing attention to this separation and to who is on each side. The next chapter is about this exposure and need to understand what the madman says and sees, through film. I will attempt to connect insanity with the truth and the difficulty to cope with being so close to a truth, but lacking the ability to find reason in it. The exposure of madness brought the sane closer to the reality of the insane. Ken Jackson in *Separate Theaters: Bethlem ("Bedlam") Hospital and the Shakespearean Stage* tries to find a connection between the exposure of the insane in the Hospital to the society that had previously only surrounded the Hospital, but were then being invited in and exposed to what truly went on behind the closed doors. He uses similar devices to Foucault by verifying the information against the institution and mentality of the time, and how people related to the "insane". He says that Foucault, in

Madness and Civilization "suggested that the great modern 'art' of Nietzsche, Artaud, and Van Gogh was made possible by that art's relationship to madness" (p. 35). Art has always aimed to reach a place in your mind and soul that is not on the surface, and that break and simultaneous connection to reality is where art seems to be able to survive and speak the loudest. To show what we ourselves do not seem to understand. Art is that middle ground between contemplation and understanding.

At the same time madness seems to exist best in the middle between reality and fantasy, awareness and a total loss of connection. This is why, many times, passion is associated to insanity; the extremes of certain emotions. And this is where art resides. Artists such as Shakespeare employed madness as a form of tragedy, and used it to move a story. This passion and connection that one can have to an object is where madness can occur because once something becomes an object, of flesh and bone, for example, it means it can also die, and whatever part of you that was connected to that dead object can potentially die as well. But this ephemeral fact is also is what allows for creativity and art to exist. The nature of confinement ends up working against itself, creating a sort of fantasy and desire to the unknown. One begins to imagine what it would be like to live without the constraints and obligations that come with being a part of society. There is a fascination with being outside of what they had always known and it makes you wonder if those who were sane and forced to remain productive were actually the ones confined. We spoke of how theater demonstrated the ideas of madness and their interpretations could help s to understand how madness was seen. I would like to do the same study by using two films that show two different kinds of madness and see if we can reach an idea on how madness is thought of through its depiction on the screen.

2.1 *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

      In this unit, which focuses on the exclusion of madness and of those deemed to be "mad", we will mainly look at the film *One Flew over the cuckoo's nest*. This film represents a cultural-historical view on how madness is being exposed to society. It is a reflection on the decade that it has been created in the 1970s. The 70s was a time of passionate responses to the excesses of the previous twenty years. "Its allegorical theme is set in the world of an authentic mental hospital (Oregon State Hospital in Salem, Oregon), a place of rebellion exhibited by an energetic, flamboyant, wise-guy anti-hero against the Establishment, institutional authority and status-quo attitudes (this can be seen personified by the patients' supervisory nurse in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*).[6] The 70s are the decade of the emergence of the "blockbuster" film the big seller that made money and put more effort into sales and the studio than the characters and the plot. But *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is part of the period of New Hollywood that preceded the blockbuster film. This was an action driven film that's plot was restricted to 25 words, and replaced idiosyncratic films such as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and many other films that preceded the more action-packed films. Also before these blockbuster films started gaining popularity, the directors had more creative freedom to demonstrate the effects of real issue and social problems. "At a cursory glance, the process of rejuvenation that the film industry enforced after 1967-77, and which resulted in a 'New Hollywood' was a product of the same logic [of the Indie film movement] [7]. Perhaps the crucial difference lay in the intensity of the social movements, changes, shocks and crisis, which rocked American society in the Sixties and early Seventies, and

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[6] Forman himself noted that the asylum was a metaphor for the Soviet Union (embodied as Nurse Ratched) and the desire to escape. (Taken from http://www.filmsite.org/onef.html)

[7] "Often connected to a niche consciousness, the standard-bearers of independent cinema consequently helped to establish, which could then easily be appropriated or inhaled by the mainstream industry. The important "indie" companies of the eighties and the nineties are today part of or closely associated with major studios. In addition, the studios themselves have set up their own labels to cater to the (formerly) "independent" market. In Late Capitalism the so-called alternatives almost always turn out to be mere variations of one and the same economic logic." Alexander Horwath.

moreover, in the intensity with which popular culture registered these shocks" (Alexander Horwath, p. 11).

In a film like *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, madness is being represented as a state more desirable than the alienation and expectations of the society that the characters lived in. Films had a large influence from the emergence of socially conscious directors that were highly influenced by the events surrounding them. They were influenced by the Music, the Literature, and the crime and war of the time. This was an era of a strong connection between the actors and the directors. It was the beginning of the "new Wave" movement Leo Braudy, the author of *The World in a Frame: What we see in Films,* explains that "The New Wave especially derives its presentation of the enigma of character from the potential of character to escape total interpretation. Society may impose forms to which the character cannot measure up. But the filmmaker presents as a possible intermediary between the character and the world" (p. 251).

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest is about a man who committed a crime and he decides that pleading insanity is a better option than going to prison. He believes that he is smarter and above the system. He believes that by pretending to be insane, but not actually being insane, he will have the best of both worlds, the benefits of being in a mental institution, away from society and not expected to do anything for it, yet still have his sanity. What ends up happening is that the head nurse, Nurse Ratched, refuses to let him get off easily. She is his first obstacle. Eventually he gets to know the other patients and does not see a big difference between them and him.

It does not matter if they are medically correct, and it does not even matter if the film is considered to be good or not, but for the sake of argument it does matter that a large amount of spectators have seen this film, in order to make a commentary of the majority of society, the more who have seen it, the more the exposure. This is why I chose *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* because it has won academy awards and is considered to be an extremely affluent film ahead of its time (http://www.filmsite.org/onef.html). The choice to view this movie was also because of the direct subject matter of the film, and the insight into an institution, that we, the sane, may not be very familiar with. The fact that it was popular, and seen by many, means that more were influenced by this perspective and story. *One Flew over the cuckoo's nest* is a

