CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENTS OF INTENT: What is the question?

*it is not art which imitates insanity, but the perception of insanity which imitates art*

*Sander Gilman (1982) p.xv*

This chapter will be concerned with the need to outline the parameters of the thesis, its principal areas of interest and the background to the study. It will briefly review some of the major issues in the representation of Madness in popular film and move towards establishing the currency in which the analysis will be conducted. It will, where necessary, indicate the understanding of particular terms which will be employed throughout the thesis and lay the foundations for what follows.

Establishing a Discourse

*Every institution gives a position. It does not give a legitimation*

*Micel de Certeau (1986) p.19*

The term discourse is to be understood as much more than a set of statements or positional attitudes, and more in the sense that Foucault made familiar (1972), that is, to encompass the way in which what we consider to be knowledge about a subject is organised, regulated, contextualised and understood. Foucault’s position suggests that a discursive regime, through its use of techniques, analysis, power relations and concepts will begin to create its own perspective on reality and to constitute its own objects which may then become linked with aspects of specific professionalised practice, example psychiatry. That always opens up the possibilities of difference, because it invites an oppositional account in a dialectic, but constantly reminds us of and returns to the ideological context. Nevertheless, although Foucault is vague when locating the moment of change from one dominant discourse to another and the forces of change, his consideration of power relations remains important.

Bordwell (1996) identifies a number of tacit assumptions that form lines of continuity through the Cultural Studies debate; significantly that “human practices and institutions are, in all significant respects, socially constructed” - a theme to which the thesis will return
many times - that “understanding how viewers interact with films requires a theory of subjectivity” - an aspect of analysis that permeates much of the detailed response to the films in question - that “the spectator’s response to cinema depends on identification” - a point which leads on from the previous assumption and without which much of the intensity of the cinematic experience is lost - and finally that “verbal language supplies an appropriate and adequate analogue for film” (pp.13-17) - that is that we talk about it in terms of familiar metaphor and meaning. In addition, Tolson (1996) acknowledges the area of overlap with “classical semiology” but stresses that it is “also showing in very practical, institutional and historical ways, how realities have been constructed” (p.196). The drive behind the thesis is to begin to examine the way in which madness, the sufferer and the mental health care system are portrayed in popular culture and particularly in the popular cinema.

Within this thesis Madness (and the capital letter is often used to denote the full complexity implied by the term within the discourse) is not seen as a static or immutable category and will be principally understood in terms of the material itself, that is to say that a checklist of clinical criteria or first rank symptoms will not be the single factor which indicates a film’s suitability or applicability to the thesis. As Ussher (1991) notes, to “use the term madness is to recognise the meaning attached to the perception of illness or dysfunction in the psychological domain - the stigma” (p.11). Furthermore, the term Madness is not to be understood as coterminous with mental illness or psychiatric disorder both of which accept and engage the medical discourse, although the reality and terrible severity and seriousness of them is readily acknowledged and always to be kept in mind. Neither is Mental Disorder, as defined by the authoritative classification reference The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV (DSM-IV) (American Psychiatric Association 1994), the principal focus, although it is of considerable textual and thematic importance. Rather, the Madness that will concern the study is a popular conception; a lay understanding that that embraces the formal taxonomy as well as self description, strange behaviour that seems to only exist at the extreme fringes of our experience, altered states and borderline conditions. It is also a more significant historical term, and as might become evident, in many ways the past is still with us. Therefore, if an action or attitude or state of mind is represented as being or comprising a facet of mental illness it will come within the scope of the study, but only as one part.

As Bates (1977) shows, models of madness also incorporate models of the mind. The representations and models of the mind that are developed aid the discourse because they
allow for extensions and implications to be incorporated without the need for over-elaborate explanation. Nevertheless, sometimes a model may become so pervasive or so well-inculcated into the body of popular knowledge that it seems to have appropriated the terms it uses and excludes them from any other interpretation or meaning. In the case of Freudian psychoanalysis the model of the mind can be seen as exactly that, a model through which abstract ideas can be represented. However, terms such as unconscious (with or without the definite article), dreams and symbolism are not to be seen as entirely the property of Freud and his successors. It is possible to use the word “unconscious” to indicate something of which one is not consciously aware, perhaps at that moment, perhaps for a prolonged period. Authors who see themselves as physiologists (Sacks 1988) or sociologists (Durkheim 1984) may use very similar words to very different effect. Within this study some frequently used terms may benefit from an initial broad statement of location.

Although it is problematic to name the actors in the interaction without entering a debate about the political underpinnings of the terminology and the implicit values that inform it, in what follows the sufferer, sometimes called the client, the patient or even the consumer, is understood to be that person, persons or group defined by the particular conception of madness and may at times include those belonging to a particular social group the definition of which may change from time to time or place to place. As Lillian Feder (1980) has it “the madman ...does not exist alone. He both reflects and influences those involved with him. He embodies and symbolically transforms the values and aspirations of his family, his tribe and his society, even if he renounces them” (p.5).

The very definition of madness is mercurial itself. It is not just that the words change from lunacy to mental illness, so does the meaning, the conception, what is included and excluded, the progressive categorisation, compartmentalisation and definition. Prior (1993) draws attention to the importance of the representation of significant concepts, apart from the disorders themselves, such as more anthropological understandings of “community” or “family” in the social organization of mental illness. Much of this historical development is one of choice, and the recognition or not of choice is ideologically informed. The way in which the Twentieth Century has educated its students to believe in the psychotic/neurotic polarity or the functional/organic divide (Mayer-Gross, Slater & Roth 1977, Stafford-Clark & Smith 1978) seems, to a critical eye, to be only one of a multiplicity of alternatives. Boyle (1990) demonstrates this when she deconstructs the positivist model that has dominated the definition and understanding of schizophrenia, by any account far too
common and destructive to be ignored, by contextualising and challenging the preconceptions upon which the social constructions are built. She does not set out to dismiss the concept, but to critically contextualise it and thereby listen to distant and dissident voices. For Boyle (1990) there is a process of self-justification and circularity in the sort of research that is legitimised and valued which all make perfect sense if the initial premises are accepted, but seem less secure if they are critically questioned. She endeavours to engage in continual and restless debate and not sink into any stasis of self-satisfaction. She adopts a position that will be reiterated below that researchers tend to find what they are looking for and discover the answers to the questions they ask, not the ones they do not ask.

One facet of such an approach to research is to move towards an understanding of how and why those choices are or have been made, their precedents, antecedents, logic, context and consequences. However, it is important to note that the material form of such ideologies are found all around us. They are in the rules that govern our daily lives, that prescribe and prescribe, that become ideology made solid; a solidity which will not, for the immediate present or until there has been some further examination, melt into air. A clear example of the way this assumes a concrete form is the way in which there has been a development of the definitions of diagnostic terms and criteria in various forms of mental health legislation which both prescribe and prescribe. In Australia, a good indicator because of its relatively short history of Europeanisation and legislation, a progression can be seen from the Lunacy Statute of 1867 to Section 8 of the Mental Health Act of Victoria (1986) which specifically excludes the diagnosis of an intellectual disability from the category of recognised mental disorders, a distinction that was not previously apparent. Moral imbecility, idiocy and dementia praecox have likewise fallen from use, although, as an aside it may be noted that melancholia has retained a certain descriptive favour. Nevertheless, before 1986, if the law saw no distinction between the two major categorical terms there was little reason for the practitioners or public to do so either. Professional discourse and public conceptions move in some sense of reflective synchrony albeit sometimes like drunken waltzers, and the mental health care system, which also moves with the dominant current, would also not dissent.

For the purposes of this study the mental health care system, unless otherwise made clear, is understood to include the provision of care (institutions, asylums, psychiatrists' offices, clinics and the like) irrespective of whether it is legally prescribed or voluntarily given, or privately or publicly funded, the nature of care, be it custodial, physical, pharmacological,
psycho-analytical, social, penal, but not families, as well as those who provide the care (nurses, doctors and sundry others). It also is taken to encompass the way in which the experience of mental illness, in a subjective (that of the sufferer) and objective (that of observers, be they carers or others) sense, is understood.

It is not the intention of the study to redress unjust treatments or misunderstandings about the particular brand of psychiatry that is presented in film. This is a line of attack that Snyder (1988) directs against the Gabbard brothers in their 1987 book, *Psychiatry and the Cinema*. It seems that to concentrate on whether or not the actions of a psychiatrist in one film or another fall within the accepted mainstream practice of real-life psychiatry, or whether it is a faithful representation of the tenets of psychoanalysis only serves to divide the critical debate into squabbling interest groups. Snyder seems concerned to defend psychoanalytic practice against the distorted attack of “the physicians” (p.91), but does not seem to consider that his position may equally be a constructed metaphorical understanding; he seems to be a true believer and almost forgets that the object of films is not to serve as a debating platform for the competing schools of psychiatry. Kaplan (1990) discusses the problem that the pairing of psychoanalysis and culture presents. Much of this confusion is created by the use of the same term to indicate quite different conceptions. She differentiates between the idea of psychoanalysis as a science, much as Freud liked to see it, psychoanalysis as medical practice, the familiar talking cure, and psychoanalysis as “a tool for analyzing literature and anthropological texts” (p.12), almost as a social ideological paradigm. This last conception she relates to the work of the humanities scholar, as opposed to academic or health practice, and further considers some important distinctions.

While it is difficult for her to sustain the argument that “psychoanalysis as a science ... has not interfered with the humanities method” (Kaplan 1990 p.12) because she gives no clear indication of what the “humanities method” is, and because it tends to contradict later statements about the ideology of the dominant discourse, Kaplan does make some useful distinctions. She considers psychoanalysis used to explain literary relationships, actions and motives; psychoanalysis as structurally an aesthetic discourse, constructing fictions and consisting of the use of dreams and the sub-conscious; psychoanalysis as a specific process or set of processes that a critic uses to illuminate a text; psychoanalysis as a historical, ideological and cultural discourse examining how and when psychoanalysis entered into the dominant social discourse; and psychoanalysis in a narrative discourse, used in the tale told in a text. In this way psychoanalytic concerns border on totalising moral or ontological theories and cannot be contained to limited clinical perceptions or definitions.
Currie (1995) is quite antipathetic to the nostrum of psychoanalysis, not only believing its premises to be false, in a wild, deep and unrescuable sense, but also rejecting the notion that the adoption of certain psychoanalytic perspectives can illuminate our understanding of film. He advocates the exploration of cognitive science which "treats the mind as a hierarchically organized structure with levels of more or less intelligent decision-making going on in it" (1995 p.xv). This position, while not too controversial, is extended as he attempts to ground itself in empirical evidence and excludes the possibility of treating film as an illusory medium and denying the spectator's identification with the viewpoint of the camera. Nor does he treat the notion of semiotic meaning being inherent in film-making enthusiastically because he directs the argument towards the parallel structure of linguistic and film semiotic languages rather than the meaning and metaphor which govern its allusory construction. His critique is both robust and lively, but stumbles on the perceived need to see a distinction between the literal and metaphorical and is firmly rooted in the rationalist paradigm for which a single, value-free (free that is, except for the value of being value-free) truth is achievable. The nature of Madness is such, and the nature of representation is such that contextual relativity and issues of ideological hegemony must always form the background on which theories are painted.

From a position that acknowledges contextual hegemony, psychoanalysis is important to the study not because it is subscribed to as an explanatory system, and not because psychoanalytic film theory will be used, but because it appears in some of Kaplan's (1990) guises throughout the cinematic representation of Madness. It is of particular interest in those cases where it is central to the narrative, for example in Secrets of a Soul (Dir. Pabst 1926), where it is clearly used by the film-makers in their construction of motive, as in Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960), and where it is part of the ideological foundations of the film, as shown in The Snake Pit (Dir. Litvak 1948). In all these cases it can be placed contextually, and in that sense can illuminate the study. In order to understand psychoanalytically inspired films it is necessary to scrutinise psychoanalysis as a cultural phenomenon.

An examination of the context within which a particular representation of psychiatry, patients and madness emerged needs to consider issues of the dominant discourse, aspects of ideological hegemony and the plasticity of representation. This may allow for a more substantial debate about the way in which we portray and understand ourselves and our concerns.
Representations of Madness

*I stept into Bedlem where I saw several poor miserable creatureis in chains; one of them was mad with making verses.*

*John Evelyn, 21st April 1657*

Concepts of madness neither exist in, nor emerge from a cultural vacuum. As a major component of social life, the way in which these aspects have been represented have also always been with us. The European tradition of Biblical illustration found, for example, the portrayal of Saul’s madness a rich seam to mine (Doob 1974, Gilman 1982) (Fig.1). Saul, possessed by an “evil spirit from God” (Samuel 1:14-23) was often used by prelates and commentators as a warning to us all about meddling with the devil, and the subject of possession and its resolution exercised many of the subtest minds (St Augustine 1988). His cure, by the music of David, has echoes today. We still talk, as Plato did, of “music soothing the savage beast” and it would seem entirely appropriate if all Occupational Therapists took David as their patron. It also foreshadows the idea that madness and the mind of madmen could only be reached by something that spoke beyond words, either spiritually or physically.

The miracle of the Gadarene swine (Gospel of Mark 5:1-15) is interesting in that it is the later commentators that impute sin and consequently a moral dimension into the story of this man of unclean spirit; something that would continue to have profound consequences for all the mentally ill. A syllogism developed whereby the devil was equated with sin, and sin was equated with madness, therefore there was an irrefutable link between the devil and madness. Further conflation of the two concepts is evident in “the fact that the same pictorial device (the devil dancing around and above the sinner’s/madman’s head) was (commonly) used to indicate both sin and madness” (Doob 1974 p.16).

Doob also suggests that Nebuchadnezzar, who provided Blake with an archetypical representation of the emerging physiognomy of madness in his 1795 engraving of the same name (Fig.2), is a fine example of the way medieval artists and commentators were able to explore the “three conventions of madness”, illustrating the reasons for which God may strike one mad: as “punishment, purgation (or) test” (p.54). She characterises the madness of the first as the “Mad Sinner”, whose disdain for the one true God is his undoing and
who is reduced to a bestial state. In the second, the "Unholy Wild Man", a temporary madness can be seen as a form of unconscious penitence, after which he can be received back into God's grace. The third convention, the "Holy Wild Man", is where madness is inflicted to test faith and virtue, not unlike the physical torments of Job. Doob does not limit the analysis to these two, but lists others, Biblical and otherwise, from Adam and Lucifer through Judas and Mary Magdelene to saints like Anthony, Paul and Gwther, the hairy anchorite and of course Christ himself, whose stories are told and illustrated and in whom madness is represented.

As early as the Thirteenth Century the medieval mystery plays of Wakefield and York provided more opportunities for the message of the church to be promulgated. These popular entertainments, played out by the local populace from a well-known script, were not short of a message from their sponsors, and they were intended to both instruct and reinforce public sentiments about diverse subjects including the nature of madness and sin (Doob 1974, Porter 1987). The view that Natoli (1995) has taken of Popular Film is echoed here.

The fascination with dramatic portrayals of madness followed a path that took in the stories of the Fourteenth Century Ship of Fools or Narrenschiff (Brant 1971), which together with its position in Foucault's thought, is worthy of a more detailed discussion to follow, through to the Elizabethan theatre (Dr Faustus, Hamlet (with its own internal reference to the madness of Hecuba), King Lear, Othello) and on to the Jacobean morbidity, "celebrated by Burton in orgiastic Jacobean profusion" (Porter 1987 p.21) of Webster, Kidd and Nashe.

Underlying all these representations of madness, however, is the prevailing social fabric and one of its principal warps (or maybe a weft), that madness, like all disease, is the visitation of the will of God. Madness becomes equated with sin in the Medieval construction because a disordered mind is clearly a disordered, possibly possessed soul. Secondly the image of God in Man is defiled in madness and thirdly because of the elaboration of the doctrine of original sin, in which Man brings about his own downfall. Doob (1974) explores this idea and ventures that it is more than just retrospective biblical interpretation where the metaphorical, symbolic and implied meanings supersede and become far more important than any literal and factual description. She cites Froissart's account of the madness of Charles VI of France as a prime example of contemporary commentary and concludes that matters of the spirit were indeed of utmost relevance and
"natural causes were not the most important ones" (p.49). This state of sin requires some penance and it is therefore unsurprising that familiar means of expiation such as fasting and (self) flagellation should become acceptable and common treatments for the disordered mind. Charles and his wife also undertook several pilgrimages to achieve a cure by grace, but only met with temporary relief. In short, the victim is to blame and that clearly dictates the way the treatment shall proceed. Madness in these cases is being dealt with quite differently from sin, and this has a contemporary resonance when the notion of sin may be supplanted by criminality. Madness is seen as a visitation but sin is wilful; criminality, in its more modern construction is still dealing with these questions.

As Gilman (1982) details, there is a wealth of representations of fools and melancholics, treatments and incarcerations, visions and nightmares, grotesques and devils, pathos and ridicule, allegory and satire. It would be a dead soul indeed that could not be moved by the aching sadness of Dürer’s Melancholia I of 1514 (Fig.3) which seems to be so modern in its concerns with the emptiness and hollowness of scientific explanations of the world without meaning, and whose posture found such a poignant later echo in van Gogh’s Sorrow. Yet, although the modern viewer of Dürer does not read the symbolic value of the instruments that lie scattered around such as the callipers which measure the world, the scales to balance, the magic square, the passivity and weariness of the dog, the skull or the polyhedron, the power of this piece of art is in the sense of humanity. Hogarth, for who all the world seemed to be an asylum rather than a stage, was to echo such symbolism, albeit with a more savage and satirical edge, in A Rake’s Progress (1763) (Fig.4) by populating his ward at Bedlem with false Popes, naked kings and myopic astronomers. The clothes may change and the artefacts may be different but the pictures still asks convincingly, what can this state of mind tell us about ourselves.

In the early 1920s Prinzhorn (1972), who was trained as both an art historian and a psychiatrist, was among the first to argue that the paintings and drawings of inmates of asylums should be regarded with the seriousness and could be subject to aesthetic considerations as might be applied to the art of any other group. It may be noted that the art of other groups of Others such as native Africans was also gaining a certain caché, especially in the avant-garde of the Expressionist movement, and both Prinzhorn and his reviewers were struck by the similarity in primitive representations although still very much from a humane, liberal perspective rather than a reconstructed hegemonic one. Nevertheless, Prinzhorn does seem concerned to maintain the dignity and humanity of the artists and often includes their own words and descriptions. Understandably, he is easily
seduced by the prospect of the art revealing something of the inner psyche of the madman - a short-cut to the unconscious, although he stopped short of a total endorsement of psychoanalytic precepts.

It is also true that there have been great artists who have suffered from a mental illness, (although the effect of this piece of biographical knowledge on the aesthetic judgement is clearly a matter of debate). Here Richard Dadd or van Gogh may be the prime examples, and have generated some excitement about the way in which their art may reveal secrets of the psyche, even if the subject matter is comparatively mundane. The possibility of the madness of the artist enhancing the critical appreciation of the work of art is highlighted both by the debate and by the possibility of publicity driven fraud. The creation of the romantic suffering artist from Chatterton and Clare to Hemingway and Plath is a mythological creation worthy of greater study. Being mad, bad and dangerous to know, or living fast, dying young and leaving a beautiful corpse may be seen as enhancing the profile rather than the work, and whether it is in any sense based on empirical evidence becomes almost incidental. We are entering a world in which the representation may become more important than the thing it is supposed to represent.

There is clearly a point at which the cinema departs from pictorial art. With certain possible candidates and traits of paranoia, monomania, megalomania and delusional thinking, films are not usually made by the mentally ill (whereas the mentally ill can and do produce stunning works of art, but as individuals). Dadd may have developed schizophrenia, van Gogh may (or may not) have suffered from Bi-Polar Disorder, Brett Whiteley was a heroin addict, Jackson Pollock was an alcoholic and they were all capable of producing mad images, hallucinatory and bizarre compositions that seem to have been created in another consciousness. There is indeed a noble tradition that transcending the normal realm of consciousness through manifestations of mental illness, with or without the assistance of various substances, is a genuine artistic enterprise. Coleridge dreamt of Xanadu with a little help from laudanum which also helped Wilkie Collins invent the detective story with a tale about nicotine withdrawal, a genre which later inspired the cocaine-injecting Sherlock Holmes.

Hoccleve (1368-1437) is said to be the first English writer to describe his own madness “that could be real” in a “series of portraits of madmen, melancholics, and diseased sinners so detailed, vivid and realistic that they are generally taken to be autobiographical” (Doob 1974 p.210). Feder (1980), while being more circumspect in respect of his primacy
suggessting that it is still a perplexing point of argument, underlines his importance in being able “to convey an individual transformation of accepted medical and religious attitudes towards madness and describe at least what seems to be a personal experience” (p.102). Hoccleve (1897) describes symptoms that could be taken out of a contemporary psychiatric manual. His “troublie dremes, dremp al in wakyng”, his distress at feeling his “wyth dispoylyd” (II 109-111) and the pervasive sense of loneliness, guilt, worthlessness and despair would be familiar to any modern clinician. He feels so uncertain he cannot even trust himself or his own judgment any more. Then, in a phrase that can almost be seen coming out of the mouth of any supportive psychotherapist, he tells us almost desperately, that he is just a man and only guilty of human frailty. Madness is not a crime.

Since then Cowper, Plath, Sexton and many others have all dealt with and tried to expel their personal depression and despair through the written word, while some like Woolf or Hemingway found it all too much and killed themselves because of it. Strindberg directed some of his venom through his plays and Artaud, somewhat ironically perhaps in view of the creation of the Theatre of Cruelty, had several courses of Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT), presumably all the time claiming that madness is a legitimate and still logical personal expression and that “madmen are, above all, individual victims of social dictatorship” (in Edelson 1971 p.48). Alternatively, Aldous Huxley (1956) considered that hallucinogens may help to open the doors of perception previously closed to all but religious visionaries, and so the list goes on from Surrealism, automatic art and dreamscapes to the more contemporary psychedelia.

The Victorian novel and its developing Gothic tendency seemed to luxuriate in the idea of madness. Holcroft’s Anne St Ives and of course the first Mrs Rochester in Bronte’s Jane Eyre showed little sympathy and shed little light on the plight of the mad or incarcerated of the time in large part because of the conventions of the narrative and the heroic role. The mad have to wait for the arrival of the anti-hero before they are treated more sympathetically and three-dimensionally.

However, images of madness should not be confused with mad images. Mad images, among which may be counted the Dali inspired dream sequence of Bunuel’s Chien Andalou (1928) or the tripping and drug dreams of Easy Rider (Dir. Fonda 1969), are not primarily designed to challenge or examine how we understand madness, but more to affront and jar dominant, conservative and political sensibilities; dadaism rather than social critique. They sweep up the viewer in the experience and make their appeal to a visceral rather than
cerebral faculty. This does not necessarily make them less real, indeed Bunuel may or may not have said that “[d]reams are not symbols of reality, but reality (itself)” (cited in Tulloch 1977, p.336). It may well be that they do enter into the common imagination to the extent that we may even begin to think that we must be hallucinating now because it is just like that scene in *Easy Rider* (1969), but that is not the central concern of this study. It is also worthy of note that there have been reports in the literature (Bozzuto 1992) that suggest that life is imitating art in that the presentation of "cinematic neurosis" is directly related to, and imitative of, the presentation shown in the film, in particular *The Exorcist* (Dir. Friedkin 1973). There are also anecdotal accounts, by Professors of Nursing among others, of being afraid to take a shower after seeing *Psycho* (Dir. Hitchcock 1960). Perhaps some people did take Hitchcock’s own advice to a mother who complained to him about the effect the film had had on her daughter, and go to a dry cleaner instead.

An examination of the *mélange* of cultural phenomena crossed by notions of madness, insanity and mental illness and the way they come to be represented must begin to look at the factors that define the culture out of which they emerge. It becomes important to begin to distinguish which attitudes towards the mad can be seen to arise as the result of a lack of knowledge and which of them carry a more insidious ideological message.

**Representations of Sanity**

*No history of madness exists that is not also a history of reason*


It is difficult to fully explore a concept such as *madness* as it is represented without drawing a contrast with what it is seen not to be. A description of the qualities of one aspect of mental life can be thrown into relief by a consideration of its opposite. In the case of *madness* the principal opposite is *sanity*. Sanity is perhaps analogous not only with soundness of mind and absence of mental disorder, but also reason, rationality and order. The apogee of reason and rationality is in the construction of the image of science. Haynes (1994) suggests that “[p]opular belief and behaviour are influenced more by images than demonstrable facts” (p.1) and charts a history of the scientist in Western literature. She pays particular attention to the rise of the scientist-hero in the Victorian novel and examples that she cites from Jules Verne and Conan Doyle, both repeatedly appearing in film versions as well, show not only how they are able to explain the present, but can also
dictate the future. She identifies six recurring stereotypes: the alchemist, the stupid virtuoso, the Romantic (capital R), the heroic, the helpless and the idealist. While she argues that there is a majority of representations in which the scientist is a liability to society, and the Romantic may be an ambiguous figure, there are important and positive images as well. In particular the scientist as hero and as idealist show the great progressive power and purity of reason.

In the rise of positivist science as the dominant paradigm, as was to become evident in the reinvention of its type in the Science Fiction films of the 1950s (Shortland 1997), we are presented with the impression that science holds all the answers and most of the questions. The scientist is the man, almost invariably the man, who will rescue humankind from all its perils. This is only a few years after the culmination of the new heroic physics, the atomic bomb, won World War II, and the fruits of technology had made America the dominant economic and political world power. An example culled from The Day the Earth Stood Still (Dir. Wise 1951) sees the theoretical physicist, Dr Barnhardt, something of a combination of Albert Einstein and Robert Oppenheimer (and with a suitably Germanic name), as “the smartest man in the world”.

Shortland (1988) locates the rise in the stock of science and psychiatry in a context in which while the physicists had built the bomb, psychiatry had also “served the allied war effort by screening, testing, treating and then rehabilitating those who served in the armed services” (p.67). The clinical certainty and scientific attitude to this task is in some contrast to the psychiatric soul-wrestling that Sassoon (1974) describes in the treatment of shell-shock during the First World War, and the great humanistic régime of Dr Rivers, which features heavily in Regeneration (Dir. MacKinnon 1997), an adaptation of Pat Barker’s trilogy of novels. Nunally (1961) conducted a number of surveys of popular perceptions in this period and is not only impressed by the familiarity of his respondents with Freudian or at least Hollywood-Freudian terminology but also the decisive, commanding, authoritative image of psychiatrists in general.

Sherlock Holmes and the application of the scientific method shows how even the most bizarre and dastardly of human acts are explicable. In this way reason can defeat the basest of evil geniuses, from the diabolical Professor Moriarty to the Nazis, and make life safe for us all. There is indeed a way in which the psychiatrist is seen as analogous to Holmes in piecing together the tiniest elements of the mystery. They did of course meet as doctor and patient in The Seven Per Cent Solution (Dir. Ross 1976) when Holmes went to Freud for
help with his troublesome fondness for cocaine, for which Freud may have had some personal sympathy. However, the similarities were emphasised when The Daily Worker (31st September 1963) reviewed John Huston’s 1962 film Freud as a process where “the Watsonian patient supplies the clues, Sherlock Freud develops the theory, and the bad old villain Oedipus is brought sternly to justice in the end”. There is similarity in the way in which other heroes and defenders of truth and justice, such as Batman, who also show devotion beyond the call of duty and make sure that we can sleep safe in our beds, will make use of modern technology in the form of computers and weaponry and the remorseless of the scientific method to defeat their (and our) enemies.

For Neumann (1996) the architect is also at this pinnacle of human achievement. Especially in films such as The Fountainhead (Dir. Wise 1949), based on Ayn Rand’s novel, we are shown that here are men (again) of such vision and intellectual majesty that they do not and should not be subject to the normal fetters of human existence. The extreme individualism is based on the fact that Roark (the architect hero) has mastered science and science has mastered the world. Science is wedded to the idea of progress, and progress will take us away from superstition and unreason.

An important repository of reason, because at last the human mind can be explained, is the psychiatrist, at least when it is not the mad psychiatrist. The great explanatory speech by Dr Richmond, the psychiatrist, at the end of Alfred Hitchcock’s seminal film, Psycho (1960), is a moment at which all the puzzles of the human mind are laid bare. In a significant change in the film from the book the psychiatrist reports in person to a gathering of all those involved in the investigation, the police, the laity and all, rather than having his observations reported by, and mediated through, Sam Loomis, the boyfriend of the murdered Marion Crane, to her sister alone. In the film the magisterial demeanour of his report of his conversation with the Norman Bates character leaves no doubt to the admiring audience, both the one in the theatre and the one on the screen, that he is in total command. He strides about the Sheriff’s office in complete confidence. He develops a perfectly logical and persuasive thesis to explain Norman’s behaviour. He fields the questions from the group with a patronising but caring way, patiently explaining like a humane teacher being careful not to discourage the rather dim student who is struggling and really trying very hard to understand. He makes his points with an air of unchallenged and unchallengeable authority and constructs an aura of modest infallibility around himself. The religious overtones of the scene, where Dr Richmond is the high priest delivering revelations to the faithful, emphasise that this is now the way in which we should understand the world. He
easily fulfils the Sheriff’s prediction which opens the scene that “if anyone can get the story out of him (Norman), the Psychiatrist can”. The great exposition of the tenets of post-war American psychoanalytic psychiatry puts him in the pantheon of what Schneider (1987) would call the “Dr Wonderfuls”. It is a crowning moment of the triumph of reason.

However, it should not be assumed that there was a uniform presentation of the effects of science, and clearly from medieval alchemists to the mad scientists of the current era there have been many villains and dystopias. For every *Walden Two* there is a *Brave New World*, for every *Dr Kildare* there is a *Dr Frankenstein*. Biologists create monsters and atomic physicists threaten world peace, but scientific mind-control may be more frightening. As Haynes (1994) suggests, “the indictment of psychologists (sic) (may) spring from the same uneasy feeling that they treated even the mind and the personality, seemingly the last bastion of spiritual and moral consciousness, as a mechanism and assumed profane control over them” (p.201). However, this is a well-worn path and not central to the thesis, which is concerned with many aspects in the representation of madness, and not scientists alone. Nevertheless, the scientist as hero does represent the modernist project and the notion of progress. The point to underline is that when the opposite of madness is shown it is usually to the glorification of the scientific method.

The representation of the march of reason in pictorial art is perhaps less well articulated, but some attention can be paid to the portraiture of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries, and the work of Joseph Wright of Derby whose works were among the first to show the scientist at work, and imply the excitement of the project. Paintings such as *A Philosopher Giving a Lecture on an Orrery* (1764-66) and *The Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (1768) (Fig.5) or his portraits of some of the great industrialists of the time such as *Sir Richard Arkwright* (1789-90) and *Jedidiah Strutt* (1790), demonstrate the magnificence of the enterprise; men, machines and the marvels of the new knowledge are poised at the dawn of great new world. Science, at this moment, is imbued with a sense of wonder and this is reflected in Wright’s treatment of the scientist and his audience. The great central light that shines from the air-pump and its captive bird is reflected onto the wise face of the scientist while members of the audience, children and adults alike, sit in various states of admiration, fear and astonishment. However, in a human touch which suggests that science will not always control every variable, some are distracted by love games and a single note of doubt is struck by the man in the right-hand foreground. He looks pensive as he considers the Pandora’s box of Reason. Nevertheless, the painting stands as a major statement of the confidence and certainty of the scientific enterprise.
Everything is brought out of the darkness of alchemy and ignorance. It is almost as if this is a presage to the Psychiatrist’s exposition in the closing moments of Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960), the magisterial demeanour, the point by point explanation and the awed audience. The shining light of “The Enlightenment Project” promises to make reasonable men of us all.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE LITERATURE
Texts in Context

I write of melancholy, by being busy to avoid melancholy

Robert Burton (1621)(1948 edition)

Among the most influential developments of recent social analysis has been the way in which traditional disciplinary boundaries have been challenged. It has become increasingly difficult to consider a text from the position of a single discipline. At the forefront of this restructuring has been the emerging disciplinary complex of Cultural Studies. There is a way in which social and political analysis cross-cuts and intersects with features of material cultural production to examine representation as a feature of social life that has a meaning and a history beyond the aesthetic. Tsivian (1994) notes that both the production and reception of films from the very earliest days can be seen as being culturally conditioned. He argues that in “many ways reception means acculturation” (Tsivian 1994 p.3).

Milner (1991) charts the influence of Marxist thought in cultural theory. He sees a scientific tradition in which culture is seen as essentially an “outcome of an interaction between biology and material history” (p.45) as one thread, and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School in which hegemony plays a much more prominent role as another. These present two major contrasting approaches and the question of the importance of a world view assumes a central position. Alongside the latter group he includes contemporaries such as Gramsci (1971), who is important for the development of the notion of hegemony and the emphasis on ideological concerns, as well heirs like Habermas (1981, 1982) for whom the continuing natural history of the “Enlightenment Project” and the essence of open communication is of prime importance.

Two essential aspects highlight the differences. The first, which as he points out reflects back on the Weber-Marx axis and earlier still the Kantian and Hegelian traditions, concerns
the rationality and therefore the inevitability of the historical imperative, and second the
importance of a consciousness and the power of ideas. Consciousness, which includes the
production of ideas, is in some way a product of a culture, and part of the defining culture
of the twentieth century is the cinema. Therefore, in the terms of cultural theory, the link
between a social fact such as the psychiatric system and cultural perceptions of madness,
mental illness, and their portrayal is further underlined. Like paths across a minefield, there
are also parallel concepts of ideology and hegemony which can be followed and allow for
the possibility of several and sometimes opposing cultural systems existing within a
cultural system at the same time within the same historical conjuncture. These positions
recognise the problem of seeing everything in terms of a totalising dominance, and
therefore can aspires to accommodate sub-cultures, dissidence and difference (or différencé
to acknowledge the contribution of Derrida 1972, 1987). Writers such as Bauman (1992a),
Denzin (1986) and Hall (1983a), in their different ways, explore the border terrain while
steering clear of a totally postmodern response.

However, the notion of a cultural artefact is not entirely governed by everyone knowing it
through having seen or read it. An obvious example is that in a nominally Christian society
like Australia, United Kingdom or United States (even allowing for multi-cultural
arguments) the number of people who have actually read The Bible is very small yet most
people have a good idea of its major tenets. Thus certain films and cinematic images may
have an influence beyond those who have actually sat in the cinema and watched it. Thus
questions of iconography, symbolism and archetypes begin to suggest that a collective
unconscious may underpin the thread of a defining culture. Adair (1992) and Eco (1986)
develop postmodernist perspectives which suggest that, to develop an idea from
Baudrillard (1975) which emphasises the concentrated impact of representation over
empirical reality, there is a hyper-reality in which things may take on a range of
connotations and associations that allow them to act as capsules of social understandings,
signifiers and short hand with a plethora meanings and resonances far removed and
extrapolated from the original. Social experience is coded. Secondary experience of the
world can be seen to be overtaking primary experience in our construction of the world.
Thus, the mention of a “Catch 22 situation” or a “Cuckoo’s Nest mentality” will convey
meaning accrued through social digestion, integration and inculcation. This metonymic
understanding also allows for the images to go beyond their initial strictures and come to
inform anti-bureaucratic or anti-establishment stances. Noting this it may also be possible
that original meanings or intentions mutate and are re-interpreted in the light of different
historical experience and context.
For Hall (1983a, 1986, Hall & Whanell 1968), as a major figure in the development and definition of the discipline of Cultural Studies, there is a tension between the marxist (and he often uses the lower case "m") notions of material determinism and the material premises of ideology. He is indebted to Gramsci’s analysis of hegemony where such is the predominance of one way of thinking that is so pervasive that critical reflection on itself is smothered. Hall argues that it is possible to reconcile these factors with the experience of the world. For him there is a “marxism without guarantees” which concentrates on the analysis and diminishes the prophecies.

The role of ideology is central to this consideration. For Hall (1983b p.58) ideology is taken to be “the mental framework - the language, the concepts, categories, imageries of thought and systems of representation - which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and make intelligible the way society works”. From this he is able to claim that “the problem of ideology ...concerns the way in which ideas of different kinds grip the minds of the masses, and thereby, become a ‘material fact’” (ibid).

For the mental framework of how we see madness we must therefore consider the language; what are the words we use and what connotations they have, what sense, what feeling, what intention, what thought? Which words have a pejorative effect, which convey a dignity; which words can be seen to be oppressive and which are liberating? The Glasgow Media Group’s review of the popular media lists over 160 different terms “associated with mental health/illness in the media” (Philo 1996, p.119) and that is thought to be an underestimate. The Macquarie Thesaurus (1984) lists (among others) such synonyms as “psycho, psychopathic, schizo, boob happy, stir-crazy” (587.14). There is also “craziness, daftness, insanity, looniness, madness, queerness, softening of the brain, idiocy, imbecility and raving” (699.1). One can also be a “basket case, bedlamite, crackbrain, crackpot, dingbat, energumen, fruit cake, loco, loony, luny, maniac, nutter, odd bod” (699.3) and many other varieties. One’s behaviour can therefore be “barmy (as a bandicoot), bats, batty, bonkers, crackers, cuckoo, daffy, dilly, dotty, gaga, gonzo, kinky, loopy, mad as cut snake, mad as a tree full of galahs, mad as hatter, mad as a March hare, mad as a meat-axe, moonstruck, non compos, nutty (as a fruit cake), off one's block ...face ...head ...onion ...panniken ...rocker ... saucer ... scone ...tile ...trolley, off the rails, off the wall, original, out of one’s head ...mind ...tree, round the bend ...twist, soft in the head, troppo” (699.4) to mention but a few. For the sake of completeness, however,
it should be noted that it does not include being doolally, bananas, mad as a weaver, mad as May butter, but mad North, North West, out of one’s pram, to be a sandwich short of a picnic, a brick short of a load, a prawn short of a barbie, to have a kangaroo loose in the top paddock or simply being potty. Some may also lament the demise of more archaic expressions such as distemper of the spirit, woodnesse or to be melancholy as a parrot. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2nd Edition 1989), in a most appropriate coincidence with popular culture, Raymond Chandler is to be credited with the first recorded use of “psycho” to indicate a particularly dangerous and unpredictable mental state when he spoke of a “psycho case” in his 1937 short story The Man Who Liked Dogs. It scarcely needs to be emphasised that some of these terms are at best patronising without malice, while others are clearly oppressive, destructive, insulting, stigmatising, diminishing and without dignity.

A narrow or reactionary position may decry the attention to these factors as a hypersensitivity or political correctness, pandering to a misguided unwillingness to see true difference. Indeed, it may well be so if, as in the position Feldstein (1997 p.3) puts forward, it is a sensitivity which refuses to allow such representations to pass uncontested, or that political is taken to show a concern with power, its distribution, its uses and abuses, its oppressive force and its potential to wound, control and punish and to question what can be considered to be true. However, that merely serves to underline the observation that words are not value-free, they have power. To be mad, as an example of those things that we would rather not be, becomes an irregular verb; I am an individual, you may be eccentric but he is a raving lunatic. How we label things betrays not only the ideologies that inform such a choice, but also where the power lies.

The concepts, categories, imageries of thought and systems of representation can be similarly explicated, exploded and deconstructed to illuminate the way in which the cinema deals with the issue of madness. The theory of ideology can therefore prove useful in identifying the way in which “a particular set of ideas comes to dominate the social thinking of a historical bloc” (Hall 1983b p.58). This is not yet a Gramscian notion of hegemony, but it is moving in that direction. There is also a need to confront the Althusserian question of how an ideology becomes internalised so that it is declaimed and espoused as orthodoxy with unconscious certainty and spontaneity. For Althusser the revelation of ideology comes through the excavation of the state apparatuses, for it is always embedded there. However, as the experience of the critical debate over perceived selectivity and misperceptions in the
work of Foucault (Castel 1990, Gordon 1990a 1990b, Gutting 1994) illustrates, sometimes artefacts may get broken or overlooked in the digging process.

To describe a single state of affairs is one thing, but such a theoretical analysis must also confront how one set of ideas supplants another to the extent that it becomes unimaginable how one could have thought in such a way or believed certain things at a particular time; but one did, and one felt exactly the same then about how it was previously. We tread a line between reflection, revisionism and wise hindsight when saying that we know better now or that we were not aware of certain facts at that time or that is the way everyone thought at the time. Sometimes, of course, we know better now. The processes by which a new consciousness arises and reframes the world in its image is of key importance in this exercise. For Gramsci as for Hall, ideas “only become effective if they do, in the end, connect with a particular constellation of social forces” for “ideological struggle is a part of the general social struggle ...for hegemony” (Hall 1983b p.76). Gramsci did not, however, see ideological hegemony as a monolithic entity. It can be a pastiche of contradictory attitudes that grab at all manner of things for survival, but through a process of refinement what is most useful remains. It is important to retain the insight that although cultural artefacts will contain the marks of dominance and subordination, they will also provide the clues that lead to opposition. Just as material social systems will, according to Marxist analysis, contain the seeds of their own destruction, collapsing under the weight of their own contradictions, so it would seem to be with ideological constructions.

The macro and micro levels on which ideology appears to work sets up a tension in which the individual may make ideological statements, but ideology is not the product of individual consciousness or thought any more than although all societies consist of individuals, societies are not the sole sum of those individuals. Ideologies are not just a collection of statements and attitudes, there is an articulation into a formulation that is identifiable and distinct. For Larrain (1991), “ideologies work by constructing for their subjects positions of identification and knowledge which allow them to utter ideological truths as if they were the authentic authors” (p.3). Any discussion of how those “ideological truths” reach their subjects must return to the “concepts, categories, imageries of thought and systems of representation” of Hall’s earlier definition.

Not only are these “imageries of thought and systems of representation” ideologically informed and shot though with seams of crystallised social values, they also carry multiple levels of meaning. Semiotics attempts to bring these meanings to a more aware
consciousness. However, the examination of signs is not a context-free exercise, and it should be vibrant, alive and engaged. Voloshinov (1973) argues that signs are indeed part of the “area of class struggle (and a) sign that has been withdrawn from the pressures of the social struggle ...inevitably loses force, degenerating into allegory, becoming the object, not of live social intelligibility, but of philological comprehension” (p.23). Similarly, Gottdeiner’s (1995) advocacy of “socio-semiotics” uses some deconstructivist analysis, but is always concerned with material culture and its social importance. Neither his terminology nor his purpose is entirely removed from the concerns of the “social semiotics” put forward by Hodge & Kress (1988) for whom “social structures and processes, messages and meanings (are) the proper standpoint from which to attempt the analysis of meaning systems” (p.vii) for all sign systems are socially constituted.

The multiple resonances of Popular Film operate on different levels and with different effects. Sometimes with films the subject matter, the title alone or one memorable phrase, even a passage of music, have entered the vocabulary of common discourse; words and images and quotes have done likewise. “Psycho” may have once only appeared in a dictionary as a prefix, but ever since Alfred Hitchcock’s (1960) seminal film (with all due respect to the Robert Bloch novel and the citation the Oxford English Dictionary (2nd Edition) (1989) attributes to Raymond Chandler) it has become a powerfully evocative trope that leaves no doubt about its impact even though its meaning is obscure. It carries with it multiple meanings that can be serious or scary, humourous or profound. From Scarlett O’Hara fixing on the middle distance and declaiming, “Tomorrow’s another day”, to Hannibal Lecter licking his thin little lips and informing us that he’s “having an old friend for dinner”, phrases resonate and encapsulate a raft of experiences and can be seen as part of the shared language that enables us to communicate implied meaning as well as the explicit one. It is also interesting to note that sometimes what people didn’t say is considerably more important than what they did. So, for “Play it again, Sam” or “I want to be alone” it is of no real consequence that the words are misquotes. What is important is the impression that they give, and so if history is rewritten it is done in the image of what ought to have been; something that connects Orwell and present-day Public Relations consultants. Life can be seen to be imitating art in this respect in the way recent American Presidents have shown a penchant for Arnold Schwarzenegger quotes, one thinks of George Bush inviting the audience to read his lips (promises which of course bore absolutely no relation to what really happened) and displaying the sort of acting and delivery skill that gives trees a bad name. It can be seen through this infiltration into a public vernacular that it may not be what a film is actually about, but rather what people
come to agree it is about. It may be that films are now going beyond the expression of mythological concerns to developing mythologies of their own. For some indeed, life may be alright but it is not as good as the real thing.

Unpicking a social fabric can, however, lead to loss of something of its essential nature. A holistic perspective may need to be employed because impressions are sometimes created in a stream, not always in discrete steps. Just as the secret of an egg can seemingly only be revealed by breaking the egg, which then is no longer an egg but a broken egg, a serial dissection of a phenomenon may destroy what it tries to reveal. Perhaps some things have to be understood as a whole, and impressions may be as valid as a traditional empirical model. There is a clear allusion to the notion of synergy where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and that there are many layers on which things can be understood.

TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF TERMS
A Concept of Popular Culture

_We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end to despondency and madness_

Wordsworth, "Resolution and Independence", 1802

If definitions are shaped by their purpose and the purpose of the definer, it is important to illuminate some of these concerns. It has already been suggested that words have their own power as well as a multiplicity of meanings; however, if a total dismantling of the means of discourse is to be avoided, some measures of shared understanding can be established. To that end a brief discussion of some of the terms which will continually appear in the thesis, what they are taken to mean and what will lie outside their concern, may prove useful.

Fiske (1989b) suggests that what we identify for ourselves as “Culture” “is the constant process of producing meanings of and from our social experience” (p.1). This is in a continual flux of making and remaking and is not to be seen as static or ossified. It is important to note that this applies to all aspects of culture, for even what is regarded today as classical culture, the highest of high culture, may not be seen in the same light tomorrow, and is almost certainly different to yesterday’s evaluation. If the essence of all cultural artefacts is to engage in meaning-making it becomes possible to examine the way
the meaning we attach to and read into particular aspects of our social lives is in process. This relates to how we develop meaning from the concept of madness.

Popular culture, as it is to be understood, draws a contrast with academic or technical presentations. It includes modes of mass communication such as television, film, novels, newspapers and magazines as previously suggested by Hebdige (1979). It is unarguable that other artistic media such as painting, sculpture, music, plays, poetry and essays do not have a profound effect, but the scope of the present investigation precludes an all-encompassing approach. The view of popular culture used here suggests that the cultural experience of the commonly accessed media is in no essential way less rich at its finest than the traditional canon of a Leavisite great, enduring and “Minority Culture”; both help us to make better sense of the world in which we live. Leavis, for whom the past and refinement of it is of greater importance than any engagement in the present, tends to paint a picture of bucolic bliss, full of happy shepherds and rosy-cheeked milk-maids and an educated and discerning aristocracy with their minds on higher things. He does not seem to consider that there was quite likely to be as much dross and drivel produced in any of his golden or Augustan ages as is produced today, and most of it met the same fate that hopefully awaits today’s less successful artistic endeavours - the waste paper bin. For him the influence and effect of popular culture is entirely pernicious, without any redeeming feature.

However, the beginnings of the opposition to this aristocratic elitism, first discernible in Britain in the writings of Hoggart and Williams in the 1950s, argued that an examination of popular culture could prove just as rewarding because it could not only give a guide to social mores, but also suggest ways in which those mores may have developed. Leavis and his stance was unable to conceive that there was anything less than an unchanging standard by which literary and other artistic works could be judged, and could see no value in the ephemeral. There is no suggestion, as there might be in a postmodernist interpretation that as much can be learnt by what is not acceptable or valued as by the study of what is. Postmodernism likes to go back to rummaging through the rubbish bin, to go back to the cultural midden to construct an understanding of a social history rather than uncritically read the received versions. It is, as Foucault (1972) coined, often to do with the archaeology of knowledge. It this not so much a search for authenticity in any absolute sense, but a refashioning of the meaning attributed to authenticity. For example, the vogue for playing music on original instruments to reproduce the so-called original sound, may be seen as an attempt to repudiate the dominance of modernism and its single interpretation,
but is also a way of re-evaluating the historical perspective. Sometimes, of course, the shards of a cultural artefact may not be put back together in their original form, but in a way that seems to make sense to the re-creators. Each generation creates and writes its own version of history, each age constructs the history it finds meaningful, each orthodoxy invents its own nostalgia. The art of the margins must, from this standpoint, be seen as more than ephemeral - acceptance of the canon is not the only criterion for understanding.

Tudor (1989) speaks of the struggle to maintain a "non-reductive view of popular culture" (p.5). He suggests that it should be regarded as an embedded feature of social life, "as simultaneously both symptom and cause, reflection and articulation, language of ideological production and reproduction" (p.5). In this way the social construction of concepts such as Madness are embraced as personally meaningful, culturally significant and contextually understood. It also validates and valorises the prosaic rather than esoteric interpretation, and places its meaning within the common reach.

Morris (1988), aligning herself with the position of de Certeau (1984), wishes to emphasise the sensibility which informs a world view. For her popular culture is "a way of operating - rather than a set of contents, a marketing category, a reflected expression of social position, or even a "terrain" of struggle" (p.20). However, while this is a timely reminder of the infusion of a cultural mind-set, it may still be amenable to contextual analysis because it does have values and privileges certain representations and modes over others. It also contributes to a sense of identity and communality.

Williams (1976) catalogues three understandings of the word "popular" as it used in this context. The first suggests that it is simply liked by a large number of people; the second is used to contrast with high culture, which itself needs some definition apart from not being popular; the third usage refers to culture made by the mass of people by and for themselves. Easthope (1991) acknowledges these working definitions, but adds a coda to the last one which interprets "popular" to mean "the mass media imposed on people by commercial interests" (p.76). This highlights a recurring edge of conflict and contradiction in that the artefacts of popular culture are controlled and produced by the economically dominant, but rely for their continued success on the mass consumption by what Fiske (1989b) characterises as the disempowered. Whether this disempowerment also extends to the free choice of what people watch, listen to and read reflects back on the notion of ideological hegemony and is further complicated by the element of pleasure.
Bread and circuses were, and remain understandably popular; a full belly and a little bit of schadenfreude seems a good recipe for political and social stability as it keeps the masses fat and content, and with someone to mock. However, if, as Brantlinger (1983) argues, there is a perception of an inevitable cycle of social decay unaffected by material conditions, what he calls a “negative classicism”, then the questions become socio-psychological rather than materialist and concern the things that seem to undermine stability, such as Madness. It will not matter how much a social culture provides by way of material comfort and a distracting mass culture, there remains a perception, which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, that it will decline; a sort of cultural Third Law of Thermodynamics. Brantlinger (1983) points to a fetishism of change to illustrate his analysis, and sees these traits in several traditions “from the offshoots of Burkean conservatism to the esthetic (sic) postulates of Marxism” (p.10), but argues that they are myths that can be debunked.

The second point that Easthope (1991) is keen to establish concerns the actual artefacts that can be reasonably said to be included in his mass media. By way of example he includes newspapers, radio, television and film, and in this he is in general agreement with others of quite different theoretical positions such as Williams (1976), Hebdige (1979), Brantlinger (1983) and Fiske (1989a). Some wish to add a little here, perhaps giving a bit more emphasis to music, others may want to introduce a few more degrees of discrimination, but few would dissent from Brantlinger’s (1983) view that “For better or worse, the most powerful, influential instruments for the dissemination of values, knowledge and art are today the mass media” (p.9). Of these films from Hollywood are seen as almost the apotheosis of the commercial imperative, and it these films which will provide the bulk of the material for the following thesis.

The Particularities of Film

For the first time in the history of the world it is possible to see what a kiss looks like ...the idea has limitless possibilities.

from The Evening World magazine (1899)

The main focus of the study is intended to be film, and what is to be called Popular Film. A number of significant characteristics of Popular Film influence this major statement of the limitations of concern. Firstly, it is an almost exclusively twentieth century medium and so is not only contemporary with modern psychiatry, but also a form with enormous reach,
scale and unexhausted richness. As journal articles throughout the period (Anon. 1911, 1929, 1958) demonstrate madness, the movies and their mutual understanding seem to fascinate continually. The historical development of the driving questions of the study of madness continually informs the present. The contemporary representations of Madness can only be fully appreciated when viewed as part of a history, when they are placed in a context of thought, ideals and mores. Although they will not form the bulk of the study, examples from Greek tragedy and the struggle of Dionysus and Apollo or the madness of Hecuba, or King Lear and The Duchess of Malfi are always present as part of the process and development.

It is also acutely important that the lifetime of the cinema as a popular entertainment is almost exactly contemporary with that of the major eruptions in Psychiatry. Kraepelin's Lectures on Clinical Psychiatry first appeared in 1894, Freud published Die Traumdeutung (The Interpretation of Dreams) in 1900, while the Lumière brothers films, with all due respect to the various competing claims of Edison, Le Prince and others who would be known as the inventor of motion pictures, and their court battles over patents (Liesegang 1986, Rawlence 1990), are usually seen as the beginning of Popular Cinema and date from 1895 when they filmed the train pulling into La Ciotat station and apparently caused panic and consternation in the audience (Brownlow 1968). Indeed, the Oscars awarded to Shine (Dir. Hicks, 1996) and Sling Blade (Dir. Thornton, 1996) for their representations of psychiatrically disturbed or damaged characters give the period a neat symmetry. For Madness and the Cinema it is as if it is a melodramatic blockbuster novel where two protagonists, born, unwanted and despised and probably out of wedlock, at the same time in different parts of the Old World, are fated to cross each other's path over and over again, as each in their own way come to positions of enormous influence and domination in the New World of America. They are bound together in an inextricable love-hate relationship, and as Tyler (1971) has noted, Hollywood has consistently been “finding Freudianism photogenic” (p.111).

Secondly, although it may have begun as simply pictures that move in direct representation of reality, film quickly became, as Fleming & Manvell (1985) observe, a medium “peculiarly suitable for handling intimate psychological subjects” (1985 p.18). “Intimate, psychological subjects” seem to be those of thoughts and inner monologues. To be able to hear the narrator's or protagonist's voice and thoughts without having them declaiming in front of an audience, without their lips moving, was like having every member of a mass audience being given a private reading of a confessional diary with pictures that move as
well. The audience can be inside someone’s head, it can know everything. To be able to see into someone’s eyes so intently that they were 50 feet across is a moment of such intense intimacy that we could not reproduce it in our real lives. The technical possibilities of film, the close-up, narration, over-dub, imagery, animation and the blend of the visual and spoken content have they argue made it the medium with the greatest potential for making a profound impact on a mass audience. Comoli (1969) recognises that these possibilities illustrate that ideology is to be found as much in technical levels of filmmaking as in the area of content, because they presuppose an interest in this form of knowledge and a desire on the part of the audience. Lukacs (1971) notes the richness of “cinematic technology and technique” for representation of the fantastic. This is, of course, almost contemporaneous with other movements that began to bring the private world of the individual into a place for mass consumption. As Macdonald (1990) notes in the case of psychoanalysis, it made possible an “account of a relationship that had been previously considered uniquely intimate and unpublishable, a relationship between two individuals that was necessarily conducted in secret” (p.188). Tyler (1971) suggests that it is not the science that “makes psychiatry adaptable to the screen; rather it is the photogenic character of the dream” (p.119). However, he does not always distinguish psychiatry from psychoanalysis, which he takes, as do so many writing with an uncritical perspective on the debates that exist within the discipline itself, as practically interchangeable terms. Furthermore, it is not clear whether the peculiar suitability of the medium that Fleming & Manvell (1985) highlight is, in their view, solely confined to sound pictures, or if they intend to imply that silent films convey the same power of intimate revelation. If they are given the benefit of the doubt, with proper attention being granted to the silent era, it underlines the importance of the nature of film itself as Münsterberg (1970) confirms.

Films, as Martin (1994) argues, are also filled with the expression of ideas and this is true whether they are self-consciously films of ideas or not. They are formed within a context of concerns and attitudes and relate to them. They can and do form the catalyst for discourse on a number of levels, emotional, visceral and intellectual, in which the concerns of representation and identity are articulated. Philo (1996) suggests that there is a category of film that seem to deal with madness, murder and mayhem that depend in part for their success on “people’s real fears about their own society and safety in the world which is perceived as dangerous and unfriendly” (p.66) and thrive by offering greatly exaggerated, exploitative accounts.
Thirdly, it is a mass medium, not for the most part aiming at an elite group of esoterically informed cognoscenti, although there is that element in some areas, perhaps those that become art house or cult successes. This is perhaps a claim that could also be made for television, but its lifetime is in truth only about half that of film although its influence continues to grow. It is also of interest that with the development of video technology the numbers who only see a cinematic film on the television screen is increasing all the time and this may influence the impact of a film when removed from the cinematic experience of going out to a cinema and sitting in a darkened theatre with lots of other people for two hours while ritually eating pop-corn and choc-ice, not to mention the changes in what the viewer actually sees in the translation from a 15x10 metre cinema screen to square tube.

Yevtushenko (1984) observed that, “All humanity is divided into three categories: those who have read The Brothers Karamazov, those who haven't read it yet and those who will never read it”. He then drew breath and considered that “[t]here is another category ...[t]hose who saw (it) in the movies”. Perhaps this ought to be extended to include those who have seen it on TV as well as those who have read the reviews in the newspapers of the showing on TV of the film of the book, and are led to believe that they have seen it in reality. Vicarious reality becomes, in this way, in the very fabric of the postmodern experience. It also becomes of importance whether there can be anything approximating to a cinematic imagination; what may the relationship be between the technology of an experience and the content? The debate over the relationship between perceptions of reality and simulation is presaged here. Baudrillard (1983) may argue it is one of fundamental loss, with a proliferation of copies of copies and references to references, while Deleuze & Guattari (1983) suggest that it may be an intensification or distilled concentration of the real. Both agree however, that it cannot be ignored.

Denzin (1991a) suggests that representation in film tends toward typification, but in a way that lived experience shape cultural representations and cultural representations shape lived experience. It is the contention of this thesis that (Hollywood) cinema, that form most readily identifiable as Popular Culture and Popular Film, does far more than describe our world and the meaning we give to it; it is absolutely inseparable from its definition and creation. Sartre is said to have revealed that the theory of contingency, a key point of an existential philosophy, was born at the movies; coming from the experience of film, the playing out of the relationship of the image and the world (cited in Jameson 1990, p.5). Sklar (1975) suggests that in this century, or at least from 1896 to 1946, “movies were the most popular and influential medium of culture in the United States” and American culture,
and the American Dream manufactured in the Dream Factory, assumed world-wide predominance during that period. An Age of Empire needs its myth-makers and, as Denzin (1991b) notes when he paraphrases Dewey, our moral prophets in the Twentieth Century have always been film-makers. From a historiographical perspective there may be little to differentiate Herodotus or Tacitus from Griffiths or de Mille. Perhaps this should now be updated to include the revisionism of Oliver Stone or the moral tales of Steven Spielberg.

Representation and the Cinema

_I do not believe that satisfactory plastic representation of our abstractions is at all possible._

_Sigmund Freud (1925)_

From Georges Méliès' _L'Omnibus des Toques_ (1901), which is little more than a burlesque of comic characters, and Billy Bitzer's _Dr Dippy's Sanatorium_ (1906), which was based on the character from a popular newspaper cartoon strip, to _Shine_ (1996), which sought to tell the story of an actual person, the representation of madness has exercised the critical faculties of film theorists, social theorists, sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses and increasingly consumers of psychiatric services. Sometimes the issue has been of such concern that Kubie (1947) advocated the establishment of special boards to advise "on the technical accuracy of any film which directly or indirectly depicts technical subjects and processes ...(and while) ...such a board ... could not and should not act as a censor ...it could give or withhold the right to use a statement that the film had been approved by the appropriate scientific board" (p.117). In what is otherwise a fairly orthodox and formal psychiatric history Shorter (1997) finds it important to mention the role of the representation of mental illness and the portrayal of psychiatrists in the cinema "from the idolatrous ...to films depicting analysts as sex-mad leeches (or) domestic stumblebums" (p.309). It seems that the psychiatric community was simultaneously entranced by the possibilities of film and extremely jittery over what it might see as misrepresentation. These two parallel concerns find an echo in many of the treatments of film as a cultural entity.

It is understandable that any investigation in this area will cross boundaries of discrete disciplines and take note of the contributions of a plurality of views rather than an artificially circumscribed perspective. However, this is in keeping with a postmodern sensibility which seeks to transcend the traditional distinctions which may limit lines of
inquiry. In some cases the psychiatric content is clear in both theme and context, but, as Fleming & Marvell (1985) suggest, “more often, the relationships are very subtle and highly inferential” (p.9). Nursing, especially within the psychiatric sphere, is seen as existing within a cultural context one aspect of which is its presentations of itself.

While for some it is film’s extraordinary ability to create a “quasi-realism” which could allow an audience to “live vicariously” (Kubie 1947), others were interested in other aspects. The ability of film, as a medium, to disclose the inner and the outer realities of life, and its facility to transcend the static barriers of other media was the subject of speculation from the earliest days of its commercial life. Münsterberg was already an established intellectual as a Harvard professor and the first president of the American Psychological Association, well known as a psychologist and philosopher when the fundamental changes in social constructions being brought about by film captured his attention. Writing in 1916, he argued that art in the cinema was not the imitation of nature, but the manipulation of images to create its illusion. He thought that it is only through the artificialities of film that its apparent verisimilitude can be realised and he recognised more readily than most that these images had a unique and remarkable power to move. He already saw cinema as an “independent art, controlled by esthetic laws of its own, working with mental appeals that are fundamentally different from those of the theatre” (1970 p.18). He sought to equate film with a peculiar psychological form, because of its concern and appeal to the inner workings of the mind; it could show you thinking, but it could also show your thoughts. While some art forms may work within the imagination of the audience, Münsterberg felt that in cinema the act of remembering was “projected into the pictures themselves ... as if reality has lost its own continuous connection and become shaped by the demands of our soul” (1970 p.41). He saw how the “photoplay (sic) tells us the human study by overcoming the forms of the outer world, namely space, time and causality, and by adjusting the events to the forms of the inner world, namely, attention, memory, imagination and emotion” (ibid p.74).

Already, for Münsterberg, the link between cinema and the deepest questions of the representation of psychological states has been established and the two strands inextricably entwined. He suggests how film is “more than any other art destined to overcome outer nature by the free and joyful play of the mind” (1970 p.100). Griffith, in his foreword to Münsterberg (1970), suggests that we no longer even need to say this, it has become such an accepted assumption in the discourse. He claims that “[e]verybody knows from his own experience that there is a sharp and specific analogy between film forms ... and the mental
mechanisms by which consciousness functions on all its levels” (in Münsterberg 1970 p.v).

Henri Bergson gives further evidence that even at a very early stage it was being recognised that film was changing the relations of representation. Bergson, who was interested in the manifestation of the fabulating process, saw some developments somewhat earlier than most in his lectures on Creative Evolution in 1902-3. He drew analogies of perception in terms of the cinema and its technology when he described the “cinematographical character of our knowledge of things” (Bergson 1977 p.333). We view the world as a camera. “Whether we would think becoming, or express it, or even perceive it, we hardly do anything else than set going a kind of cinematograph inside us” (ibid p.332). This allows for a sense of self as viewed from the outside, from the detached position of an observer, and, in Bergson’s view, affects not only the representation of movement, but also the nature of the imagined self. As Bergson was aware, this is both a metaphorical and an epistemological device. He was able to use the trope because it would contain enough suggestions and connotations to be meaningful, but he was also considering the way in which we view the world, order it, make sense of it and imagine it.

Irving Thalberg, who as the head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios may have had a personal interest, spoke in 1927 to an audience at the University of California of the ability of film to present “our customs and daily life more distinctly than any other medium ...(because of)...the immediate fitting in with current thought” (cited in May 1980 p.xi). In one of the first major ethnographic studies of American towns, Middletown, the power of films in generating notions of class sensibility was underlined. It was argued that it is “perhaps impossible to overestimate the role of motion pictures, advertising and other forms of publicity in this rise in subjective standards” (Lynd & Lynd 1929 p.82). This seems almost a direct foreshadowing of what Hebdige (1979) sees as popular culture.

Not everyone was convinced that the social influence of the cinema was a good thing. Fulk (1912), Nebraska’s Superintendent of Schools, published a large scale survey of educators on the impact of films on the youth of the day. He concluded that it was a double-edged sword and that although there may be educational benefits, the “constant playing on the emotions of the child and adolescent tends to overexcite and prevent the development of the emotional life. This growing desire is apt to lead (them) especially away from the right ideals and morality. Here lies the great danger of the motion picture drama” (p.456). Some arguments have not advanced very far.
Yet, although this new technology may have posed grave moral danger to some in the audience, the excitement that it caused and the possibilities it raised, even for those immersed in the traditional art forms, is almost palpable. Stasov (1957), an art and music critic, wrote to his brother about his impressions of the famous Lumière brothers’ film: “All of a sudden a whole railway train comes rushing out of the picture towards you; it gets bigger and bigger, and you think that it’s going to run over you, just like in Anna Karenina - it’s incredible” (p.128). It is possible to believe that his head was spinning for days, but importantly, he had used his previous experience of literature and his own imagination to mediate his response to the film; now he was presented with what had become the definitive version of how certain events should look. 

Some observers seem remarkably prescient. Dickson (1894), even before the publicity accorded to the Lumière brothers, pondered on the future of the “kinetoscope” in a piece of barely disguised publicity for the inventions of Thomas Edison with whom he collaborated and for whom he worked at various times throughout the period. He suggested that it “is the calling of the coming age, when the great potentials of life shall no longer be in the keeping of the cloister and college, sword or money bag, but shall overflow the nethermost portions of the earth, at the command of the humblest heir of divine intelligence” (p.206). Popular culture was clearly seen as the future, and film as the coming medium.

Images become international, striking and immediate. The world may be developing a cinematic imagination, and if so this leads to an important question that has to deal with cultural specificity. While the word “Hollywood”, as a metonym, leaps most readily to mind when “Popular Film” is mentioned (at least in this author’s mind and by metonymic extension that of most Westerners), it is clear that the Indian film industry is actually the largest and most productive in the world, Hong Kong and Chinese cinema is hugely popular and vibrant and there is also a long and distinguished history in Europe. Filmmakers from Murnau to Dreyer and Bergman have been concerned with the power of the “inner reality”, the way film may be able to inhabit inner states of mind and outer appearances. Fleming & Manvell (1985) quote Bergman as saying that film “should communicate psychic states” (p.9), although the word “psychic” may not either by translation or transliteration be exactly what he had in mind. The success and power that they have in this may be one reason why Prawer (1980) says that it is “surely no accident that so many of the illustrations of a key work like (Jung’s) Man and his Symbols ...should turn out to be stills from films” (p.119). He goes on to cite one particular caption
to a picture of Godzilla which says “Perhaps the monsters of modern “horror” films are distorted versions of archetypes that will no longer be repressed” (p.120). While Jung’s concept of universal archetypes which can transcend cultures is not necessarily endorsed, there is a clear suggestion that certain states of mind have remarkable power when shown in films, especially in the genre of horror films as Iaccino (1994) notes, and these are the important images for the contemporary world.

Kracauer (1974) suggests that films reflect “not so much explicit credos as psychological dispositions - those deep layers of collective mentality which extend more or less below the dimension of consciousness” (p.6). He did not want to distinguish between film as art and film as a social indicator; for him, film was always a reflective phenomenon. With a great flourish he writes (in his preface in Wiene 1972) on The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (Dir. Wiene 1920), that “the fair (where Dr Caligari displays the somnambulistic killer Cesare) (Fig.6) faithfully reflected the chaotic condition of postwar Germany” and “intentionally or not, Caligari exposes the soul wavering between tyranny and chaos ...(and) [I]ke the Nazi world, that of Caligari overflows with sinister portents, acts of terror and outbursts of panic. The equation of horror and hopelessness comes to a climax in the final episode, which pretends to re-establish normal life” (p.23). Eberwien (1979) suggests that what Kracauer saw was “the image of an exhausted collective soul ideally suited for a tyrannical strong man, exactly like Hitler, who would lead them back to power and security” (p.98). The importance of Kracauer’s insight, which argues that such a film could only have been made in the Germany of the 1920s, and is as much part of its creation as it is of its reflection, resonates throughout the study even if there are methodological and theoretical differences of opinion and analysis. Indeed for Petro (1990) it represents “the most sustained attempt to locate the film within the social and psychological history of the Weimar period” (p.207). This is an issue that will recur many times as will Kracauer’s (1974) concern with the “madness inherent in authority” (p.67).

A highly significant phrase in Kracauer’s argument is “intentionally or not”. It is clearly implied that the full meaning of the artistic creation may have not been conscious to Wiene, the director, or Mayer and Janowitz, the screen-writers, but becomes apparent only in later analysis. It is implied that many of the sentiments of the film could not have been otherwise and, as in the Marxist social analysis of the Frankfurt School, that one cannot escape the cultural parameters that mean we can only possibly think in certain ways. To this end he constructs a thesis whereby the collective consciousness, the common zeitgeist, of Weimar and Nazi Germany may be discerned by means of close analysis. This must show itself not
to be simply 20:20 hindsight, but contextual argument drawing on the films which were produced at a particular cultural moment and by a particular popular culture.

For the purposes of this discussion, however, "Popular Culture and Popular Film" should remain the defining characteristics and so the main focus will be on the broad and fairly arbitrary category of mainstream English language films which spread into far more non-English speaking cultures than the reverse. It may also be noted at this point that there will not be any attempt to distinguish a peculiarly Australian culture except to highlight some of the more remarkable examples of the subject matter. It is therefore worthy of note that the Australian film industry has, with a little help from New Zealand, produced at least eight major releases in recent years with mental illness or the mentally ill as a central concern, either with a central protagonist or as a trope. There has been (among others):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Sweetie</em> (1988)</td>
<td>Directed by Jane Campion, it tells the story of the disruption caused by a mentally disturbed woman to her sister’s family.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>An Angel at My Table</em> (1992)</td>
<td>Directed by Jane Campion and based on the autobiographical writings of Janet Frame and her experiences in psychiatric hospitals.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Bad Boy Bubby</em> (1994)</td>
<td>Directed by Rolf de Heer as an update of the Kasper Hauser wild child story, it concerns a man who spent the first thirty years of his life confined to a house with only his mother and a cat as company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Heavenly Creatures</em> (1994)</td>
<td>Directed by Peter Jackson, admittedly a New Zealander and still based there, unlike Campion. It is based on the true story of the murder committed by two schoolgirls, Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme, of Hulme’s mother. The use of court hearings and psychiatric records is extensive.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Angel Baby</em> (1995)</td>
<td>Written and directed by Michael Rymer, it tells the story of two people with a diagnosis of Schizophrenia who meet at a Day Treatment Centre.</td>
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<td><strong>Film</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Cosi</em> (1995)</td>
<td>Written by Louis Nowra and based on his own experiences putting on a play with patients in a psychiatric hospital.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Lilian's Story</em> (1995)</td>
<td>Directed by Jerzy Domaradzki, it is based on a novel by Kate Grenville and tells the story of a legendary eccentric who spent forty years in a psychiatric hospital.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Shine</em> (1996)</td>
<td>Directed by Scott Hicks and based on the life of the pianist David Helfgott who, after beginning a promising career as a concert pianist, fell ill and spent many years in a psychiatric hospital before being rediscovered.</td>
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It is remarkable that such a small industry should produce such a concentration of similar themes, but that may well speak to the importance that they play in the social imagination of these countries. The coincidence that four of the eight are openly biographical, one other can be seen as a reworking of a celebrated case and one more is substantially based on a real-life character is an important pointer to the telling of the story of mental illness. Of the others, *Angel Baby* (1995), without descending into bathos, manages to give a profound impression of the whirl of passion of the experience of the principal characters, both of whom are diagnosed with schizophrenia. The audience treads that uneasy line between overt and twee, even patronising identification with the hero of the melodrama and the armchair rage against the unjust system. The ambivalence of the relationship of the ordered world of stable families with the disorder of the disturbed characters pervades the film. The discomfort that such disordered thinking, logic and behaviour can bring to middle-class sensibilities becomes part of the essential counterpoint of the film, as it does in *Sweetie* (1988).

*Sweetie* bears some comparison with *Lilian's Story* (1995) which, adapted by Kate Grenville from her own novel, was based on the well-known character of Bea Miles, an indigent woman who used to stand on the streets of Sydney in the 1920s declaiming poetry after surviving a deeply repressive upbringing and a traumatic period in a psychiatric hospital. It is clear that Lilian does have psychiatric symptoms; for example, she develops a systematised delusion about a man she does not know but believes to be Lord Kitchener,
and who gives her secret signs, but she engages our sympathy because we are led to the conclusion that no-one deserves to be treated so badly as she is. Like Sweetie, Lilian’s Story also tells the story of a woman who seems to be the victim of an over-regulated, intolerant and unsympathetic world who is institutionalised because of her eccentricity rather than anything that can be recognised as an illness; delusions notwithstanding, the real cause of her hospitalisation is intolerance. But, in contrast, it is altogether less dark in its humour and less bleak in its outlook. It does, however, present the period of hospitalisation with conscious verisimilitude.

There is a noteworthy preponderance of stories based on actual events and real people, and this seems to be far more characteristic of Australasian films than others. When the Australian context is considered, it may be that real-life experience is still closer to the popular mythologisation than in more established cultures. Madness still remains something outside the comfort zone of the popular imagination, and so one entry into it is through the telling of real stories, the biography. In that way whatever horrors or disturbing images or material that may be dealt with, can be seen to have really happened and therefore cannot be denied. The striking features of the subject matter may be more than a coincidence.

**Representation and Social Contexts**

*What the camera did not see did not exist.*

*from Evening World magazine (1899)*

As Benjamin (1973) has argued, film has often run in parallel with social movements and has sometimes quite consciously reflected them, sometimes to the extent of consciously glorifying or serving explicit political purposes. A film can thus be seen as a social document, and it can be argued that not only is the particular construction of a film a reflection of its time, but its time is reflected in and preserved in the film. Brik & Shklovsky (1976) remind us however that only when the departure from fact approaches the grotesque can we be sure of not watching the lie of history but an edited and proscribed version of it. Still, as Keats observed in a letter to Benjamin Bailey of November 22nd 1817, when musing on the "truth of imagination", "what the imagination seizes as beauty is truth - whether it existed before or not" (1931 p.31). This of course is particularly apposite to what are purported to be true stories or based on actual events. Would it now be possible
to glorify the role of the Ku Klux Klan as D W Griffith did in The Birth of a Nation (1915)? One would think not. Berger (1974) argues that not only do we view any art through a particular cultural prism but may be ordinarily incapable of acting in any other way. We cannot be other than ourselves but we should know that today’s received wisdom may be tomorrow’s heresy. If history is always written by the victors, then we should consider who are the victors in the case of socio-political orthodoxy and consensus. There is an interplay between intention and expectation.

It is no more possible to create a work without reference to its context than it is to view or read one without acknowledgment of previous experience. This can lead to a playfulness or trickery, a psychological trompe d’oeil, but it can also be used to seriously consider the way in which the makers and the audience interact, what and how the images are regarded and how accepted versions of reality mutate and adjust according to the context. Furthermore, what we think we see may be a combination of what we are told we see and what we expect to see. Magritte once told his audience that they were not looking at a pipe, they were looking at a painting of a pipe. Film-goers remember that they are only watching a film, but may also find the distinctions of what is real, or realistically portrayed and what is fantasy or fantastically presented becoming blurred; that is that there is the co-existence of artifice (clearly what is happening on the screen is not real) and the suspension of disbelief (which is a fundamental concept inherited from theatre). The celebrated opening to the Coen brothers Fargo (1995) which stated that the events which were to follow were based on a true story highlighted this relationship when they later revealed that they made up that part of the story as well. However, the audience was left to ponder which bit they really were making up.

However, the verisimilitude and sense of suspended disbelief that we, as an audience, might seek and wish to invoke in a representation can be problematical. Both Lyotard (1988) and Blanchot (1986) consider the problem of representing the unrepresentable in a way that retains some sense of realism, and they discuss this with particular reference to the post-War, post-Auschwitz situation of Germany. The Holocaust has, in part, become a touchstone for this question because, as Lyotard points out in an echo of Adorno’s (1983b) remark that no poetry can be written in innocence after Auschwitz, it can be seen as an end point of the historical process as well as the final extreme and absurd consequence of the most unreasonable application of Reason. The terrible consequences of the single-minded application of a monological world-view seriously question the division of madness and reason which had previously remained largely uncontested.
In the eyes of some commentators, especially those such as Kaes (1989, 1992) who are struggling for understanding within the German context, the Nazi period and the logic of the Holocaust has become the single defining event of the Twentieth Century. However, it may also be too enormous and too monumental to conceive in a single image or moment, and must develop a notion of mythological or allegorical representation. We are faced, through a consideration of the historical events of the Nazi period, with questions that note the ordinariness and banality of evil, to quote Hannah Arendt’s memorable phrase, and so must face the possibility that we are all capable of monstrous acts and the veneer of rational civility is easily stripped away. We may have to consider that the Other is not all that different to ourselves, and the beast may not be very far beneath the surface. Arendt (1958) was also to consider how the Nazi regime was an example of the way in which totalitarian orders tend to create total world views. She saw propaganda and film being instrumental in this “art (which) consists in using, and at the same time transcending, the elements of reality, of verifiable experiences, and in generalizing them into regions which are definitely removed from all possible control by individual experience” (p.362).

Of course the Nazi period is not alone in condoning or organising mass murder and institutionalising the elimination of the enemies of its culture. However, it may be that in looking to the extreme margins of what it may be possible to represent adequately through the medium of film, we may begin to understand a little more clearly the construction of the representation of ourselves. There is a level of appreciation of the cinematic experience in which the visceral and intellectual reactions of the audience potentiate each other and create an inexpressible but unforgettable reaction. As Pronay & Spring (1982) demonstrate, the use of propaganda was not limited to totalitarian regimes and the more democratic nations were perfectly happy to employ the medium of film to support wider political aims including the perpetuation of colonial rule and aggressive trade policies. The ideological content may have come to be regarded as quaint rather than sinister, but the purpose is very much the same.

Sometimes the artifice may be used for purposes other than teasing the audience. Benjamin (1973) cites the heroic tone of Eisenstein’s October 1917 (1927) and Battleship Potemkin (1925) as examples in which intention, expectation and ideology come to the fore. For Benjamin, the aestheticization of politics was the ultimate strategy of Nazism (Kaes 1992 p.47). Similar claims could be made for Riefenstahl’s documentaries of Nazi Germany around which many of the issues crystallise. Riefenstahl is troublesome for many
commentators (Kracauer 1974) because “before our very eyes palpable life becomes an apparition ...(and) ...this transformation affected the vital existence of a people” (p.303). The use of newsreels was approved because in order to “keep the totalitarian system in power they (the Nazis) had to annex it to real life” (Kracauer 1974 p.303). The presentation of the real becomes lost in the artifice until neither can be distinguished, and it doesn’t really matter any more (at least from one perspective). Kracauer cites Riefensthal’s use of “living ornaments” to “captive the spectator” and suggests that where “content is lacking or cannot be revealed, the attempt is often made to substitute formal artistic structures for it” (ibid p.302). Kracauer ventures that “not for nothing did Goebbels (who had inordinate pride in the achievements of his own Ministry) call propaganda a creative art” (ibid p.302).