great film to begin with because the main character Randle McMurphy pleads insanity in order to avoid being arrested and sent to jail, seeing the mental institution as a far better alternative than prison life where he will be forced to work and rehabilitate. He believes that if he gets labeled as insane that he will just fly under the radar, be put away from sight, and people will just let him be. He has to understand enough about madness in order to infiltrate the mental hospital, to pretend he is mad, to avoid being put into a seemingly worse institution, prison. One of the main issues that is being addressed is the problem with always wanting to be accepted, fitting into a label perfectly, and not understanding exactly who they are or what their lot in life is. The giant and silent Indian character, named 'Chief', did not speak and believed that who he was made him not fit in anywhere else, except where all the "rejects" and "broken" people were sent. Another secondary character and mental patient, Dale Harding did not know the socially acceptable way to react to his wife's infidelity therefore he believed that the mental institution was this was the place for him. Randle is actually much more 'deviant' than most of the other characters are. Most of them checked themselves into the mental institution because they believed they did not have a place in the world outside of it and that this was where everyone who did not have a perfect fit could find their place. Randle gives the patients some relief by taking them out of the institution one day, and by trying to break as many rules as he can. Breaking the system and simultaneously taking advantage of it seems to be Randle's goal. He avoids one form of confinement by pleading insanity and runs right into another form. We see him abuse the system and yet the abuse happens within the system as well by those with authority. He can be considered 'sane' because he takes a reasonable approach to the strict regime of the institution, a rebellious one. But the institution fights back, mainly through Nurse Ratched, because they truly believe that his attitudes and approaches are detrimental to his health and safety, and based on this assessment he is punished for the attitudes he takes towards being restricted and taught to act a certain way. Two paths change in the end, Randle, once thought of as the 'sane' one, gets lobotomized in order to control him better, and he loses all connection to the world that he once had, he loses his sanity and reason. The effect this has on another patient, the Chief, who had never spoken until he reveals to Randle that he is only faking his symptoms, is quite the opposite. It makes him

realize that the mental institution is not where he belongs, and he breaks out of the institution, quite literally, by shattering the window to the room preventing his exit. This act was inspired by Randle who had once threatened to do this and get himself out of there, but did not have the physical strength to pull it off.

There is a separation from the two establishments, jail and the mental institution, right off the bat, but just as a preconceived notion from the lead character. He believes that he would be treated better in a mental institution than at a prison, and at a prison he would have to be put to work, to be a productive criminal, but at the mental institution he will be left alone and will not be convinced to convert back into society. What we see is an institution designed to break down their patients, control them and condition them to be passive and compliant beings. For the sake of movement and action let's throw in a main character who is not mad, for to shake things up one must be a deviant, and if all the others are already considered "deviants" then to be a deviant from the deviants one must be non-deviant, therefore, normal. This goes back to the idea of discourse that defines something in relation to another. These characters are very different from each other. Most of the characters have checked into the mental hospital voluntarily, just like the lead character, believing that there was no other place for them, and that the institution was their only chance to "fit in" anywhere. This is a perfect representation of the grouping of all conditions in one place. Sadists and developmentally challenged men are all put in the same room[8], and most, by choice, because this was where they considered they were supposed to be. Society had expanded this idea so intensely that it forced people to come to terms with their own illness and set themselves aside from society, seeking exclusion and finding it in institutions. It is difficult to say what came first, society forcing its views on people and therefore them assuming that if they have those traits then they would much prefer to be excluded, or if they chose and preferred exclusion than to be immersed in a society that elevates productivity and "normalcy". In the beginning of the film, the superintendant explains to Randle why he is there, to be evaluated and to see if he is in fact as ill as he claims. Randle's line while sitting in front of a judge states how he sees himself in society "And now they're telling me I'm crazy over here because I don't sit

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[8] The same can be seen in *Girl, Interrupted* (James Mangold, 1999) when the suicidal and sociopathic are all grouped in the same mental institution

there like a goddamn vegetable. Don't make a bit of sense to me. If that's what's bein' crazy is, then I'm senseless, out of it, gone-down-the-road, wacko. But no more, no less, that's it". He calls himself crazy if in fact, that is the definition of crazy. There are several dichotomies happening at the same time in this film. On the one hand you have the sane mixed altogether with those who are really insane, and on the other hand you have the sane yet disruptive man and the nurse who is socially accepted as sane and is supposed to take on the role of the caregiver and the one with all the power and control, yet she treats them worse than they treat each other. From this premise we can gather a few things, mental instability is possible to fake, unable to be verified 100%, and that a mental hospital, although it is its own form of confinement, is viewed as being a much better alternative than prison. This film demonstrates a rupture in a system that we take for common knowledge to be a certain way. Everyone is supposed to have their role and label, or so society says, but when roles are all mashed into one and someone finds a flaw in the system it will start to crack. In the film, however, ultimately they manage to "calm the rebel" and incorporate him in to the system they have created.

Randle challenges the system with the logic of a madman, but with logic nonetheless. According to Foucault, idleness used to be considered a form of madness because of its lack of productivity and inability to advance society in any positive way, Randle claiming madness to remove him from having to work in the prison system would make him mad anyways. His claim is just emphasizing his words, and he may believe that he is just saying that to avoid work, but the old institutions would believe that indicative of social deviance anyway. Randle seems to be nothing but a rebel with the goal to disrupt the label given to the insane, and that of "insanity". Nurse Ratched is determined to keep order and is a huge promoter of social correctness. This appears to Randle in the form of a fun game. He takes it upon himself to challenge the order that she represents. Her harshness and structured ways represent the sentiments of most of society, and he is the outsider that has no place anywhere, not with the criminals, but also not with the sane, so he is put here, because if he is not "in" society and contributing to it than he must be against it. Society seems to prefer having clear delineations about what is and what is not, and this is the same for what is insane and what is not. The institution Randle is put into feels that he will be swayed one way or another, not blurred, but will

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clearly fit into one category or the other even though for now his tendencies oscillate between both categories. The institution presented shows the need it has to rigidly categorize where someone fits in, if you are not fully insane or sane, they will push you into being fully one or the other, and in this case, make Randle fully "insane". This film makes you identify with Randle because this blurring of the categories are a part of being human and part of what films from this time demonstrate. He is somewhat of a 'rebel with a cause' and a cause that we can still identify with today, of not being limited and labeled as only one thing, but a bit of both.

The methods of enforcement, with restraints and ultimately the lobotomy, are much too extreme for the audience to find comfort in or a desire to identify with the perpetrators of such violent measures (Nurse Ratched). In showing his perspective, and his quest, and successfully gaining the sympathy of the audience that films from the end of the 60s and beginning of the 70s were trying to do, demonstrates the breaking of stereotypes, and restricting labels and groups of categorization.