Curiously, given the Nazi’s antagonism to Bolshevism, Goebbels recommended Battleship Potemkin as an example of propaganda to be emulated to a meeting of the SPIO (German Film Producers’ Organization) and the DACHO (German Actors’ and Directors’ Association) in May 1933 (Hull 1969 p.24). He wanted to impress on them what he considered to be good films. For Goebbels the “purpose of making films was twofold: to educate the people and to make propaganda for the state” (ibid p.24). There is an interesting divergence here from the position espoused by Hitler, who was quoted in the New York Times on April 16th 1933, only a month earlier, as saying, “I want to exploit the film as propaganda, but in such a way that every theatregoer may be clearly aware that ...(it is) a political film” (ibid p.20). Hitler, perhaps more sentimentally, wanted art to be art and politics to be politics, a point which is made by the remainder of the quote, in which Hitler told his audience that it “nauseates me when I find political propaganda hiding under the cloak of art. Let it be either art or politics”. Goebbels was less certain that the two should or indeed could be separated, although that distinction is blurred if the quote is not given in full, as is the case in Leiser (1974). Goebbels (1984) was also aware that, as he wrote in diary on 1st March 1942, “Even entertainment can be politically of special value, because the moment a person is conscious of propaganda, propaganda becomes ineffective”.

As early as 1933 in an address to the International Film Congress in Berlin, Goebbels presented a prescient and insightful if, in retrospect, slightly sinister and Machiavellian, view of the importance of film as a medium. He suggested seven theses about film which included, inter alia, the notion that each medium (film, theatre and so on) has its own language; that mass tastes can be educated and film can play a crucial role in this; that film is duty bound to be a total Volkskunst (a much more encompassing term than Popular or Folk Culture) which could give artistic form to the joys and sorrows of the masses; that it
should be supported by the State; that it must reflect the spirit of the times if it to speak to
them; that film gives expression to a sense of national identity and that film can be a vital
and plastic representative force. He concluded by suggesting that if it followed these
principles, film could conquer the world as a new artistic possibility (cited in Rentschler
1996 pp.239-240). It is unsurprising that Rentschler feels that we are still living with the
testament of Dr Goebbels (1996 p.215), and the possibilities of both popular cinema, in
terms of the way a film works with its audience, and conceptions of national cinemas, in
the role they are seen to have in establishing a sense of identity, are children of his vision.

Within the socialist Austrian republic of the 1920s there was, conversely, little appreciation
of the propaganda potential of cinema. The dominant aesthetic was still fixed in the classical
tradition. While the SDAP (Austrian Socialist Party) and the trade unions were both keen to
support and develop a working class culture, they regarded film at this time as a rather low
form of popular entertainment, and certainly not be considered on the same level as the
establishment of public libraries, community orchestras or theatre groups. Indeed Gruber
(1991) suggests that it was regarded as a threat which could undermine the resolve of the
workers rather than an “opportunity to strengthen (the socialist) cultural program by
attuning it to popular tastes” (p.127).

This led to the development of something akin to the socialist realism that dominated the
aesthetic of the Soviet Union and China later on. This neue Sachlichkeit (new objectivity or
factual, a stripped down, laconic style) was evident in art and literature and reflected the
way that the SDAP “looked down upon pleasure for its own sake as baggage to be shed on
the way to the neue Menschen” (Gruber 1991 p.135). Such a moral position produced
strange bedfellows, and not for the last time, as the Roman Catholic church viewed film in
almost exactly the same way, as corrupting and immoral kitsch.

It would appear that although newspaper reviews began to appear regularly by 1922, very
few were by critics other than transposed theatre critics who brought with them a theatrical
sensibility. Balazs (1924) seems an exception, as one who could appreciate “the unique
visual power of film (and saw in) its expressive use of gestures ...the emergence of the
first international language and the beginnings of a new visual culture” (Gruber 1991
p.233). Rosenfeld (1928) was concerned to expose the bourgeois values that underpinned
most of what he saw and to develop a true working class cinema which could be a weapon
in the class war. He did not see the cinema as politically neutral, and this bourgeois myth
had to be demystified.
Taylor (1979) discusses the debate in the totalitarian states of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia (sic). He cites Fritz Hippler, head of the film division of the Propaganda Ministry from 1939 to 1943, director of one of the more explicit anti-semitic films of the era, *Der ewige Jude* (1940) (*The Wandering Jew*) and described by Hull (1969) as “the evil genius” (p.172), as saying in 1942 that “[i]n the cinema, more than in the theatre, the spectator must know whom he should hate and whom he should love” (Taylor 1979 p.190). Clearly this is recognising that the emotions evoked are more than mild engagement or pleasant entertainment. The cinema was seen as a rhetorical weapon of immense force. It could tap or engender profound emotional experiences and attitudes. The simplistic presentation of good and evil, of heroes and villains, could have just as easily come from the one dimensional productions of Disney or Hollywood, and Elsaesser (1984) suggests that they are readable in just the same way as Hollywood films of the period. They were not meant to overly tax the critical faculties of the audience, but relied on the premise that if you say it loud enough for long enough, no matter what the content, people will come to believe it. In a diary entry of 8th February 1940 Goebbels (1984) says that he “keeps impressing on (his) people with one basic truth: repeat everything until the very last, most stupid person has understood”. In *Was der ererbt* (*What You Inherit*), a propaganda film made for internal NSDP use in 1935, this forms an essential part of the drama in which a white-coated scientist, who espouses a spurious social and racial Darwinism, shows a series of films of “the survival of the fittest” to his staff until the secretary, the sole female, exclaims, “So the animals were using a correct racial policy”. Even as early as 1912 Duenschmann had foreshadowed this when he recognised that the “mass thinks only in images and can only be influenced by images that act through suggestion on its power of imagination” (p.924).

Marxist cultural analysis is intrigued by the question of the value-free camera. However, rather than endorsing the notion it is concerned with showing how hegemony renders it a fiction. It would appear that although the cultural neutrality of film as a medium, and films as a cultural product, must be considered, it must be deemed impossible. It is clear that the cinema is not a means of production readily available to the mass of people. This has not substantially changed in a century, even with the comparatively recent development of video and Super 8 cameras. The huge costs of production meant that there was always going to be a financial imperative, and almost always going to be a consequent sense of control and purpose that tended to exclude or at least restrict, spontaneity, experimentation and improvisation. While the final cut was capable of as much manipulation and refinement
as the producers were willing to pay for, films are, in the main, made in order to make money. This drive to make profits can also result in a tendency to appeal to what are perceived to be existing attitudes, values and beliefs on the principle that people will prefer the familiar over the disruption of the new, and will prefer to be comforted rather than challenged.

Nevertheless, the cinema is often said to be a mass medium, and correctly so in terms of the numbers that it reaches and in terms of the universality of its technique. There are no words and it is not troubled by barriers of language or literacy, there are many, many copies rather than just one original which expands its simultaneous reach endlessly. It is a medium that had to remain in the hands of the very rich and/or powerful. Whether this was direct state control as in some totalitarian regimes, or the ruling capitalist class is less important than the idea that the predominant ideology would be propagated through film because that was the ideology of those who controlled the means of production.

While the examples of political propaganda may be the clearest illustrations of the lack of cultural neutrality, and when examples are cited in the context of the peculiar demands of overt war, the issues may be thrown into high relief, it remains a central plank of the present analysis that cultural propaganda is an important element of representation in film. Public education and indoctrination may only be separated by degrees of subtlety rather than intent. Propaganda is the essence of advertising for a cultural weltanschauung. The choices made about how to represent states and concerns of madness are also governed by this.

It is in the nature of propaganda that it is a simplistic presentation of attitudes and beliefs which can be nurtured and developed to the exclusion and damming of any opposing view. It works in opposition to complexity or a multi-textured approach in order to present the choices involved, be they moral or material, in the starkest form. It may seek to endorse a political movement, a health practice or moral attitude, but its methods are consistent. It is an irrational process, brooking no argument, in the guise of rational certainty. Propaganda operates in such a way as to support and affirm popular sentiments, even if on occasions they may not be readily acknowledged, to encourage an orthodoxy until it becomes an all-embracing personal and communal commitment.

Fears, desires, prejudices and uncertainty may be tapped into more easily than their opposites or certain intellectual constructions, but the nature of the exercise remains
unchanged. It is a hegemonic device through which the agenda of the dominant interests are portrayed, and minority views diminished. If the image of madness with which we are presented is one of danger and confusion, such as the initial one of Becker, the mentally disturbed murderer in Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) (Fig.7), we may be persuaded to one point of view expressed in the film, that it is a situation in need of radical action. Alternatively, if the putative patient is portrayed sympathetically as a victim of circumstances or of a repressive system, as in Ken Loach's *Family Life* (1971), we may begin to see the virtues of that position. Both these films have discernible ideological themes, both concern themselves with popular fears and constructions, both in this sense can be seen as examples of cultural propaganda.

However, the concerns which come to prominence for any audience vary in relation to the temporal and cultural context. Audiences are receptive to certain presentations at some times, while at other times they may seem hopelessly outdated or naive or anachronistic. A contemporary audience cannot and will not receive the complete complexity of the references in a British war film of 1941, but that cannot diminish the importance, impact or meaning that it would have had at the time. A genre of film, characterised by an issue of public concern, became recognisably distinct with its own conventions of treatment and resolution. Herd (1986), who was interested in the changes in the way alcoholism was dealt with in film, notes the "degree to which the representation of alcohol problems and alcoholism is defined not in terms of biological or even behavioural "reality", but in terms of social ideology" (p.214). She suggests that "alcohol and alcohol control movements have functioned as a key metaphor for much of American history" (ibid p.214). Denzin (1991a) was also concerned with this particular social manifestation and felt the need to examine and interpret "these broader social and cultural texts (i.e. classic exemplars of American film) in terms of the meaning they convey about the alcoholic and alcoholism" (p.xiv). The treatment of alcoholism in film has many parallels for the representation of Madness in that it can be portrayed comically (*Harvey* Dir. Koster 1950/ *Dream Team* Dir. Zieff 1989), tragically (*Days of Wine and Roses* Dir. Edwards 1962/ *Frances* Dir. Clifford 1982), with social realism and a conscience (*Lost Weekend* Dir. Wilder 1945/ *The Snake Pit* Dir. Litvak 1948) or as melodrama (*The Rose* Dir. Rydell 1979/ *Ordinary People* Dir. Redford 1980). It would seem possible to directly substitute madness into these pronouncements on the significance of alcoholism; they are both transgressors, fallen and give the impression that although they are Other, but for the grace of God, we too could be in that position.
Rodowick (1982) notes the use of melodrama in the 1950s as a way of working through bourgeois concerns in the period following the social disruption of World War II and its aftermath. He feels that melodrama is always culturally and historically situated. For Elsaesser (1972), the popularity of melodrama often coincides with periods of intense social and ideological crisis, and it has become the most highly elaborated complex model of cinematic significance in American (read Hollywood) films. Madness in these terms is sometimes the price we have to pay for the tension caused by the conflict between the demands of material and psychological stability, between law and desire, between society and nature. This becomes a Freudian trope of immense importance, not for its eternal insights, but for its contextual role.

To see social and domestic conflicts in expressively Freudian terms, most often in Oedipal terms, has led, in Rodowick’s (1982) view, to a refusal to see social conflict in anything but familial, personal or sexual terms. In addition, conflict becomes defined in terms of a struggle with patriarchal authority, which reinforces the tendency to describe the difficulties of social and personal identity, of meaning and being in intra-psychological terms to the exclusion of other, perhaps materialist or socio-cultural explanations. Eagleton (1976) has noted the closeness of the ideological and the aesthetic visions in society. The consequence of this is that a dominant ideology will divert discontent away from structural analysis towards an individual one. Thus, change must come at an individual level, not a social one. It would also lead to a form of narrative (the melodrama) which “could satisfy the contradictory demands of the genre in which the tension between sociality and sexuality was both the product and subject matter of a system of conflict which played out this drama” (Rodowick 1982 p.43); the drama of “demand refusal and wounded desire” (Ricouer 1970 p.241).

Benjamin (1996) was similarly interested in the role of allegory in explaining social concerns and the allusion that allegories are to thoughts what ruins are to things. Allegorical constructions and images are places to be revisited and revisioned, sometimes in pilgrimage sometimes in nostalgia, in an attempt to hold on to and at the same time refashion memory and meaning. The past is not to be regarded as yielding to a single interpretation, but moves with and responds to the present. Each present will construe the past according to its own position, each era will write its own histories, and each historical moment will emphasise and ignore evidence according to the construction it chooses to create. Benjamin (1973) also develops an analysis, in line with a Marxist notion of praxis, in which there is an reflexive interaction between artifice and disbelief; the one has an impact on the other, and
neither can be defined without reference to the other. In this way there is a dynamic and helical relationship between the art and its context; the camera, if it doesn't exactly lie, is sometimes economical with the truth. As the director Alan Pakula might have said, it is always *The Parallax View* (1982).

The nature of the medium is also evidently influenced by the technical tools available to the film-maker. It becomes clear at a very elementary level that the way in which characters are lit, to appear morally uplifted or darkly brooding, will affect the impact that the character has on the audience. To back-light or not, to use deep focus or accentuate the foreground and so on are artistic choices exercised by the makers of the film, but not without wide ramifications. Whether it is Tom Mix and the man in the white hat vanquishing the man in the black hat or the foreboding notes of the film's soundtrack, the film-maker leaves signifiers scattered across the screen which both inform and direct the sympathy of the audience, leave clues for emotional identification, lay a trail for the audience to follow in its engagement with the characters, develop allusions and red herrings in equal number, and, in short, create the cinematic experience. An examination of the way in which the emotions of the audience are engaged by the techniques of film-making may well begin to suggest that the medium is peculiarly suited to this *mélange* of sensory stimulation. The film-watcher may not be able to recall in detail how the different aspects create the impact on the imagination, but will not forget that shiver of dread felt when a particular chord sounds or the frisson of excitement created by peering into a half-lit room. Some of these examples clearly have antecedents in other arts such as the use of chiaroscuro in painting or the monologue in drama, but the film is able to put them together and juxtapose them in a unique way. Within such a proposition a clearer revelation of the technical expertise behind the creative act is able to add to both the analysis and enjoyment of a film without ending in its desiccation.

*Film* may like to see itself as the most accurate, objective and democratic of the arts - after all the camera does not lie, it simply records what it sees - but this is disingenuous. Rather it is the most subjective and controlled experience in that it dictates the parameters of its experience to the viewer. Film, as a medium, controls its context, a darkened cinema isolating every individual in the gloom (with all due respect to video or home cinema); it controls its length of viewing, you cannot come in and out, take a rest and come back as is possible with a painting; it controls the vision and the sound of the experience, and there have also been attempts to control the smell and sensation with *smell-o-rama* and moving seats or artificial rainfall. In performances of *The Tingler* (1959), a horror film produced by
William Castle who is described as basing his career on a mix of P T Barnum and Dr Caligari (Skal 1993 p.256), the "Percepto" was to play a crucial part. At a critical moment the film itself was to appear to come loose from its sprockets and break, and the eponymous Tingler was to be "projected on the screen as if it is crawling all over the projector" (Skal 1993 p.257), and let loose into the darkened cinema. It was now that the "Percepto" was to come into its own by wildly vibrating the seats of the audience by means of mechanical contraptions fixed underneath. Unfortunately a trial run caused the grand experiment to be abandoned when all the vibrators went off by accident the day before the opening during the showing of a feature improbably coincidentally appropriate, The Nun's Story. Skal (1993) hints that there was--"absolute pandemonium" (p.259). Undeterred, Castle continued his search for total sensory immersion, but sadly without much success.

Film seeks to control the replication of each performance, so that, unlike a play, every production would be exactly the same; it looks to control the interaction with the audience. No matter what the audience reaction the performance would go on unchanged, not affected in the way live performers might be. A J Balaban built a successful chain of cinemas on the basis of each one being a standard replica. Staff were trained to behave in the same way, the crowd was ushered and controlled and the whole experience packaged and homogenised. He was later able to take this approach to a higher and more refined level in the 1920s with the Paramount organization. The technique has clear echoes in the move to industrialised mass production/consumption and has been adopted with great success in contemporary commerce. Fordism was influential in the provision and marketing of entertainment as in other areas of the economy.

However, more recently the primacy of the cinema as the sole site for watching a film has been challenged, and some of the unique characteristics are less certain. There have of course been examples of this in the development of television and video technology. Video means that films can be viewed in the home, they no longer occupy all the viewers' total field of vision out to the periphery, they can be interrupted, packaged into small portions, re-run or even frozen, and the cost makes it possible to do it on a relatively minuscule budget. There have been attempts by the audience to rebel against these structures, and the social habit of eating in the cinema, pop-corn and Jaffas, ice-cream and soft drinks, can be seen as ways of asserting the autonomy of the audience. TV dinners contrast with the bourgeois outing to the theatre, and viewing a film on television may subvert the control over the experience that the makers may wish to exert. Once cinemas were intended to be the "Palaces of the People" (Chanan 1980, May 1980) and architects rose to the challenge,
but they are now more commonly refounded as multi-plexes which are indistinguishable from one another and have the bland, homogenised characteristics of international design. It is only required to look at the exotic and luxurious pseudo-mansions of the 1920s or Art Deco cinemas built in the 1930s to see the extravagance and ostentation which was intended to transport the customer to another world, one that was previously completely outside their experience, where they could fully realise their dreams. They garnished with resonant names and sought to overwhelm with what Tsvian (1994) calls “the Versailles effect” (p.66). These were places in which dreams could be made real. However, in many cases this illusion did not last beyond the post-War world. They became the site of rebellion in the 1950s. Seats were ripped, the really-cool customers would lounge with an arrogant insouciance with their feet over the seat in front, the screen itself would even be pelted in a critical response.

Philo (1996) argues that watching television, like watching films, is essentially a communal experience in that it is one of the common experiences that we all undertake. This does not mean that it always occurs in the presence of other people, although that is most often the case, but that it forms part of the social discourse through which we can recognise our common experiences. He notes the way in which the content of television programmes and films will become the topic of casual conversation at work the next day like sports results. More of the Glasgow Media Group’s attention is given to television and tabloid newspapers than to films, and many of the same observations apply. It is as though we are presented with the vision of an entire nation sitting down as one to watch the popular soap operas, thought by Philo (1996) to be “among the most powerful conveyors of meaning” (p.67), with the same newspaper in hand, and in reality audience figures for the most popular of these programmes can be as much as a third of the nation (ibid p.67). In Philo there is not a great deal of attention paid to the different audience experiences of the cinema and television, but the way they intersect and respond to each other is repeatedly emphasised. If anything, we are left with the impression that television representations are framed in terms of major films rather than the reverse. In this way a television character or plot will be said to be “like watching the film Psycho” (Dir. Hitchcock 1960) (p.67), or One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Dir. Forman 1975) is “one film that stays in (the) mind” (p.99). It is suggested that films have one big impact the ripples of which spread wide, while television, which seems to ask for less concentrated attention, influences by accretion.
The cultural origins of the particular film or programme also escape close attention from the Glasgow Media Group, something that might be significant in the present climate where American films and Australian soap operas are enormously important with the British audience. As Ang (1989) has argued, there is an important element of internationalism in some programming, and the cultivation of audiences. However, leaving that aside, it is significantly concluded that media images do matter and that the films mentioned have “clearly made a deep impression on public memories and beliefs” (Philo 1996 p.66). Similarly, Stead (1991), on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, maintains, especially in and for America whence the majority of these films come, that “film remains an integral and essential part of the continuing debate on the very nature of America and the meaning of the American experience” (p.219). But the nature of the reach of American culture is such that what meaning America makes from its experience is quickly available for all to share, willingly or not. It underlines the point that the scenes where our dreams are played out for us, be they physical, mental or representational, create an uneasy and ambivalent relationship.

**Audience Reactions**

*Going to the cinema turns out to be a philosophical experience*

*Henri Bergson (1906)*

The power of film to influence or manipulate audience reaction and attitude to issues beyond that which is immediately on the screen is hotly debated. There is a line of attack that harks back to the ancient Mosaic struggle between the image and the word. According to this, the image is characterised as a cheap thrill, something immediately gratifying but shallow, and close to pagan idolatry. It is implied that this will be directed at an uncritical audience, more concerned with consumption than analysis. The word, on the other hand, is a far higher art form and requires far more serious attention. This is supposedly characterised by a more sophisticated response. God, after all, sent written instructions, not a picture-book diagram. A model like this over-simplifies the question and reiterates outmoded divisions of high and low culture and middle and working class audiences.

The question of whether the effects of the portrayal of a certain attitude can spill over into other areas of life has been questioned within the context of notable theories of psychological development. The effect on impressionable youth was quickly seen, to be of
most concern, even in the earliest years of the cinema. McKeever (1910), in a magazine article whose title leaves its readers little doubt about what to expect, *The Moving Pictures: a Primary School for Criminals*, felt that films were clearly “more dangerous than the dime novel because they represent real flesh and blood characters and import moral lessons directly through the senses...[furthermore, by leading a young boy on, they can]...force upon his view things that are new, they (can) give first hand experience” (p.185). Similar sentiments and fears can easily be found today. There now exist data bases available on the Internet in which films are categorised, rated and listed according to certain criteria such as profane language, sexual conduct, disrespectful/bad attitudes, imitative behaviour or actors as role models (Screen It! Database). These are intended to alert people to the characteristics of certain films in order to restrict access to them or facilitate consumer-led censorship, avoidance or boycott. Of course, some film-makers may appreciate the publicity that such infamy can bring, and there may be consumers who use the list as a guide to the most salacious material available, but the more important point is that films are seen, with or without empirical corroboration, to be able to convey dangerous and subversive messages which present a threat to the moral and cultural integrity of a society.

Kleinhans (1974) suggests that audience reactions can be either simple, in which the audience seems to surrender itself to the experience of the moment, or complex, where the audience absorbs the immediate experience but also notices and is concerned with content and form. He extends his typology to say that all reactions can be either emotional or intellectual, and further, as he argues less persuasively, be either conscious or unconscious. Thus an action adventure film such as *Star Wars* (Dir. Lucas 1977) may be enjoyed for its storyline, and/or appreciated for the special effects and the visceral response, and/or interpreted as an allegory on the nature of good and evil and the technologization of the human spirit, sometimes all at the same time and without any internal conflict. Over-extension notwithstanding, his suggestion that there are multiple, sometimes co-existing and even contradictory readings of films is worthy of consideration. The chosen reading may be affected by the emotional, social, political, public context in which the film is seen.

Rather than speak of simple or complex readings, Corner (1991) suggests that there are three different levels. Primary signification tends to be fairly immediate, largely concrete and roughly equivalent to denotation. Sometimes, he argues, there is no more to it than that. Secondary signification is more implicatory and associative, more concerned with abstracts and more akin to connotation. His third level, which may equate to the preferred
or chosen reading, is one where readers “attach a generalized significance to what they have seen and evaluate it and locate it within a negotiated place in their knowledge where it may continue to do modifying work on other aspects of consciousness” (p.272). His notion of negotiated meaning has important echoes of the work of Hall and suggests how reflexive the process can become. When this is considered in relation to the representation of Madness it becomes apparent that the meaning that Madness holds for us, and the way in which it is interpreted is culturally complex and is more influenced by connotation, association and implication than empirical evidence.

Much recent attention has been concentrated on the most extreme examples of sex and violence as it is perhaps understandable that the more subtle influences may be more difficult to detect (Mathews 1994). Often, he suggests, it may be claimed, with great outrage but without much substantiation, that a film will deprave or corrupt, will desensitize or pervert. However, little experimental evidence exists to support the contentions. Moral danger often characterises the language used in the rationalisation of censorship, but it may also be noted that even in 1919 the British Board of Film Categorisation had considered refusing a release to The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (Dir. Wiene 1919) because of the distress that it may cause to the families of the insane. Clearly, the notion of Madness, its manifestation and the way in which it was treated was discomforting for bourgeois sensibilities, and not for polite society. It is possible to imagine similar arguments being presented today to suppress particularly salacious treatments of real-life events or public figures. The question is not so much what is true, but what comes to be seen as true.

Prawer (1980) believes in “at least five conflicting theories about the effects such fictional violence may have” (p.272), and it is worth bearing in mind how often madness is associated with violence. Briefly, he lists the no effect hypothesis, the inhibition effect, the catharsis theory, the habituated reaction and the socialisation factor. But he also warns that these should be tempered by a consideration of the possibility of aesthetically, artistically and morally justified depiction (used to justify more than violence), the insidious effects of “bloodless, “sanitised” violence and violence perpetrated by figures of authority” (ibid p.273) (there is very little blood in a Tom Mix film), that there may be other far more serious sources of “moral and cultural pollution” (ibid p.273) and the distancing effect of film as an art form. That theorising on this level can seem viable for different audiences at the same time, or for the same audience at different times, points to some of the difficulties in establishing monological explanations.
Jablonski & Zillmann (1995) became interested in the way some issues were treated and began to look at the trivialization of violence by the use of humour. They concluded that not only was there evidence to suggest that “the involvement of humour in the cinematic perpetration of violence diminishes distress reactions in both male and female audiences” (p.131), but also “the involvement of humour may form a violence-trivializing disposition that diminishes the distressing quality of violence in the absence of humour” (p.132). These findings may suggest that there may well be an accepting brutalization of the audience’s sensibilities from the repeated and unquestioning juxtaposition of values and action. The moot point for the representation of madness is that the seriousness of the personal distress, the social tragedy or the psychological disintegration may be belittled by the presentation on the screen. That in its turn, especially in the case of such a stigmatised condition as mental illness, may filter through to community attitudes and social (in)action.

It is suggested in line with Prawer (1980) but from a different perspective, that psychological, and particularly learning, theory may help to explain this. The model of hedonic incompatibility as outlined by Baron (1977) proposes that if distress (a negatively valenced reaction) is followed by humour (a positively valenced reaction) the degree of distress is significantly reduced or nullified. In a simple juxtaposition more retained attention is given to the last projection. Jablonski & Zillmann (1995) suggest that an example of this may be when severe and objectively horrifying violence is followed by a laconic quip by the hero (very rarely a heroine) and results in the audience having an appreciably reduced distress reaction to the violence. In this way it may be assumed that a film such The Dream Team (Dir. Zieff 1989) in which the antics of a group of ex-patients are treated as slapstick, may serve to defuse social anxieties about having the mentally ill wandering loose in the community. There is a similar tendency for television news programmes to end on a lighter note with some humourous or trivial item. Researchers of this ilk are involved in contrasting the audience reaction with what it would be without the humour, but, because of their positivist slant, there is a sense that they would like to be able to produce a mathematical formula to predict this, and are not comfortable with more qualitative analyses.

Prediction of future behaviour as a consequence of past experience lies at the heart of many explanatory models of behaviour and they are worthy of fulsome examination, even if they do not question the basic premises of the assumed value of predictive models. Variations in the subjective perception of the severity of the acts of violence may also be explained
through other psychological theories and social models. Association Models (Berkowitz 1993), Empathy Theory (Zillmann 1991) or Social Learning Theory (Bandura 1977, 1994) are cited by Jablonski & Zillmann (1995) as all leading to the same predictions of desensitization, brutalization and unconscious demeaning of serious subject matter. However, much of the effect must be influenced by the frame of approval/disapproval within which the protagonists are held. An example which will be elaborated in future chapters concerns the use of brutal treatment meted out to mental patients in films such as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Dir. Forman 1975) or *The Snake Pit* (Dir. Litvak 1948) and the audience response when they reply in kind. Alternatively, the restrictions placed on Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs* (Dir. Demme 1991) may be seen as justifiable, at least after the scene in which he chews the face off a guard. Despite the opinion of one examiner from the British Board of Film Classification that some people do want to look like Hannibal Lecter (cited in Mathews 1994 p.266) and presumably see themselves as just as clever and dangerous, Lecter is a character who fascinates rather than promotes emulation.

There is also a line of inquiry that is concerned with the effects of explicit violence or sexual activity in the content of film and other media. The focus of interest is most often the individual rather than communities, although a degree of extrapolation is frequently apparent. The range of hypotheses to explain or suggest the consequent behaviours, not necessarily imitative ones, following exposure to graphic material include catharsis, arousal, disinhibition, imitation and desensitisation (Gunter 1994).

Through catharsis we can discharge our (natural) aggressive or anti-social impulses in a vicarious masturbatory manner. It is as if identifying with the fantasy is enough to satisfy the urge. However, experimental designs to attempt to verify this hypothesis have not been conclusive, in large part because of the difficulty in controlling all the variables, especially those associated with the audience. The corollary that this may have for the representation of mental illness is that the viewing of some films which may contain and satisfy the more explicit stigma attached to aspects of madness may legitimise uncensored or anti-social behaviour, during which the perpetrators can act a little mad. Alternatively, negative or punitive attitudes towards the mentally ill themselves may seem to be justified. The first example may show itself in the romanticisation of psychopathic behaviour, either when it is violent as in the avenger/vigilante genre, or when it appears to cock a snook at convention, authority or the established order as McMurphy does in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Dir. Forman 1975). The second possibility is perhaps clearest when the behaviour of the
madman is grossly transgressive or violent and thus more easily categorised. An example may be the attitude towards the Buffalo Bill character in *Silence of the Lambs* (Dir. Demme, 1991) who is portrayed as pathetic and malevolent and in need of control rather than care.

The arousal hypothesis on the other hand contends that the depiction of certain actions, attitudes and behaviours may work in such a way as to be seen to directly provoke them in the viewer. A contrast put forward by proponents of this model is in the contrasting effects of humour and violence. It somehow seems more persuasive, or at least intuitive, to imagine that we will go out of a film smiling, laughing and telling jokes and that mood will persist through the evening, than it is to imagine that we will be fired up to rape, pillage and murder because that is what we, have just seen on the screen. As with other intuitively plausible hypotheses verification is difficult and often seems to rely on anecdotal or coincidental evidence. Physiological stimulation is somewhat easier to measure, but does not fully explain or predict behaviour.

In the disinhibition model it is suggested that watching violence may in some way legitimize its use in real life, and is in some ways related to the catharsis hypothesis. If it is alright for these people on the screen, it is alright for me. Following this logic, if it is seen to be acceptable to treat the mentally ill in some way that is dehumanizing, stigmatizing, disempowering, discriminatory or devaluing then reality may indeed see itself justified by art. The tendency to concentrate on the crime, the act itself, rather than the cause, the psychopathology, has been noted by Hazelton (1997) as part of what he sees as the “meaning-making process” (p.73) in local and national Australian newspapers, and this is seen as reflective of social trends to regard a penal response as justice and psychiatry as either the soft option or risk-management. The contextual influences of Hazelton’s study include the aftermath of the Port Arthur shootings, Australia’s worst mass killing, and bears some comparison with Appleby & Wessely’s (1988) research from the United Kingdom concerning the public attitudes to mental illness following the mass shooting at Hungerford where a punitive and custodial attitude towards the mentally ill which was detectable in the first weeks following the massacre subsided back to pre-massacre levels after several months, although the feelings towards the individual perpetrator did not appear to soften. In short, the effect was significant but temporary.

In the case of the disinhibiting effect of pornography, it is more apparent in the cases dealing with violence or sexual pathology. In particular and the work of Donnerstein
and Donnerstein & Malamuth (1984) seems to confirm a strong correlation in the area of sexual violence in the USA, but that a liking for pornography and a tendency towards sexual violence or violence against women are often found in the same person does not establish a causal link, or reliably indicate in which direction any link may operate.

The case for imitation is closely related in many ways but emphasises the learning theories of development through imitation, and the view that play is in some respects preparation and rehearsal for engagement with reality. There is strong intuitive support for such a view, and much anecdotal testimony. Heroes may become role models, play may become reality and identification may become identity. The commercialisation and merchandising of films and television programmes, or sport stars lends weight to the thesis that imitation is encouraged if not manipulated, and that we are all susceptible to it.

Behavioural learning theory is also prominent in the case for desensitization, where repeated exposure will lead to a reduction, over time, of the emotional (and physiological) response. The support for this orientation often comes from the clinical field and the exposure therapies used to treat anxiety disorders (Marks 1972), but they are most successful with discreet behaviours and compulsions, and less so with psychological complexes and thought. The question that this forces us to ask is whether or not this can also apply to such multi-valent responses to notions and experiences of madness.

It would be naïve to suggest that there is a simple correlation of cause and effect in any of these explanations. All recognise that they are extremely complex and multi-faceted social phenomena, but there is more than a suggestion that there is a strong tendency and predisposition. For Ellis (1982), there is not only a problem in the uses to which direct effect research can be put, that is to persuade advertisers about the value of advertising, but also in its aims. He suggests that the ideal of narrow and straightforward links are never going to be achievable. That is not to say that cinema and related media do not have effects, but they are diffuse and diverse and not easily put into secure or hermetic categories. Rather, he argues, they "have more to do with the creation and sustaining of meaning in modern society (the realm of 'ideology') than they do with any direct action upon individuals" (p.14).

What is also not quite so clearly defined or explained by Jablonski & Zillmann (1995), and this is acknowledged by them, is the point at which the audience no longer retains the knowing self-awareness that this is just entertainment and it becomes a deeply entrenched
characteristic of the world view. They find themselves up against the problem of “whether trivializing dispositions that are formed on the basis of fictional expositions extend to ‘real life’” (p.132). However, their analysis seems to call for some positivist confirmation and does not consider in any detail the knowing audience. An essential characteristic of the postmodern audience reaction is a sense of detachable self-irony (but not necessarily with a reflective sensibility), and this does not loom large in their conceptual model. They do not consider that detached, wise or aware viewers, or simply those who are too clever by half, may reply to the question of what it was that they were thinking while they were watching, “Acting, simulated violence and copulation, and make-believe”.

Nevertheless, Jablonski & Zillmann (1995) do acknowledge that the “involvement of humor ...has long been recognised as a condition necessary to liberate onlookers from moral inhibitions ...setting them free to enjoy cruelty” (p.132). Reading that passage will inevitably recall the Freudian notion of the function of the joke as some sort of psychological pressure valve for the release of sub-conscious tension, not all that far from the catharsis hypothesis. Such a position will find favour with those who wish to subject the whole nature of cinematic representation to psychoanalytic scrutiny, suggesting that film is in some way a psychoanalytic medium in its own right. That position should be distinguished from that which examines, and sometimes has sympathy with the way psychoanalytic principles are adopted or inculcated in to the presentations on the screen and the contextual factors that influence the choice or need to do so. The former may also seem less than fulfilling for those who champion a socio-political cultural critical analysis. Indeed it may sometimes pay to be cautious before identifying an orthodox Freudiansim with all the variants of the psychoanalytic thought, many of which (Fromm 1955, Marcuse 1972) have established an important and substantial relationship of mutuality with critical social theory.

Ang (1989) suggests that audiences do not exist naturally. They form and reform and sometimes different groups with quite different value systems and agendas can enjoy the same material because they are reading it in different ways. Thus while one audience of a film like Shine (1996) may watch it for the human (melodrama), there may be another which is looking at the representation of Madness, and a third which has an interest in the person as real life figure. However, for Ang, the question of power and control over the preferred reading is of central concern; the desire for orthodoxy in contrast to the institution encouraging and celebrating diversity remains strong.
The extent to which audiences can and do move between different readings, and can exert conscious control over this, is debated by many writers. Although the encoding/decoding model proposed by Hall (1986) suggests that meanings can be negotiated, audiences are probably not as recalcitrant, autonomous or subversive as Fiske (1987) would like to imagine. As Ang (1990) suggests it is "a perfectly reasonable starting point to consider people's active negotiation with media texts and technologies as empowering in the context of their everyday lives, but we must not lose sight of the marginality of this power" (p.247, italics in the original).

Docherty & Morrison (1987) suggest that film audiences have changed with the advent of television. They argue that the social conditions that dictated the early development of the cinema were related to a particular phase of capitalism which created a large, much more literate working class concentrated in urban areas with increased leisure time and a certain financial surplus to enjoy it. In this way cinema was able to become the mode of mass entertainment. This led to a greater sense of communal experience in contrast to television which they equate with the embourgeoisement of the working class, the development of the nuclear family and the comfort and privacy of single family homes. This, they suggest, has precipitated a decline in film attendances, which is supported by the statistics, but they go on to correlate attendances with influence - a position that is more difficult to sustain. Drawing simple relationships does not explain the way in which major films enter the social consciousness through advertising, presence, publicity and glamourisation, and Baudrillard (1975, 1995) has suggested not only the ubiquity of the image, but also the acceptance and propagation of a hyper-real experience. It becomes more important to acknowledge the way in which Bourdieu's (1984) notions of cultural capital and habitus, a personal and cumulative body of experiences, which although largely subjective, can begin to account for the inculcation of icons and image into a sense of identity. Bourdieu seeks to link the processes of cultural consumption with the processes of cultural production, and he would agree that it is an empirical endeavour, he would regard it as anti-positivist or post-positivist because its subjectivity will not allow for generalized predictions.

It is to their credit that, in drawing attention to the audience as a factor in the relationship, authors as diverse as Jablonski & Zillmann (1995) or Fiske (1989b) raise more questions than they appear to answer. Morris (1988) comments that there is often a "humane and optimistic discourse trying to derive its values from materials and conditions already available to people" (p.15) which is laudable but not particularly muscular in pinning down strong arguments. A conscientiously relativist approach which insists on the value of all
views may, as Ang (1990) suggests, downplay the severe realities of oppression in favour of a representation of a rosy world in which a way to redemption is always possible. In some respects the idea of an audience can be less helpful than the notion of the public (Rapping 1992). The first will tend to suggest a particular group who are engaged in a common experience, while the public sphere is more relevant to the present concerns. By adopting this approach it is possible to “posit a set of representations and textual practices existing in a common site within which a complex, shifting set of dominant and subaltern meanings are struggled over by an entire community with a broadly shared set of social terms and values, understood to be at stake in the process of these negotiations” (Rapping 1992 p.xxx). This would appear to be a more flexible and productive approach which allows for the way representations enter public discourse to an extent way beyond the numbers of people who have witnessed them.

The question of the audience, or audiences remains in a fluid state (Curran 1990) and care must be taken not to lose a sense of the wider social response and cultural currency through over-concentration on the individual. Nevertheless, in canvassing for suitable explanations of intuitive or tacit assumptions Jablonski & Zillmann (1995) lead us to examine more closely the insights offered by competing or even complementary frameworks of analysis. This prompts us to go further with some methodological considerations.
CHAPTER TWO

THE FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

Theoretical Approaches to Popular Culture
Myths, Mythologies and 'Reading Them

*Much Madness is divinest Sense -
To a discerning Eye -
Much Sense - the starkest Madness

Emily Dickinson, "Much Madness is divinest Sense", 1862

All critical perspectives are, in part, motivated by a desire to escape tyranny. The dominant emotion may be fear or anger, and it may be directed towards the tyranny of uncertainty, monology, taxonomies, gender inequality, class interests or ideologies, but any critique, like any social practice, must know not only of what it is in favour, but what it contends. This thesis, besides trying to illuminate some of the cultural and contextual representations of Madness in the cinema, is also motivated by a desire to contend the notion that these representations have no effect on daily lives. Simply and mundanely, they are part of the discourse through which we construct ideas of madness, the mad and attitudes towards them, and they are not just entertainment devoid of ideology, meaning or significance. The thesis is informed by a desire to construct a framework of analysis which will allow the reading of myths and mythologies, and assist the deconstruction and reconstruction of the subject. O’Regan (1996) speaks of this critical activity as a “duty of care” (p.350) of engaged criticism, and suggests that while problematizing can be “repudiating, denunciatory, debunking and demythologizing, it may equally be critical, contemplative, positive and remythologizing” (p.349). However, a single critical method or methodology, if pursued in isolation, may lead to unfortunate and unnecessarily limited perspectives of analysis. Kellner (1995), although struggling with the cumbersome nature of the terms, considers that any attitude to analysis that is both critical and multicultural, as this hopes to be, must also be “multiperspectival” (p.98). By this he means that it may be possible to draw “on a wide range of textual and critical strategies to interpret, criticize and deconstruct the artifact under scrutiny” (p.98). This does not have to entail the rejection of the old and only the acceptance of the new; contemporary theoretical discourse takes place with respect to that which passed before. No idea comes without reference points; even the sharpest breaks in traditions occur in an intellectual context and frame their thoughts with respect to, and within a known and expressible discourse. Denzin (1986) argues that it is necessary
"to continue to rework classical and modernist theories in the name of the new" (p.203) in a way that acknowledges various heritages and traditions, but does not slavishly reproduce them. His challenge is “to better reflect (our) condition so that we may better understand the current situation that engulfs all of us” (ibid p.203).

However, as Kellner (1995) points out, each approach has its own strengths and limitations, and may be suited to answering different sorts of questions at different times in the analysis. While monological analyses may deliver dazzling insights and be full of rhetorical power, they can develop blindspots which may be stubbornly and unrealistically defended. In the case of methodological approaches, more may not necessarily be better, but if a text, such as a film, is formed by a number of influences and arises out of circumstances that have both particular and general characteristics, then it seems defensible that any analysis should follow similar structures.

Kellner considers that while traditional Marxist ideology critiques have “been strong on class and contextualisation” they are less so “on formal analysis, as well as gender and race” (two important aspects of Otherness to which Hall (1997) pays particular attention); feminism “excels in gender analysis but sometimes ignores class, race and other determinants”; structuralism may give useful insights for narrative analysis (and is important for an understanding of further developments that show a lineage to post-structuralism and postmodernism), although it tends to be overly formal; psychoanalysis “calls for depth hermeneutics and the articulation of unconscious contents and meaning, but sometimes ignores sociological determination of texts and individuals” (p.99), but retains great influence in the understanding of the intention of film-makers; semiotics is a further example of an approach that gives important and sometimes intuitively correct insights, but may fall into the trap of acontextuality; and positivism answers some questions very well, but is quite inadequate to fully interpret and communicate relative or personal experience. Rather than seeing this position as likely to lead to confusion, Kellner (1995) advocates a less restricted, almost post-disciplinary, approach because “the more of these critical methods one has at one’s disposal, the better chance one has of producing reflexive and many-sided critical readings” (p.99), but not without discipline and rigour.

The premise that there are aspects of texts that are subliminal or latent but are still there to be read or uncovered introduces an interpretative note. The study of medieval church frescoes, to take a somewhat historically removed but still apposite example, is not based on aesthetics alone. It takes into account the audience, the setting, the culture and the
prevailing mores as well as the skill in the actual execution of the work. However, while the average peasant, even though illiterate, may see the meaning in the depiction of a biblical scene or the illustration of the effects of good or bad government, the subtleties may escape someone not immersed in that culture. Similarly, what may now be accepted as fairy tales and told for the amusement of young children can, when subjected to another critical view, be seen to be stories of good and evil, of demonisation and misogyny, of sexual temptation and predators, from Lilith and Eve to Cruella DeVille, of what Barbara Creed (1993) has called "the monstrous feminine". The potency of fairy tales may perhaps be seen in the epigram that those who laugh at fairy tales have never suffered. Angela Carter (1978) draws the connection between these medieval myths and the prevailing sexual political ethos, the ideology, as she terms it, of pornography; both work to make women both object and abject. She remarks that we should not be so naive as to think that myths only concern the ancient Greeks or Norse or the exotic East. In her view they are just as much as part of Western daily life as anywhere else at any other time. Louis Sass (1992 p.21) cites Wittgenstein's observation that there is an attraction in myths as an explanation that all present confusion and turmoil has happened before; each age, each time, each culture will tend to invent, re-invent and re-interpret its own myths and so the potency of the messages will be continuously renewed. Charlesworth (1982) mentions that myths justify and legitimate social structures and concerns, and while "not meant to be literally true ...(the) function is rather to express the image that a society has of itself" (p.37). We do not value myths for their empirical worth, but for the way in which they represent the inarticulate struggle to make the world comprehensible, comprehending and complete. Totalising explanations can be very seductive.

Nietzsche (1967) argued that myths were not only unavoidable in any human society, but were actually crucial to their identity and cultural vigour. His attack on the Enlightenment and rationalism is based in large part on the belief that it had sought to rob mankind of its essential nature, to emasculate it. He suggest that if it lacks a central, defining mythology "every culture loses the healthy natural power of its creativity: only a horizon defined by myths completes and unifies a whole cultural movement" (p.135). It is impossible to mistake the appeal to the natural, as though there is a single and true state in which humans and culture exist, and that this has a sort of pristine, unsullied state which has been taken from us. A tradition that encompasses the expulsion from Eden, the poison of knowledge and original sin as well as nineteenth century Romanticism and the propagation of the noble savage. However, while some commentators put forward Nietzsche as a precursor of Postmodernism's questioning of the Rationalist enterprise, this argument is very different
in that it is a reactionary wish to return, rather than a position which suggests its futility and self-delusion. It may be radical in its treatment and prescription of social ills, but its vision is fixed in the past. In this way Nietzsche’s contribution to the nature of social myths is at the decaying end of Romanticism rather than a Postmodern deconstruction of multiple or plural realities. However, it would be a mistake to always equate purpose with meaning. Some variants of postmodern analysis may question or even deny historical purpose, especially when it is assumed to be a forward march, but that does not rule out subjective meaning.

Vattimo (1992) further develops the role of demythologisation by arguing that a principal design of The Enlightenment Project was to show how Reason could demythologise and demystify the past. The application of Reason could rescue us from superstition and ignorance. We would no longer even need these primitive supports, we could explain it all. However, in Vattimo’s contention, this process was itself a myth, and so the task becomes a continuous attempt to understand the demythologisation of demythologisation. It might also be suggested that this process consists of the remythologisation of remythologisation.

The interplay between myth, present day reality and distorted perception out of which meaning may be divined is central to Wiene’s seminal The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (1919). The audience is informed at the beginning and reminded at the end of the film about the 12th Century myth of the mountebank monk and his somnambulist. However, in the meantime the film progresses in such a way, the fantastic and hallucinatory landscape notwithstanding, to convince the audience that the story of the evil Caligari and his murderous designs is the true one. Yet, in the final dénouement, the story is revealed to be the fabrication of a patient in a psychiatric hospital who has absorbed the good Dr Caligari, the real one, into his systematised delusion (or is it?). Who are we to believe? Which is the true version of events? We are being asked to consider where myths begin and where reality intrudes, but we are left with the uneasy feeling that not only is this an intractable problem but there is some doubt over the desirability of asking the question.

If myths are representative of our dreams and aspirations then the “Dream Factory” is clearly a place where the reinvention of mythologies is centred. The language of having “More Stars than there are in Heaven” is mythopoetic, indicative of how Hollywood began to see itself. The on- and off-screen activities of these stars began to be reported like the inhabitants of Mount Olympus: fan magazines sold, and still sell, by the million on the basis of the mock confessional interview, peeks into the secret world of the stars and
publicists' gossip. We saw the invention of secular but no less fabulous Gods and Goddesses of the silver screen. Hollywood became the home of fabulists, and its product modern fables, fairy tales and morality plays. Film, as a medium, may then be seen as supplanting traditional sources, and is linked with the dominant discourse and crucial to the cultural creation of identity. Consequently, the emergence of cinematic genres can, themselves, develop particular themes. Gangster films told us who to hate; cowboys and Indians films showed the triumph of the forces of civilisation over the savage; heroic tales of derring-do told us who to love; romantic comedies told us what to wish for; musical comedies could offer us re-enchantment; horror films could show us what to fear and films of social conscience reveal about what we should be concerned. In this way Hollywood's treatment of the human condition, and of madness, can be seen to be operating on a level of mythologisation.

Fairy tales have been seen as a source of meaning which still has relevance for the contemporary world (Bettelheim 1976), especially in response to a positivist paradigm, and tell of the persistent concerns of a culture (Propp 1968). For Benjamin (1973), they tell us of the earliest efforts humanity made in order to shake off the "nightmare which myth has placed on its chest" - and how can that be read without imagining that he had the disturbing memory of Fuseli's incubus (Fig.8)? Fear is a powerful emotion and is seen to bubble up from deep recesses of the psyche, and plays on irrational and subliminal aspects that are rarely brought into the light. The folk devils, those groupings of Others and Outsiders of which Cohen (1972) speaks, are seen as one of those aspects of social-psychological demonisation that allow us to feel secure in our common identity, defined by it being in opposition to the Other; that which is not us, but is more than just what we are not.

The mythology of demonisation of the Other creates the (illusory) reassurance of consensus; we all know what we are against, and we know it is nothing like us. Taussig (1992) takes this to demonstrate that there is a "mutual co-implicatedness" (p.45) between the Self, that is a conscious sense of identity, and the Other. Jackson (1981) contends that "from a rational, "monological world", otherness cannot be known or represented except as foreign, irrational, "mad", "bad"" (p.173), and as such becomes the unseen part of our culture; that which is always there, but never acknowledged. Psychiatry may have importance in this regard in that, as Doerner (1981) would have it, there is an intention, an aim, to "dim the deeply disturbing and uncontrollable phenomena of nature and render nature harmless, so that what remains can be dealt with theoretically within a harmonious,
humane and scientific framework” (p.4) and the representation of madness is in a reflexive relationship with the world of practice.

To this perspective Hall (1981) adds the inextricable relationship between ideology and stereotypes. For him they are not to be found separately, but in “the articulation of different elements into a distinctive chain of meanings” (p.31). The chains that bind can also be seen in those that shackle the colonised, as Bhabha (1990) argues, and by extension the oppressed, the marginalised, the outcast, the mad can be substituted here, for the dominant ideology and its proscribed and prescribed discourse functions in a circumscribed way to reproduce the notion of the subjected other. Perkins (1979) forces the point still further by insisting that the stereotypes that pervade popular culture will necessarily infect, in an ideologically irresistible way, (all) other forms of cultural production. If, as for Laurie Anderson (1986) paraphrasing William Burroughs in the best postmodern style, language is a virus, for Perkins, ideology may be seen the same way, just as contagious if not necessarily from outer space.

It is central to Jackson’s (1981) argument that there is sense to be made of the mythologised and fantastic. She cites Marcel Schneider (1964) as saying that the fantastic dramatizes the anxiety of existence (Jackson 1981 p.5) and notes the cementing power of symbolic representation. White (1977) puts it that the symbolic is “that unity of semantic and syntactic competence which allows communication and rationality to appear” (p.8). Porter (1989), although not generally of a psychoanalytic persuasion, ventures that it is one of Freud’s “monumental insights ...that man makes myths” (p.4) and the myths that psychiatry creates for itself and has created about it form part of the great ideological fabric that binds and contains. However, it is also the case that myths continue to make man in that the myths of madness will contribute to the way our sensibilities and concepts of madness, and add to our individual and collective perceptions of, and responses to, madness.

Myths can be self-created as well as accrued and there is a reflexive relationship of renewal and displacement. While hindsight can always make things clearer, it is well to remind ourselves that the nostrums we hold most dear may be no more than modern constructions which will, in their turn, be displaced. Pillars of our constructed world such as science or medicine or technology, or ideological concepts like individualism, humanitarianism, progress or democracy, perhaps even the “Great American Dream”, may not be the eternal

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truths we take them for, but they do have their proper place in our world-view and in the current discussion.

The importance of myth within the political sphere has been noted by Mosca (1939), Pareto (1963) and Sorel (1976) among others, where it is noted for its inspirational qualities. While this aspect may be interpreted as only referring to huge Wagnerian visions of chariots and glory, it may also be seen in the mundane underpinnings of any social structure. Mannheim (1960) noted that utopias cannot exist without an ideology, and the realisation of an image is sometimes part of the construction of a world as we would like to see it, irrespective of how it might be in any empirical sense. For Mannheim, mythologisation and hegemony seem inextricably linked and each epoch will create new myths and interpret old ones accordingly. Thus, mythologisation may be a fundamental process, but individual myths may not have the same timeless quality, or at least unchanging interpretation. Modern mythologies, as Vattimo (1992) suggests, may be subjected to an analysis that questions their role in the perpetuation of social, personal or political integrity with as much vigour as any examination of the gods of Mount Olympus. But he would suggest that myths are important in and a continual state of creation and deconstruction. It is the delusion of the Modernist enterprise to believe that the bottom of this process can be eventually reached.

Freud’s own writings are peculiarly full of allusions to classical mythology although he saw the question differently. It is not a great step to note that he sees the stories of Oedipus and Electra as saying something about the human condition that has remained true regardless of the historical context or particular representation, and that this is the very nature of a myth. Even when he makes explorations of a more socio-psychological nature and speaks of Civilization and Its Discontents (1973) or Totem and Taboo (1974) he is still concerned with the covert rather than the overt expression of psychological truths. It is scarcely surprising in that case that an essentialist Freudian model of psychopathology should be so attractive to film-makers. Both are concerned with suggestion and the creation of allusive referents. Both work by seducing the audience into complicity and relying on a substantial degree of suspended disbelief - that is if you accept the premise, what follows is not so incredible. Both are flattering to the audience in that they pander to an element of narcissism. Both tell wonderful and exotic stories. Both seek to explain the mundane as well as the complex in interminably simplistic ways with a deceptive coating of sophistication. Both employ the magisterial voice, something that I, as the author, know but you do not. Both use, and to some extent rely upon, multiple symbolic interpretations;
events which may or may not mean a particular thing, and may or may not be particularly important. If cinema is the site for the modern-day myth-makers then they are going to want to use all of Freud’s great story-telling abilities for their own purposes.

What Freud doesn’t seem to consider, and a point taken up by his more deconstructionist readers such as Lacan (1977), is that the attractiveness of his own model of consciousness may be because it is fulfilling all those powerful promises of a mythology. When Lacan argues that that language is always and inescapably shot through with the desires of the unconscious, and any attempts to liberate ourselves from this is a massively futile exercise in self-delusion (if not a model of ultimate horizontal violence, and it is not the time or place to discuss the delights of a sado-maschistic relationship with yourself) he is pointing out the conundrum of any model of enlightenment or monological reason. It is as if this is a barb that hooks us like a fish, and the more we struggle against it, the more it embeds itself in our psyche.

Although Freud concedes the point that sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, the essential hypothesis is that stories can be read at a number of different levels and that symbolic truths are often more profound and revealing than the veneer, sometimes precisely because they strike a sub-conscious resonance. Presentations may vary, but the big themes remain the same, timeless and universal. Allegory and sub-text are not confined to tales of witches and wicked step-mothers who live in vulvacious dark forests, or sleeping beauties and virginal paragons of unsullied virtue who can only be awakened by a prince of unblemished character, they are alive and well and flourishing in the popular culture of our own day. Barthes (1970) drew attention to the meaning inherent in the everyday objects, practices and rituals that surround us. For some it may seem that professional wrestling is the battle between good and evil restaged and refought in the same way that Walter Scott wrote his historical romances; fidelity, chivalry and honour pitched against treachery, immorality and dishonour. The conventions of television situation-comedies show similar tendencies in which the essentially lovable if eccentric or ever so slightly dysfunctional set of central characters encounter a problem, resolve it and learn a moral lesson about the decency of the bourgeois life-set, all within half an hour minus time for advertisements.

The issues that are dealt with in film may of course vary from context to context, both geographically and temporally. It may be that those aspects of sub-text that find particular resonance are peculiarly related to the psychopathological concerns of the audience of its time. At one time it may be social cohesion at another it may be repressive conformity, but
it will always reflect community concerns. So that, in the case of madness and the
mundanity of murderers we may see a change in the mythological presentation from the
deceiver, the worm in the bud, of the popular culture of Cold War period of the early 1950s
to the amoral random violator of the 1990s.

The first theme, the worm in the bud, may, when located in the political climate of the time,
be read so as to reflect a conception of the communist menace to the American way of life.
Anyone, our neighbour in our nice suburban house who washes the car on Sundays just
like we do, could appear to be just like us, but be anything but, and again the paranoia of
science fiction is apparent (Shortland 1997). It therefore becomes important to know how
you can, if you can really know what someone else is thinking.

The second, the person who seems so far removed from a conventional moral core as to be
as disconnected and unpredictable as an animal, as seen in Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer
(Dir. McNaughton 1990), Naked (Dir. Leigh 1993), Love and Human Remains (Dir.
Arcand 1993), Natural Born Killers (Dir. Stone 1994) or Butterfly Kiss (Dir.
Winterbottom 1995), may turn attention to the underbelly of society which we might feel
lurks out there and could invade us at any moment. In this case we fear the barbarian at the
gate, the outsider who can destroy our stability. With their various considerations of
redemption, expiation, penitence and the connectedness of individuals and society and each
other, films deal with our hopes, our fears and our myths, and it is instructive to examine
how different methodological approaches can illuminate the question of the significance,
meaning or effect of representations of madness.

Accentuating the Positivist
The psychiatrist will get it from him. If he can’t, nobody can.

from “Psycho” (Dir. Hitchcock 1960)

There is little positivist research activity in the area of the images of madness apart from
cataloguing them, which is itself a dangerously uncertain activity as the definition of terms,
themes or prominence can be quite subjective and influenced by time, place and theoretical
orientation. In this vein, Fleming & Manvell (1985) give notes and synopses of 145 films,
Gabbard & Gabbard (1988) even more, Wahl (1995) finds more than 150 examples in the
ten years between 1985 and 1995 and offers a similar list of episodes from television
programmes, and Gabbard (1996) claims something of the order of 350 major Hollywood films in the period 1906-1995 in which psychiatry or psychiatrists are represented.

However, for those who are interested in the effects of these representations, rather than being solely concerned with aesthetics, specific approaches to research are required. Gunter (1995 p.169) suggests that there are only a small number of methodological approaches used in the literature, and they all work within the rubric of behaviourism and seek quantitative measurements which in the most successful cases would enable predictions to be made with some degree of certainty. He lists laboratory experiments, field experiments, correlational surveys, longitudinal panel studies, natural experiments and intervention studies. All of these seek to establish a change in some aspect of audience affect, behaviour or cognition as a result of exposure to certain material. In common with much empirical research of this kind, these reports have shown that controlling and accounting for the effect of variables is an enormous task.

However, the way cinematic representation may affect attitudes or behaviour has been investigated taking other aspects as its keynote. Gabbard (1996) observes that while psychotherapy and psychological examination has proved to be a very durable plot device, allowing as it does the exploration of different sides of the one person, flashbacks to reveal the history, cathartic moments of epiphany and insight, redemptive love and resolution, it is not quite the same as the exploration of madness. Although there is a lack of distinction between psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, psychiatry, mental health and other concepts by which professionals differentiate themselves, the Gabbards do, like Fleming & Manvell and to a lesser extent Wahl, concentrate on the psychiatrist rather than the putative patient or the meaning inherent in the construction of the concept.

Perhaps the richest source of research activity into film content and its effect on consequent or subsequent behaviour is in the portrayal of violence, which, in the absence of investigations using representations of Madness, may produce significant indicators for further thought. Denzin (1987 p.681) suggests that the ubiquity of violent images and their relation to the borders of acceptable or reasonable behaviour makes such investigations worthwhile. Much of the research (Bryant & Zillmann 1995) is predicated on the way violence is portrayed in film and the proposition that it can alter, in a measurable way, the affect, cognition and behaviour of the audience. It may then be postulated that the way madness is represented has similar effects. That must remain speculation for the moment but it is worth pausing to consider its value. The link is also emphasised by the
understanding that violence can sometimes be seen as a temporary violence. Commonplace expressions such as being blinded by rage, suffering a rush of blood or literally losing one’s temper testify to the transient loss of reason. Violent people are often seen to be beyond rational thought or rational control. They violate social norms, they are often chaotic and indiscriminate, they are unreasonable and although violent acts may be seen as subconscious in origin it is when they are calculated, knowing or rationalised that they are most chilling.

In what was first published as the series entitled Motion Pictures and Youth (1933-35), and later became better known as The Payne Fund Studies, a wide number of research projects were initiated driven by the question of what unsupervised and increasing watching of films was doing to the youth of America. Operating largely under the rubric of the Department of Sociology at the then dominant University of Chicago, they can be seen as one of the first examples of large-scale research into the social effects of the media of mass communications, and were prompted by a good deal of pessimism. However, as Jowett et al (1996 p.5) point out in their introduction to the studies, there has been comparative neglect of the studies even though many of the methods such as questionnaires, open-ended interviews, content analysis and even physiological testing are still apparent and to some extent still in vogue today. Despite being attacked and losing much prominence for the adoption of a social process model of social development, the researchers were faced with the same fundamental questions of the influence of film-watching that are current today. It was postulated that perhaps films do have an educative function, perhaps they do affect social attitudes and behaviour, perhaps there is a link between Movies, Delinquency and Crime as Blumer & Hauser (1933) wished to investigate. It is unfortunate that many of the studies in the series would now appear to be methodologically troublesome, but it is instructive that the questions are very much the same. The difficulties inherent in their desire to “devise ways to answer intuitive questions with empirical research” (Jowett et al 1996 p.5) and their adherence to the positivist paradigm remain as pertinent now as then.

Reading this research in this area does not resolve the further problem of trying to establish whether there are justifiable correlations of these postulated effects with issues of Madness. It may be a feasible hypothesis that watching films in which Madness is depicted will either encourage or cause people to behave in mad ways. It may be conjectured, at this point, that the first option is possible, if imitative behaviour is examined, but the second is more doubtful if it means that they will be caused to be mad. However, the supposition clearly raises questions of definition as well as causality, and in the specific case of Madness it
also problematises its true nature, or at least believes that this is possible and that there is an identifiable true nature.

The evidence that Bozzuto (1975) cites about the rash of teenage girls being possessed following the release and popular success of The Exorcist (Dir. Friedkin 1973) would indicate that there may be something of value in pursuing this line of thought. However, the confusion evident in the multiple interpretations of what possessed behaviour may be like, the speculation that the fashion in differential diagnosis has taken another twist, what was once hysteria is now something else, and the suggestion that publicity may be providing the oxygen to fantasy quickly throws a doubt over the total acceptance of the reports, and may indicate a passing, albeit interesting phenomenon. It also becomes apparent that it is not actually important whether the persons concerned have in fact seen the film. It is enough that they are aware of it, and what they think that it involves. In this way the image and the simulacra become more influential than the single real event.

Concern has also been raised about the role of film in the genesis of copy-cat killers, even to the extent that Hollywood produced a film Copycat (Dir. Amiel 1995) about the same subject; a strange instance of putative self-reflection. It is a complex, and perhaps intractable question, loaded with social and political agendas, to decide whether watching a film incites someone to perform these terrible acts, or whether it simply affect the particular form that actions which would have occurred anyway. It is difficult to find records of people attempting to throw themselves off the cliffs at Dover having just watched King Lear, but that can appear facetious. Indeed, as has been indicated, the search for a straightforward causal relationship seems to be too simplistic. It is more useful to recognise that the act of watching a single representation of a particular act, even if there are repeated viewings, is only one aspect of a complex and intertwined range of factors including identification and the oppositional and contending forces in the construction of identity, that feed into the development of a consciousness that finds expression through aspects of popular culture.

If a statistically significant relationship is to be established between the watching of films containing representations of Madness and affective or cognitive changes in members of the audience, the crucial questions, as in all research of this nature, revolve around the identification and systematic isolation and combination of variables, and the reliability of the measuring instrument. Further, it should be established whether these changes occur as a result of emotional identification or another factor such as overt pedagogy? However,
when a dynamic psychological process rather than a static situation is examined it is necessary to consider whether audiences could become more sensitive to the nature of mental illness, or could be caught by a public mood that is so outraged by the depiction of the conditions of mental hospitals that there is a sea-change in psychiatric practice. Within reason, the intuitive response would tend to support such hypotheses but as yet there is little research of this kind to examine them.

There are a number of examples in which the film of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Dir. Forman 1975) has been used in universities, schools and training courses for health professionals in order to inform, provoke a reaction, initiate discussion or be critiqued (Bell 1988, Remender & Lucarelli 1990). Both studies conclude that the value seems less in viewing the film as a social record in the sense of documentary, but in its ability to evoke an emotional and cognitive response through its presentation of characters and conflation of ideas that it takes from the public domain, re-orders and re-presents to the public sphere for reaction, debate and comment. The students did not learn much about the practice of psychiatry, but felt that it powerfully engaged in the debate over its moral standing and public purpose. The reports also indicate that, more so than other texts, the film stimulated the students to speak and debate, and perhaps, to feel more able to express deeply felt opinions.

Domino (1983), starting from a “concern about films as a cultural phenomenon worthy of study” (p.179), tried to investigate “the impact of the film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* on attitudes (among college students) towards the mentally ill” (p.179). He administered an attitude questionnaire to a broad sample of college students before the release of the film, readministered it three months after the release of the film when about two thirds of the sample students had seen the film (presumably of their own volition), and once again after a further eight months at which time half the group were shown a *cinema verité* television documentary “designed to balance the film’s portrayal of life in a mental institution” (ibid p.179). His analysis “indicated substantial negative changes in attitude ...after viewing the film, but no change after the television documentary” (ibid p.179). Clearly while this is a worthy attempt to produce empirical evidence there are still problems. He does not distinguish between the nature of drama and documentary, nor between film and television, nor why some students chose or chose not to see the film, who were regular film goers and who were not, or how films were regarded by the students as carriers of information, and he can only speculate on the effects that the publicity the film received in that time may have had. Nor does he take into account the
suggestion of Sodowsky & Sodowsky (1991) that, the substantial changes from the novel to the film notwithstanding, by the time the film was released many viewers, especially in a counter-cultural literate student population, were familiar with the book, whether they had read it themselves, had seen it on the bookshelves or knew someone who had once thought about buying it. This may have led them to have developed preconceived notions of what they thought it was about. Nevertheless, this study and others like it may serve "to encourage psychologists (sic) to study films as a powerful influence on our lives, as Münsterberg suggested" (Domino 1983 p.182). If there is a lesson to be learnt it may be that any further investigations of an important and worthwhile subject has to be placed in a greater, multi-factorial contextual framework, and that seeking certainty may prove a vain hope.

Wahl & Lefkowits (1989), Americans, like most of the researchers in this field, looked at the effect of a television rather than feature films on a group of psychology undergraduate students. One group was shown a tele-film based on a "true story" about a man who murdered his wife while on leave from a psychiatric hospital. A control group was shown a film about murder but not mental illness. Unsurprisingly, the attitude questionnaires administered immediately after the film (no pre-test ratings were taken) showed that those who had seen the first film were more concerned about issues of the potential dangerousness of mentally ill people, security of hospitals, and risk management and assessment, and held generally more negative attitudes towards mental illness. The confirmation of the intuition that people are substantially affected by the material they view, and do transfer some of these attitudes to life outside being a viewer is reassuring. It leads to speculation about the cumulative effects of repeated viewings, and the possibility that complete saturation will extinguish the possibility of another point of view. However, there are severe methodological weaknesses that undermine the value of this research, although it does highlight the difficulty of controlling variables.

Laboratory experiments try to establish some verifiable and reproducible causal relationship between the viewing of a violent film and subsequent and consequent changes in affect, behaviour or cognition. The difficulty of controlling the wide variety of variables involved in the human response will always leave such designs open to criticism and ultimately unsatisfactory because they will always fall short of their narrow and purist aim. However, such results can be usefully suggestive of possibilities, likelihoods and trends, leading to further research questions, and often support intuitive explanations. They tend to support reasonable hypotheses, but confirmation is more difficult.
Principal figures such as Bandura have sought to confirm the projections of social learning theory, that antisocial behaviour can be and is learnt by observing others, following their example. In a series of experiments he investigated the relationship in children between watching violent incidents on film and violent behaviour (Bandura 1973, 1978, 1995, Bandura, Underwood & Fromsen 1975). He and his fellow researchers made a convincing argument that there was a higher level of imitative aggressive behaviours among those children who had seen the violent example than among those who had not. Similarly, Berkowitz and several collaborators (Berkowitz 1984, 1993, Berkowitz, Corwin & Hieronimous 1963, Berkowitz & Green 1966, Berkowitz & Rawlings 1963) investigated the arousal and acting out of aggressive acts following the viewing of screen violence and concluded that there was suggestive evidence. As with Bandura, they cautiously and judiciously say that it could not be called incontrovertible. The necessary reductionism of such experimental designs suggest that they are useful contributions to the field, but are not complete in themselves. There are strengths in the ability to test hypotheses, a scepticism of nostrums and the challenge to the intuitive or what is assumed to be obvious, and these can make important contributions to our understanding. The limitations of the methodology, the acontextuality, the question of meaning and interpretation and the simplification of social critique can be minimised by adopting a more inclusive approach.

Field experimentation, especially popular in the 1960s but still active, embarked on a direction of research that hoped to circumvent some of the classical problems of the confines of the laboratory while still holding on to the advantages of dealing with flesh and blood participants. As before, children and adolescents were the commonest investigative samples, and the breakdown shows that they were often skewed towards boys rather than a balance or looking specifically at the behaviour of girls. Again, as in the laboratory experiments, the major correlation sought was a measure of aggressiveness. Gunter (1995) observes that the one study of this type that seemed to offer a dissenting opinion, (Feshbach & Singer (1971) cited in Bryant & Zillmann 1995 p.172), where it was concluded that boys who watched only non-violent television were likely to behave more violently than those in a control group whose viewing contained a mixture of the violent and non-violent, was similarly plagued by methodological problems. For example, it was not taken into consideration how the boys might feel about being deprived of their favourite programmes and therefore the consequent violent behaviour may have been prompted by more than the single factor being investigated. Resentment, frustration, exclusion by peers,
rebellion may also offer explanations that the researchers did not seem to take into consideration.

The frustration born out of the difficulties in creating a representative sample that would stand up to scrutiny, and the accommodation of multi-factorial responses, led some researchers to explore correlational surveys which involved larger groups and different methods such as diary keeping and self-report surveys. Here, although the studies may have more representative samples, the interpretation of the results were not without their problems. It seems that the search for statistical significance leads to a potentially fatal lack of acknowledgment of the law that states that if something can go wrong it will. Popper (1992) has demonstrated that experimental findings tend to show that nothing has yet been found to disprove a theorem, rather than prove it. The unreliability of self-reports, whether knowing or otherwise, should also be considered as they may prejudice the results and cast doubt over the veracity of the findings.

Working on the assumption that it is not easy to sustain a high level of self-delusion or deception over a long period, there developed a taste for longitudinal studies, especially in America (Bryant & Zillmann 1995), and Gunter for one finds these “perhaps the best kind of studies of TV effects” because of their ability to “test causal hypotheses” and their use of “sound sampling methods” (1995 p.174). One particularly important aspect of this approach that sets it apart from previous ones is that it attempts to take into account the cumulative effect of repeated exposure. The problems of desensitization and brutalization can only be addressed if measures can be taken over a period of years rather than over the short term. Shock and trauma may be one passing reaction, but the question of how long-term behaviour is affected needs another perspective.

Appleby & Wessely (1988) sought to examine the way in which attitudes measured in the heat of public awareness, such as when a terrible act is committed and many people die or are injured, may well be very different to those measured sometime before or later. There are numerous examples which could have been taken, but the one in question, somewhat serendipitiously, was the case of Michael Ryan who shot 15 people and then himself in the Hungerford massacre in Britain in 1988. It is an ill wind that blows no good because some three months prior to the killings Appleby & Wessely had completed a large scale survey of 965 people on the link between mental illness and violence and attitudes to the mentally ill living in the community. Seizing the day in the name of science, they repeated the same survey two weeks after the shootings and found that although about the same proportion
felt that there was a link between mental illness and violence (43-47%), many more now felt that mentally ill people should not be allowed to live in the community (a rise from 21% to 54%). This is despite no formal diagnosis being pronounced on Ryan, even if the newspaper coverage had included such assertions and epithets; madness tended to be assumed because of the act. The survey was repeated a second time some months later, and the results had returned to their previous value. This would seem to confirm the power of publicity and the media coverage of events to influence attitudes, but leaves unanswered the questions of how much, how seriously and for how long.

It may be somewhat disappointing to report, therefore, that the evidence in response to the latter questions is so far less than conclusive, and it would seem that there is a chicken and egg problem which bedevils this kind of research. There are a number of variations of these questions:

- does the watching of violent material measurably influence the later behaviour and increase violence, or
- is any increase in violence purely coincidental, or
- is there an innate violence that some people merely satisfy vicariously, or
- is the increase in graphic violence reflective of social changes rather than a cause, or
- is the attitude towards any increase in violence and how to react to it affected by media representations, or
- any or all or none of the above?

It has become a matter of interest to speculate whether similar research projects could be generated by substituting “Madness” for “violence”, and Philo (1996) has worked in those border areas. Although he concentrates on television viewing and includes family groups (watching television is understood to be often the most common form of family, communal interaction) he makes strong suggestions that the predominant impression is that mental illness is associated with violence, and reports that films (“like Psycho”), sensational newspaper reports and television were cited as the principal influences. The effect of personal experience of one particular family point out some of the problems that can infest such research. None of the three teenage children had direct experience of a mentally ill person, but all said they associated mental illness with violence and thought that the mass media were the principal sources of these images. The father, a senior Police Officer, said his personal experience led him to associate mental illness with violence, while the mother, a nurse felt quite the opposite (Philo 1996).
Studies such as the ones on violence noted above have to come to terms with the rapid changes in technology. A single cohort may begin a study in an age of two or three television channels and finish it with satellite television of uncountable options, video technology and the remote control device which allows particularly skilled practitioners to watch several programmes all at once without losing track of any through the continuous channel surfing which gives enough of a sound and vision input to keep abreast of the storyline while they do the same to the next four programmes.

A number of long-term and cross-cultural studies (Eron et al 1972, Lefkowitz et al 1977) have suggested that there are significant relationships between the watching of violence at fairly young ages, less than 10 which some may extrapolate to indicate a particular period of sensitivity, and increased levels of aggressiveness up to 10 years later. This may seem to be intuitively plausible, but still suffers from a lack a knowledge about how the children actually view the material. It is relatively easy to project an argument that violent images are corrupting and twisting young minds, but that does not take into account the way in which the children watch. If the children are able to discriminate between serious and non-serious depictions then it may be that they have greater powers of resilience than might have been presumed; after all, there is a great and noble tradition of frightening fairy stories concerning murder and cannibalism (Hansel and Gretel), infanticide and regicide (Snow White), killing and bestiality (Red Riding Hood) and so on. Do these not corrupt? Is the treatment of the violence the crucial factor in the way it is perceived? Cartoons in which the characters are regularly blown up, cut in half, shot, fall from high buildings, crushed by heavy weights are all deemed suitable children’s fare. However, they all require of the audience that there is a clear and obvious suspension of disbelief. We know that the characters and what is happening to them are not real and that the events are not to be taken as anything more than a willing and conscious acceptance of the rules of the game. It is when the rules are transgressed, obscured or uncertain that we begin to worry. Thus, violence depicted in a documentary fashion does not allow us to be certain that it is just a fiction. For some, the thrill of pornography or “snuff” movies is that they just might be real, and although reality is quite likely to be comparatively undramatic in its action, its transgressive qualities are even more exciting.

The number of variables involved in these studies make unequivocal conclusions impossible. Multi-variate analysis is required to cancel out the competing factors, and this has been shown by Wiegman et al (1986). In a Dutch study they demonstrate that there are
distinct differences between the reactions of girls and boys, with the girls, although having lower absolute levels of aggressive behaviour, proportionally more affected by violence on television.

When Belson (1978) used extensive interviews and self-reports with British teenagers there was some criticism of the inherent unreliability of such data, susceptible as it is to the bravado and self-aggrandising of youth. However, while those who doubt the veracity of the self-reports may well have good reason to be sceptical, they should not ignore the adolescents’ desire to create an image by saying that they watched certain types of graphic material even if they had not. Once again the full force of influence may be felt in a referred rather than direct way. To boast of having watched some extremely explicitly violent film, especially when underage, may carry with it the same sort of kudos as putative sexual or alcoholic experiences. The importance of this for researchers is that attempts to measure tightly defined acts or categories may well overlook or be unable to detect subtle symbolic or totemic inferences.

One study that tried to shed light on how a predisposition to violence may lead to particular choices in viewing habits was developed by Atkin et al (1979). Attitudinal dispositions, especially with regard to aggression and violence, were used to predict television viewing habits a year later. The results seem to suggest that there is a viable relationship between aggressive attitudes and viewing choices. This is not altogether anti-intuitive, but it does suggest that an important factor may be that the television depictions can also be seen as reinforcing attitudes as well as creating them. Base and visceral reactions may also be strong examples here because they lend themselves to simplistic and uncontested presentations.

The connection between violence and madness is not entirely unexplored territory. Not only is there the body of psychoanalytic theory that sees aggression as a primary psychological motor, the concern of much psychiatric training and educational literature with the identification and management of violent behaviour (Stafford-Clark & Smith 1978, Birkhead 1989) indicates that even for professionals the two concepts never easily separated. Although this thesis is concerned with the representation of Madness in film, a review of positivist research in related or tangential fields can underline important issues. The question of the influence of representations of facets of human behaviour which may be unacceptable, taboo or seen as dangerously different, and whether any significant correlations with subsequent affect, cognition or behaviour can be deduced, is transferable
to a consideration of madness. So, although research into the effects of violence is most often cited it is often because of the paucity of research directly concerned with madness. Furthermore, it is of interest to consider some of the difficulties which arise with the notion of the recurrent difficulties encountered by research in this field and of this perspective suggest that an approach which takes account of the cognitive and multifactorial contextualisation of representation is going to be required before a fuller understanding can be gained. It needs to be acknowledged that representation does not exist in a cultural vacuum, nor is it without a socio-political context that is formed around the interaction of values and their presentation. Alternative methodological approaches, which will now be considered, have concerned themselves with the nature and construction of institutions, historical contexts or collective Understandings and sought illumination rather than prediction.

Marxist and Neo-Marxist Perspectives

*Cinema will always be at the forefront of change*

*Lenin (in Boltyanskii 1925 p.16)*

Marcuse (1972) states that one of the characteristics of contemporary American society, at least that of the 1960s, is, alongside the economic effects, the “scientific and pseudo-scientific investigation, control and manipulation of private and group behaviour, both at work and at leisure (including the behaviour of the psyche, the soul, the unconscious and the sub-conscious) for commercial and political purposes (p.248). Concerned with many of the same issues, but less influenced by psychoanalytical ideas, Hall (1988) argues that “all discourse is placed, positioned, situated and all knowledge is contextual. Representation is possible only because enunciation is always produced within codes which have a history, a position within the discursive formation of a particular space and time” (p.29). This leads to a structuring, and restructuring, of cultural relations within a context informed by the hegemonic ascendency of the particular historical period. It also identifies the position of the dominant system which might most readily be seen as the existing hegemonic force, the subordinate system which may be more or less accepting of the status quo and will often see itself in terms of its relation to the dominant system, and oppositional systems which are concerned with contention and critique. If the history of the representation of madness in film is examined from this standpoint, which owes much to the understanding of culture articulated by those writers sometimes clumsily, but conveniently, grouped as the Frankfurt
School of critical theory, amongst whom Marcuse may be counted, it may lead to a useful explication of the primacy of the interaction of context and action.

Swingewood (1977), while a fierce critic of the Frankfurt theorists, has pointed out that the reification of culture was a major concern for them; for some, like Adorno, pessimistically so but for others like Benjamin and Kraeauer there was a certain hint of optimism. Stuart Hall (1994) argues that “[p]opular culture ... is an area of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured ... That is why “popular culture” matters” (in Storey 1994, p.456). Hall, in support of this view, would subscribe to the aphorism that although people may make history, it is not out of conditions of their own making. This position shows why Storey (ibid) suggests that “[a]ll the basic assumptions of British cultural studies are Marxist” (p.viii). Some of these theorists may be openly (post)Marxist, like Hall, but all, including those who take an anti-Marxist position, are fundamentally informed by two major Marxist axioms. First, that culture and its social structure and history cannot be regarded separately, and second, that “capitalist industrial societies are ... divided unequally along ethnic, gender and class lines” (p.ix). This has led, by Storey’s contention, to a general acceptance of Hall’s formulation (1985) that there are three points of significance: 1) the break with the Leavisite tradition and also with mechanistic Marxism, 2) the influence of French structuralism and poststructuralism, notably in the late 1960s, and 3) the “discovery of the work of Gramsci and the concept of hegemony (mid-1970s), enabling a synthesis of the best of culturalism and structuralism” (p.xi). It is that last critical thrust that will, alongside the debate within and about postmodernism, continue to inform this thesis.