Alexander Horwath would say of films from that time, that fit into the 'New Hollywood' era, that "in the case of these films, it is often not only a matter of themes and plots related to current events or of a transfer from political to cultural emerges, but essentially a matter of changing modes of perception" (*The Impure Cinema: New Hollywood 1967-76,* pg 12). This can be seen in the role of the Chief who, at the time, would be seen as an "wild savage"[9], yet he was silent, and although he was gigantic and strong, he would cause no harm to anyone else. He believed that was where he belonged because he had not truly belonged anywhere else prior to that. In his search for a clear 'home' because he was denied one so instantly by being an outsider. This became his home not because it felt better, but because it did not feel worse. The uncertainty is what brought all the patients to the same place, the lack of clear delineations of purpose, brought them to the mental institution, where all 'rejects' and outsiders went, and eventually found a label that they suited, that of the "un-labeled".

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[9] John Ford's *Cheyenne Autumn* from 1964 discusses this image of a 'savage indian'. When the government fails to deliver supplies to a proud Indian tribe, the members embark on a journey back to their original hunting grounds, attempting to fend for themselves. When cavalry captain Thomas Archer is sent to retrieve them, he sympathizes with their courage and strength and ends up helping them instead.

The next time Randle is being evaluated the Dr says he believes him to be sane and that he is just trying to fool them all. In a valiant attempt to demonstrate that fine line between sane and insane, and the stereotypical actions of the insane he "acts insane" and challenges the Dr. asking him if that's crazy enough for him.

There is a concept, often associated to George Hegel called 'Zeitgeist'[10] that helps to explain the influence that we are looking at in this film. Zeitgeist is a thought process of a determined period in time. Hegel believed that it would be quite impossible for someone to surpass their own time because he/she is a product of that exact time. Both Hegel and Foucault have found connections or forms to connect specific concepts, such as insanity, with structures, like politics or institutions and look at them with a cultural-historical background. This film very much reflects the spirit of the time when it was created. In the 70s when there was a much larger importance given to the creativity of the director and of his connection to the work and the actors. This was a time of a hyper-conscious director who works with what they knew and what was surrounding them.

In the case of Milos Forman, the director of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, his influences from his life were very much in focus and can be seen in the films he created. [11]The 70s was very much a time of questioning and searching for truth, it was a time of blurring lines and breaking down restrictions and barriers. From the period of New Hollywood and onwards, we can make an interpretation of how society was responding to something like madness in those years, because American cinema, at that time, enjoyed a relative 'freedom' from studio-bound conventions and economic restraints. Horwath explains that "This book [*The Impure Cinema: New Hollywood 1967-76*] deals with a kind of cinema which in many ways pushed back the boundaries: politically, by raising taboo topics and views; Aesthetically, by striving to replace a

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[10] Although the term is attributed to him, he never actually uses the term, but he mentions the capturing of the spirit of a time in one's work. He uses the phrase *der Geist seiner zeit* (the spirit of his time).

[11] Forman was born in Czechoslovakia, where he lived and work primarily, lost his parents to the Nazi regime and then he went to an extremely good school for the orphans of the war At this establishment he was surrounded by people who were strong-minded and going for greatness. Forman grew up never feeling quite like he belonged, and with the idea that there was something bigger and better out there As many people from his time, who experienced loss in the war, he lacked a faith in institutions, being a first hand witness to the problems of excess of power, and war.

seemingly transparent and natural norm of realist representation with self-reflexivity; and lastly, in economic terms, by trying to extricate itself from the traditional industrial film production process through the formation of groups and the cultivation of auteur personalities" (p. 12) This reflected strongly in the films that were created at the time. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was an award-winning film and enjoyed by many, but it still followed the stream of films that told a story and highlighted many of the desires of the director and actors, instead of the studio. "The freedoms of the Renaissance period were given to filmmakers by the big studios. They could also be taken away. The industry was in difficulties and latched onto a new generation of filmmakers who held the promise of being able to attract a new and younger audience" (Geoff King, p. 90)[12]. Many of the films that we see created at that time could not have been created at any other time. "In many films of the New Hollywood era, these conflicts create a magnificent richness and enormous internal tensions and an incoherence, which lays bare their conditions of prediction and, consequently, the contradictions in American Culture. As Robin Wood has observed: 'The films seem to crack open before our eyes'" (Horwath, pg13). These films went against the grain and broke down these boundaries much more than in any other time. "At the same time, it was a cinema that could not help internalizing these boundaries" (Horwath, pg 13).

Randle McMurphy can "act crazy" in order to get what he wants, but this exaggeration show makes you wonder which side of sanity he falls on, and if he could be more insane just for knowing how to do it so well. Does the fact that he is convincing as insane mean he is, in fact insane, or that he is sane enough to know how to mimic insanity?[13] And to be able to do so, to understand madness or at least the representation of it so well as to convince others that you are insane, does that require you to be sane? The impossibility of fully understanding madness gets in the way of being able to answer the questions. It is the conundrum that we are faced with whenever trying to understand

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[12] Geoff King and his concept of 'New Hollywood'
[13] This paradox is also the plot of a known book by Joseph Heller called Catch-22, of the army where you could declare yourself insane to get out of joining the army, but the fact that you knew to declare yourself insane was a very sane thought. This declaration of insanity to avoid the war was a very sane notion.

insanity. By being logical and theoretical about the concept we are already using our sane devices to try to understand something that has no devices at all.

Giorgio Agamben discusses a similar impossibility in his *Homo Sacer* when attempting to determine laws for the lawless and evaluating those on the outside of the law, from inside of the law (2003). There is a constant desire to put labels on everything in order to understand what they are. This is habit and a need for order and organization. Even things that we cannot label go under a label of unlabeled. The mentally ill patients, the label-less, all go under the same roof because they are equally difficult to understand. It is human nature to act this way and to see things in groups like this. It is human nature to make associations as close as you can to the thing that you do not understand in order to find reason and logic in them, so what do you do to things that defy reason and logic? The impossibility comes in the fact that we use logic to make sense of things, so we cannot use logic to determine the illogical, any more than we can begin to understand those outside of the law by being inside of the law. By trying to understand we are already failing at understanding. It all sounds very complicated, and that is because it is. These complications are why we must keep questioning and why they cannot be so easily determined as one or the other.