Jameson (1988a) and Huyssen (1986) see an ideological theme in the divisions and relationships between mass and elitist cultures and cultural forms. They conduct a broad sweep of analysis in which the content, text imagery and sub-text are inseparable from their context. They adopt a critical social science position to ask whether there are significant themes, trends and relationships that can better inform our understanding of our present situation and so lend a greater degree of analysis to our attempts to make sense of our world. Theirborn (1984) sees critical theory as “primarily a prise de position (Haltung), and only secondarily a theory of a specific type” (p.344, italics in the original). It is, of course, unlikely that all the possible aspects or examples will be covered, and no sooner will a word be written before it is out of date, but if the nihilistic vortex of absolute relativism is to be avoided the link of meaning between our past and our present (if not to our future) is worthy of examination. It is also contended that a further keystone in that link of meaning
is the culture with which there is an inextricable relationship. This leads back to images, representation and our understanding of mental health, of mental health care, the discipline of Mental Health Nursing, Mental Health nurses and of course what they do to and for those they call their clients.

Collins (1989) offers the opinion that “the mass media are always contingent and specific historical examples of a range of institutional means by which, in any society, symbolic forms and the meanings they create and carry are produced, distributed and consumed” (p.1). He goes further to suggest that “any analysis ... must be based, if only implicitly, upon general theories as to the nature of social and cultural structures, and in particular, as to the effectiveness of symbolic forms in the maintenance or change of those structures” (p.1). Thus, if both the conception of mental illness and the care concerned with the mentally ill are seen as a socially and culturally specific, this thrust of analysis may lead to greater degrees of insight and self-understanding.

Slater (1977 p.119) cites Lowenthal (1932) as saying that “ideology is an element in consciousness which has the function of concealing antagonisms and replacing an understanding of those antagonisms with the illusion of harmony” and so it must follow that the “task of literary history is largely the analysis of ideology”. This may not be completely representative of the aesthetic sensibilities of the Frankfurt School, never the most consensual or harmonious grouping, but it does suggest that “the analysis of art in its dynamic tension with the socio-historical totality” (p.120) can be a guiding principle of this study. It is clear that this analysis is quite applicable to the development of Critical Theory, for in a time when propaganda was not yet a dirty word, nor yet solely identified with the spreading of untruths, it was acceptable that an overt function of a governing regime was its self-publicity and justification. Taylor (1979 p.45) notes that the “distinction between agitation and propaganda is not normally made in English”, the former presenting many ideas to a few people while the latter presents one idea to many people, and although, especially in considering the political regimes of the Soviet Union (Taylor 1979, Tsvian 1994), and Nazi Germany (Hull 1969, Leiser 1974, Friedlander 1992, Bartov 1996, Rentschler 1996, Schulte-Sasse 1996) in particular, and to a lesser extent elsewhere in Europe (McNair 1988, Gruber 1991, Pronay & Spring 1982) and Hollywood (Roffman & Purdy 1981, Fraser 1988), it should be borne in mind, he argues that it is not a particularly useful distinction. It is better by far to look for the common factors. Lenin, in What is to be Done (1972), is clear as to the function of propaganda in raising the political consciousness of the populus. It would be suggested that the way totalitarian regimes went about this was

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simply less subtle, or less self-deceiving, than methods found elsewhere. It is only a short step from there to the realisation that if public morals were not subject to corruption, that is influenced by art and representation, there would be no need for censorship, and governments would not be so concerned with their control or production. The contemporary tone of Lenin's pronouncement in 1922 that "of all the arts, for us cinema is the most important" (Boltyanski 1925 pp.16-17, cited in Taylor 1979 p.44) is still unmistakable. Trotsky (1924) also saw the potential of the cinema, and described it, in Pravda on 12th July 1923, as "this weapon, which cries out to be used, is the best instrument for propaganda ... a propaganda which is accessible to everyone (and) cuts into the memory" (in Taylor 1979 p.51). This clearly signals that ideological manipulation through popular culture is far from a contemporary concern (as indeed is the potential to make money for Trotsky added "and may be a possible source of revenue"). The revolutionary potential of the cinema, however, is within its reach. This is something which both Lenin and Trotsky seem to have understood.

By seeing cultural artefacts as reflective of social and ideological values, Marxist analyses of culture are also interested in the cultures of class and economic groups, and the way in which the culture of the dominant economic class may also become, if not the most common one, the one with most approval and prestige. The question of cultural dominance or hegemony, and its relation to economic dominance has greatly exercised many writers.

For Easthope (1991) the divide between high (associated with the economic elite) and popular culture (associated with the masses or working classes) in the Twentieth Century assumes great importance and is a defining aspect of contemporary life. In contrast to the Leavisite view of great and lesser cultures with ahistorical criteria, he poses other explanations which owe something to a Marxist perspective and the development of the role of ideology in social life. The influence of the ideology of those who own the means of production in a cultural form which, like film, is wholly dependent on considerable technological and economic investment must therefore be problematised. If films are to be seen as cultural artefacts which are also commodities to be bought and sold the relationship between producers and consumers becomes important. The ideological assumptions of the producers, conscious or not, may only allow them to produce products which, although they have interpretable meaning, only operate within a restricted range of acceptable representative frames. Therefore economic class interests influence the product in a more profound way than simple cost.
Fiske (1989a, 1989b), also of a Left persuasion but owing more to the Freudian-Marxism of Marcuse (1972), sees a dialectic at work and claims that the “popular” in Popular Culture “is determined by the forces of domination to the extent that it is always formed in reaction to them” (p.45). However, due in part to the shifting tastes and fashions, Popular Culture is, in this view, to be found in its practices and not so much in its texts. Film, in itself, is neither High nor Popular Culture, but individual films can be.

There seem to be two touchstones by which all frames of analysis claiming a Marxist lineage are guided. The first derives directly from interpretations of Marx’s own work on commodity fetishism and false consciousness, and the second must place itself in relation to the analysis that emerged from the Frankfurt School for Social Research and the importance of ideological hegemony. Commodity fetishism, tied to the objectification of labour, becomes central to a Marxist understanding of how certain cultural forms can establish and prolong class domination. It is also a self-fulfilling process of social valuing; if something has high value it must have a high price, while anything that has a high price must have a high value. In addition, as the basis of Western social structures is, in the Marxist view, exchange value, whatever subverts that must also be subversive to this and its value system and its social structure.

That the ideas of the dominant class perforce become the dominant ideas of the age is an established dictum of hegemony. An analysis which proceeds from that position reconciles how it is possible for a dominant class interest to produce a Popular Culture which appeals to a subordinated class in a very real way, in that an awful lot of people consume it, but does not undermine its own sets of interest. Easthope (1991) suggests it is difficult to find supporting evidence for this position without recoursing to a notion of consciousness. It remains, however, a central plank of hegemony, and may be seen to work through its logic in the form of globalisation and cultural imperialism, so that the whole world will soon be watching Hollywood films with a Coca-Cola in one hand and a Big Mac hamburger in the other and then going home to watch satellite television (Peters & Waterman 1982). It may also be tempting to see this as a crushing of true human nature rather than economic and social exploitation informed by an imperialist ideology, but that, as has been suggested earlier, emphasises an essentialism that is at odds with, and refuted by, a social constructivist position.

As Gramsci (1971) sought to elaborate, there is a role for coercion alongside force. People labouring under a false consciousness persuade themselves that the oppressive system is
justified, and save the dominant class interest the trouble of having to enforce it more physically. The placation and pacification of the subordinated class is completed by the acceptance of false needs, usually satisfied by consumer goods, and commercial interests which are seen to act against the more natural and true needs of living out full and meaningful, unimpeded and fulfilling lives in a promised land of true communism. It is also, in the view of Hall (1981), empirically unsupported and quite insulting to imagine that people, even in the most oppressive of cultural climates, do not think for themselves. Thinking in a state of reflection, or when personally affected, is one thing, but if it is reasoned that for the majority life is more comfortable if they do not engage in reflection, a sensitized or raised consciousness moderates the division. Films, in this instance, serve to sensitize consciousness to chosen representations, and if these representations are of Madness, they work within the public imagination to form the perception of it.

One or two further problems still remain with some dominant ideology theories. Despite some theoretical opposition to the Enlightenment Project, especially when capitalism is seen as its logical outcome, some simplistic Marxist critiques suggest that as ideology always lies at the centre of texts, the way forward is to refute and expose the false ideologies and reveal the true or enlightened one (Kellner 1995 p.112). However, such positions still subscribe to a final historical solution, and do not subject themselves to the same rigorous deconstruction which they apply to others. If they did, it may become apparent that civil libertarianism and plurality is not wholly at odds with a critical position.

In the view of Fiske (1989b) there has been far too much concentration for far too long on “ideological and hegemonic practices as the key to understanding popular culture” (p.183). He argues that this position cannot account for the nature of the pleasure that is so obviously a part of the reasons for popularity of Popular Culture. It is both the culture of the populus and the culture which attracts the greatest audiences or consumption. Populist culture is more easily identified as ideological, although it may be suggested that pleasure is also ideological to some degree as it reflects the individual’s identification with a social view, and the way pleasure is taken and shown may certainly be seen as socially constructed. But the subversion of the pre-packaged aspects of Popular Culture, which Fiske applauds, is still seen in oppositional and conflictual terms. He returns to the need to establish a sense of meaning; for him, even with a distrust of the grand narrative, it is not acceptable to assert that the meaning is that there is no meaning.
It would seem that a Marxist analysis offers much to help situate popular culture and its treatment of Madness within a context. Hall (1986) identifies three ways in which a cultural text can be read. There is the hegemonic reading, which takes on the reading preferred by the dominant ideology; the negotiated reading, which moderates the position of the preferred hegemonic reading with insights drawn from a minority or alternative position; and the oppositional reading, which seeks to transform the preferred hegemonic reading and engage it in an oppositional discourse. If these alternatives are examined and deconstructed a number of important points of analysis emerge. When Madness is taken to be in opposition to the dominant ideology it becomes relevant to consider the way in which a notion of false consciousness, sustained by materialist benefits, can direct the oppositional struggle away from Capital and Labour and focus it on marginal groups, such as the Mad, which threaten to disrupt the status quo. This leads to a particular representation of Madness and leads to a set of values which will inform its characterisation of the individuals concerned and the course their experience should take. It places the conception of the Other in relation to the socio-cultural values that define it.

The Contribution of Structuralism

*The construction of the image of the patient is, then, always playing out the desire for a demarcation between ourselves and the chaos represented in culture by disease*

*Sander Gilman (1988 p.4)*

Structuralism is seen by Manning & Swan-Cullum (1994) as both a theoretical perspective and a methodological approach although it cannot be viewed as a monolithic body of theory and/or practice; there are splits and fissures and areas of profound contention. Real (1989) suggests that, in essence, structuralism “is concerned with how meaning is generated in social texts” (p.55), but that this may take the course of examining the structures of language (Saussure 1966), of signs in society (Peirce 1931), of narrative sequences (Propp 1968), of myths (Barthes 1970), of binary oppositions (Levi-Strauss 1966), of social dominance (Hall 1986), of race (Snead 1985) and of gender (Kaplan 1983). The variety of bed-fellows to whom Real ascribes the label points to one of the fundamental problems of definition, and one that will emerge later with regard to postmodernism. It also underlines why it may be possible to adopt some methodological concepts without full subscription to the theory and vice-versa. The legacy of structuralism is perhaps of more contemporary relevance than much of its original analysis. In particular poststructuralism and
postmodernism, which many would regard as wholly indebted to structuralism and impossible without it.

However, in accepting structural analysis it is assumed that foundational, and unchanging, conditions of social life can be discerned almost irrespective of the particular form they take. The fixity of these underpinnings enables an analysis to expose the essence of social relations: they are always there, as the skeleton, if the flesh can be scraped away. Structuralists would tend to see content as a function of form, and meaning as a product of a system of relationships. The importance of Structuralism in linguistic analysis, and this is primarily understood to be the modern French structuralism and its influences, emphasises that language is the principal way in which the structuring of the world is evident. It is not just the power of words to label and classify the world, but also the structure of different language systems to conceptualise the world, the grammar and rules of usage and what the words themselves can connote and denote. This means for Rossi (1983) that “knowledge does not consist of copying reality but in reconstructing it” (p.12).

The importance of the symbol is of central concern to theories of structuralism because “they conceptualize all domains of social life as systems of communication consisting of signs” (Rossi 1983 p.22), and symbols carry collapsed, nested and distilled meaning. The symbols may be traffic signs on the side of the road, or they may work within the text of a film, but they will always need some degree of common understanding and interpretation. Postmodern sensibilities use this insight and look at the particular words or signs that are used to define or encode the world and its structures, but ask about what is not there, what is excluded, omitted, forbidden, taboo, suppressed or simply inconceivable. We may have some idea of the structures of the world, but what lies in the spaces in-between? From this perspective, some interpretations of structuralism seems to seek closure, whereas postmodernism looks to open up possibilities. So, although structuralism creates some important analytic possibilities, it often has difficulty in accounting for the pluralistic, contending, unknowable or uncertain aspects that nuance a situation.

Poststructuralism, while concerned with interpretable meaning and relationships, maintains that there can be no eternal laws governing social systems where language is concerned and it is futile to chase after them. Language is quintessentially contextual, rich and resonant with meaning, but meanings that are fluid. However, there are moments at which shared meanings and interpretations bring people together with a commonality of understanding where the representation of the world is expressed and holds true for that moment. This
will usually enhance the view that “conventional canons of interpretation reflect dominant values” (Manning & Cullum-Swan 1994, p.468). Sometimes these moments melt away, sometimes they are more robust, but they are never, in themselves, imbued with permanency.

This position has a degree of importance in the consideration of cinematic representation that comes into sharpest relief when the case of documentary films are highlighted. While *Let There Be Light* (Dir. Huston 1946), which was made for the army and concerned itself with the mental health problems of returned servicemen, explored the possibilities of successful treatment, it did not show itself to be very self-reflective. When Frederick Wiseman made *The Titicut Follies* (1967), a film which seeks to chronicle life inside the Massachusetts Correctional Institution, Bridgewater, a prison for the criminally insane, he struggled to get a commercial release because of its portrayal of brutality and abuse by the prison officers and the medical personnel, and was, by contrast, quite aware of the polemical aspects of what he chose to present and how he chose to do it. Just because it was called a documentary Wiseman’s film was not without either narrative pace or enticement, nor was it seen by the director to have to try to be objective. For Wiseman, the subjectivity was to be seen more in the editing, the juxtaposition and arrangement of the material rather than in the photography or *mise en scène* itself (although that may still not be quite accurate enough). A document that does not simply record, but re-orders time and sequence for dramatic and narrative effect can have no pretensions to being an unbiased, unfiltered picture of events as and how they occurred. The camera sees things from a particular point of view, and the compression of time and events, and the process of discarding and editing render disinterest a delusion. For these reasons Wiseman’s films are termed “reality fictions” (Benson & Anderson 1989 p.1) and are cited as heirs to John Grierson’s creative treatment of reality. Although many themes in the film are shown in apparent time-order, such as the man appearing before the review board, some are re-edited out of time. Wiseman intercuts one scene of a man being force-fed with shots of his body being prepared for burial by the mortuary staff; the way he is given a final shave, his eyes and orifices are packed with cotton wool, and he is dressed in a suit are shown in contrast to him lying naked on a trolley with men holding down his arms and legs, while a nasogastric tube is passed. This is done to exaggerate the impact of the film and to underscore one of the points Wiseman wished to make. Wiseman wanted to engage the emotions of his audience as well as to force it to think. According to Winston (1992), he also wanted to use his films to teach, but in many ways all that separates him from purely fictional film-makers is the basic material with which he works and his open pedagogical and ideological intent.
His authorial voice is every bit as strong as any director from the Hollywood canon. This is not, however, to call documentary film-making a sham or deception, but to point out the inherent subjectivity of communication.

It has also been suggested that fictional treatments can distil essences of reality so that, even though while watching it, we know that it is a fiction, it seems to be more truthful than actual events. This is not a poetic truth, but one in which the scenes seem shot from life. The realistic style in *The Snake Pit* (Dir. Litvak 1948) is a case in point. The Superintendent of Nurses of California visited the set during filming, and, despite conscious awareness of its artificiality, was unable to distance herself. According to a cotemporary report “she looked at the sobbing, muttering, staring women and said, “Why, they all look like my own girls” (Time, 20th December 1948, p.41). Clearly, verisimilitude is one aspect, but meaning is conveyed and interpreted in a more complex way.

Lapsley & Westlake (1988) argue that structuralism became increasingly influential in film criticism by stressing that meaning was produced within the structures of signification, and therefore that language itself assumes a central position. The importance that this has for the representation of Madness in film is underlined by the role Popular Culture has in defining, articulating and expressing the commonality of interpretation of issues of concern. The structuralist analysis shows that the way the world and our understanding of it is ordered by a particular set of rules that are difficult to break. In this way, when we begin place representations of Madness with a frame of understanding, we may assume that content is less important of form and code, and that language and pre-determined channels construct meaning. Manning & Cullum-Swan (1994) see structuralism as resulting in a closed system which is tautological rather than historical and contextual, but that is probably one of a number of branches of a common root. However, by enlarging the conception of what may be seen as a readable text and emphasising plural interpretation over single facticity, the post-structuralist movement opened up a profitable line of inquiry which could examine the margins and the interplay of co-existing codes. The attention that it pays to language and how structures may pre-determine thought and outcome bear some consideration. The power of language is difficult to underestimate where Madness is concerned. One word, spoken with authority, can lock a character, perhaps a mad character, into a representative frame and inform a continuing conception of Madness.
One of the most urgent tasks of semiotics, in the view of Greimas (1990), is "the study of the discursive organizations of significance" (p.11) and to make this as scientific as possible. However, the reach and influence of the field of study has gone further than linguistics and has entered the cultural world. Nöth (1990) suggests that "film semiotics...has become a major trend in film theory" (p.463), and which began with assumed "homologies between language and film" (p.463). This necessarily extends to include ideas of grammar, syntax, meaning and the reader. Metz (1974), while not accepting the totality of the language-film homology, still speaks of a "cinematographic language" in which there are such codes. Some of these codes apply to all films in general, and some are only applicable to films of a certain genre. Thus, all films have certain things in common, while genres tend to develop their own conventions and reference points. Lapsley & Westlake (1988) contend that this was seen to be almost the death knell of conventional criticism because it was thought to provide a reductionist scientific basis for aesthetic judgement, even if, according to one commentator, it was carried out with "the poised vigilance of a lobotomised ferret" (p.32). This may have been an over-reaction.

The exploration of film grammar and syntax have tended to focus on the technical details of the means of representation such as the close-up, montage, jump-cuts and so on. It becomes a point of interest to examine the way a film is put together and what this conveys. Schmidt (1996) consider the way in which the lighting and camera angles in Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960) are used to convey different aspects of Norman and Marion in the seminal parlour scene and to compare and contrast their psychological states. Norman is shown in a harsh light, Marion in a soft one; Norman is shot from awkward angles; Marion's position is much more conventional and the juxtaposition of the two allows us to frame the characters for the ensuing story. However, Schmidt's analysis also shows a weakness of failing to contextualise the signs, or over-interpreting. He notes, and probably quite rightly, the covert menace in the use of the word "parlor" (sic). He says that it evokes the rhyme of the spider and the fly and presages the closing line of the film in which Norman/Mother speaks of not harming a fly. Nevertheless, Schmidt does not see how Hitchcock's Englishness may also be a crucial factor in the use of the word, despite the very American setting and references in the film. Front parlours were for guests and polite entertainment, not for everyday use. To go into someone's parlour was to enter into quite a different
relationship than to be invited into their kitchen. It signified a formality and respect, as well as, apparent even in 1960, a certain old-fashioned courtesy. So, while Schmidt may be persuasive or provocative in much of what he says, his analysis exemplifies many of the strengths and weaknesses of his approach; it enlightens and adds to our appreciation of the depth of the film, but it is, without contextuality, inherently limited. Metz (1982), in an influential discussion of the subject, ponders about the peculiarities of the filmic image as the “imaginary signifier” which is illusionary and real at the same time, but this can be a somewhat narrow focus, and aspects of meaning, interpretation, signs, the signified, the signifies and the reader can be investigated with different concerns.

An appreciation of the value of semiotic analysis, which examines signs and symbols, must question the inherent semiotic value of things, or consider the possibility that semiotics is just a way of substituting one system of interpreted meaning with another. While Benveniste (1971) states that it “is definitely the symbol which knots that living cord between man, language and culture” (p.26) the question of cultural peculiarities and particularities remains. This questions whether the meaning that is drawn from a work of art or a film is governed by the maker’s intentions, or whether the meaning is generated by the audience, or even if there is a position somewhere in between. Semiotics is polysemic, and in pursuit of such questions it would seem intuitively plausible and suitably deferent to pay a good deal of attention to the creator’s intentions. To be told that this aspect holds such a meaning, or that passage was inspired by or has reference to something else, may on the face of it add to our understanding of the work. This position has in large part informed the theory of the *auteur* that has become associated with the particular brand of film criticism which emerged alongside the *nouvelle vague* of French cinema in the 1950s (Metz 1974).

For some creators the film they produce may be a conscious and controlled attempt to explore themes and issues within the context of a popular entertainment. Alfred Hitchcock’s disarming and teasingly transparent false modesty may deny the subtextual readings of psychoanalytical themes of repressed sexuality, taboo in mundanity, voyeurism and so on (and some may ask if cinema audiences are not voyeurs, what are they?) but, as in the case of *Psycho* (Dir. Hitchcock 1960), a number of readings and referents can be discerned and these will enter the frame later in greater detail. As MacBean (1975) states, we are often in the position of watching someone “adrift on a sea of significations” (p.17). Is *Psycho* a straightforward thriller, a money-making vehicle, or a meditation on Oedipal themes, or a paean to psychoanalytic insight, a manifestation of deep mistrust or misogyny,
or a particularly important milestone in the cinematic representation of madness, or any, all or none of the above? The answer is probably “Yes”, sometimes at the same time and sometimes at different times.

However, the position at which the observer stands will dictate, on top of the influence of selective attention, what is seen. It becomes possible to suggest that these films can be read semiotically as “texts are both produced and apprehended by a work of signifying practices” (Fornäss 1995 p.147). However, while the authorial voice is interesting and important it cannot be seen to be the one true interpretation. Interpretations, opinions and insights change over time. It may be that the creators are the last people who can give a balanced critique of their work. Indeed, the absorption of Freudian precepts in many of these films seems to be in opposition to the psychoanalytic practice of an expert outsider interpreting the subconscious.

There is also a way in which aspects of popular culture in film now have a sufficient history in themselves to allow for pastiche or referents to be sliced into a narrative. Woody Allen was able to create Play It Again Sam (1972) based on an illusion and misconception, a place where what we believe we remember is far more important and far more real to us than anything that actually happened. The audience knew, and was constantly reminded of the fact, that without Casablanca (Dir. Curtiz 1942) the film they were watching would not have been possible. Some may join in those late night cult showings of film where the sound is turned off and the audience recites the lines en masse. Yet, what they were being reminded of was a Chinese whisper of the original. They had accepted the simulacrum. There are sections of the world-wide audience of the cartoon series The Simpsons who will sit and count the references to icons of popular culture that are flashed on the screen for a brief instant and then disappear once they have seduced the audience into a collusion of a shared moment. But if the reference is given out by America, will the audience in India or the Borneo jungle (places well within the reach of satellite television) share the joke or will it read on a completely different level with another set of referents and yet still be taken as a satirical comment? Is meaning inherent in the sign, or does it always rest with the audience? Simply because the same artefact is found to be praiseworthy or amusing it does not necessarily follow that the judgements are made on the same criteria. An authentic experience should not have to be assumed to be a real one any more than an authentic representation should have to be real.
The recognition of symbols within films is not easy to account for. It is by no means certain that the apparent use of one piece of action to symbolise another is actually clear to the audience which watches it until the symbolism, or the director’s interest in it is made obvious. The audience which sat in front of Alfred Hitchcock’s *North By Northwest* (1959) may well have thought that the closing scene which fades from a passionate embrace of Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint to a train entering a tunnel was simply a neat way of drawing the narrative to a close. However, if it is forewarned that Hitchcock had an interest in Freudian psychology, was something of a voyeur in his private life, had a deep and abiding interest in sex and a macabre sense of humour, it may begin to interpret the long snaking object entering a dark, cavernous hole in the earth and whistling its delight in quite a different way. It may be the audience, or audiences, who make themselves content with their own interpretation and that does not mean that one is more insightful more sophisticated or more insightful than another, only that each audience views and interprets according to its own set of criteria, and if it so chooses is able to move between one and another. In this way a postmodern sensibility is a knowing one. Even for Hitchcock a train may sometimes be just a train.

If presented with the same artefact in different guises we may find it extremely difficult to retain a critical consistency. Bordwell (1989) makes the point that interpretive critics tend to ignore the “theoretical precept that empirical claims should be open to counterexample” (p.251). A hypothetical composer, called “Sorensson” or something similarly Scandinavian to locate it somewhere, may say that a piece of music was inspired by the ocean in winter, great surging swells, the crashing of waves on the shore and so on. Consequently the piece is entitled, for the sake of argument, *Ocean in Winter*, and when the audience hears it and knows the title and is made aware of the composer’s inspiration, there is agreement that it is indeed evocative of such a scene. If, at an alternative performance, the audience is told that the composer, who has been given a different name, perhaps “Kawaki”, has been inspired by the medieval wars in Japan and the piece is called *Battle of Hokkaido*, would the reaction be the same? Would the audience, any audience, agree that it conjures up visions of great armies clashing and so on? If yet a third performance is given with no named composer, no title to the piece, no explanatory notes, how would the audience react, what interpretations would it evoke? Even when taken to extremes it remains impossible to create an uninfluenced or uninfluencing text. As is apparent in non-representational art, leaving a piece without a title or giving it the label *Untitled* or *Opus 10* is just as much of a declarative act as any eight line appellation given to an Augustan novel. Such actions will not and cannot prevent or exclude audience interpretation. The title of a work is a part of the work,
and may be seen as an integral decoding device, it works within the framing of the work to establish an understanding. Furthermore, Baudrillard’s (1983) analysis reminds us that sometimes beneath the thin veneer of the surface there lies the thin surface of the veneer.

Baudrillard also problematises the question of authenticity and authorship because, in his view, this is the age of simulation in which the image is dominant over anything that can be called an objective reality, and can become so disconnected from it that the original is lost. As a consequence, authenticity becomes one more thing to be faked. The recent scandal in Australian literature in which Helen Darville’s book The Hand That Signed the Paper (1994) was seen to have so much more authenticity when she was known as Helen Demidenko with a Ukrainian heritage, showed that her supposed ethnicity was a factor in the reading of the text. Was this a case of deception, of stealing an identity, of a conniving dissembling on the part of the author, or can it be explained and excused because it was fiction? The same issue was also active when the author of My Own Sweet Time (1994) was revealed not to be Wanda Koolmatrie, an old Aboriginal woman from the outback, but Leon Carmen, a white European man living in Sydney. There are of course many examples of contributors to films going under assumed named or having their work uncredited, but these measures usually seem to have been taken to disguise their real identity than to perpetrate a deceit. However, the case of the those directors, writers and actors who were blacklisted during the 1950s as a result of the Senate House Committee on Un-American Activities presents a slightly different aspect (Buhle & McGilligan 1997). Certainly there is deliberate deception involved in creating false identities and noms de film, but it seems to be motivated by a desire to protect those concerned rather than to exploit a perceived advantage or caché of a particular exoticism.

The privilege attached to perceived authenticity was also in question in the casting of One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Dir. Forman 1975) in which Richard Brooks, himself a psychiatrist, played a psychiatrist, but, perhaps more troublingly, real patients from the institution were cast as extras, playing psychiatric patients. The group in Fig.9 may contain real patients among the actors, and while this is not known with any certainty, it provokes interesting speculation and forces the viewer to examine the bases on which any opinion is formed. The way in which these people were asked to act highlights the perception and simulation of reality. If the extras were encouraged simply to act as they normally would in the given situation, it may be assumed that the intention was either to normalise their behaviour, or document it unadorned or at least give the impression that these were living their character and not acting it. Alternatively, if they were asked to act in role, it is quite
unclear what this would mean to them; to act like a stereotypical patient, to act as a patient might see a patient, to act as a buffoon, to act in line with the thrust of the film or something different again? Furthermore, the effect that this foreknowledge of the audience may have on the reception and perception of the performance is unknown but undeniable, in the same way that revelation after the act may lead to a reconsidered opinion of its worth, value or skill. Whether this is the defining issue is a question moderated by views on authenticity. However, if, as Baudrillard (1983) reminds us, any constant notion of authenticity is but a seductive chimera, and each situation creates and validates its own acceptable authenticity, what authenticity is taken to mean and represent is more revealing. It may be concluded that searching for, or identifying authenticity is not, for these purposes, as productive a line of inquiry as the pursuing construction of identity.

The question for semiotics is posed in such a way that it is significant for one critical perspective to understand the author’s point of view, but it does not necessarily affect or dictate the reaction or understanding of the audience. Films that place themselves in the popular frame are particularly apposite examples of this. Hirschman (1995) considers the “veridicality between the cinematic portrayal of drug addiction and actual drug addiction” (p.160), and suggests that unauthentic practice, such as the dealer injecting the Frank Sinatra character in The Man With The Golden Arm (Dir. Frankheimer 1955) can be compared to the playing of a heroin addict by an actual heroin addict in Trash (Dir. Warhol 1970) which, in her view, “serves as one of the strongest anti-drug narratives ever produced” (p.161). However, her concentration on the fidelity of representation seems to neglect the emotional response which engages the audience and is an important factor out of which it discerns meaning.

Gottdeiner (1995) asserts that “understanding semiotics is essential for an appreciation of postmodernism” (p.3). He sees a “trajectory of thought that began with poststructuralism” (ibid p.3) and has so far reached postmodernism. But he wishes to turn from the post-Saussurean semiotic tradition of signs towards the “greater promise” of Peirce where it is possible to “contemplate the relevance of material culture” (ibid p.4). Peirce does not allow the object to become lost. For Peirce the sign can only stand for or represent some object because of the mediation of the interpretant, by which he meant a psychological event in the mind of the interpreter. As a result, all thinking is seen as dialogic, even if the dialogue is with oneself. This position is of course subject to its own deconstruction - what are the factors that caused the particular interpreter to interpret in that way with that particular interpretant and so on in ever decreasing circles? Now, while momentarily entertaining, this
is not eventually productive and a more fruitful venture may be, as Gottdeiner (1995) advocates, to seek “the identification and analysis of mechanisms that constrain knowledge and limit or manipulate meanings through the deployment of power relations” (p.12). Although, as Nöth (1990) notes, that there is not yet a school of “Peircean film semiotics” (p.465, italics in the original), there are movements in that direction. However, a critical note of contextualisation needs to be re-introduced.

Denzin (1987) would not disagree that an understanding of semiotics is indeed necessary for an appreciation of postmodernism, and he has some sympathy with Hall’s approach to the identification of contextual and ideological issues (Denzin 1991a), but he takes issue with Gottdeiner over his interpretation of Barthes, Baudrillard and the relation of objects to signs in particular. Denzin argues that Gottdeiner has misread Barthes and Baudrillard and contends that “an object and its meanings (sign value, exchange value, symbolic value) are intertwined with practical conduct taken toward the object as well as the social and political functions to which the object is put” (p.680). The question of ideological context is important, but it is a Barthesian perspective that allows us to see that sometimes, as in the cinema, we seek to find our true selves by becoming someone else.

Denzin considers that it is possible that Barthes and Baudrillard may have taken the semiotics of the sign as far as it can reasonably go. If the society in which we live has become its own sign, it may indicate a terminal decline and imminent collapse. However, while Gottdeiner seems to recognise that there is a need to reconsider semiotic analysis, he believes there is a problem with the language of expression; he is not alone in this. Denzin (1987) suggests that Heidegger’s later writings on “language as the dwelling place of being” (p.682) may provide some helpful lines of inquiry because capitalism, like semiotics, technologizes language because it turns language into a science of signs and may neglect the poetic. However, Heidegger is himself problematic, principally for the advocacy of phenomenology and the consequent difficulty for the transferability of interpretation or shared meaning, but also for where some of his ideas led him and some of his political pronouncements.

Denzin’s extra emphasis on studies of “violence, distorted desire, manufactured subjectivities, consumer pathologies and fetishes, the mystiques of solitude, the anomie of abundance, and the cults of the sincere that permeate the everyday world” (1987 p.681) seems warranted, and pertinent to the case in hand. As Barthes (1970) has argued, it is important to consider the affective and effective power of the irrational in the construction
of mythologies and the meaning attached to the sign. States of Madness, because they are seen to be on the margins of human experience, bring these questions to the fore.

Behaviour or thought that exists on the margins, at the furthest reaches of our imagined or experienced possibilities, makes a consideration of otherness or alterity inevitable. Mason (1990 p.9) suggests that the position of Todorov (1992) that all research on alterity is necessarily semiotic has become a dictum. We are constantly looking for and interpreting signs and signifiers around us, and they are the only signs that we can interpret; we literally do not know what we are missing. However, there is a certain reflexive irony in the way in which attempts to understand exotic cultures or represent the Other will often be more revealing about those who attempt the analysis than those who are the subject of it. It can be pertinent to question the choices that are made, the signs which are ignored as well as those to which we pay attention, the spaces we create as well as the landmarks we erect, what we can recognise and what we think we can recognise. It requires a certain ability to adopt dual positions and a premise of scepticism about monological explanations of the world, but such an adventure can be fruitful.

The examination of the representation of Madness in film may benefit from some of these insights which serve to link together some of the themes of the emerging discourse. It becomes clear that not everything we read into texts is explicit. There are symbols which rely on a shared understanding and convention without which they would be lost on the audience, there are allegorical stories that may tell one tale, but are meant to show another when laid over a different frame, there are metaphors and tropes that carry with them a raft of meanings and associations that do not need explicit, further or repeated explanation or articulation once the initial reference has been established, analogies are drawn and recognised representations transformed into mannerist conventions. It may be suggested that we live in and understand our world by means of a negotiated system of signs. Fornäs (1995) posits that to "signify is to mean, to produce signs which convey meaning to others" (p.146). This insight is important in that it points one way to understand the construction of shared meaning, but needs to be moderated by a solid foundation of cultural and contextual factors. A note of caution is sounded by Bordwell (1989), who warns against being over-interpretive and assuming that all films are equally susceptible to self-conscious and referential interpretation. He feels that although that is how we come to know films, it is possible to over-interpret them and to stretch credibility too far.
Clearly if two different people looking at the same phenomenon do not recognise it as the same sign, or even a sign at all, some of the assumptions of semiotic analysis must be re-evaluated. Bordwell’s warning about over-interpretation may be illustrated by some of the debates surrounding *Psycho* (Dir. Hitchcock 1960). Bordwell (1989) himself considers seven different models taken from the literature (pp.224-248) which demonstrate the rhetorical nature of interpretation, that is to say that they intend to persuade, or at least challenge, by argument. The possibilities of the importance of the names within the film may be a moot case. First of all, there is the question of Marion Crane - a crane being a migratory bird which always returns to its own nest, even if it appears to have taken flight and be gone forever. Birds are used by Hitchcock as a motif in other films, most notably in the later example of *The Birds* (1963), but perhaps only a small part of the audience would either be consciously aware of that or consciously looking for such things. In this case, there is Norman’s hobby of stuffing them, his observation that Marion eats like a bird and the numerous birds in the decor of the motel. Perhaps of more interest is Norman (N)(just two letters away from being normal (L), so close and yet so far). His mother was of course Norma (an unfinished normal, rather than an altered one), and Norman would have grown up being Master Bates. The cases that could be made for these names being highly significant, that they are signifiers and signs put there to alert the audience, are probably as internally consistent and supportable as the argument that protests that it is just coincidence and it really reading far too much into things that have no ulterior significance. Some may say that there is no such thing as a coincidence and even if the names were in the book before the film, it may be that Hitchcock, with all his morbid sexual predilections, was attracted to the project in the first instance because of some deep sub-conscious resonance they created. It begins to emerge that the process of engagement within the debate, the propagation of alternative and plural views of the same phenomena and the exploration of the contexts out of which they are formed become of greater significance than the dominance of a single hegemonic view.

It is not necessary to agree entirely with the argument that “culture and communication are the production of shared meanings by way of symbolic forms” (Fornäs 1995 p.146) to accept the value of semiotic analysis and recognition and interpretation of signs; however, that interpretation should be located and referred to the situation from which it emerges. In particular, it becomes increasingly important to consider the constraints of knowledge and representation within the socio-cultural, material and ideological context of generated meaning. Bordwell (1989) argues that the “critic who interprets Psycho does not prove that psychic normality and abnormality lie on a continuum, or that the male gaze is a symptom
of psychotic repression; no more does the film. The critic and her reader agree to entertain such notions as imaginative possibilities, as intriguing juxtapositions of semantic fields suggested by the film at hand and the critical practices in force” (p.257) (italics in the original). It becomes evident that the plurality that is necessary to counteract monologism in semiotics must also lead to the questioning of the construction of knowledge.

The Postmodern Shuffle

Modernism and Postmodernism: Before, Between and Afterwards

Hamlet is idiotically sane,
With lucid intervals of lunacy

WS Gilbert, “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern” (1891)

As has been suggested above, there are traps and pitfalls in the task of definition. Kellner (1995) is scathing in his criticism of those who use the term “postmodern” without much thought, clarity or sense of history. It is not to be seen as simply a “synonym for the contemporary moment in which we live” (ibid p.44) nor a rag-bag collection of puns, prolix confabulations and obscure aphorisms that delight in their own cleverness. Nor, does he feel that that there are postmodern objects out there waiting to be discovered, each historical or explanatory label will tend to create its own products, and refashion some old ones in its own image. Indeed, it seems that because of the company he might have to keep Kellner would rather not use the term at all. He suggests that the current era is an ageing modern one, and the postmodern has yet to be adequately formed or mapped. Although he recognises that historical periods do not fall into neatly delineated epochs, and that change from one recognisable dominance to another is protracted, painful and messy, he could give greater acknowledgment to the challenge and contention that exists with respect to the dominant paradigms of understanding, confidence, certainty and desire; something that much of his work exemplifies. However, while for Kellner living “in a borderland between the old and new creates tension, insecurity and even panic, thus producing a troubling and uncertain cultural and social environment” (1995 p.49), others, most notably Baudrillard (1983), will embrace the opportunity and feel content to live with dissonance.

Denzin (1986) sees postmodernism as both “a form theorizing about societies and a period of social thought” (p.194). Not only is this typified by a move away from the Grand Theory, it is also intensely preoccupied with “the crises of legitimation and experience that
characterize the modern ...media dominated world cultural system” (ibid p.194). This position has profound implications for the representation of Madness in that it problematises the understanding of the experience of Madness and its relation to legitimacy, and also underscores the seminal influence of the media in the creation and propagation of such representations. Denzin is also keen to point out the “profound mistrust of reason and science as forces which will produce a utopian society based on consensus, rational communicative action and human freedom” (ibid p.194), and considers the importance of myths, plurality and articulation. Therefore, he sees the need to move beyond and re-evaluate previous streams of social theorizing while still using them as reference points.

Decay of faith, plurality of meaning, multiple truths, the centrality of the image, the effect of new technologies (especially in communication and the virtual world), re-ordering of social logic, discontinuity and fragmentation, mutation of traditional capitalist relations and political definitions, the questioning of the idea of progress and the melting of the edges are among the principal issues that seem to characterise much of the discussion about what to be postmodern might mean. Rosenau (1992) suggests that “Post-modernism (sic) haunts social science today. In a number of respects, some plausible and some preposterous, postmodern approaches dispute the underlying assumptions of mainstream social science and its research” (p.3). But before examining some of the plausible and preposterous in greater detail a minor aside should be made in order to clarify the reasons for the use of the term postmodern in preference to post-modern. It is not seen merely as a grammatical nicety, but a question of different meaning. The use of the hyphen connotes that everything must be defined in terms of modernism and referred to those concepts. The use of the unhyphenated word allows for a distinct understanding of the world which, while owing much to its philosophical antecedents, is able to create a primary rather than a referred viewpoint. Postmodernity (without a hyphen) does not, contrary to an over-literal definition (Morley 1996), presume a “temporal sequence in which postmodernity supersedes modernity “ (p.328). It is not stuck in some linear progression of continual displacement, rather it can co-exist with other discourses, come into and out of relationships with them and transcend geographical, disciplinary and traditional hegemonic or any other kinds of borders. It may become less of a fixed cultural, material or political state and more of a state of mind.

The centrality of the image becomes more evident with Baudrillard’s (1983) notion of the hyper-real, which questions our relationship with commodities and representation. If the commodification around which our lives are structured is more concerned with the signs which are conveyed than some definable utility, the yardstick of values has moved away
from the rational. Barthes (1970) noted the way in which the phenomenon of advertising was leading to the triumph of form over content as the image rather than the detail, the instant rather than the considered, and the desire rather than the use have become the dominant interests. For Jameson (1991), such processes have a lamentable logic of their own. The genie that postmodernism lets out of the bottle, "rejects epistemological assumptions, refutes methodological conventions, resists knowledge claims, obscures all versions of truth and dismisses policy recommendations" (Rosenau 1992 p.3), but whether these are revolutionary or redefining acts may be in the eye of the beholder. It may be that the extreme viewpoints, those verging toward an anarchic destruction as well as deconstruction of past models, are a necessary part of the process of redefinition, because violent revolt prods even the most inertia-bound into reconsideration.

Connor (1989), like Borges (1974) before him, compares the use of intellectual frames with travellers using maps. A traditional map, he contends, presents a view from outside, simplified, stylised and simultaneous in its presentation of the world, which requires the reader to twist and turn in imagination in order to locate a position. A postmodern map is more akin to a peripus, as understood by Pound and his poetry, in which the map changes as the journey progresses and gives a temporal rather than spatial image. The reader becomes of greater relevance to the reading.

Whether the challenge to, or decay of, the virtues of modernism, such as ideals of progress, certainty, knowledge or rationalism, is seen as a good thing or not can make for strange bedfellows. Rosenau (1992) offers a division into affirmative and sceptical postmodernists/isms, which echoes some considerations of the innate political character of postmodernism (both the Left and the Right claim it which probably points to a certain ambiguity that is not comfortably defined by these established criteria) as also happened with modernity, liberalism and nationalism in their turn. However, as Chen (1992) argues, the points of agreement between Postmodernism and Marxism, in their concern for the point of view of the oppressed and for social engagement, are more convincing than a conservative fundamentalism that wishes to return to a different grand narrative under which we are all free to pursue the same ends.

Rosenau (1992) traces the heritage of the sceptics back to Heidegger and Nietzsche. Heidegger's influence is credited for methodological insights and the "de-striuction of traditional forms of frozen hermeneutic disinterest, and the opening of texts and their readers to the play of opinions and partialities through time" (Connor 1989 p.119). The
possibility of interpretations of texts devoid of historicity is seen to be impossible, disinterested readings cannot be made. Heidegger’s counter-modernist stance remains important. It is epochal in the sense of historical periods and infused with a concern for the essence of Being, but, as seen by Bourdieu (1991), is the view of a conservative-revolutionary, a radical conservative in politics and an anti-humanist in philosophy. Nietzsche continues to be influential because of his sceptical attitude to the notion of truth, and a sense of the “immediacy of death, the demise of the subject, the end of the author, the impossibility of truth and the abrogation of the Order of Representation” (Rosenau 1992 p.15). He seems at times to have a very pessimistic epistemology.

The affirmatives, in contrast, are more likely to be Anglo-American, rather than Continental Europeans (presumably the only two geographical distinctions that count), and to applaud the opportunities created by an intellectual practice that is “nondogmatic, tentative and nonideological” (ibid p.16), despite the contradictions of this position that might be pointed out by a critical analysis. While this typology has some possibilities, the problems arise when trying to fit one author or another into a particular group or tradition (including Rosenau herself), in what way it aids our understanding and, therefore, the worth of the exercise.

Rosenau (1992) notes the difficulties posed to liberal values by a heritage that includes Heidegger and de Man. Both these writers are problematical because of the links that exist between ideas and action. Although she does not doubt that both were anti-democratic and unapologetic in their Nazi sympathies, she questions whether that necessarily colours the political hue of the epistemological and ontological constructions. A distrust of representative democracy as commonly understood in the West, apparent in Heidegger and Nietzsche but for different reasons, does not seem to be the province of the Left or Right, but in Rosenau’s view the reaction to it is crucial. She wants to acknowledge the validity of both perspectives, but tries to avoid having to ally herself with one camp or another. It is part of her attempt to reconfigure the criteria of analysis that she seems to prefer the Affirmative/Sceptical axis to a Left/Right one. Nevertheless, she does not argue that lacking a traditional political allegiance equates to being non-political. Indeed, in line with the tenets of Post-Marxism, she does not believe it is possible to be non-political. It is a political world and every act takes place within that context.

The case of Baudrillard is a good example of someone who would be characterised both ways, by himself as well as his critics. Chambers (1986) suggests that he belongs to the
Frankfurt School, but with an even bleaker vision; for MacRobbie (1986) he is far too pessimistic; Hebdige (1986) has problems with his nihilism and fatalism. Yet, there is also the Baudrillard that Poster (1994) describes as being positive and enthusiastic about the possibilities of radicalism. It may be uncharitable to refuse Baudrillard a position in which he can accept a multi-faceted dissonance. However, an underlying tone can sometimes inform the presentation and reception of all ideas, and Baudrillard may strike his readers with more dystopian dread than utopian promise. Authors do not always have to approve of their inventions, Einstein after all is said to have sometimes wished that he had remained a Patent Officer, and it would be unfair to suggest that postmodern theorists should be any different. It becomes important to consider not only the ideas themselves, but also the mind-set that allowed them. Baudrillard may have counselled us against believing our own eyes, but he also wondered why we should want to do so in the first place.

Some authors such as Poole (1991) contest the difference between postmodernism and the condition of postmodernity, with a clear reference to the work of Lyotard. Poole, Like Frow (1991), suggests that the very term postmodern “lacks a precise definition” having “one set of meanings when it is contrasted with the various cultural and aesthetic movements known as “modernism”, and another when it is contrasted with the socio-economic formation known as “modernity”’’ (Poole p.192). Although he concedes that these are not always seen as entirely separate, he suggests that postmodernity requires a rethink of the whole conception of modernity, but is more content with postmodernism “as probably the more defensible notion” (p.192). A perspective infused with Critical Theory would however, find it hard to justify any total separation as each both informs and is consequential to the other. As Laclau & Mouffe (1985) suggest, there is a reciprocal relationship between postmodernism and cultural studies, indeed postmodernism may be seen as radically interdisciplinary or perhaps trans-disciplinary. It is suggested that each feed from the body and sustain each other, especially as postmodernism becomes an establishment itself. As has already been indicated, it is likewise impossible to conceive of Cultural Studies without considering the legacy and the progeny of Critical Theory.

Grossberg (1996) acknowledges the importance of the antecedents of the present situation in Cultural Studies. He suggests that “much of the contemporary work on identity (a central concept to the whole field and to this thesis in particular) can be seen as a struggle taking place in the space between Derrida and Foucault” (ibid p.94). In this regard he characterises Laclau & Mouffe (1985) as “an attempt to bring Foucault and Derrida together (with the help of Gramsci)” (ibid p.95), but, he adds, they have re-read Foucault as if he was
Derrida, and so “Foucault’s concern with subjectivization becomes the basis of the chain of discourse which produces both temporary fixity and the excess which destabilizes it” (ibid p.95). However, it should be borne in mind that the same analysis may be reflected back on itself, to acknowledge its own “temporary fixity”.

“The modern human”, ventures Grenz (1996), “can be appropriately characterized as Descartes’s autonomous rational substance encountering Newton’s mechanistic world” (p.3). A marriage which some might see as brokered by the devil and bound to end in tears. However, the imagination of rational self-knowledge and a universe of certainty may be the defining characteristics of the “Enlightenment Project” which Habermas (1994) describes as consisting “of a relentless development of the objectifying sciences, the universalistic bases of morality and law and autonomous art in accordance with their internal logic” (p.162). The words that Habermas chooses are as important for their vigour and symbolism as they are for their meaning. “Relentless” is clearly giving the impression that this is something more than a fashion, it is almost millenarian in its character. It will go on and on, determinedly overcoming any obstacle or setback, convinced of its own righteousness. To conceive of a “development” is again to acknowledge a process where one thing builds upon another, a sort of inevitable Couéism, and to link this to “objectifying sciences” is to envisage the progressive uncovering of all the laws of nature. One by one the mysteries of existence will be answered and it is possible to believe in the end of knowledge. It would seem that there is life in Dr Pangloss yet, although Vattimo (1992), with his concern for demythologisation, may be working on a different project.

To imagine “universalistic bases of morality and law” is to have faith in a monologic universe, the key to which is rationality and “internal logic”. Habermas does not appear to see the irony of the point that Marx, a man who was also fond of universals from time to time, saw the contradictions of “internal logic” as contributing to the downfall of social systems (until presumably the correct one comes along). However, it is a small step from the acceptance of a universalistic base for morality (what is right and wrong, what is good and evil) and law (how we are to be governed and controlled) to an imperialism informed by blind self-interest, self-delusion and self-satisfaction. Yeats (1980) noted that “the worst are full of passionate intensity” and was always worried about those who are so sure, so certain of things. Basic psychiatry also tells us that delusional thinking is characterised by a strong internal logic which once accepted makes everything else explicable, but is itself fundamentally flawed. Of course if you believe in an alien conspiracy your bad luck betting on horse races is easily explained; if you believe in the historical inevitability of progress
then it may be that the possibility of alternatives is excluded. Thus it is with the rationalist explanation of madness; if you believe that there is only one true explanation which will progressively become revealed, no other possibilities can even be considered, nor need to be.

As intellectual understandings come and go and leave clues to their context, so do fashions and movements in art. "Autonomous art" may not seem the most obvious aspect to put alongside the other categories of material and intellectual discovery, but it is important here in that it seems to deny the contextuality of artistic representation. The changes in artistic vision and conceptualization of the world are, from this standpoint, more a case of fashion and ahistorical aesthetics. To make a claim for autonomous art is to divorce the artwork from the real world, both materially and intellectually. It tries to place artworks in a hermetically sealed box, and cannot allow for the interaction of social context, historical vision, intellectual imagination and our representation of ourselves. Gadamer (1994) argues that any distinction between works of art that exist in themselves for all time irrespective of the audience, and works that require a transition from text to performance is erroneous. All works of art exist only in the moment of their reception which is governed by and changes according to the historical, social, cultural, political and economic context. Weinsheimer (1985) reiterates that "a work cannot be differentiated from the representations of it" (p.3).

Nietzsche is another whose influence is felt in a discussion of the power of representation. It has been suggested above that his rejection of the Enlightenment Project is, per se, reason enough for describing him as a precursor of postmodernism, although the position at which he arrives and the places to which he departs are very different to a postmodern analysis. For a moment he pauses at that particular postmodern conjunction of ideas where it is not so much that language (as a representative system) "distorts reality but that it is reality" (Grenz 1996 p.97, italics in the original). It is suggested that for Nietzsche the "objective "correctness" of the interpretation is less important than the "beautiful possibilities" it offers" (p.97). This is to be achieved by the triumph of the will, and that makes it right. Grenz for one interprets this to lead directly to the deconstruction of meaning, but does not seem to take full account of Nietzsche's exaltation of the myth as public performance, of display, of spectacle and the mass experience, which contrasts with the scepticism of postmodernism.

Mimesis, as reconsidered by Adorno (1983a), contends that there is a reflexive relationship between what is perceived and how it is represented, so that a film can be seen as a
reflection of the known reality as well as the beginning of defining what is not. Habermas (1984) takes this to mean that imitation “designates a relation between persons in which one accommodates to the other” (p.390), but is prone to see imitation and mimesis as interchangeable terms which can lead from imitation to truth by way of representation, which Adorno does not. Nevertheless, both see this as filled with the possibilities of liberation, rather than a restricted reification which ossifies the image, and the power behind it. Adorno began to draw attention to the apparitional power of art, which subverts an essentialist aesthetic and denies a single, true position. Wurzer (1992) argues that this marks the beginning of “the imagination’s transition from modernity to postmodernism” (p.6), and film plays a central role in this due, in part, to its flexibility. For Benjamin (1973) this is part of the process of re-forming the sense of the non-identical. It becomes part of the process of “othering”. The reflexivity is not unlike the tension between psychiatry and sociology which Doerner (1981) sees as sometimes imitating each other. He characterises the relationship as resulting in an eventually satisfactory dialogue brought about “via reflection on their precarious and ambivalent social situation” (p.5). He is not necessarily saying that the tension is resolved, but rather that the lines of intersection and interlocution are satisfactory. The tension has not disappeared or been superseded. From the perspective of Horkheimer & Adorno (1987) it has merely adopted another form or been “refunctioned”. They argue that, for example, in Nazi dominated Europe the Jew became a signifier of the animal world, of the beast, of a sub-humanity. The use of imagery and metaphor to equate Jews with rats in posters and films such as Jude Süss (Dir. Harlan 1940) underline this point in the most graphic and unsubtle way. Mommsen (1986) suggests that throughout this period the “Jew ...appears as a distortion, a shadow, the dark side of human nature” (pp.98-99).

However, a crucial point in the debate asks, if it had not been the Jews who would it have been? Could it have been another group? Would it always have to have been some group or another, but it wouldn’t really matter just who? Could it have been an accident of history that the Jews found themselves in this role? Ludwig Börne, himself a baptised Jew, wrote in 1832 that “some blame (him) for being a Jew; others forgive (him); a third even praise (him) for it; but all think about it” (cited in Goldhagen 1996 p.63). Perhaps what they were thinking about is, who is the Other.

The policies of extermination that characterise the Nazi period throw many of these issues into sharp relief. In what is a highly contentious field, verification, corroboration and acceptance of material evidence remain unsettled. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish
bravery from foolhardiness in any venture into the territory, yet it is still worth some examination. Friedlander (1995) believes it is accepted that the mentally ill, Gypsies, homosexuals, moral, political and racial degenerates of all kinds were systematically eliminated, but questions remain over the equivalence of the signification involved. Goldhagen (1996) offers a schematisation which compares and contrasts the “dominant beliefs in Germany about Jews (and) the Mentally Ill” (p.469) (he also included the characterisations of the Slavs but that is not so pertinent here). Both groups had their character set in their biological make-up, but the Jews represented an evil whereas the Mentally Ill were seen as diseased, but in both cases contact was to be avoided. The danger posed by the Jews was seen as extreme, while that from the Mentally Ill was chronic, festering and somewhat debilitating, excision of this danger was therefore for the greater social good. The motivation was pernicious on the part of the Jews, but the Mentally Ill bore no malign intent, and this led to a lesser degree of punishment. The implications of this was that the Jews, a pernicious and active presence, should be eliminated while the Mentally Ill, who were more passive, could be quarantined or eradicated. Goldhagen suggests that beliefs about the Jews were more wide-spread and more deeply felt than those about the Mentally Ill, but doesn’t examine the claim closely. However, he maintains that the virulence of the anti-Semitism led to a qualitative difference in attitude; to kill the Jews in a genocide was seen as infused with a sense of righteousness, to “euthanase” the Mentally Ill was done as one might do to a sick dog or one that was mad or irredeemably mangy, not without a certain amount of regret, not with monstrous intent, perhaps to rid oneself of the distasteful presence, perhaps to put an end to a useless life, but definitely not the same as killing a complete human being. On Goldhagen’s scale the Mentally Ill could certainly be seen as having many of the attributes of the Other, but would not be the principal signifiers of the time.

Nevertheless, there are a number of significant films which deal explicitly with the question of mental illness, the genetic threat and the final solution of mass euthanasia. In the script of Dasein ohne Leben (Existence Without Living), a popular film made in 1939 but only existing in fragments since 1945, the lecturing Professor speaks to a group of enraptured students of the humane treatment options for chronic mental illness, and receives a round of applause at the end. He argues with passion, and with a degree of apparent credibility, that apart from being an hereditary evil, “incurable mental illness is the most terrible fate that can befall anyone. They can neither recover nor die”. The only recourse is “to put them out of their misery”, and he says that 73% of parents of the patients agree. To underline the point the Professor shows a number of slides of grotesque and deformed faces and famous
paintings, illustrations which are said by one student to be an exaggeration, while another retorts that they "are nothing compared with reality". In Geisteskrank (Mentally Ill), an educational film also unseen since 1945, the script calls for a scene of a mentally ill patient being gassed in exactly the same way as become familiar as the final solution of the Jewish question. All that remains is a shot of the outside of the gas chamber and the ominous close-up of the spy-hole (Burleigh 1991).

However, it is also clear that such behaviour is not restricted to Nazi Germany or that period. Russia can claim its long and ignoble history of pogroms, the Turks managed a genocide against the Armenians, modern day Iraq is trying to eradicate the Kurds, the war in Yugoslavia introduced the world to the euphemistic hygiene of "social cleansing", and so on in a terrible and depressing litany of monstrous actions made possible by the characterisation of those who are not like us as The Other. The great democratic powers are not immune either as the continuing forced sterilisation of the intellectually disabled in America, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia can testify, and so the question moves to include significance as well as practice.

Given the policies of extermination applied to the mentally ill and the intellectually disabled the same analysis may apply. So, although mental illness, or the madman, may be seen as signifiers of social relationships, the nature of the illness, the clinical signs and symptoms, may also, as Taussig (1992) posits, be "signs of social relations disguised as natural things, concealing their roots in human reciprocity" (p.83). If the emotional insulation offered by existential alienation no longer protects, the only way to survive is through despair, macabre humour or madness. Perhaps this is the point at which de Certeau (1984) would have a world of anarchist semioticians striking back at the emptiness of a postmodern life. It is not so much that the critics to whom de Certeau (1984) refers feel that there is cultural starvation, but rather that there is malnutrition. The bellies may be full, but they are full of pap without substance, unable to sustain growth, development and full health. The diet is junk food and sugar sweets, not protein, vitamins and profound nourishment. The term Popular Culture sets up a conception of another form of culture from which it can be distinguished. While it may not in itself be unpopular culture, there is a perception carried by a modernist aesthetic and opposed by a post-modern pluralism that it is at least serious culture, with an effort to be enduring and profound. The modernist notions, as Sass (1992) describes them, are locked within the values of the Enlightenment, according to which it is felt that progress in all things is possible and is based on the application of reason. Consequently, madness is the opposite of reason and does not, as
the anti-psychiatrists such as Laing (1968) might argue, have its own internal and equally valid defining logic; but the distinctions between the arational, the irrational and the anti-rational, and the alogical, the illogical and the anti-logical are less clear than modernists assume.

A descriptive irrationalist such as Mestrovic (1993) puts forward the argument that the basis of society is nonrational, but because this notion makes us feel so uncomfortable (if we can't predict the behaviour of anyone or anything, how can we live in anything but a state of angst and trepidation? The quintessential existential dilemma!), rationality, "the Enlightenment Project" (1993 p.xiv), has been charged with the task of containing the barbarian menace. He argues that this is an act of faith and one that has been shown to be sadly misplaced. His documentation of the catalogue of barbaric acts from genocide to the self-interest of wealthy nations, suggests that he would be delighted to be proved wrong, but the weight of evidence is against that. He seems constantly shocked, but rarely surprised. It is Mestrovic's position that it is time to move beyond the "artificial barrier between psychology and sociology enshrined in ...absurd reification" (1993 p.xiv). His suggested alternative to the illusion of rationalism, is compassion; a social imperative that builds upon the forces of empathy which itself is enhanced by the emotional identification of one for another, which probably makes him of a normative humanist perspective. Some might say his adopted position has no greater tradition than the one his criticises in that the behaviour of the irrationalists (as in genocide or institutionalised discrimination) often shows a remarkable lack of empathy. This is the point, however, at which the fundamental importance of story-telling and myth-making comes to the fore, because these are the ways in which the otherness of the particular group is constructed. The images that bind are both the reflections and the carriers of the ideologies that justify.

Modernism requires the acceptance of a hierarchy of worth, not simply in terms of artistic execution but in terms of form and subject. A postmodern stance however, as taken by Featherstone (1991a) among others, gives credibility to a plurality of forms and values, and follows the logic that the very reason that something is popular and takes the form that it does is because it is able to strike a note of resonance within the psyche or consciousness of its audience. The way in which the subject matter is presented will also add to the moment, and so the mediation of the experience becomes important to cultural perception. Therefore, popular culture will tend to deal with the outstanding and consuming interests of the day and as such show an insight into that particular cultural moment in an unguarded way. A popular cultural product such as a film or a television soap opera may not have
pretensions to be an enduring creative act, but the fact that it dealt with a particular theme in a particular way is an indication of the social construction of a particular historical moment. It may be a distinguishing feature of high culture from popular culture that one aspires to a certain universality and longevity, while the other acknowledges that it may be disposable or ephemeral but for all that does not see itself as being any the less valued or insightful.

It should not be assumed, however, that this should lead to some relativistic free-for-all. It is not a call for that "facile relativism that abandons standards of truth or the possibility of valid knowledge" which Mitchell (1986) dismisses, but a demand for "a hard, rigorous relativism that regards knowledge as a social product, a matter of dialogue between versions of the world, including different languages, ideologies and models of representation" (1986 p.38). Nor is it entirely circular, a criticism that Denzin (1991) levels at Jameson who is seen as presenting "[t]hat which causes the postmodern (late capitalism)" as later to "become the postmodern (its culture)" (p.43). Denzin (1991) characterises this entire debate as, in part, incorporating the dialogue which tries to "fit (C. Wright) Mills' call for a postmodern sociological imagination to Baudrillard's reading of contemporary America" (p.vii). If, as he suggests, postmodern society's knowledge of itself is fundamentally unreflective, the question must be asked as to how "the possibility of valid knowledge" can be pursued. If we are no more than disconnected voyeurs who only know ourselves through the images that are presented to us, it becomes of concern to ask whence those images come and what validity they have. However, origin and validity of representations are not mutually dependent, and to examine the context from which an image emerges does imply or necessitate a subscription to a standard of value, which may be a modernist concept.

It becomes important to examine the relationship between artifice and what may be accepted as reality. This may illuminate the way in which the particular construction of the world on which we routinely rely on a mundane level to guide everyday interactions, operates on different levels, and can be deconstructed as such. It is part of a postmodern consciousness to be able to hold quite different levels of meaning at the same time without one necessarily bleeding into or overspilling into another. This can be by way of acceptance rather than being necessarily reflective, unless a critical, historical and contextual dimension is added. The shattering of the illusion of truth allows the readers of texts to move between interpretive models of understanding with ironic self-awareness.
Denzin (1991b) calls for both an acknowledgment of the cultural smorgasbord of postmodern theory in which everything must be a text, and for a considered reassessment of Baudrillard in particular whom he approvingly says “may be read as a progressive elaboration of a postmodern critique of social theory, traditional Marxism, cybernetics, ethnography, psychoanalysis, feminist thought, communications theory and semiotics” in such a way as to be “a threat to standard sociology and social theory” (p.29). He writes in a tone which suggests that Baudrillard knocked off these shibboleths in the course of an afternoon’s casual conversation, but that should not detract from the kernel of the point. Postmodernism is no respecter of disciplinary boundaries, which are in essence artificial, and its reconfiguration of set patterns of thought challenges any notion of certainty. If there can said to be such a thing as The Postmodernist Project, it may be that it is driven by the desire to affirm the validity of, difference and ways of knowing; the voices of the oppressed, of women, the dispossessed, the devalued, the disenfranchised, the degraded and delegitimised, the sexually or racially marginalised, are all to be heard in postmodern discourse and, of course, the mad who can be seen to be both a voice of their own and also part of all the foregoing groups.

Just as the hyper-real inveigles itself into our perception of reality and subverts it, Baudrillard tries to break with the convention that certainty is necessarily a virtue or the best way of understanding our world. The image and representation of things govern our reactions, and we can no longer be sure that there is a single unimpeachable truth at the bottom of any riddle of the universe. The original is lost and searching for it is a fruitless, modernist exercise. The copy of a copy of a copy with which consumers are presented leads to the consumption of signs, whether the consumer is considering a box of breakfast cereal, a political candidate or a construction of madness. The important thing is whether it is possible to feel comfortable with continuous uncertainty. Baudrillard wishes to put some grim irony in our soul. Whether this indicates an invasion or welcome iconoclasm depends on your point of view.

Baudrillard’s ability to so divide other commentators may be testament to the discomfort that he clearly enjoys inflicting on those complacent moral certainties that he sees as the legacy of the Enlightenment. By employing a Mœbian logic he presents a challenge to the accepted paths of analysis and value. However, he may almost be in danger of becoming, because of his uncompromising, wildly exuberant, adventurous, hyperbolic style, an assimilated token of extreme critique, which will thus leave the body of conventional thought intact. A less conspiratorial appreciation may see him as that small piece of grit
without which the pearl cannot form. Whichever way his presence is viewed, his contribution is indelible. It may not be, as Poster (1988) has it, that he "shatters the existing foundations of critical social theory" (p.8), but he forces its re-evaluation. By making the declaration, that we have irreversibly entered the postmodern age, an age so different to anything that preceded it that the old rules no longer apply, he has let the genie out of the bottle, and he has become a major referent for all further considerations. He tells us that the world has not only changed, but has changed forever. There is no going back and the only future is nostalgia. As a consequence a position in relation to postmodernism must now be stated; whether it is of the zero-sum conviction or of a gradualist or evolutionary persuasion is of less import than the fact that a position is taken.

Perhaps Baudrillard's most telling contribution is the notion of the simulacrum (plural simulacra), which, confusingly, except in postmodern world, can be seen to mean both an image and an image of an image; and so ad infinitum in the self-reflexive hall of mirrors. This denies the possibility, or at least reminds us of the futility, of seeking out an original, but also leads us to consider the conditions under which the particular simulacrum is produced and seen. For Denzin (1987) it “unravels and untangles the denotive, connotive and mythological (ideological) meanings that are woven into the object and displayed in the multiple uses to which it is put” (p.680). The imaginary is as important as the symbolic or the ideological, all of which may or may not (not that it really matters) be constructed as the real. It once again becomes apparent that it is not what is real that is important, but what you are happy to accept as real in that moment. For Denzin, this raises questions as to the compatibility of phenomenological semiotics which he describes as being able to locate “within the worlds of lived experience, the surface and deep-meaning structures that radiate outward from the textual and intertextual language systems of a social group” (1987 p.679), and a symbolic-interactionist theory of a cultural object such as film or madness. The interactionist perspective itself becomes a simulacrum of the object it describes and the internal (but unjudged) contradictions, fallacies and whimsies that it exposes.

Denzin (1995) suggests that a methodological emphasis on the lived experience has some severe shortcomings. He says, in a reflexive tone, that “the worlds we study are created through the texts that we write” and consequently, “[w]e do not study lived experience, but rather we examine lived textuality” (p.197). Our experience of the world is always mediated, but this is sometimes an uncomfortable thought. It may be more reassuring to imagine that we experience the authentic world, but it may be a vain hope (as well as being vain of us to think it). The problem then arises that although we still cling to a notion of the
real, we cannot distinguish what it is and what it is not. It is precisely to avoid this trap that Baudrillard would rather we did not even try, he would have us re-configure our entire world instead.

The difficulties that have emerged from a consideration of the true story were recently highlighted by the Coen brothers putting “This is based on a true story” at the beginning of their murder thriller *Fargo* (1996), and then later confessing that they made up that part along with everything else in the film. They showed, as evidenced by the almost physical shock that was felt on hearing this confession, that we create an entirely different set of values around what we take on trust to be true. When those conventions are breached it seems to be a defilement. We have been duped, we have been betrayed, they have taken advantage of us. These conventions, and our reaction when they are breached, find an echo with the importance which Habermas (1984) ascribes to ideal and authentic speech situations, but perhaps what is developing is a view that what matters is not so much any truthfulness, but its convincingness.

A further point at which we are prone to falter is, according to Denzin, the assumption that “this ocular epistemology” (1995 p.197) makes visual perception the dominant form of knowing. This is not an attempt to be descriptive in the way Bandler & Grinder (1982) are when they speak of primary representational systems. Denzin’s point is one of valorisation as well as dispute. For him “[v]isual representations can only be understood as textual constructions” (1995 p.197). While seeing may aid believing, sometimes it may be necessary to believe in order to see.

His third concern is with the type of research that “privileges the ear” (1995, p.198) as opposed to the eye. For Denzin this qualitative inquiry does not recognise the way in which the ear filters what it hears, and so distorts the original. However, while Denzin may be criticised for taking a rather naive view of these approaches, a riposte that would come very easily from a critical theorist, the possibility of authentic enlightenment is a crucial difference between those in the tradition of the Enlightenment Project and those who see the need for a postmodern review.

Baudrillard does try to suggest that this view of the authentic has not always been the case. In his conjunction with (post) Marxism, he charts a historical development from the counterfeit of pre-Renaissance Europe (rarely does he stray outside the Western canon). This is where art imitated life to an industrial aesthetic, where reproduction became

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predominant to our current age of simulation and where the signs do not have to bear any
direct relation to reality (Baudrillard 1983). When Baudrillard sets himself in a pose of
disagreement with Marxist thought, he is almost exclusively considering the economic
analysis that does not take account of sign value and symbolic exchange in its concentration
on economic determinism and pure exchange value rather than the social philosophical
Marx for whom the political economy had profound human consequences. For Gottdiener
(1986), who disagrees with Denzin’s emphasis on phenomenology, an incorporation of
sign value and its ontological character into Marxist analysis is in the continuing tradition of
Critical Theory.

Several unresolved aspects of Baudrillard emerge from this analysis. First, the relation of
our realities to the mode of production. The insights that Benjamin offers may be
instructive here for he strongly argues that the nature of representation affects everything
we hold dear to our idea of what it is to be human. Second, the cyclical theory that ends in
a vacuous mannerism that has at some points both prefigured and echoed Baudrillard’s
historical divisions. Third, the ambiguity of his tone. It remains questionable whether he
sees his work as essentially descriptive or normative (not a dilemma confined to
Baudrillard, but one that will be troublesome throughout this study). One is never quite
sure if he applauds or deplores this process, or wishes, in the best postmodern style to be
simply detached and amused, or attempts to do both simultaneously and interactively. The
detached pose is of course not possible and, from a critical perspective, only self-deluding,
and leads again into the materialist conundrum of false consciousness. However, when
Baudrillard speaks of game-playing we know that it is a very serious game indeed; but
postmodernism lives with paradox. Pessimism is not co-terminous with despondency, and
even then cannot be complete without a temporal dimension. Once the expectations of
monological systems are abandoned it becomes possible for normative optimism to co-exist
with descriptive pessimism. Even discussing the ideas can provoke the maelstrom of ever
decreasing circles that lies in wait of the unwary philosophical traveller, but confronting or
engaging with them may be an important step.

Norris (1990, 1992, 1993) is one who takes arms against the intellectual flim-flam of
postmodernism in general and Baudrillard in particular. Seeing that there is less to it than
meets the eye, he characterises it as some sort of anti-intellectual conjuring trick which
temporarily satiates a hunger for real analysis, but is in the end a tissue of self-indulgent in-
jokes “where “false” appearances go all the way down, and where the only available
measure of “truth” is the capacity to put one’s ideas across to the maximum suasive effect”
He attributes, in the worst offenders, an abrogation of intellectual honesty and responsibility by a refusal to subject anything, anything at all, to thoroughgoing scrutiny; an intellectual illusion of smoke and mirrors where if you leave enough in the dark, and suggest a little more, the imagination of the audience will do the rest. The gasps of admiration and the applause of the crowd are for the glitter and mannered tricks of a rococo academia. It is, then, as if everything evaporates in the light of examination until all that is left is the Cheshire cat grin of jouissance - ah, but it is all so witty.

The way in which this debate can throw together some of the strangest of bedfellows can be seen in the lack of a sense of the centre that overtly Christian critics such as Grenz (1996) bemoan. However, very few of them subject their own position to a postmodern critique and therefore fail to see that a critical analysis may constructively acknowledge the importance of ideology, confront the anxiety of uncertainty and illuminate the question of identity. Grenz, while at times suggesting that there are ways in which “postmodernism can teach us positively as a needed corrective to modernity” (p.xi), is uncompromising in his Christian evangelicalism and his denunciation of the “abandonment (by postmodernism) of the belief in universal truth (and) the loss of any final criterion by which to evaluate the various interpretations of reality” (p.163). For him the defining character of postmodernism is “despair concerning the quest to discover all-encompassing truth” (ibid p.163); however, his interpretation that this is despair is not, and should not be, universally shared. In a later passage Grenz does seem to fudge his position somewhat when he suggests that on certain points Christianity and postmodernism have much in common in their “distrustful stance towards human reason” (1996 p.166). For him, however, it is because “following the intellect can sometimes lead us away from God and the truth” (ibid p.166). He suggests that in “the postmodern world, people are no longer convinced that knowledge is inherently good”. His implicit characterisation of postmodernism as some kind of gnosticism does not stretch as far as an acceptance of multiple realities, and does not square the circle. It may be a more substantial critique to suggest that postmodernism distrusts certainty and prefers not to engage in defining knowledge as such.

There is also a tone of lament in Norris (1992), only for a more delineated world, or at least a return to intellectual rigour. On this point he is more forgiving of Lyotard than he has been of Baudrillard. Lyotard is seen by Norris as more refined in his thinking, prepared to at least consider notions of “truth, justice and critical thinking” (1990 p.44) and altogether more engaged and useful. What he describes as ideological bankruptcy and the slide from scepticism to cynicism and thence into facile nihilism may be rooted in a dialectic stance.
rather than the more ambiguous and ideologically androgynous world that Baudrillard inhabits. This is not to suggest that Baudrillard is above a little rhetorical manipulation himself, and in asserting that *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (1995) he is clearly playing with the (anti-)intuitive sentiments of the reader, but his playfulness is not something Norris appears to appreciate. Yet there is a serious intent; life is sometimes such a serious topic that the only possible response is a joke, because a joke may be the only way to say the unsayable if reality has become a parody of its own representation. The information age is not a free-market of truth, but the fields of conquest for those with the best product. Baudrillard’s important warning is that the sophistication of propaganda still keeps any truth (leaving aside for one moment the metaphysical speculations of what truth may actually be) as a somewhat pleasant but irrelevant optional extra. The non-event, the virtual experience, what we think we may have experienced or believed or been is far more creative of our conception of the world than anything that might have taken place.

A major concern for Norris is the tension placed on apparently Marxist critiques by the doctrine of historical inevitability and progress. Lyotard is clear in his rejection of the meta-narrative of history. The weight of evidence may suggest to Lyotard, although not to Elias (1994) for example, that there has been very little progress in anything that might be called civilisation, and that may be part of the allure of postmodern scepticism - workers' paradies are conspicuous by their absence and it is not altogether certain that humanity has liberated itself from the yokes of oppression. If any progress has been made at all it would appear to be in the harnessing of sophisticated technology to the inhumanity humanity inflicts on itself. Norris, however, is not deterred and finds some clues in Marx himself. In *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1972) Marx is less concerned with the economic determinism that has obscured much of his social philosophical thought and, as in *The German Ideology* (1974), shows an insight that links him to his Hegelian past and may show that his alienation and Weber's characterisation of bureaucracy as a dominant force in modern social structures may be branches from the same root (a point that will at times cause tension with the Kantian influence in the French tradition). When Marx cites Hegel observing that major historical events tend to occur twice, once as tragedy and secondly as farce, he seems to be showing a dark but humanitarian sardonic humour not often associated with him. This would appear to be the way in which the *jouissance* of postmodernism (which does not have to be light and gay, but can be seriously mordant and ironic), the profound but self-reflective scepticism, the pessimistic description, the normative stance and critical theory, can happily co-exist.
Exploring this approach, Gilman (1988) underlines the importance of images which both limit and reify. When they become anthropomorphised, as is the case in certain diseases, they also become reassuring. For Gilman, "seeing the schizophrenic as bizarre is our means of drawing a line about our sense of wholeness. For whether we distance ourselves from it, or whether we adopt it as our mask, we use the bizarre as our sign of our own completeness. In the first case we demarcate our sense of self from the Other; in the second we consciously adopt the label of difference as a means of showing our control over the world" (1988 p.244). We are therefore able to affirm our own sanity by showing that we are not part of that different world. Our definition of our sanity depends on contrast with the insane, it cannot and does not exist independently. The image of madness that a particular culture develops becomes one of the defining characteristics of this psychological manichaeanism, and so many of those images are now created on film.

There are features of the cinema that point to the peculiarity of the range of its effects and those who are affected by it. The most obvious is that it reaches people in their millions and across national and language barriers in a way never experienced before. It is suggested by May (1980) that it was a deliberate policy by early film-makers not to use the technology that was available to make sound films, in order to broaden their appeal across geographical and social borders. Part of that was to internationalise the images, but also it was thought that the actors who might have been used to a more declamatory style of stage performance may actually alienate a working class audience because of bourgeois pretensions transposed from the theatre. Even after the advent of sound, it is not essential to know the language of the dialogue (or even be literate enough to read sub-titles) in order to understand the story and the message (and the two may be quite separate). The clarity of this can be observed in the way in which the Indian cinema, commonly acknowledged to be the largest in the world in terms of output, uses song and dance, and the suggestive power of gesture and ritual in order to tell the story to people of many different language groups, many of whom may also be illiterate. The extension of these characteristics of cinema can lead to a highly centralised narrow range of images that flow from those with the greatest economic power. It would seem that within this quintessential mass medium the possibility of transnationalism has reached a remarkable sophistication. The generic term "Hollywood" has become identified with this process, and the analysis that lies behind the glibness can be best understood in the framework of cultural hegemony that Gramsci (1971) articulated and has been further developed through the critical Marxist theory growing out of the Frankfurt School of sociological theory. Garnham (1990) endorses the critique evident in Marx's *German Ideology* (1974), that the dominant ideology, which justifies and underwrites the
position and values of the dominant economic class, is also concerned with the control of the means of mental production. For Marx (1974), indeed, the "phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of (people's) material life process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises" (p.47).

While not a particularly well elaborated concept, a transfer of a classical Marxist economic analysis on to a philosophy of the emergence of a mind may be a useful analogy. If one does not control the means of mental production, one will not be able to reap the full fruits of its production, will become alienated and disenfranchised and eventually, faced by the dynamic tensions of this mental dialectic, the system (the mind) will collapse under the weight of its own contradictions (i.e. go mad). This then leads to an examination of our own imaginal constructions of the world, and the extension of the argument indicates that although as individuals we all have a preferred representative system for helping to make sense of our experience, we do not exercise complete autonomy over the images that are presented for our consumption.