In attempting to understand and change these lines that have been drawn is potentially already failing. By trying to force someone to fit into a category you are already demonstrating how they do not, because if you have to force something so hard then they never truly belonged there to begin with. This is what Randle is trying to show through his crazy actions, that he cannot be contained or defined so rigidly, and that no one else should be either. Ultimately, because the institution cannot accept the failure of finding order, they go to an extreme measure to conform him. Visual cues seem to be one of the best ways to demonstrate madness, like Randle does when he "acts crazy", he mimics exaggerated stereotypical movements of madness. Think about someone talking to themselves in public, an example that Wanda Strauven uses. If you are talking into a small Bluetooth in your ear, it is assumed that there is a recipient to your words, but if you are not, if you are having a conversation with yourself, outside of your head (normal would be to have this conversation internally), then you are acting mad. Strauven says there is an interesting exception to this, which is to change the talking to singing, and

suddenly you are considered normal again. This demonstrates our social acceptance of things out of the realm of normal. Strauven's example would be in the second order, talking to oneself, unless it can be explained, like on the phone, or singing to oneself. It is clear to see how difficult it can be to represent something outside of itself, but even more difficult when being within madness would make it impossible for you to logically define it, that is the definition of madness, not being able to logically and reasonable determine the world around you, so the only people who know what it is exactly are those that will never be able to define it or even desire to. Therefore the madman is not just excluded from society, but from being able to understand itself and it is that lack of definition that can make a man mad.

At one point in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,* Randle brings the boys on a boat trip by convincing the owner that they are doctors. He gives them a label and they are immediately accepted thanks to their title. He then emphasizes this idea of a label when he says: "You're not a goddamn looney now, boy. You're a fisherman!" This scene is important because it shows the arbitrariness of a label, he was a fisherman, because Randle said so, and it was that easy. From the moment you are categorized as such, other behave towards you as such. Like when Randle pretends to be a Doctor in order to get access to the boat. That title was all he needed to be let on the boat. [14]At the same time it also demonstrates how one can easily oscillate between these labels simply by adjusting their behaviors accordingly, as we see throughout the whole movie.

One of the hardest things for Randle to grasp is why any of the patients would willingly commit themselves to such a place: a place that automatically puts them on the "outside" of social acceptance. He quickly realizes that it is because they had nowhere else to go, and that they had nowhere else to be put into so they ended up there. Their inclusion into the mental institution excluded them from everything outside of it, and even if they could be a fisherman or a doctor for a day, they would ever truly be a part of the "normal" world. This logical acknowledgment could very well mean that they were

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[14] Slavoj Zizek gives the example of a Judge, who may be a despicable person in his daily life, but from the moment he puts on his judge "attire", his official clothing, he
[14] Slavoj Zizek gives the example of a Judge, who may be a despicable person in his daily life, but from the moment he puts on his judge "attire", his official clothing, he is treated like a judge, and everything that encompasses that title.

saner than most, possibly even saner than Randle because he still believes he has a place somewhere else when no one else does. By entering the insane world he had been unable to leave it. He acts out against the Nurse and gets lobotomized, a procedure used in treatment between in the 30's to the 50's[15]. He returns as a mere shadow of himself, not who he was and with no idea who he is now. His friend, Chief, who had been pretending to be insane as well, to avoid the society outside that he did not agree with, gives him a mercy kill by smothering him with a pillow and eventually escapes the mental institution regaining his place in society, which goes hand-in-hand with the idea of the Indian being treated as an 'outsider' in his own country. Randle's tragic fate is 'performed' for the sake of unleashing the Chief's strength. In the end Randle's rebellion is not in vain for he sacrifices himself so the Chief can be liberated. This is also the main reason for the film's popularity among hippies: The 'Indian' rediscovers his 'natural destiny', he has been contained/confined, but Randle provokes him to take action. Thus Randle's simulation of madness has resulted into the Chief questioning his own insanity, and discovering he should not be kept hidden away, and he breaks himself free.

Randle's act brings out something in the Chief and makes him face his reality, as opposed to hiding from it in confinement. He makes him question his own actions and consider that it can not be as easy as saying if someone is not fitting in the society they must learn to live outside of it. Just as Randle's extreme fits of insanity provoke a reaction and contemplation from the Chief, so does The Joker to Batman in *The Dark Knight*. The Joker's actions make Batman reflect on his own, questioning what it means to undertake action from an extralegal position. Despite this common denominator, there are crucial differences as well, since Randle rebelled while locked up in an institution, whereas The Joker was roaming freely causing chaos in an already corrupt Gotham City.

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[15] This was one of the many cruel treatments done on mental patients. It is also demonstrated in *A Clockwork Orange*.

2.2 The Anarchist Clown

We have been using many variations of the word madman, fool, insane, crazy, mentally disturbed, distracted, and the list goes on, but one of the words we have yet to use when speaking about madness is "clown". The main reason we are going through the history of the fool and his sometimes synonym the clown, is explained by Faye Ran in her article "Modern Tragicomedy and the Fool", she says that "The fool's philosophic 'modernity' should not, however, obscure the fact that fool behaviors are based on antecedent traditions and patterns of subversion" (p. 1). In spite of the interest of this thesis to see where the fool fits in and a more current definition of madness, there is also a need to understand where they once were before we can see where they are now. The film *The Dark Knight* was created during a time that followed the tragic events of 9/11, the terrorist attack on the United States. Many of the texts on The Joker point to a connection between the storyline and the tragic events on the United States. Following the tragedy films began to follow a pattern of post-apocalyptical storylines. The main characters were to deal with a world, post-catastrophe and try to survive it as best they could. 9/11 brought a fear to the United States, and they took a severe blow to their belief in their indestructibility. In his dissertation, Dan Hassler-Forest, says "The attacks of 9/11 affected the popular fantasies and fears associated with New York City as the archetypal modern metropolis, which in turn influenced its representation in popular culture" (Ch 3, Pg 11). He discusses the effects that 9/11 has on film by making New York City seem vulnerable, and then have them survive every attack upon them. A hero always came to save them in the end and again all was balanced in the heart of the U.S. "These narratives serve as representations of a multitude of contemporary anxieties relating to globalized capitalism, the death of the subject, the absence of historicity in postmodern culture, and the increasing virtualization of life in the contemporary global city" (pg. 111). Hassler-Forest describes Gotham as a dystopian depiction that contrasts the utopian urban fantasy (pg. 112). Gotham is a city loosely based on modern day American city, just enough to resonate, but not enough to be exact to any one in particular. "Just as the cinema developed the modern metropolis simultaneously as a utopia and as a dystopia, the popular superhero narratives in comic strips also presented urban space as an exciting,

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dangerous, and quintessentially modern setting" (pg. 114). Gotham is a city of such corruption and chaos that there seems to be a lot more freedom to roam either as a vigilante or as a criminal, it comes as expected when a city is such a slum, and the police, who are meant to be those who serve and protect, are doing much less protecting than necessary or required to keep the citizens safe. The good guys are the bad guys and sometimes the seemingly bad guys can have more integrity than the ones posing as good.