Eagleton (1981), in his discussion of Walter Benjamin, raises the question of whether there are different kinds of imagination. He argues that within poetry a visual imagination, that is feeling through words and the images they create as can be seen in the metaphysical conceits of John Donne, can be contrasted with an auditory imagination, with feeling for words, exemplified in Milton. The extension of this line of questioning leads us to ask whether there can be such a thing as a cinematic imagination, wherein so much is presented for the viewer, yet there is still so much that can be suggested. Murray (1972) explores this notion and the relation of the viewer to the film, which for him is different to anything that went before. No other medium presents the audience with such a scope of visual and auditory sensation, combined with an ability to have internal and external dialogue, close-ups, jump-cuts, time-shifts and special effects and so on. Perhaps never before in history have so many been shown so much by so few.

For Benjamin (1973), this was a cultural revolutionary moment. He felt that what he termed "mechanical reproduction" managed on the one hand to destroy the authority of origins, thus moving towards a homogenisation of cultural produce, but also underlining the plurality of form. He saw the essential distinction as being that between the continuing recurrence of myths and the distinguishing of specific presentations. For him the cinema, by virtue of its reach and its technique more and more leads to the repeated telling of (hegemonic) myths in collective settings, and this repetition in the telling which always
moves from beginning to end in the same sequence and cannot be re-ordered as can a book, or does not remain static as does a painting, points to his distinction between contemplation and distraction, where the audience is by nature more passive. To this end a study of the historical and social conditions of that art may lead to a clearer understanding of its place in our consciousness. Thus, while knowledge that *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Dir. Forman 1975) was made at that particular time is essential for a full appreciation of the way it portrayed the characters, the emphasis with which it told the story and the sub-textual references with which it would assume its audience was familiar, it is also necessary for a contemplation of the way the characters were photographed, the technical aspects and stylistic choices in the physical presentation of the film.

Jackson (1981) comments that bourgeois culture, dominated by the values of the capitalist middle classes, has a penchant for demonising its fringes. She characterises this with descriptors like “black, mad, criminal, primitive, socially deprived, deviant, crippled, or (when sexually assertive) female”, but the point is perhaps better made when the contrast to these terms is highlighted. Thus it becomes desirable to be white, rational, law-abiding, civilised, wealthy, orthodox, healthy, male, or (when sexually submissive) female. It becomes evident that the madman is tarred with the same brush as the monster and may also be criminal, primitive, socially deprived, deviant, and a *femme fatale* (although curiously, and in the face of the statistics of reality, not often black), while the nurse (excluding the more ridiculous or prurient examples of the “naughty night nurse” variety) may be seen as the upholders of righteousness, of high moral stature, the embodiment of civil virtue, supporting social order, physically and mentally whole, female and of course sexually submissive (if sometimes unattainable). However, while the Edith Cavell paragon may fit this conception, *The Snake Pit* (Dir. Litvak 1948) and Nurse Ratched, in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Dir. Forman 1975), may have turned this all around.

Doerner (1981) also considers the embourgeoisement of the mental health care system, which may be seen to inform the dominant images of psychiatry. For him it can be most clearly seen in the distinction between psychiatry and psychoanalysis (both of which are the work of medical practitioners rather than nurses or psychologists). He argues that psychoanalysis serves the bourgeois culture through its concentration on the individual and cannot be equated with psychiatry which is concerned with the Poor Toms of the world, the mad, the raving, the lunatic, the psychotic, the complete Other. This confusion is a crucial point for it means that “all recent psychiatric theories, whatever their claims, are undone by the simple fact that neither the couch nor the existential encounter with the Thou
could affect the harsh necessity of insane asylums, even in their euphemistic transformation into “psychiatric hospitals” (p.3) Since this motif can also be seen in films dealing with psychiatric/psychoanalytic phenomena, especially examples like Vertigo (Dir. Hitchcock 1958), Spellbound (Dir. Hitchcock 1945) and other Hitchcockian explorations, it may be appropriate to distinguish the two themes within the present study.

The transmogrification of the “Lady with the Lamp”, an angel of mercy, to “Big Nurse”, a monstrous controller, may be contemporaneous with degrees of social critique. It has been suggested that images are locked into their time, but so are critiques, and it is no more possible to have a pre-Freudian understanding of the world nowadays than it would be for a medieval monk to have a post-Freudian one. Moreover, the incubus of Promethean progress that stalks our psyche has changed shape from the Metropolis (1926) of Fritz Lang, by way of the appositely named “alienists” to the aseptic scientism of A Clockwork Orange (Dir. Kubrick 1974), to the crushing bureaucracy of One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Dir. Forman 1975) and the forlorn alienation of Ordinary People (Dir. Redford 1980). The critical perspective of One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest and the way in which Forman’s Czech heritage, and his imbibition of Kafka’s reality may help to illuminate some of the departures the film makes from the book, from the libertarianism of Kesey to bureaucratic critique, will become as important as the loss of modernist hope in Ordinary People.

However, as has been indicated, the characterisations of doctors, patients and nurses are often informed by ideological and hegemonic concerns which result in sexual stereotyping and gendered role expectations. The psychiatric relationship is frequently so intense and personal that the protagonists must deal with intimate situations and their own sexuality, like other aspects of identity, is a factor within this. It has been suggested by Cohen (1994), because of the perceived overlap of psychological, ontological and sexual intimacy, that “[i]n the movies bad psychiatrists have sex with their patients and then murder them, while good psychiatrists simply have sex with them”. Alternative critical perspectives which examine the power and dynamics within such relationships may usefully add to the debate, and because of the special relationship that psychoanalysis has with both film and the representations of women, madness and the point at which they overlap, it is appropriate to now consider some feminist theorisations.
Feminist Analyses of Oppression and Power

Women makes the best psychoanalysts, until they fall in love - and then they make the best patients

from “Spellbound” (Dir. Hitchcock 1945)

It is perhaps more useful to speak in terms of many and diverse Feminisms in the plural rather than a single one, and this is as apparent in film criticism as it is in the wider socio-political field (Carson et al 1994). The recognition of multiple perspectives helps to dismantle the perception of a monolithic feminist position for which gender is the single deciding issue and biology is mistaken for destiny. However, there is a major thread to be followed which concerns itself with the investigation of the nature of gender and difference and the consequences and implications of their cultural practice. The nature and criteria of Otherness are also within the compass of this perspective, as well as the social structures that support them. In a critique that challenges the status quo of the established order, be it patriarchal, sexist or based in spurious biological or psychological theories, feminist discourse has raised many important questions related to the nature and practice of oppression (Rowbottom 1987, Beechy 1988). Indeed, Kellner (1995) sees feminist discourse as offering, and informing, much of the most vital and vigorous contemporary critique of oppression and theories of resistance. They manage, he says, to “infuse cultural studies with political passion and intensity, breathing new life into its projects” (ibid p.55), and relate to the principal concern of the present study in that they set out to consider whether such perspectives can shed light on the representation of Madness in film.

A brief consideration of the major protagonists in the films identifies five common identities, some of which are predominantly female, some of which seem to be equally male or female, and some of which are rarely female:

- The patient, the person supposed to be mentally ill, seems interchangeable, but when it is a woman, as in for The Snake Pit (Dir. Litvak 1948) for example, it is usually a significant issue.

- The psychiatrist, most often the principal therapeutic agent, more rarely a woman, but again it is usually a significant factor when she is as in Prince of Tides (Dir. Streisand 1991).

- The nurse, along with other ancillary agents, part of the therapeutic or medical establishment, she is usually female as for example Nurse Ratched in One Flew Over the
Cuckoo's Nest (Dir. Forman 1975), whereas the ancillary staff such as ward orderlies are more often male.

- Fellow patients, frequently used as a counterpoint to the principal protagonist to show that they may not be quite as mad as they are portrayed, again in The Snake Pit may be either, but are usually the same gender as the patient.

- Finally, the family, and mothers in particular as in Family Life, (Dir. Loach 1971). As will be evident at a later stage, it becomes important to consider qualitative differences in the treatment of these characters according to their gender. If women are portrayed differently because of and only because they are women; are these differences coincidental and if not what can that tell us?

It is clear that many of these issues and representations are connected with the influence of Freudian interpretations of gendered relationships (Penley 1989). Many are concerned with the apparent resolution (or not) of Oedipal conflicts, and have been seen as the “monstrous feminine” (Creed 1993). Some portrayals are blatant, as when Lucretia Terry (Joan Crawford) is obstructive to the idealistic young Dr MacLeod (Robert Stack) who wants to introduce all manner of humane reforms in The Caretakers (Dir. Bartlett 1963). More famously, Nurse Ratched is characterised as the castrating woman, a “ballbreaker”, in McMurphy's words, fuelled by penis-envy. Others appear as a facet of a mish-mash of snatches of theory, cobbled together in a haphazard way, as in the relationship between Norman and his mother in Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960). Still others appear in a subtle way that infuses the perspective of the film, an example being the rigid, frigid and dominating mother of Family Life (Dir. Loach 1971). Metz (1979) asserts that in this regard psychoanalytic film theory, which he recommends, may be seen as an outgrowth of film-semiotics in that “both linguistic studies and psychoanalytic studies are sciences of the very fact of meaning, of signification” (p.9). Nevertheless, Kaplan (1987) clearly states that “film is perhaps more guilty than other art forms of literalising and reducing Freudian motherhood theories” (p.88), and once a theory, perhaps even a metaphor, takes on concrete form and assumes a simplified, literal interpretation it takes on itself an aura of authority rather than debate and hypothesis.

The one voice that rises above all others in the representation of the (patho)psychology of women has, until very recently, been Freudian in its basis and conclusions. However, although some authors and supporters of scientific psychiatry such as Shorter (1997) may say that fundamental Freudian precepts such as the Oedipus complex, infantile sexuality or
the special sexual attributes of women became "objects of disbelief" and "relegated to the same scientific status as astrology" (p.313), they may forget the importance of creative mythologies and the seductive nature of the Freudian model in which it is possible to imagine the drama of great psychic forces struggling for control of the mind. In addition, Freudian analysis makes every individual feel interesting and unique rather than a lucky, or unlucky, configuration of genetics and neuronal networks. In Freud's eyes, everyone has an interesting story to tell and we can all become the protagonist of our own personal movie.

Substantial criticism has been levelled at a perceived misogyny that informs Freudian interpretations, and it would appear that similar concerns can be found in a feminist analysis of madness in some of these films (Silverman 1988). Kinder & Houston (1976) argue that motherhood is the defining experience of women and can be the key to understanding their madness - those who do it well do not go mad, those who do it badly or do not manage to do it at all, whether they are barren, abandoned or never get the chance, are the ones who are incomplete and susceptible to madness. Putative titles such as The Happy Spinster are hard to come by.

Mulvey (1989) argues that men and women fulfil different functions in the way meaning is constructed in film, and this is in turn related to male dominance and female subordination, with male hegemony and female abjection. Men are seen to be active and make meaning through their action, whereas female characters are bearers of meaning; they function less as clear individuals and more as ciphers onto which meaning is projected. If that is the case, when female madness is represented it must be a depersonalised and therefore less affecting experience. It is the condition of women, as a group, and not of a single recognisable individual (and the American dream remains one of individualism). This madness in women, seen as a natural state of affairs, can be taken less seriously, discounted and paradoxically, not quite so worthy of social remedy.

Busfield (1996) considers a highly complex gendered landscape that has historical, social and theoretical constructions. If, as she convincingly argues, there is no firm evidence that there is a greater innate biological propensity to mental illness in women, attention must turn to other explanations; explanations that consider the agendas of power, control and dominance involved. The similarity with other perspectives of a Post-Marxist persuasion are not coincidental. The shared concern with structures, what keeps them in place and the use and abuse of power, addresses some of the short-comings of a Postmodernism that
fails to situate itself socially and culturally and can tend to flatten the terrain of power relations (Bordo 1993), but also steers away from a completely materialist analysis. Analyses which manage the deconstruction of the Madness of women (Ussher 1991) and also pay close attention to the language of psychiatry need to be tempered with caution if it is then assumed that these issues do not have any reality outside our perceptions of them. Such a position may encourage and give power and confidence to the process of deconstruction which may reveal that there are façades and paper constructions, but it should not take anything away from the pain, distress and suffering of the mentally ill and the mad.

Some Methodological Reflections
In every image we must ask who speaks

Jean-Luc Godard

Phillipson (1971) likes to draw the useful distinction between method and methodology. He feels that methodology is not the manipulation of the techniques of research, but the process by which theory is constructed. In this way the researcher will decide which phenomena are going to be considered relevant, how they are given priority and how they are related. Kuhn (1962) posits that theories have an important role in giving meaning to facts and observations, and although he is prone to using the term “paradigm” somewhat loosely, that is to refer both to Science as a whole (Big Science with a capital letter) and to individual theories, the central thesis bears some examination. It is not necessary to enter into relativistic absurdity, but it may be profitable to consider whether, if we do create models of understanding for our times, this excludes the possibility of there being fundamental issues that remain unchanged. Perhaps Kuhn can be said to be post-Positivist, not so much in the sense of Popperian falsification (1992), but in that he challenges the notion of a one single truth, but not quite Postmodern given his discomfort with normlessness. It may be that the creation and fear of the Other remains constant, but the representation may have a significance that can only be appreciated within its context. It is of particular interest to consider the way in which one paradigm, one primary representative system gives way to another. If filmic representation is in a reflexive relationship with its culture, it is arguable that it can also effect a paradigm shift, and therefore a Kuhnian and post-Kuhnian analysis may give extra insights. If the catalyst for a paradigm shift can be any cultural artefact, i.e. can be a film, then it is a sustainable argument that certain films at
certain moments strike such a resonant chord that things can never be looked at the same way again. Pertinent examples that may approach this criterion form the core of a close analysis which can be placed within a broader socio-cultural sweep. Thus, One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Dir. Forman 1975) has so thoroughly entered common cultural discourse that it has become a reference point in its own right. Secrets of a Soul (Dir. Lang 1926) with its glorification of the marvels of insight afforded by the (modern) scientific application of psychoanalysis presented the subject seriously and thoughtfully for the first time to a public outside the clinical area. The Snake Pit (Dir. Litvak 1948) which so excoriates the mental hospital system peopled in almost equal proportion by paternal and saintly doctors, vindictive nurses and patients who are both victims and victimizers, was the subject of debate in magazines, newspaper editorials. Ordinary People (Dir. Redford 1980) in which often the most that can be asked or offered is good intentions (not far from the widening gyre of Yeats), speaks of the anxiety at the end of certainty. This is not analogous to the “great man of history” thesis that informs the aesthetics of the art historian Kenneth Clark (1972), for example, because, consonant with the world view of Critical Theory, it is not suggested that these moments arise without context. They may be seen, retrospectively, as decisive, frozen incidents, but they can only be fully appreciated or explicated within a socio-cultural continuum. In this spirit, Flynn (1994) characterises Foucault, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, with all their distinctive analyses, as masters of suspicion who are engaged in “uncovering the unsavory provenance (pudenda origo) of ostensibly noble enterprises” (p.36).

The brief exploration of the example of One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Dir. Forman 1975) in this light may elaborate the point and may also presage the direction of future study. There is already a large body of literature concerned with the film (Sight and Sound 1975, Kael 1975, Boyd 1972, Myers & Kerr 1976) and it may show that the traits of McMurphy as the maverick, the individualist, the iconoclast are as representative of the anti-authoritarian counterculture as they are of psychiatric diagnostic variations. If the primary intentions of this thesis are revisited, the way in which the film is part of the cultural fabric and its particular strengths in conveying images and emotions, can be seen to depict the mentally ill in a way that it would not have in other times. The context out of which the film of the book emerged is thus of crucial importance. It is not without interest that the book was written out of Kesey’s own experience in the 1950s, was seen to exemplify the 1960s and was made into a reasonably faithful film version in the 1970s (in the direct translocation of speeches for example, but clearly not in the terms of the principal protagonist). This would suggest that the way in which the sympathy of the watcher (and
the relationship of the film to its audience is always going to be a central concern), is firmly with the various victims of oppression is a function of that cultural context. In a similar way, Chief Bromden massive and unspeaking, embodies a prizing of non-Western, native wisdom. Perhaps the only way in which the secular West can rediscover enchantment through the adoption of alternative mysticisms. However, this wisdom is reduced to the same catatonic state as the Chief himself, which can only be understood in the context of the questioning of the Great American Dream that took place within the maelstrom of the Vietnamese War, Watergate and the end of the Panglossian ethic. That may only be one small aspect of the significance that can be drawn from the film, it does not consider textual analysis or the other allegorical strands that can be identified and which will be considered in greater detail in later sections, such the representation of a contemporary Christ, individual, dangerous and punished, or the condescending romanticism that may have been detected, but it can point to the thesis that following its massive public exposure, nothing was ever the same.

There may also come a point, but not here, at which a certain interchangeability terminology will need to be addressed. Can a stereotype be seen as being an ideal type an archetype by another name, as sometimes seems to be the case in practice, and how do the pattern of symbolism, allegory and representation become explicable and consistent? A brief review of the literature it is often most convenient to use the author’s own terms, that unfortunately does not always exclude the possibility of confusion, as the example Kuhn and the notion of the “paradigm” shows. However, if it is generally accepted if this is possible the words will be used in the sense that the original authors intended spirit of latitude and forgiveness may be most appropriate while the broad strokes are still being applied to the canvas.

Gilman (1982) has claimed that “visual stereotypes are the product of the application existing paradigms to those aspects of the universe which a culture has defined inherently inexplicable” (p.xi). This is a remarkable statement and alive to many possibilities. It clearly behoves any study of the visual stereotypes of Madness investigate these aspects. However, if in order to understand a cultural expression, we have to follow the core logic that dictates the thought, it becomes problematic, if we are not first inculcated in that paradigm, to be sensitive to all the connotations that one single gesture may suggest. Grand unifying historical theories must confront the unknowability otherwise of other worlds, and at this point they will usually stumble.
It seems important to Gilman to acknowledge that there are times when some things seem unknowable. However, there are different conceptions of what makes something unknowable. It may be that it has simply not been discovered, or rather uncovered yet, but it is only a matter of time. This would concur with the great historical narratives where everything will be revealed as we move, inexorably, to the march of progress, but would not suggest that they are inherently inexplicable. Alternatively, it may be that there are things beyond our ken, things that can never be explained or fully understood. From one perspective, the mind of God may fall into this category, from another it is because there simply are no reasons to be understood. Some forms of religious understanding do contain a sense of the unknowable, because to fully comprehend must remain the province of the Creator. Aspects of postmodern theory may agree with the conclusion but not with the premiss. However, to be inexplicable does not necessarily also mean to be unknowable. A gnostic vision allows for experience to be known but not explained.

If the stereotypes that a culture produces are indeed related to what that culture considers inexplicable, the way in which representations of Madness are considered inherently inexplicable becomes important. One of the difficulties with Gilman's bon mot is the word "inherently". Without it there is the possibility of some eventual explanation, even if it is never realised. With it, the paradigm either grinds to a stop, having outlived its usefulness in a Kuhnian sense, or retreats into mysticism, or readjusts its priorities of understanding to allow for a plurality of coexisting ways of knowing.

It is within the critique of the meta-narratives of the Enlightenment Project that many of postmodernism's most trenchant points can be found. The grand vision cannot, as Habermas would have realised, escape comparison with other grand scientific missions to change the world such as the Manhattan Project, the Human Genome Project or the projected Grand Theory of Everything which appear as historic confluences of profound and majestic minds, in the fashion of hasty, adolescent idealisation. Norris (1990 p.129) points to the binary distinctions of "truth/falsehood, science/ideology, real/imaginary, history/fiction" as some of the pre-occupying concerns of modernist discourse. The refutation of these arbitrary distinctions is seen as a focus of the postmodernist attack.

It would appear that these oppositional distinctions have not dropped off in the order that Norris gives them. Marxist notions of hegemony, perhaps most ably articulated by Gramsci (1971), accounted for the separation of science and ideology, or more correctly knowledge and ideology, before Baudrillard's melding of the real and the imaginary or
Foucault’s demolition of the myth of history. Sacks (1988) is one of many authors who note that we all constantly confabulate, and each telling of our story is, to some extent, a re-invention of ourselves which shifts its position and adjusts and refines its details according to the context. Therefore, I am not who I am, but rather a result of the interaction and interface of who I want you to believe I am (or at least suspend a sufficient amount of your disbelief to accept that I am), and the person you choose to see. My self is a fluid concept. Reality becomes a negotiable concept and a moveable feast. The narrative self appears as an important issue in the creation of a narrative identity which weaves a relationship with memory and history (Freeman 1993). These identities are not fixed nor are they absolute, and the best lives may be invented. Sometimes the wisdom of Humpty Dumpty (Carroll 1980) who announced that words meant exactly what he intended them to mean seems to be the appropriate point of departure and of arrival. It now becomes redundant to ask if this is true or that is false, but it is very much to the point to ask whose truth is this or whose falsehood is that.

In many ways Baudrillard’s playfulness with the concept of the real set the postmodern cat among the grand narrative pigeons. There are moments at which he seems quite sympathetic to Marxist (attempts at) analysis. He concedes that Marx was able to reveal the illusions of the Natural and applauds the way in which our attention is drawn to the fetishization and commodification of socially valorised concepts, but laments that Marxism was not able to disencumber “itself of the moral philosophy of the Enlightenment” (1975 p.58). The particular aspect that he suggests Marx is unable to forego is that of “Necessity” (capitals in original). For Baudrillard this contains a moral idea that seeks to clothe itself in concomitant concepts such as nature, progress and immutable laws of history. Things would be better if Marx included a notion of encultured choice.

**Towards a Critical Postmodernism**

*O! matter and impertinency mix’d;*

*Reason in madness*

*Shakespeare, “King Lear” IV.vi*

As can be seen, postmodernism is not a uniformly understood term. Foster (1983b p.xii) identifies a spectrum of postmodern positions including neo-conservative, anti-modern and critical postmodernisms, which can and do directly oppose eachother at times. The last of
these, the critical tradition, while linking strongly to his preferred version of a resistance postmodernism, offers much to the consideration and contextualisation of the representations of Madness, especially in its protest against any form of teleological explanation or appeal to utopia. Furthermore, it would be contradictory, especially given its concern with plurality, to expect that anything identifying itself as a postmodern perspective would be unaffected by historical agendas or political considerations. Reality is a particularly slippery concept, even if at times it seems an attractive idea to try to tie it down to one single definition. However, as Laclau & Mouffe (1985) have suggested, the desire for the appearance of seamless harmony within societies seems to be a perennial, if fruitless, pursuit, and, when contextualised, the ideological forces at play may be revealed.

One particular methodological problem that needs to be addressed, at least aporetically, is concerned with the confluence of a descriptive postmodernism and a conceptual Critical Theory. The former will tend to point towards absurdities and exceptions, but the latter, some pessimistic outlooks such as Marcuse's one-dimensionalism notwithstanding, moderates the potential nihilism with aspects of an analytical world view and a more penetrating socio-cultural perspective. Kellner (1989a) posits that Critical Theory can be interpreted not so much as a static view locked into its own context, but rather as a dialectic which, when subjected to its own analysis, becomes a "series of responses to succeeding crises of capitalism and Marxism" especially as it "encounters new socio-historical conditions and the postmodern critique" (p.2). He sees the self-reflexivity and flexibility of the Frankfurt School and Hall in particular as an epistemological strength which is able to develop a critical social theory which "attacks oppression and strives for social equality is necessarily multicultural and seeks to attend to differences, cultural diversity and otherness (1995 p.95, italics in the original). If, as Kellner suggests, Critical Theory is a response to modernism, by which he means the rationalization, secularization and socio-economic consequences of industrial capitalism, it must confront the postmodern experience and the centrality of questions of identity and alienation. The principles of reflexivity and praxis allow for that, but it is not within the scope of this study to completely examine the disintegration of modernism as portrayed through film. In some cases, such as Metropolis (Dir. Lang 1926) or Modern Times (Dir. Chaplin 1936), there will clearly be areas in which they overlap with the primary focus of the representation of Madness, or at least the human soul, but they will normally be examples of context rather than subject.

Rosenau (1992) is concerned about the "dark side of post-modernism (sic)...when it encounters the challenge of the political" (p.143). Extreme scepticism can lead to opting out
of politics leaving “power relations and formal authority untouched” (ibid p.143). She is greatly concerned that a refusal to participate politically can lead to a celebration of the carnivalesque where suicide becomes the only authentic response left, but where even that can become lost in the passivity of apathy. But, it is possible, she argues to adopt an active and participatory approach while still remaining consistent with a postmodern position.

Active affirmatists, as she terms them, with a postmodern sensibility avoid this problem for Rosenau (1992) because they see the possibilities of the deconstruction of existing forms as liberating rather than nihilistic. The changes which occur in perception, in self and class consciousness, in hegemonic structures, in the strictures of conformed identity all begin to take root in a perspective of postmodernism which has become infused with a Critical spirit. In this way neither the nihilism of postmodernism, nor the historical inevitability of traditional Marxism need be accepted; there is a middle way utilises post-Marxist insights, and are particularly concerned with ideology, identity and communication.

Zizek (1992b) suggests that Habermas, rather than being in opposition to postmodernism, is himself a postmodernist, although he may also be saying that everyone is a postmodernists now, because these are postmodern times. It is true that Habermas (1994) sees value in Derrida’s concept of difference and “the fantastic unbinding of cultures ...in a medium of mutual interpretation” (p.119), but he castigates Baudrillard for appealing to those with short memories (p.80). However, just as Adorno cannot but remember Auschwitz and use it as the crucial reference point, Baudrillard might retort that the world has a short memory these days, and that is his point; memory has become plastic and disposable and the history-makers, more than ever, work through the representation rather than the actuality. The advantage of such a broad church which turns away no-one is that everyone can join, “although (like Habermas) in a peculiar way, without knowing it” (Zizek 1992b p.141). Zizek asserts this on the basis that “he (Habermas) recognises a positive condition of freedom and emancipation in what appeared to modernism as the very form of alienation” (p.142), but that may be Habermas wrestling with some of the internal contradictions of Modernism rather than wholeheartedly embracing the Postmodern ethos.

The point that Habermas appears to wish to make is that certain human interests are best served by different mental orientations, types of communication and modes of thinking at different times. If the predominant interest is in change and reordering then irrational thought may throw up quite unsuspected alternative options for action, much as de Bono (1972) values lateral thinking. On the other hand, and for Habermas it is an almost inevitable consequent stage of social organisation, if the predominant human interests are in
predictability and control, a rational mode of thought will be far more appropriate and will serve those interests. Habermas (1994) argues that the “mass dynamic of the streams of public communication, and not the psychology of the masses, is the vehicle for the realization of democratic participation and the development of true pluralism” (p.92), and on this point he must diverge from a postmodernist stance for the representative conventions in film seem to be more suited to a notion of mass psychology than open communication.

Habermas’s use of validity claims for communication cannot really be termed postmodern with any confidence, and yet bear some relevance to how a text such as a film may be perceived. That it can be understood by all parties is one aspect, but a postmodern sensibility acknowledges the sense of ironic and multi-layered reference that an apparently pure communication act would find difficult to accommodate. Sometimes this may be homage, for example Brian de Palma’s tribute to Hitchcock in Dressed to Kill (1980), described by McCarty (1986) as “not so much a psychofilm as a film about Psycho” (p.102), at other times it may as a spoof with a knowing wink at the audience as when Mel Brooks made High Anxiety (1977). There are also times at which it may be unconscious. Furthermore, the truth of the matter is not important if what we are dealing with is an ideologically informed image. It is at this point that Habermas seems distinctly uncomfortable with the postmodern, or at least Baudrillard’s version of it. Sincerity is not something that the audience may deconstruct, but in deeper analysis even the jokes, or perhaps especially the jokes are the most sincere parts. His final assumption, that the speaker has a right to be speaking, calls to mind the state of suspended disbelief in which the audience willingly places itself and which informs its appreciation of all the other factors.

However, the unwillingness that Habermas has to let go of the ultimate world towards which the Enlightenment project is progressing means that he cannot see that in this way the best of all possible rational worlds is not possible, unsullied communicative acts are not possible and freedom is illusory. As Bernstein (1995) argues, this makes it difficult for Habermas to account for ethical dislocation or meaninglessness in contemporary society. The importance of the Outsider, one of the main guises of the madman, is therefore crystallised in the terrifying possibility of freedom. Perhaps we have go mad to be free, but freedom will send us mad. However, lack of restraint does not necessarily equate to freedom either. This poses a profound epistemological problem which can at once appear paradoxical and contradictory. The dissatisfaction with previously hermetic categories of
analysis has been expressed by Rossi (1983) among others. He finds it difficult to accept the notion of dialectic in its objective and subjective version. Neither Sartre’s position of the individual as the locus and motor of history, nor Althusser’s (1971) emphasis on the objective seems to be satisfactory, and so he posits that praxis should be considered as the interaction between structure and subjectivity. It is the essential dynamism involved in this concept that allows it to work within the cultural context. It is not only a concern of Critical Theory to incorporate psychology, aesthetics and ideological critique in the sweep of praxis, but also to develop the acceptance of aesthetic praxis, one major form of which must be the cinema.

It has been pointed out by authors as varied as Kristeva (1980) and Silverman (1988) that the substance of the prototypical films of madness such as The Snake Pit (Dir. Litzvak 1948) can be illuminated by a feminist critique. Feminist critiques are as many and varied as the number of theorists themselves, but perhaps the unifying feature is their primary concern with gender engendered oppression. It is a point to consider whether the subject of oppression has more in common because of the consequent treatment of that feature, for example objectification, demonisation, dehumanisation, or whether the nature of gender specification is such that it will cut across all social experiences. If it is the former, then it is possible to have a feminist perspective within an orientation informed by Critical Theory. The importance of this can then be seen in that more than being a mirror to social standards of gender roles, films are quintessential examples of the discourse surrounding the oppressed, and historically few groups have been more oppressed than the mentally ill.

Bordwell (1989) suggests that there are two major traditions of film criticism. Explicative criticism seeks to “ascribe implicit meanings to films” (1989 p.43), whereas symptomatic criticism, which is more important here, takes a more interpretive tack and is concerned as to “how repressed material has social sources and consequences” (ibid p.73). It is suspected, by employing a “hermeneutics of suspicion” (ibid p.43), that in a film there is “something significant about the culture that produces or consumes it” (ibid p.73). However, the two dimensions overlap at times and are not entirely mutually exclusive. O’Regan (1996 p.337) argues that this can be done to enlarge our comprehension of the totality of the experience of film as it works with our intellect, our emotions, our memories and our fantasies. Bordwell (1989 p.72) wants to explore the way in which meaning is made, and makes use of the scepticism of Nietzsche which questions what is not shown, what is not represented, what is missing, what is excluded, what is concealed and what are we not intended to see.
If films are then to be seen as full of meaning, and meaning is interpreted, the way in which this happens and the influences on the process must be brought into the analysis, we must learn, as Nicholls (1981 p.291) terms it, to become informed rather than naive travellers in a landscape of detectable, if hidden, signs. Hall (1986) articulates a position in which meanings are negotiated, and while the emphasis or preference of a particular group may be clear, that is to say that it is possible to have preferred readings, single monological explanations can no longer suffice. New discourses require a combination of “new places, new positions, new situations (and) new contexts” (Arroyo 1991 p.99). This position can support Lyotard’s (1984) contention that postmodern knowledge can refine our sensitivity to difference and increase our tolerance of incommensurability; difference and Otherness subvert monology and expose our selves. However, exposing ourselves is fraught with the anxiety of what it might reveal and of that of which we are not aware. A postmodern sensibility mixes distrust of single explanations with an ability to look beyond them and deconstruct them, but without a reassuring expectation of resolution. The ambivalence that what we see or accept as a form of reality is more of a representation which must be lived with but not trusted, despite all wishes to the contrary, lies at the heart of a postmodern concern with madness and its representations. Although there have been many attempts to banish Madness to the margins and to suggest that it is an extreme of human experience and only affects very few, it still entrances us. Through the cinematic representations of Madness, and their continuing fascination, by a twist of logic, the map we create for our comfort folds back on itself and the edges begin to emerge in the centre. We know that we create representations but whence do they come? Equally, we are aware of Madness, but if we cannot be sure that it can be monologically explained we must rely on the representations of it, and their relation to anything that can be called true is less important than its acceptability. It is instructive, therefore, to begin to critically examine the contexts of the choices that have been made, and to question the hegemonic structures in their particular configurations.

Wurzer (1992) notes the continuing mutual fascination of deconstruction, critical theory and postmodernism (p.xv). Recalling Kellner (1995), it can be seen that a number of important streams of thought and analysis flow together here, mix, interact, catalyse one another, reform and move on in what can be termed a Critical Postmodernism. The term is used here not only out of deference to its antecedents, but to indicate a critical contextual sensibility within a postmodern framework, and a postmodern deconstruction allied to critical cultural analysis. In this way the lack of reflection of postmodernism that Rosenau
(1992) detects is avoided, along with self-deconstruction and anti-theoretical stances. Indeed, from this perspective, to take an anti-theoretical stance is a theoretical stance in its own right. Similarly, the trap of solipsism is skirted and a post-Marxist context is established that acknowledges Marxist analysis as a vital reference point for the continuing exploration but does not feel constrained to a perpetual literal interpretation. The application of such an understanding may help to illuminate the representation of Madness in film, and informs the rest of this thesis.
CHAPTER THREE
MADNESS AND UNREASON

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason

Shakespeare, “Hamlet” II.ii

Even a cursory review of the material in the cinematic representation of Madness begins to suggest that there may well be a repertoire of familiar representations of the mentally ill, or to be more precise the truly mad, which have enough florid signs and symptoms to provide a recognisable cinematic hook. These may in some sense be sub-categories of a genre, but they also cross treatments from melodrama to the kitchen sink and, importantly, have a context of concerns. Furthermore, the treatment and representation of Madness is, in almost every case, contrasted with and compared to notions of reason, rationality and what may be taken as sanity.

It has been suggested earlier that one of the most popular, enduring and significant representations of the modernist project, which is the epitome of Reason, has been the Scientist both as an individual and as a representation of the Scientific Enterprise. The question of Madness can be explored through an examination of the themes that 1) excessive scientism can lead to madness, 2) an unreasonable application of Reason (in the Enlightenment sense) to the exclusion of the spirit, and 3) Madness as synonymous with Unreason in behaviour and action; there are also the individual characterisations of those seen to be Mad. Such an approach to the depiction of Madness allows for a looser and more flexible interpretation. It eschews the disease model and encompasses illogicality and irrationality as well as madness when it is used as a (horror movie) strategy for the representation of a disturbed state (Tudor 1989 p.3).

Foucault (1973, 1991) develops the correlation of madness with meaningless disorder, except that course it is only meaningless and only disorder when understood from a particular framework. But it also carries with it the opposite, or rejection, of all the concomitants of what it means to be reasonable, even if this may itself be a relative position informed by class, economic or ideological interests. A man of reason is a law-abiding citizen, he is responsible and prudent, he acts according to his duties and place in society, he recognises the responsibilities that offset his rights, he obeys rules and the natural order, he has tamed his animality, he applies logic and is moral in his outlook and ethical in his behaviour, he does not cheat and is honest, he believes in the force of argument rather than
the force of will. He is, in short, a most enlightened fellow, although unaware of being shackled by the only light he sees. Madmen of the cinematic type are not so constrained.

As has been detailed many times (Sutherland 1992) behaviour does not always tally with perception or self-image when rational or irrational behaviour or thought is concerned. Illogical decisions and fallacies may be as likely as rational ones, but it is of equal if not greater importance to consider the power and influence of the desire, aspiration and struggle to be seen as rational, no matter how self-defeating or doomed it might be. There is a growing suggestion that the rational or reasonable person is able to overcome base or animal nature, banish superstition and advance the human race and the civilising process. Rosen (1993) noted the changes that linkage of reason and progress had in the Enlightenment mind-set. He argued that irrationality and madness came to be seen as “the consequence of historical development and a changing social environment” (p.240).

However, he does not differentiate between the romantic view in which man (sic) suffers from his forced divorce from his true nature, and the liberal view in which man fulfils his nature by living out an ethos of progress. He goes on to only consider the latter. “As civilisation developed and spread through the inexorable march of progress, irrationality and insanity were conceived as due to man’s separation from nature, to a deranged sensibility arising from a loss of immediacy in his relationship with nature. Madness was the obverse of progress” (ibid p.240).

It is a commonplace to suggest that a madman has lost his reason (in the sense of balanced perception), which is a parallel with, in common parlance, having “lost his mind”. We may also describe acting in a totally uncontrolled way as “having lost it”. Although the “it” in question is less specific there is a suggestion of balance, perspective and equilibrium. Clearly, there is a way in which the ability to reason is seen as being an essential part of maintaining sanity but there is also the way in which reason can become confused with choice. Is the choice to act in a way so completely contrary to conventional standards, as for example unrepentant mass or serial killers, necessarily a sign of madness? The vigilante genre provides examples of this dilemma because they question the point at which these positions intersect. In some cases, the Death Wish series (Dir. Winner 1975, 1981, 1985, 1987, 1994) or Dirty Harry (Dir. Seigel 1971) and its sequels, for example, the perpetrator is seen to be on the side of law and justice, if not always law and order. In one case the central character is an apparently ordinary citizen, in the other he is an extraordinary police officer, but in both cases it is necessary to go outside the confines of the letter of the law. It
would seem that the processes of Reason, as well as its assumptions, are being questioned in this scenario.

However, the law itself can sometimes appear to be most unreasonable, even at the point at which it sees itself as carrying the torch of unalloyed logic. If that logic happens to include the fundamental inferiority of some human beings and the racial superiority of others, then what may come to be regarded as permissible or acceptable treatment may take on a very particular perspective. Films which deal with the Nazi atrocities with documentary flatness and understatement, such as *Judgement at Nuremberg* (Dir. Kramer 1961), *Shoah* (Dir. Lanzmann 1985) or *Schindler’s List* (Dir. Spielberg 1993), demonstrate that following a perverted logic to unnatural ends can produce grossly distorted behaviour. These films meditate on the ability of ordinary people to perform extraordinary acts and problematise the effects of context. The crucible of war remains a favourite setting for exploring these issues as the tradition from *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Dir. Milestone 1930) to *Paths of Glory* (Dir. Kubrick 1957) and *Apocalypse Now* (Dir. Coppola 1979) amply illustrates; however, a more detailed examination is explored in a later chapter.

From a justifiable point of view all the protagonists of these films may be engaging in unreasonable behaviour, and it is assumed, without much contention, that only a madman behave in that way. It should also be noted that although such behaviour may be unreasonable, it is not necessarily unreasoning. The ability to reason is therefore liable to moderation by value judgements and can result in distortions. A criminal may plan some horrendous act with great care, reasoning all the time the best way to achieve his ends, but the ends as well as the methods, although effective, may be quite immoral or unethical. The way in which people who behave in this way and acts of this kind are represented makes an interesting study for the construction of psychological pathology even if the conceptions of criminality and immorality vary. Anti-social behaviour may also be labelled as a psychiatric disorder and recent psychiatric practice in the Soviet Union equated contra or anti-Soviet thought with mental disorder (Medvedev & Medvedev 1971, Bloch & Reddaway 1977, 1984). Clearly only a person who was mentally disturbed could think or behave in this way; it was next to delusional.

The metaphors that are commonly used in contemporary Western understandings are instructive in this regard. Although we allow animals a certain cunning, we do not see them, apart from gross anthropomorphic examples, as reasoning beings because what intelligence they possess is seen to be embodied rather than cerebral. Therefore, we tend to
invest Reason with a moral quality in which we are able not only to work out the optimal solution, but it is a solution that is right in a moral sense as well (Radden 1985). In short, we can work out what is the right thing to do. We are not solely governed and determined by drives and instinctive desires. We are not raging, uncontrolled and uncontrollable ids. When people are unable or unwilling to hold their base instincts in check they are characterised as beasts, no better than a dog. It is not that long ago, and for these very reasons, that "moral imbecile" was a familiar diagnosis in Western psychiatry. The progressive logic of the argument may be faultless, but the assumptions were questionable.