In the midst of this vulnerability, films about human beings survival seemed to take precedent. *The Dark Knight* was filmed in the middle of George Bush's War on Terror, which led to an expansion of figures of authority that functioned outside the law, such as Batman does in the film. The film offers a more complicated depiction than what Bush defines as what is only 'good' and as only 'bad', or good vs. bad. As quoted by Hassler-Forest, Matthew Wolf-Meyer says "heroes that fail to conform to the conservative ideology – heroes that are often seen as terrorists to the societies that they are a part of, but to the reader, existing outside of the fictional world, the truth of their heroic actions is better understood for the struggle that is (pg. 117). Many of the superheroes have conflicting characteristics while Batman enjoys being considered an outsider and staying on the other side of the law, he is very often seen by society as a marginalized vigilante, and sometimes even as a criminal.

"In the narrative of *The Dark Knight*, the citizens of Gotham City are faced with a series of binary choices that leave no room for alternatives. This binary narrative logic is embodied most explicitly by the central conflict presented by the film between its protagonist and its primary antagonist: Batman stands for order, and the Joker stands for chaos, while all the characters that seem to fill in the middle ground are swiftly eliminated from the playing field. The central division between the two main characters goes beyond the Manichean binary of good vs. evil that is so familiar from the (post) classical Hollywood film; instead it introduces the Joker as the embodiment of a paradigm shift that forces the other characters to redefine their definitions of these terms. While attempts are made within the narrative to make sense of the Jokers' actions, all

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such efforts are consistently contradicted at several key points in the dialogue, by the Joker himself as well as by other characters" (pg. 145)

There is a constant need for another side to the coin in a city like Gotham. Kindness always comes with a catch, with an ulterior motive, and those who are entirely pure and good, can end up being an evil monster. The film shows that the only way for an outsider operating from an extralegal position is to accept his own darkness. The illusion of a certain level of goodness (represented by white knight Harvey Dent) can only be maintained because Batman is prepared to take responsibilities for all the mischief, performed by Two Face. The very important role of The Joker is that he – as a figure without an explicit agenda – has provoked this scenario. And thus, The Joker can be said to hold up a mirror to those who claim to fight injustice: one can only clean up the streets on the condition that one takes on an evil guise. And that precisely, is the main difference with Bush, who all the time acts as if he is someone who has the moral right on his side. But he can only do so, since there is no Joker around who could point out the utter falseness of this position.

Todd McGowan in *The Fictional Christopher Nolan* says, "Under even the most benign historical circumstances, injustice is more powerful than justice, and as a result, justice requires an exceptional figure who operates outside of the periphery of the law" (pg. 142). Both Batman and The Joker operate under these expectations, but also these margins, they take the law into their own hands, one for the sake of order, the other for chaos. This label we put on those who were threatening the safety of the "good" citizens, such as evil, or villain, seem to put weight on our expectations of them. Those who were purely evil were distanced from the "every day", "regular" citizen, and put in the same box as fanatics, lunatics and madmen, because, of course, only those without reason and wit would ever be able to do such a thing. Those who were deviants or not purely good, were marginalized and/ or treated to believe that they could never be good. "These narrative choices have encouraged critics and audiences alike to interpret *The Dark Knight* as an allegorical representation of America's Bush-era War on Terror, in which the Joker 'can very easily stand in propagandistically for 'America's enemies'' (Pistelli),

and which conservative critics have described as 'a paean of praise to the fortitude and moral courage that has been shown by George W. Bush' (Klavan)" (Hassler – Forest, pg. 145, 146)

But whereas Bush regards his 'war on terror' as a legitimate fight for justice, Batman accepts the criminal nature of his interventions. He comes to realize that he is only acting according to The Joker's continuous attempts to create chaos.

In addition to being the second highest grossing film of all time, it indirectly engaged contemporary political questions. This film is the second part of Christopher Nolan's *Batman* series, based on DC comics[16]' superhero of the same name. In this sequel the defender of Gotham, Batman, (played by Christian Bale) is joined in his crusade by the newly elected district attorney Harvey Dent in an attempt to abolish the high crime rate in the city. Besides the usual small-time criminals and the mafia that roam the streets of Gotham, Batman and his consorts are faced with a bigger threat than they had ever seen, a criminal mastermind calling himself The Joker. The Joker's main goal seems to be to cause as much uproar and commotion as he possibly can. He aims to cause conflict and chaos wherever he goes. Bruce Wayne, the billionaire playboy under the Batman mask is impressed by the idealism and purity of Harvey Dent so he backs him and lends his support (in spite of him dating his former love Rachel Dawes, played by Maggie Gyllenhaal), saying that he is the hero that the city needs, and because the belief in someone's ability to be good is what could save Gotham, and what was lost with the murder of the Wayne's, Bruce's parents. When they were murdered in the beginning of the Batman Saga the fall to chaos began and all things started to fall out of place and order, because they had represented hope and good. Now Harvey Dent could be that same glow; that same thing people would strive for, the thing Batman could never be while he maintained his function as a masked, unnamed vigilante.

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[16] DC Comics is one of the largest American companies in comic books and related media publishing. It is responsible for iconic characters such as Superman, Batman, The Flash, Wonder Woman, and all the remaining members of The Justice League. For decades DC has been one of the two leading comic book companies, along with Marvel Comics. DC originally stood for Detective Comics, but then was changed so just the initials were the official name.

The Joker offers to kill "The Batman" for the mob, for a price, but of course, it seems that he would have gladly done it for free. He does not see Batman as his direct enemy, but as someone who simply gets in the way of his manipulative plays, and who constantly foils his plans to cause as much mayhem as he can. He revels in the struggle between the mafia and Batman and hopes to jump on board the conflict train with them. He has no clear agenda, but his qualms seem to be with the fact that each and everyone else is driven by self-interests. So his actions are meant to expose that people behave unethically: no one seems prepared to do anything unless there is some sort of personal gain in it. Everything that the Joker seems to do requires some sort of audience and spectacle, but it is for his own entertainment, and everyone else is the show. His grand finale included two ships, one filled with convicts and the officers escorting them, and the other with innocent women, men, and children. He gave them each a detonator to the opposite ship telling them that they could choose, to live, but blow up the other ship, or to let the other ship blow them up before. If neither of them made a decision he would blow up them both. He based his "little experiment" on human nature and believed that deep down everyone was evil and selfish and given the chance to save themselves over someone else, they would always choose themselves. He wanted to see the real evil in everyone revealed and brought to the surface. In the end he believed that everyone was just like him, and the social experiment would demonstrate this. He did it for entertainment, but also to prove that goodness is just an illusion and that a belief in goodness can only be preserved by acting from a 'dark' position. Moreover the experiment with the ship is successful, because no one used the detonator, which means that not everyone is as selfish as had probably assumed and people end up showing themselves capable of ethical behavior. Prior to this, however, the Joker had done a very similar thing to Batman. He rigged both Rachel and Dent to explosives in two different locations. When there was only enough time to save one of them he revealed the addresses and Batman had to choose which one he was willing to save, the woman he loved, or the man who he believed could be the new hero to Gotham and the change that they very much needed. Either decision would have made him both a savior and a killer because he would have had to live with the decision of letting one die. On the phone with both victims Dent begs Batman to choose Rachel, and he does, but when Batman bursts

in to Dent's building he realizes that the Joker had switched both addresses and by then both men knew it meant Rachel's death. Until the end Dent believed that Batman had chosen him to save all along and that he had just let Rachel die. Dent lost more than Rachel that day. Half of Dent's face was burned off in the explosion, he then became the vindictive Two-faced, who would not stop until everyone he blamed for Rachel's death was killed, coining himself the phrase "you either die a hero or live long enough to become the villain". Of course, because a somewhat happy ending was still needed, Batman defeats the bad guys. The Joker dies with a sinister laugh and permanent smile on his face as if even in death he found amusement. And Batman chose to hide Dent's "second face" and let him die the hero that Gotham deserved, one that would die fighting crime. What Harvey Dent had been trying to accomplish could not die with him, but become a symbol, stronger than that of a bat, to fight for a better city.

Many things are to be taken out of this story. Andrew Klaven wrote in his article "What Bush and Batman have in common",

> "There seems to me no question that the Batman film *The Dark Knight*, currently breaking every box office record in history, is at some level paean of praise to the fortitude and oral courage that has been shown by George W. Bush in this time of terror and war. Like W, Batman is vilified and despised for confronting terrorists in the only terms they understand. Like W, Batman sometimes had to push the boundaries of civil rights to deal with an emergency, certain that he will re-establish those boundaries when the emergency is past." (Pg. 125)

There seem to be many similarities in the former president and the vigilante who has to act outside of the law in order to maintain it. It is exactly this dichotomy that Batman represents (he wears a mask like a villain, but a uniform like a hero), that allows him to be the "hero that Gotham deserves, not the hero Gotham needs". But on the other hand, the focus is put on the biggest difference between the two. Whereas Bush believes it is as simple as being one thing or another exclusively ('you are with us or against us'), Batman learns, and the film demonstrates that there is not just a blur in who is on which side, but

that sides may not even exist since they cannot be that easily determined, you are instead capable of both good and evil.

There are many characters, uniforms, and masks that function either to hide an identity or to reveal one in the film. We will start with the figure of the clown that the Joker represents. He wears a type of mask created with white face paint that makes him have a sinister permanent smile that demonstrates his grotesque scars. He represents quite the duality, on the one hand he is a clown, who is supposed to be funny, and wants to make people laugh, but on the other hand he is so strongly associated to mayhem and destruction that the contrasting sides make him much more scary than if he were just a regular criminal.[17] In David Robb's introduction of the volume of articles called *Clowns, Fools and Picaros: Popular Forms in Theatre, Fiction and Film*, he describes the function that a mask such as the Joker's can have, a "mask may serve as a projection of a society's illusions or repressed utopian longings; or it may function as an ironic celebration of the 'other' that is feared, denied and substituted by 'falsehoods'" (p. 1). I believe that his mask is most likely a product of both circumstances. The reason he is such a sinister villain is because of the deeply embedded notions of a clown that said that we were going to feel better after seeing one. The clown was there to entertain with light humor and uplift our spirits, "if there are no clowns to make them into fun, and the Utopia has not yet arrived in which they [social and personal problems] are eliminated, what do we do with those anxieties, neuroses, and deep-seated problems which it is part of the clown's functions to express and exorcise?" (Robert Cheesmond, "Where the Antic Sits", p. 6)[18] So it is the expectation of what a clown should be doing that throw us off when he does the complete opposite, this is societies projection onto what they always expected of the clown, to laugh and make them feel better, but when the Joker laughs, there is no one who feels better, it usually means that someone is literally dying for his amusement. Society becomes the clowns to him, which goes against popular beliefs. On

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[17] There is some possible connection to the 'grotesque' with the Jokers appearance. One of the definitions of the word is to look fantastically ugly or absurd. In his case this seems deliberate because of the heightening of his deformed mouth and absurd notion of the clown.

[18] An article part of *Clowns, Fools and Picaros: Pupular Forms in Theatre, Fiction and Film.*

the other hand, the second statement of Robb's mask theory seems to fit the Joker's description as well because of the deformity on his mouth, that was cut opening the sides of his mouth much more than would ever be desired. His catchphrase is "why so serious?" as he mocks the fact that his face will never make him look serious, but always in a perpetual state of sinister mockery and false happiness. At the same time his make-up, over the course of the film, starts to run, blur and smudge, much like where we categorize him. He has no fear of losing his mask because its function is not to mask his identity, but to demonstrate his complete lack of one. The monster exists under the mask as well. Mcgowan says "He is the pure fiction without any truth hiding underneath" (pg. 136).

He believed people would see him as a clown with or without the make-up, so he just emphasized the joke and took agency over it. He was already an outcast, due to his imperfections, and would be always seen as the "other" or monster that was not quite human, so he beat society to the punch and embraced his title of the clown, and turned it upside down. Without the choices of the Joker, to break down the stereotype of the clown, he already represented a duality in his own by taking on the mask of the clown. Robb says "the clown continually inhabits a world on the boundary between perceived opposites: structure and non-structure, reality and dream, comedy and tragedy, reason and madness" (p. 1). It is in that duality that we have seen that we find a madman, in between reason and unreason, like King Lear finding himself between being a former king and becoming just a shadow of one, and Randle McMurphy torn between a delinquent and a psychiatric patient.

In the film, the Joker gives an apt description of the strong differences between him and the Batman. He says that everyone in Gotham is guilty of being a part of something called 'scheming'. He says to Harvey,

> "I don't have a plan. The mob has plans, the cops have plans. You know what I am, Harvey? I'm a dog chasing cars. I wouldn't know what to do if I caught one. I just do things. I'm a wench in the gears. I hate plans. Yours, theirs, everyone's. Maroni has plans. Gordon has plans. Schemers trying to control their worlds. I am not a schemer. I show schemers how pathetic their attempts to control things

really are. So when I say what happened to you and your girlfriend wasn't personal, you know I'm telling the truth."

In this he highlights how any attempt to gain control is rooted in selfishness. Control is impossible and a weakness, but the fact that everyone has a plan except him also makes him the only person who does not act out of self-interest. His deliberate irrationality is what makes him the farthest away from corrupt because he wouldn't be lucid enough to 'scheme' and have ulterior motives. You can always know what to expect from him, chaos and disorder, and it is written all over his face. A face that is honest and requires no lies, no masks. Because the Joker never searches for personal gains, when Batman interrogates him he says, "You have nothing to threaten me with", because he has nothing to lose, as he never expected to win anything, and cares about nothing, he merely does it to cause an effect.

Palgrave Simpson illuminates this paradoxical duality and recognizes the social expectations of the clown:

"Yet what is to be said? Are not all the clown's enormities considered merely very fine jokes, which everybody ought to admire and applaud? Was not the 'jolly old clown' applauded and admired when he taught these cruel tricks, and set these dangerous examples? And isn't he 'such a good fellow!' Why, everybody laughed at him, and said so. And why should naturally cruel and mischievous urchins be blamed for what was hailed with delight and glorious prototype?" ("Stage and Street Popular Types, *The Theater,* p. 230-231)

Is the Joker rebelling against his expectations or is he embracing them and causing a spectacle for his audience? Simply put, he seems to be doing both. He is rebelling against the expectation to be funny, but he has not given up the expectation of causing mayhem and entertainment. His audience just has shifted; his audience seems to be himself. Of course, he does not do anything without spectators around, but the show is for himself and his laughter demonstrates his success, this success is the scariest and most

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dangerous part about him. From the moment his laughter is heard, everyone around should know that he has accomplished what he wanted. This is why, when he dies, an act that should otherwise not be entertaining to the person dying, and he laughs, a shiver goes up your spine and you wonder what it must be that he is so happy about, and fear is instilled in what he may have accomplished. His accomplishment was, that even though he could not change the people on the boats, who he believed would inevitably show their true evil colors, he did succeed in turning Harvey Dent, whose goal was to save the city, into a murderer. Dent's idealism was lost, what surfaced was somewhat of a killing protégé to the Joker, another "causer of mayhem", and another one broken. When it came to Dent and who he had turned into, the Joker won, evil triumphed over good, and he died successfully. The Joker never lived to see Batman cover up this victory, so he died believing he accomplished his ultimate goal and that chaos would reign and terrorize the city even in his absence. Or so it seems, but the Joker's biggest achievement, however, was in making Batman question if what he was doing was purely good. When Batman takes the blame for Harvey's evil deeds, he is seen as the evil one, this unselfish act is what finally makes him a true hero.

> "The clown figure embodies a different set of primordial emotions, all the feelings that are outlawed by the fixed conventions of masculine identity and the society fixes them in place. The clown plays fool to the hero, the effeminate one to the manly, the unsettled maudlin one to the composed leading man […] Is he strong enough to escape all the wreckage he causes, or a victim whose slightest plan must disintegrate? […] He bodies forth the archetype of feeling defended against, a feeling that is then discovered or aroused in others by the clown but always masked in himself." (Ann Belford Ulanov and Barry Ulanov, *The Witch and the Clown,* p. 9)

The Joker is the antagonist to the hero, who is Batman, and when they are side by side, Batman looms over him in a body-armor fully equipped with metal abs and a mask of his own, while the Joker has a tailored garish purple and green suit that elevates the ridiculousness of the pair. Batman's masculinity oozes out of him from head to toe and

even through his mouth with his deep, raspy voice, but the Joker does not have a effeminate voice or other traits, he simply laughs giddily and wears make-up in a totally unorthodox fashion, deliberately sloppy as if to emphasize a sad mood, "The Joker's evil provides the basis for any ethical heroism because it highlights and strives to eliminate the evil of calculation that defines subject's original relation to the law. He thereby constitutes the ground on which the ethical act can emerge" (McGowan, pg. 141)

The political relevance of The Joker is that he is problematizing any easy catagorization between 'good' and 'bad', which can be regarded, despite his obvious anarchism, as a beneficial stance in a climate that requires citizens to take up positions. It echoes in the former president of the United States George W. Bush's speech post 9/11 where he implied that you are 'either with us, or against us' when he said: "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them"[19]. Slavoj Zizek analyses who the Joker is in his *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* and declares that "The truly disturbing thing about *The Dark Knight* is that it elevates a lie into a general social principle: the principal of organization of our social, political life, as if our societies can remain stable, can function, only if based on a lie, as if the truth – and this telling the truth is embodied in the Joker – means destruction". This lie can be seen in several ways, whether it is in the mask that he wears, denying the city of his true identity in order to represent the symbol of justice that he believes the city needs, or it can be seen in the end, when he makes the decision to take the blame for the murder of Harvey Dent so that he is never revealed for the maniacal revenge-fueled killer that he became.

The Joker's eerie unpredictability is pivotal in helping Batman take up an ethical position: a superhero cannot work within the limits of the law, but is at best an extralegal supplements to the law, bordering on criminality.

The Joker demonstrates the consequences of embracing the evil expectations that could have been believed that society put upon them. " Literature, drama and art continually change, forging and reflecting new consciousness; the figure of the clown

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http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911addresstothenation.htm.
George W. Bush's response to the acts of terrorism on 9/11.

mutates too, but it is always there – as far as any society needs or allows it to be there – providing the foil for the shortcomings dominant discourse or the absurdities of human behavior" (Robb, pg. 1).

To look at a character like the Joker and say 'we did this', 'we' being society, is difficult. It makes you wonder if it were not for the giant spotlight put on them saying 'make me laugh' and 'entertain me' would they not find solace in their own tiny differences and not find a need to fit themselves in to the mold that was created. We made the court jester suit and promptly asked them to dance, yet we expected them to do it from afar and never cross over, in fear of us understanding madness so much that we become mad ourselves. We are no longer speaking of the patient in the psychiatric ward, but in the search to 'fit in' and to know where you stand and what your title is. It makes you wonder what came first, the title of The Fool, that one then tried to fit in to, or the act of being different and then being called 'a fool'. I believe that the more you are called something the more you start to believe that you may be it. So the Joker was called a freak and a monster, so he became one and acted it out for his audience. The Joker forces the introspection on how much good one can actually do when acting outside of a law that was created to serve and protect in the best interest of all. In his forced insanity he ends up with an extremely lucid way of thinking and he says what most seem to just be living with and accepting, that people only act out of self interest and good is never entirely good if you have ulterior motives for the goodness.

In the beginning Harvey Dent represents pure good, and the villain should be its counter-side and represent pure evil (which speaks strongly to the monster he becomes as Two-Faced), but as Harvey starts to slip over the line and treads dangerously close to becoming the villain himself, it makes you wonder that if the line can blur with good, can it also be possible that no one can be purely evil either? Could the same question be made about madness and sanity? As Harvey starts to make less sense, and verges on insanity after the loss of Rachel, does the Joker maybe start to make more and more sense as well? Many lines seem to be mere suggestions and starting points for society to base itself on, but in reality the oscillation over both lines are much more common, where a hero is not always good and a villain is not always bad, maybe a madman can have moments of clarity and someone deemed as sane can sometimes experience moments of total loss.

Conclusion

I started this paper with a study of Michel Foucault's work in *Madness and Civilization* in hopes to begin to understand how previous ideas of insanity may have been formed. After seeing the patterns and connections that were possibly to trace through different forms of art in order to find the mentality which followed around the term 'madness', as Foucault did, I took an archaeological glance at the history and used his own work as reference, and incorporate the studies of Bedlam, Shakespeare's stage and his fools to try to understand a modern definition of madness. I analyzed two popular films *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *The Dark Knight.* I wanted to demonstrate how the attempt at confining and 'tucking away' the disease or disturbance called insanity also had effects of exposing those who were deemed insane, which can be seen in Randle's outcome of becoming insane, and the contrast to the Chief's realization that he was not in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.* In the case of the first film we find a man who chose to 'play' insane instead of being deemed a criminal and have to go to prison. What he found inside the confined walls of the psychiatric ward was that the expectations to reform were exactly what made you insane to begin with. If he said he was insane, then he was going to become insane, the easy way or the hard way. But we also met the Chief, a man who had been there for several years always believing there to be something different about himself, so he considered himself insane up until he saw real insanity in Randle and realized his desire to be free.

In the second film we see a different kind of insanity, and a different realization. We see a product of a post catastrophe in the United States and a state of fear that searches for order and a clear line between good and evil. The Joker is a criminal mastermind whose goal is to cause as much destruction and chaos as he possibly can, but he seems to do a little bit more than that. The clear separation between good and evil is slightly blurred. He plays with this idea of smudging the lines (just like his makeup over the course of the film) away so you are not always sure who fits into which category, and sometimes you even fit into both. This messes with the preconceived notion seen in George W. Bush's statements that if you are not evil, then you must be good, and vice-versa. Since The Joker does not pursue egotistical goals, his anarchism forces the so-

called 'good' people to abandon their presumed inherent goodness. To reach him and be at the same level you would have to be a little insane yourself, or he would have to be destroyed. I argued that a major struggle is evident in both films in a sense. This struggle is society's needs to label things and to act in accordance to either good or evil. The Joker looked to blur the dichotomy of 'good' vs. 'evil' by attempting to make everyone a little more evil, by turning them into murderers in order to save their own lives. He is a commentary on the decisions we are sometimes forced to make when dealing with saving our own lives or of those we love. When he had Batman chose between saving Rachel and Dent, by saving one, he would have to kill another. Potentially, the ultimate form of anarchy would be to make one question whether they were insane or not, or whether they were not simply good, or bad, but both. Harvey Dent's transformation exposed that under each heroic act of goodness, evil lurks as well. This is evident in Dent when he becomes Two-faced, his evil alter ego who looks to destroy everyone he deems responsible for Rachel's death. It seems that after the discovery of a constantly present evil, it is better to adopt and incorporate evil in order to perform actions from an extralegal position. One can only operate in the service of the 'good' of community by accepting one's status as a criminal outsider. They are the mask that they wear, a clean, white projection of what we wish to see or what we are expected and trained to look for, The Joker who wears his to remind everyone that he is the monster on the inside and the outside, and Batman who wears his to hide one identity by distracting you with the exterior one. In both films, there is at least once instance where those representing the 'sane' and those representing the 'insane' are put in the same room, when Nurse Ratched sits with all the patients of the psych ward in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and when Batman and the Joker are in the same room during the Joker's interrogation, and at both instances it is difficult to tell exactly who is supposed to be who. King Lear and his fool are progressively blurring their lines as well. The fool is revealed as the wisest of men and the King's outcome is to be weak and foolish. The Joker can be seen as a descendant of the fool from Shakespeare who looks to critique the way society works and the effects of 'forcing' one to act out the role provided to them. When the main characters are confronted with the seemingly opposing side, they are forced to see what they do not wish to be acting very much like they would. At times during Batman's interrogation he bursts out in blind moments of

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rage, while the Joker keeps his calm and laughs, his complacency forces Batman to switch sides. It is easier to make the assumption that 'they' are not 'us' when we can't see that 'they' looks and act very much like 'us'. We try to highlight the differences out of fear that the similarities are too many. A mask works the same way a wall does. A wall seeks to separate two distinct sides: the insane and the sane in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The mask separates Bruce Wayne, the bad boy billionaire from Batman the hero in *The Dark Knight*; The Fool and the King have their defining characteristics in *King Lear* as well and it is their social status and titles that keep them separated. The Joker is the character that seems to have a mask, but as the film goes on it slowly wipes away and the same monster is on both sides. He does not segregate either of his sides and he believes that it is not possible to do so. This revelation forces Batman to accept his potential for being perceived as a vigilante if you compare him to the law, which he acts outside of. Just as Harvey Dent who becomes Two Face, and wears both of his sides for everyone to see. The Joker teaches Batman that he will best serve his people by being a Dark Knight, an unknown hero, because from the moment he seeks applause or gratitude he is acting from an unethically false position. Batman should not take credit for his heroic acts, but should accept that the only way to be a true hero and to act as an extralegal outsider is to take responsibility for misdeeds, even when he has not committed them. He should be both a criminal and a hero, good and bad, just as all fools, clowns, and madmen are both sane and insane. Never just one or the other, but always be both, feeding one side more than the other.

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