However, if a person loses all their mental faculties entirely, perhaps through brain injury or a dementing disease, they are more likely to be characterised as "a vegetable"; to become a "cabbage" is a cruel, cutting but evocative description. Indeed, we talk of comatose patients existing in a "vegetative state". This would suggest that reasoning is a faculty of the brain/mind, as distinct from a value or a conceptual framework; not having a mind makes it impossible to reason. As a consequence, it is difficult to use the same sense of madness for the inability to reason, as in dementia, and the inability to reason in an acceptable value-informed manner. This is not to suggest that the representation of dementia, brain injury or intellectual disability is not important, meaningful or revealing, but it does recognise that it is not always central to the present study.

As human reasoning is more than animal cunning it is also seen as being more than mechanical analogue computation. When a person acts without the influence of the emotional context or considerations they may be characterised as behaving like an automaton, of having no soul, no sense of pity, no fellow feeling. There are inferences of coldness, of inhumanity, of efficiency at the expense of those intangibles that give meaning and value. Yet, just as having the courage of a lion or the tenacity of a terrier can be seen to be admirable qualities (it is doubtful that to be as cool as a cucumber can be seen in quite the same light), so possessing a steel-trap mind, or being as remorselessly efficient as a machine or as quick as a computer are also regarded as compliments. However, these qualities must be tempered or softened by contextual values. The neglect of mercy leads Shylock to personal disaster, the excision of love brings the downfall of countless power figures, but fortunately they can be redeemed by the irrational (love), the naive (the child or holy innocent) or the enchanted (the spiritual or the primeval grandeur of nature). In this way they can be preserved from madness. The way in which the redeeming values are often seen as feminine softeners to masculine harshness becomes influential in the characterisation of the march of Reason as a masculine enterprise, even when carried on by
women. Ussher (1991) takes this to show that Reason thereby contributes to the
construction of madness as a female malady.

Madness, Modernism and Reason
The sleep of reason produces monsters

Goya, Caprice No. 43

The attainment of perfect reason, in the sense of the ideals of the Enlightenment, was seen
as the apogee of human progress. To be unaffected by bias or prejudice, to be able to act
and judge fairly, equably and humanely was a sign that humankind had fulfilled its
potential to master its destiny. However, it is a persistent theme in literature and in the
history of film, that this may be pride before the fall and hubris may not be far behind. It
becomes of central importance to consider the way in which madness is shown to affect
those who most clearly embody the ideals and practices of Reason. In this way the obverse
of Reason, or fears about what may transpire as it breaks down, or the danger presented by
unreasonable behaviour informed by the logic of Reason, may be detected.

It may be suggested that the cinematic characterisations of dangerous madmen are reflective
of the concerns of the society from which they emerge. They are products and
representations of social anxieties; who or what is to be distrusted or feared; who or what
may not be all that they seem and may subvert the familiar and bring chaos, disorder and
confusion. If we cannot rely on the most solid of social structures, the professions that give
continuity, the class system which gives predictable order or the family in whom we trust,
all the foundations on which we base our desire for stability may be under threat - or may
even be a threat themselves.

In some cases specific types of Madness may be associated with certain social groups or
classes. Gardner (1982), in a review of films of the pre-Nazi Germany, suggests that the
characterisations of mentally ill persons tended to be upper and middle class, specifically
"scientists, professors, psychiatrists, a lawyer", even students (p.174), and this remains a
productive theme to pursue. With regard to science it is proposed to treat the natural
scientists, biologists, physicists and chemists, separately from medical scientists, especially
psychiatrists. The latter are worthy of a section to themselves.
The promise and threat of science, the Promethean drama was already a rich tradition in literature before the invention of cinema, and many early films retold familiar stories. Some were justifiably forgettable, but some have had a profound and significant impact. Kracauer (1974) notes the galvanizing effect on the public of a series of seminal films dealing with dark psychological themes of the subconscious. *Der Student von Prag* (Dirs. Rye & Wegener 1913), *Der Golem* (Dir. Galeen 1916), *Homunculus* (Dir. Rippert 1916) and *Der Andere (The Other)* (Dir. Petersen 1913) all appeared at a moment when, despite the confidence bred by the high modernism evident in a militarised and industrialised Germany, there was doubt concerning the relation of human nature with society. The first two films were produced by Paul Wegener who, up to then, had been solely an actor whose desire was to put on the screen the "strange visions that haunted him" (Kracauer 1974, p.28). Kracauer is enthusiastic in his praise for this "sinister magician calling up the demoniac (sic) forces of human nature" whose films "swept into regions ruled by other laws than ours" (ibid, p.28), but his purple prose should not distract from the core of his argument that the discourses of reason and unreason, of nature and civilisation, of knowledge and progress, of humanity and inhumanity, were becoming unavoidable in the establishment of identity and place in the Western world.

*Der Student von Prag* (Dirs. Rye & Wegener 1913) was developed from a number of sources, such as the Faust legend and Edgar Allan Poe, by Wegener and Hanns Heinz Ewers, "a bad author with an imagination revelling in gross sensation and sex" (Kracauer 1974, p.29) who was later to write the script of the Horst Wessell story for the Nazi cinema. However, rather than taking possession of his soul, Scapinelli, the Mephistopheles character, wants the student's mirror reflection in return for arranging an advantageous marriage and material wealth. Scapinelli is a sorcerer, an alchemist who is able to separate a man from his soul, and whose interference and machinations drive the student to despair. As a character he is not far removed from Svengali, who had already made his appearance in six film treatments of Du Maurier's *Trilby* before 1916, and so was not completely new to the audience. Eventually, in the course of the film, the student shoots his own reflection, only to kill himself of course. The moral of the tale is simple enough, but infused with enough reminders of the consequences of the loss of the soul in pursuit of material advantage to be enormously popular at a time when Otto Rank (1971) was speculating on the *doppelgänger*, its psychological meaning and psychoanalytic interpretation. Kracauer (1974) ventures that this exploration of dualism presaged what was to become "an obsession of German cinema: a deep and fearful concern with the foundations of the self" (p.30).
Der Golem (Dir. Galeen 1916) tells a familiar Jewish legend, again, perhaps more than coincidentally, set in Prague, the city of Kafka. It is the story of a statue which is given life by placing a Kabbalistic sign over its heart. However, the soulless automaton falls in love with his master’s beautiful daughter but her rejection of him leads to him wreaking a terrible and murderous destruction before eventually perishing himself and returning to the dust whence he came. The similarities with the Frankenstein story are unmistakable, but they are even more obvious in Homunculus (Dir. Rippert 1916) which occupies a position somewhat between the two. Like Frankenstein’s monster and the Golem, the Homunculus is man-made. The “famous scientist”, Professor Hansen and his assistant Rodin (!), create something closer to Mary Shelley’s original than the Boris Karloff characterisation. The Homunculus is powerful and beautiful, learned and intelligent, but, like the Golem, remains an outcast who, because he has no soul, is unable to know full, reciprocated human love. Forever the Other, he was seen by those among whom he tried to live as “the man without a soul - the devil’s servant - a monster” (publicity material). An interesting progression of attributes.

The notion of the Other gives its name to the Jekyll and Hyde story adapted from Paul Lindau’s stage play Der Andere. In this story Dr Hallers, a well-to-do lawyer, suffers a horse-riding accident after which he “increasingly often becomes the victim of a compulsory sleep from which he emerges as the other” (Kracauer 1974 p.34 italics in the original). Like Mr Hyde, the Other is up to no good, but eventually the truth comes out, the two personalities confront each other and Dr Hallers recovers his health, gets the girl and lives happily ever after. It seems significant that a lawyer was chosen for this character. As an embodiment of order, just as the scientist may be seen as the embodiment of reason, he is symbolic of the established set of values, the cornerstone of civil society. However, he is not invulnerable and, if he sleeps strange monsters can emerge. These monsters threaten the order and must be controlled. The sleepwalker is of course a theme that will resurface later when the murderous Cesare emerges from The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (Dir. Wiene 1920) (Fig.8), and is a warning of what happens when reason sleeps. Der Andere (Dir. Petersen 1913) differs from the other films in that the monsters are released by an accident rather than a deliberate act but, nevertheless, hints at what lies, barely contained, just beneath the surface. It is a scenario which requires the maintenance of control for the sake of civilised society. Clearly, unless a vigilant watch is kept anarchy is loosed on the world.
The significance of these four films is in their portrayal of the fundamental importance of Reason in social order and the hubris of those who challenge it. The relation of the educated classes to madness indicates that too much knowledge, too much thinking can be a dangerous thing. There is an incipient anti-intellectual critique of the principles of the Enlightenment Project, as if it is entering dangerous territory which should rightfully only be the province of God. This is suggestive of a disillusion with liberal values and contextual evaluation. It is significant to locate these sentiments within the latter years of World War I at which point the slaughter of huge numbers in trench warfare, brought about by the application of the fruits of scientific modernism, had bred disillusion rather than enthusiasm, and in which, as has been suggested earlier, the first stirrings of postmodern doubt and scepticism, can be detected. The, limitations of the process of reason can lead to an endorsement of individualistic principles through which Mankind can realise its true nature. In some cases this can lead to an authoritarian tendency, in which the great individual is destined to lead a people or a nation by force of will. In other representations it emerges in the character of the radical individualist struggling against the suffocating conformity of the established system.

The Problem of Anti-Psychiatry

You men are in this hospital ...because of your proven inability to adjust to society (spoken by Nurse Ratched)

Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1962) p.130

The way in which the Modernist Enterprise and the development of a corporate society affects the spirit of the individual receives more overt attention in Ken Kesey's novel One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (first published in 1962) than in the subsequent play (Wasserman 1963) or film (Dir. Forman 1975) (Figs.9,10). Although the importance of "the Combine" in the novel is underplayed in the film by the shifting of the narrative voice away from the delusional thought of the Chief, the relation of individualism to a larger conception of society remains a central theme. Familiar tenets of an anti-Psychiatry position inform the drama of the non-conformist, the rebel, the individual who will not or cannot fit into a predefined or predetermined typology and is therefore cast into the role of madness as a way of reiterating and protecting the dominant values of society's controlling interests (Laing 1968, Szasz 1974). Clearly, anyone who does not subscribe to the dominant (and most reasonable) social values is unreasonable; anyone who is unreasonable is either
dangerous, subversive, mad or sometimes all three. It may be a simplistic analysis, but it is an effective one because it is capable of articulating everyone’s inevitable feelings of being constricted by society at some point or another. It therefore idealises a naive natural state in which we can all pursue our lives as nature and not the machine, the time-clock, the faceless ones, the bureaucrats, the soulless grey suits of the apparatchiks nor “the Combine” dictate.

Neither the novel nor the film take much trouble to reflect upon what would happen if McMurphy’s behaviour was characterised as bullying, exploitative, selfish, sexist, misogynist, psychopathic and anti-social. He is after all someone who has seduced a young girl, but it was her fault as she was “fifteen going on thirty (wink, wink)” and besides all real men, he suggests, know what women really want and what they need. He contributes in a palpable way to the suicide of a disturbed young man because of his inability to empathise with others and his insistent exploitation of their insecurities. He physically attacks, and adopts a confrontational attitude toward, those whose actions may be properly examined and seen to be wanting, but whose intentions may well be motivated by high ideals. He reacts with outrage when his deliberately deceitful behaviour is questioned, and he has, it should be remembered, engineered his admission to the hospital as a way of avoiding the consequences of his criminal actions. Because of his inability to examine himself and his lack of insight he is contemptuous and mocking of the anxieties of others, and insists that his position is the only viable one. Being mad is supposed to be easy, or so McMurphy thinks, and, by implied endorsement so does Kesey, but that is perhaps an amalgam of adolescent fantasy and childish solipsism on his part. By some criteria, McMurphy is an extremely unpleasant man glorified by a charismatic actor, a script that gives him all the best laconic lines and a sense of drama that identifies his behaviour with a cultural and popular critique that fails to examine its consequences. The problem that the characterisation of McMurphy presents is that despite some of these personal qualities he does seem to make a convincing critique of the existing regime, he does appear to do good things and he does evoke emotions and reactions from his fellow inmates that the traditional therapeutic approach finds impossible. It is not clear, however, whether this is possible because of, despite or with no relation to his personal characteristics, some of which seem anti-social and pathological.

The question is raised whether or not it is possible for an unprincipled person to act in such a way as to increase a sense of public good or well-being without any thought to a moral framework. Even though the best-intentioned and morally self-aware (of the hospital staff)
are portrayed as incompetent and self-deluding it is clear that they do in part see a sense of purpose and social service in their work. Dr Spivey, for example, is seen by Sodowsky & Sodowsky (1991) as playing the ineffectual father counterpoint to Nurse Ratched's domineering mother in the group therapy sessions which are most often portrayed as something more akin to the demeaning self-criticism of Maoist China and, as such, another burden that the system loads on the oppressed individual. Although the ward orderlies, the jive-talking black boys, may have been assumed to have had more in common with and more sympathy with McMurphy and his subversive attitude, they are seen to be perpetrators of horizontal violence towards the patients, who are similarly oppressed, and there would appear to be a lack of reflective critique on their part. However, the solidarity that the film calls for is for the oppressed and emasculated male rather than that emanating from a Marxist critique. The hospital is a place run by social beings who can recognise that there are times in which the rights of the few may have to be over-ridden for the benefit of the many. It is a rational equation which only Reason can reach. This is an essentially Benthamite position, something of which is echoed in the set design of the hospital ward with its panoptic central nurses' station from which to observe. It is possible for McMurphy's Madness to be seen in terms of his moral behaviour and, of course, even if the audience may be led to feel otherwise, his behaviour is always seen by the hospital staff as evidence of and support for the diagnosis of mental disorder. The libertarian message sets out to attack the utilitarianism of the hospital by valuing the individual over the many. Thus McMurphy's idiosyncrasies should be tolerated as individualism; it is more important for Billy Bibbit to be able to have one moment of carnal knowledge than learn to simply live in the real world without too much distress, even though it leads to tragic circumstances; it is more important to set the Chief (and his spirit) free into Sedgwick's sweet primal Arcady (1982 p.146), even if his thought processes are clouded and bizarre.

There is a sense in which reasonable behaviour has a connotation of responsible behaviour (Radden 1985). Adults are expected to behave reasonably and responsibly and if they do not they are to be regarded as incompetent, derelict or irrational, all of which can give cause for seeing them as mad. If people do not behave as responsible adults who can be self-determining, then they do not deserve the full range of civil or human rights, a contingent position. Therefore, it follows that because they cannot or do not fulfil the requirements of full citizenship they can be incarcerated, treated or diagnosed without any co-operation on their part. They can be regimented and infantilised because they have either abrogated their rights or are incapable of exercising them. For One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest this is an important issue, and it is a major part of the critique it offers. However, while there is a
convincing appeal to a universal concept of human rights, it is also problematic. According to this proposition, the patients, and McMurphy in particular, should be allowed to behave childishly and enact a Freudian scenario, but the film suggests that this is childlike behaviour and thus imbued with an uncorrupted innocence rather than a tiresome petulance. At the same time they should not be infantilised by the therapeutic regime, almost a Goffmanesque total institution, yet they are still scared, distressed and somewhat short of self-sufficiency. Sodowsky & Sodowsky (1991) suggest that McMurphy is the attention-seeking child acting out some Freudian drama of the child's attempt to break out of its mother's protective grasp, but do not regard his play-ground antics of mocking rebellion as equivalent to an adolescent leaning back in his chair at the back of the class-room throwing out insolence or iconoclasm over the heads of the others who are all cowed by the repressive teacher. As a consequence of the invocation of the maintenance of order, the relation of Madness to Reason is compromised by its ambivalence towards the moral imperative of care.

The film fails to clearly pursue the notion of a social responsibility which is responsive to the humanitarian critique. Thus the representation of Madness with which we are left is one of individualised experience and responsibility. If you really want to change things all you have to do is simply do it. Despite McMurphy's ultimate sacrifice, he is supposed to serve as an example and an inspiration to the individualism in every member of the audience, and just as the Chief marches off to the future we are encouraged to march out of the cinema seizing our own opportunities with similar resolve.

One critique being advanced by the film is anti-Establishment, and the Establishment is built on and exists to support the rule of Reason. McMurphy is a romantic hero, a man of action and emotion, not like the desiccated, academic, reasoning beings of the System, "the Combine". It is clear that if a man follows his nature all will be right with the world. A man who is allowed to drink and fight and be sexually rampant is living out his true nature. If, however, he is constrained by acting responsibly towards his fellows, he is still in the chains of which Rousseau spoke.

The meaning that this has for Madness in relation to Reason is in its suggestion that the socio-political ramification of Reason, part of its cultural logic, is to deny the spiritual and individual; and so insanity can become a sane response to an insane world. It requires a re-establishment of a natural order, a return to the noble savage or to the innocence of the child at least in psychological terms to restore the equilibrium. Humans have needs beyond the
material; materialist societies are underpinned by the application of Reason and a society based on materialist ideologies must, perforce, deny a truly fulfilling life. It becomes a principal theme that the more one has to conform to the world of material Reason, the more one is forced into the adult role, the more one is forced to grow up, the less one is faithful to one’s true liberated, unfettered nature. The suggestion is that there is a golden innocence to childhood and that adults can reclaim it. In this way, the true Madness is the belief in Reason, and the true sanity is the trust in Nature.

The character of McMurphy presents a libertarian, perhaps even a libertine, rather than liberal critique. It is sentimental and retrograde in its siting of true nature. It is misogynist and splenetic in its characterisation of women as madonnas (the idealisation of the good mother), castrators (such as Nurse Ratched, Harding’s wife, Billy Bibbit’s mother) or whores who really enjoy it, and deserve a little bit of rough treatment (the party girls or McMurphy’s rape victim). Although Nurse Ratched is also sexualised and abused she is not portrayed as enjoying it, even if, from McMurphy’s point of view, and it may be suggested the endorsed position of the film, she deserves it. McMurphy’s world-view is anti-societal, unless society is sharing beers on a fishing trip, and idealises the creative individual, the non-conformist, the maverick. It is anti-intellectual and unreasonable as well as unReasonable. The heroes are creatures of action and they contrast with the professionals who are at worst malevolent, most often blinded by science and at best educated fools. It tends towards simplistic analysis and solutions. It is without social or political depth and sees oppression in terms of the individual rather than the economic, class, social or cultural; like much of the anti-psychiatric literature with which it overlaps it fails to pursue the political implications of the rejection of the medical model. Although there may be hints that there is an allegorical content to the story, for the most part it is so clumsy as to be of more interest for its simple presence rather than the quality of its discourse.

McMurphy may be seen as a category mistake in the psychiatric system, and to some extent he is a conspirator in this. On the one hand, the hospital establishment, the medical and nursing staff, continually try to place him and his behaviour in the frame of treatable mental disorder (although why the differential diagnosis of psychopathy or personality disorder never occurs to them is left unexplained), and he does not always strive to correct this impression. On the other hand, the patients clearly recognise that he is not one of them, which allows them to engage in the naughty rebellions and disobedience. If anything should go wrong McMurphy can be denied; he can take the blame because he was never
truly representative of them. The audience is aware of both misunderstandings, and its identification with his position of being miscategorised by both parties is encouraged by the thought that we too could be taken for what we are not. This leads to a consideration that a more resilient key point of the film may not be so much the malevolence of the system, but its blindness to its own failings and the difficulty of seeing outside the constrictions of what we know. This is also the tragedy of McMurphy’s failing because he remains unreflective up to the end, he does not realise the consequences of his actions. He never quite believes that he will lose.

Although in many ways it is a naive work of social analysis it is still an engaging piece of film-making, and therein lies a problem. The audience is meant to identify with McMurphy and, for a while at least, go along for the ride - and in large part it does this. A good time is had by all, most of the time, and the audience is encouraged to cheer when the patients claim a minor victory over the stiff bureaucracy and cry when McMurphy is finally extinguished, at first metaphorically, then spiritually and finally corporeally. At this point it would seem that the other patients are being regarded as eccentric misfits rather than mentally ill, and this is the same patronising attitude for which the hospital system is justifiably criticised. In this regard the underlying sentimentalism that infects the film spills over on to some of the minor characters. Harding, a hen-pecked husband, is someone who has been so constricted by the conventional life-style that he has become emasculated. Only when he stops doing what he is told by his wife, his job, his doctor or his nurse, does he find true pleasure and experience real emotions. It is suggested that if only he could be allowed to slough off the trappings of materialism he would rediscover his true self. Others, such as the giggling Martini, are seen as doing no harm to anyone and should be left alone. Little thought is given at the end of the film about the young girl McMurphy raped, or that the treatment and attack on Nurse Ratched might be unwarranted or simply criminal.

It seems that to see the film as a critique which can lead to a radical social/cultural reform of the mental health services is an unfortunate, although understandable misreading. The film may be claimed by the Left for its characterisation of institutional oppression, but the full consequences of its logic lie elsewhere. The position that is put forward finds its practical outcome in the deinstitutionalisation and libertarian mental health reforms of the 1980s, and the influence of the film in contributing to that consciousness can be seen to be seminal (Pilgrim 1990). The name of the film became a touchstone for any critique of the system or any scandal which exposed terrible conditions or maltreatment. It contains a number of
magnificent cinematic set-pieces and memorable images. It delivered such a body-blow to the use of Electro-Convulsive Treatment (ECT) that it has struggled with its therapeutic legitimacy ever since, to the extent that it almost became a litmus test for liberal or Critical Psychiatry (Ingleby 1981), although in the USA, Canada and Australia it is currently enjoying something of a revival.

The film presented some spectacular and searing images of psychiatry which were ripe for a coherent critique, although this did not develop at the time, due in part to the extreme popularity of the film. In 1975 it would have seemed like sour grapes, reactionary politics or trying to defend the indefensible. It was only a little later, when critics such as Sedgwick (1982) began to question some of the assumptions of anti-psychiatry, that some aspects of the film were reassessed. In the course of 129 minutes we see the appalling conditions of the patients, the unmodified ECT, the use of psycho-surgery, the brutalisation of both staff and patients, the over-worked and ill-resourced staff, the psychiatrisation and medicalisation of dissent or non-conformity and the reductionist tendency of biological psychiatry, but we see little of a coherent critique. Instead of building on the outrage that these images engendered, and substantially re-creating a moral and social approach to mental health care, the psychiatric agenda was hitched to the same deregulating wagon as the economic credo of the time, and freedom became a simplistic catchcry. Freedom was to be achieved by opening the doors of the asylums and telling the patients they were free; free to become unemployed, free to be homeless and sleep on the street, free to become clients of the prison service rather than health agencies, free to be victimised, exploited and become an under-class. They were not, however, always free to access treatment. Ussher (1991) contends that “desolation in the back ward of the psychiatric hospital has been largely replaced with desolation on the streets or in lonely bed-sits” (p.237) and would agree with Sedgwick (1982) who thought that rather than slipping into something more comfortable, the only thing the discharged patients were likely to slip into was “the gutter or the graveyard” (p.146). In this sense the “sequestration of unreason” (Docner 1981 p.20) has shifted its location but not its function. This terrible scenario would suggest that in relation to individual liberty the social context and consequences of mental illness were to be secondary. When Sedgwick (1982), who later killed himself, called such positions revisionist it was because for him the reality of mental illness was a dreadful and terrible thing and required urgent attention. To deny all mental illness, at least of psychological rather than biological origin, was to throw the baby out with the bath water and effectively make mental health reform all the more difficult to achieve because of the extreme position’s clear untenability. It would seem that there was a missed opportunity to offer
something more progressive about the treatment and popular representation of the mentally ill.

It can be argued that, in some respects, far from advancing the understanding of mental illness in a straightforward, linear way _One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest_ became problematic. It sought to operate on more than one level, activating both literal and metaphorical critique, and it was implicit that what was happening within the asylum was applicable to the wider world because the Western world, or America at least, had become a madhouse of perverted values and lost humanity. A line of critique was beginning to develop in which the notion of the ultimate disprovability of paranoia and conspiracy theories found a ready audience.

Within the same narrative the film served as a fictionalised but emotive exposé of the psychiatric system, which must also be seen as a cipher for a greater social system, which may have been beginning to collapse under the weight of its own contradictions, but also undermined any serious concept of madness and those who suffer from it. It also significantly failed to underscore that it was a story set in the late 1950s, a decade and a half before its audience was watching. As a result it carried the implication that this was the way it still was in the middle 1970s. The intervening period had been hugely important in the history of institutional psychiatry with developments in community psychiatry, open door hospital regimes and generations of new drug treatments, let alone the absorption of the new critique into the modifying mainstream (Ingleby 1981 p.10). The emergence of the consumer movements, even in their very terminology, had substantially reinforced the view that treatment should not be given without the consent of the treated, and that psychiatry had to be a partnership in which the monological view of scientific psychiatry could not expect to go unchallenged. While it was true in many cases that the differences in conditions and in-patients and staff were minimal, the film was susceptible to rejection by the Establishment because it was too gross a generalization to forestall defensive responses from the psychiatric community which could protest that it just could not be said to be like that any more. Despite those concerns, Rabkin (1977) spoke approvingly of it at the 1976 Annual Conference of the American Psychiatric Association, saying that it was a timely contribution which may well assist in breaking down the barriers that surround mental illness.

The contradictions raised by the film are indicative of the contemporary ambivalence towards mental illness, madness and psychiatry. Even if it is very seductive, it is an
essentially romantic view of McMurphy which is ultimately unsatisfactory because it fails to recognise and valorise the experience of the other members of the asylum, staff and patient alike. It is still grounded in a model of individual sacrifice and redemption and does not see beyond a simple confrontational approach of dominance and subordination. There is a missed opportunity to extend the discourse of the anti-psychiatric premise and critically deconstruct the way in which Madness is presented because, in part, of the shallowness not only of McMurphy’s characterisation, but also his character. Even at the most crucial moments he seems to have learnt very little and changed hardly at all. His encounter with the reality of the hospital and its patients leaves him with the impression that they should be more like him and he finds it difficult to conceive that he may be like them. It is certainly a less than perfect film but it is still full of memorable imagery and remarkable characterisations that have entered the Western cultural lexicon. It has become possible to speak of a Cuckoo’s Nest situation and know the connotations that this carries. As evidenced by the impassioned debate it has engendered, it was at the time, and remains still, a landmark representation of Madness.

Mad Science and Modern Prometheans

*a loony-doctor and nothing but a loony-doctor ...however much you may call him a nerve specialist*

*P G Wodehouse, “Carry On Jeeves” (1975)*

Shifting attention for a moment to the creators rather than the creations, a number of pertinent themes emerge. In some cases it is clearly the sorcerer, the kabbalist, the scientist who is the transgressor and their creations who are the victims (Shattuck 1996). The hubris of these men, and they are all men, is seen as disrupting the natural order and, although only Professor Hansen is identified as a modern scientist the connecting factor is the temptation to use knowledge to interfere with that order. The Madness of the creators is the loss of perspective, the delusion of omnipotence and omniscience, the paranoia of those convinced of their own righteousness, the blindness to the consequences of their own actions, and the disconnection with reality as insight diminishes.

Tudor (1989) suggests that “mad science is the price exacted for human knowledge, ambition and progress” (p.185), a clearly Promethean theme. He characterises mad scientists as “visionary obsessives, glorying in scientific reason as they single-mindedly
pursue their researches" (p.185). Contrasting with the sleep of reason, it is the sleep of reasonableness, the loss of perspective that comes with a single-minded, one-eyed refusal to see the consequences of action. Great discoveries concerning the nature of being human, consciousness and life itself are at the heart of these stories and they find a contemporary echo in the sometimes sceptical reception accorded to the Human Genome Project, genetic engineering and cloning experiments.

Speaking to a worthy audience at the Convention of the British Association for the Advancement of Science Helen Haste (1997b unnumbered) commented on the images portrayed in films and television of coldly rational scientists, epitomised by the half-human, half-Vulcan Mr Spock of Star Trek fame.). She went on to describe them as propagating a “dangerous stereotype of the scientist as an emotionless half-human (both literally and figuratively) without a moral sense” and suggested that Spock is dangerous because “he epitomises the benign but disturbing cult of the rational at the expense of emotions which may interfere with the pursuit of Truth and understanding” (ibid). She argues that this is a moral debate about not only “the age-old desirability of pursuing Truth, but also the principles of how to engage in that pursuit” (ibid).

She notes how, in the worst of her stereotypes, science is often seen as dangerous, unrelated to real-life concerns and values, and attractive only to those people who are emotionally limited, irresponsible, arrogant and naïve. Furthermore, as a form of knowledge science is seen as over-reaching and deficient, bordering on the blasphemous. Scientists themselves may be seen as fixers, wise and reliable, alchemists, absent-minded, helpless, unfeeling or (equally damaging) idealistic and heroic. “We need more ordinary scientists”, she says (1997b), people who are “not isolated in ivory towers and subject to esoteric moral calamities”. But that does seem to suggest a faith in hegemony of the scientific mode, which we will all accept when see how ordinary and unthreatening it is, and a minimisation of a reflective perspective. While Haste advocates the propagation of more scientist-next-door imagery to counteract the hero-scientist, her language and metaphors, indicating the manly hunting activities of pursuit, discovery and conquest, point out her contradiction. She wants her cinematic scientists to be ordinary men and women, but engaged in a modestly epic vocation.

Haste’s paper, among all the others, captured the attention of newspaper columnists who, only a day after her presentation, commented on the images which were “so very off-putting, especially to young people” and “inimical to a proper understanding of science”
(Hawkes & Nuttall, *The Times* 10th September 1997). The leading article of the same day (ibid p.19) betrays the duplicity involved by invoking one stereotype in its first sentence, the physically unprepossessing egg-head, where “scientists are steaming their spectacles”, and using another, the hero such as Curie (and it is interesting that a woman should be included), Pasteur and Lister (both concerned with saving lives rather than more rarefied, theoretical science), in its final paragraph to enthuse young people to engage in science as a career, or a vocation. Unlike Haste, this recognises that it is not so much a case of projecting the *true* image, but choosing the image to match the intention. However, it finds common cause with Haste in that it harks back to the tradition of Pandora’s Box, the Sorcerer’s Apprentice, Faust and Frankenstein, and clearly spells out that while some contemporary scientists may not be mad, they are certainly not very pleased.

It becomes pertinent to question whether or not science, with its driving imperative of discovering and revealing the truth, can ever be moderated by moral considerations. Haste (1997a) suggests that, contrary to common conceptions, scientists are usually quite normal people with normal emotions, even if they may be dealing with extremely specialised and perhaps fear-provoking areas of knowledge. Although she is concerned with the normalising public perceptions of science, and feels that this can be done through open and full communication, she recognises that science and technology cannot take place outside the social and cultural context. This, she notes, assumes importance in the subterranean dread brought about by amoral, or supermoral, science.

With the adaptation of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* the cinema discovered an enduring tale in which the subtitle of the novel, *The Modern Prometheus*, assumes special importance. The drama focuses on the promise of science to answer all the questions of life, something that still remains intensely relevant. But, as its relation to *The Tempest* or *Jurassic Park* (Dir. Spielberg 1993) shows, it was neither the first nor the last treatment of the theme.

Tudor (1989) suggests six elements which seem more or less fundamental to the genre. For a fulsome and satisfactory monster/mad scientist movie there should be:

- the scientist - normally obsessed with his (sic) work and the “secret of life itself” - the eponymous Victor Frankenstein or, in *Jurassic Park*, John Hammond (who though not strictly a scientist himself is the one who has the scientific vision)
- the creation - with whom something goes terribly wrong - the criminal brain or the fatally flawed fool-proof security and the transmutation of frog DNA

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• the visibly crippled assistant - often malevolently motivated because of the contrast with the creature’s perfection - Igor or Dennis Nedry

• younger innocent victims - little children are good for this role

• the laboratory - isolation and spookiness is important, but high-modernism will be as effective as Hollywood Gothic

• the surrounding environment where figures of bourgeois authority and decency such as the law or the academy can be found.

With these elements in place we have begun to construct a landscape of fear (Tuan 1979), and we are right to be afraid because we know that monsters lurk out there somewhere. The principal theme can be followed from the obsessive idea, the grand vision through the deluded belief that nothing can go wrong, that everything has been taken into account; the unforeseen human factor, greed or revenge, which will ensure that if something can go wrong it will; onto imperilling the innocents and the final rescue where the heroic and human figures of bourgeois values save the day. Of course, some canny producers will ensure that there is a slightly ambiguous ending so that a sequel can be made if the film turns out to be a box office success. For Tudor (1989 p.211) this is secure rather than paranoid horror.

Once more we are being told that there are some things that should always remain beyond our ken with which we should not meddle. It is hubristic madness to believe that mere mortals can create a plan that cannot go wrong; if one has the omniscience of gods such perfection may be possible, but in a chaotic universe populated by fallible human beings, things are not so simple. Once one starts to believe that the secrets of life have been revealed, then all boundaries have been removed. There are no longer any limits to behaviour or imagination and we have lost all sense of proportion.

It is important for the resolution of these scenarios that “the powers of disorder are always defeated by expertise and coercion” (Tudor 1989 p.214) and the figures of authority remain credible, despite the rogue element. In this way we are reassured that this madness can be controlled and contained, although we must be vigilant. This contrasts with the explosive, unpredictable, dangerously latent madness of the psychotic killer of whom we see more later.
The Mad Psychiatrist

Anyone who goes to see a psychiatrist needs his head examined


You don’t have to be mad to be a psychiatrist in the movies but it clearly helps (Fig.11). Few professions have had such a long and illustrious history in the representation of madness, although for Schneider (1987) the real-life profession of psychiatry and the invented profession of movie-psychiatry, which has developed a life of its own, rarely intersect. There are nevertheless some important examples of real-life psychiatrists playing movie psychiatrists. In An Unmarried Woman (Dir. Mazursky 1978) Dr Penelope Russianoff appeared as a therapist, and was apparently sufficiently taken with the experience to seriously consider doing it again, even coveting the role of Dr Berger in Ordinary People (Dir. Redford 1980). Perhaps more famously, Dr Dean Brooks, at the time working at the Oregon State Hospital where much of the film was made, played Dr Spivey in One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Dir. Forman 1975). Both instances may serve as peculiar examples of art imitating life imitating art, and according to Gabbard & Gabbard (1987 p.255) neither had any long-lasting regrets.

However, if we only have movies rather than personal experience on which to base our judgements, we may believe the make-believe more. From the largely forgotten Doctors Dippy and Goudron to the more contemporary they have been invoked as being as disturbed as their patients and often more so. Schneider (1985) presented a classic taxonomy of Dr Evil, Dr Wonderful and Dr Dippy. The last are often too silly to be truly disturbing, except to psychiatrists concerned about their public image, but the two others are of great interest to the current discussion.

Fleming & Manvell (1985) provide notes and synopses of 145 films which contain “images of madness”, while Glen Gabbard (1996) claims that there have been something of the order of 350 major Hollywood films in which psychiatry or psychiatrists are represented in the period 1906-1995. Gabbard observes that while psychotherapy has proved to be a very durable plot device, allowing as it does the exploration of different sides of the one person, flashbacks to reveal the history, cathartic moments of epiphany and insight, redemptive love and resolution, it is not quite the same as the exploration of the notion of madness. Although there is a lack of distinction between psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, psychiatry, mental health and other concepts by which professionals differentiate themselves and their
work, he does, like Fleming & Manvell (1985), concentrate on the psychiatrists rather than the putative patient.

The prospect of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing their way through some subconscious quick-step in Carefree (1938), with a little slinky hypnotism along the way, is clearly one of the slighter plot devices of the genre. However, for Gabbard, the way in which psychoanalysis is presented as co-terminous with psychiatry, at least of the more humane or successful kind, is indicative of the way in which he feels that Hollywood, Los Angeles and the quintessential California never took to the pharmacological revolution in the way that mainstream psychiatry did. He muses that this could be reflective of the kind of narcissism that Hollywood encourages and psychoanalysis can flatter, but if he is correct, the unrepresentativeness of the Hollywood image will have profound importance for the treatment of psychiatric patients and on the way the public imagination constructs attitudes and beliefs about psychiatry.

Freudian and post-Freudian notions and interpretation seems to predominate in much of the work of Hollywood film makers and primarily American film theorists such as Robin Wood. This points not so much to the insights and truths that may be claimed for psychoanalysis, or the revelations of psychoanalytic critiques of the films themselves, but to the need to examine it as self-perpetuating confirmation of a model of understanding. Film makers and critics alike can become enraptured by the Freudian imagery that is clearly and potently cinematic in its use of symbolism and metaphor. This in turn becomes a developing ideological hegemony, echoed in some respects by the critical analysis of madness in literature (Feder 1980), despite contradictions from the clinical field where an eclectic bio-psycho-socio model is far more in evidence. But drama thrives on contrast, and in an unknown or under-explained part of the human experience the audience is not only presented with a model of explication (that this is how a disturbed mind works), but also a model for emulation (this is how you are to behave if or when you become disturbed, or indeed how you may be expected or allowed to behave). As with the advertising of chocolate bars, customers come to expect what they are led to think they can expect. Gabbard (1996) makes us wonder if we, as a society, get the psychotherapy we deserve.

In a historical over-view, Gabbard (1996) identifies a “Golden Age” of idealisation of the psychiatrist, roughly from 1957 to 1963 during which time the heroes of psychological science were truly able to understand the eternal mysteries of human consciousness and, he suggests, there was a general feeling of confidence in America. He also equates this with a
highwater mark of the popularity of a fashionable Freudianism. After this time, he detects a sense of mistrust in which the psychiatrist is more likely to be a tool of the establishment, or at best an ineffectual woolly cardigan. For the cultural contextualist this suggests a confrontation to the public consciousness which is denoted by paranoia, suspicion and mistrust, especially of what may seem to be conspiratorial or beyond control. If, after 1963, Americans no longer have faith in their government, perhaps they no longer have reason to believe.

Gabbard makes interesting observations on the relationships that develop between psychiatrist and patient. It would seem that what really heals people is love, often of the kind that would raise the eyebrows of any Professional Ethics Committee. Basinger (1993) notes that while the female therapist almost always falls in love with the male patient, and is thereby redeemed and rescued from a life of barren academic observation of life rather than drinking from the life-restoring fountain of passion, only about half of male therapists fall in love with female patients, and then it is usually that the patient has fallen head over heels in love with them and they return a love of a mature and nurturing kind, complete with calming paternal voice and the essential prop of the pipe (although the latter is suspect to a continuing Freudian symbolic analysis). So far same sex love interest seems absent from the canon although there may well be additional reasons for that omission which will be considered in a later chapter.

Schneider (1985) considered 207 films in his review, concentrating on the American experience, and on psychiatrists, although from time to time other mental health workers were included. Lopez (1993) considered a psychiatric film to “depict the work of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, their patients’ problems, their obsessions or state of mind, cures and remedies available and his or her eventual recovery if the treatment prescribed has been successful” (p.240). He does also note the sub-genres of Hospital Film, Psychopathic Thriller and Psycho Movie, but tries to keep his categories roughly under the canvas of psychiatric plausibility, rather than extreme Horror/Slasher films. Like Lopez, Schneider’s list was “exclusive of exploitation and horror films” (p.998) although they arguably comprise of an important if sometimes less palatable group of representations. In developing an inclusive category, he concludes that “in movie psychiatry distinctions are not important” (p.998), which, if true, can severely affect the generalised conception of mental health and illness. In an admittedly subjective process, he suggests that 35% were Dr Dippies, 22% were Dr Wonderfuls, 15% were Dr Evils, 14% were unclassifiable, 9% were hapless or inept, but not easily typed, and 5% were effective, but not easily typed.
(p.998). He recognises that these figures would be very different if he had included exploitation movies, but even without them he does not present a flattering picture. He speculates how we would really judge a profession in which only 27% of its practitioners were effective and up to 20% were either dangerous or downright cruel.

Although the Dr Dippys are figures of fun they may well be the most enduring stereotype. They include not only the eponymous hero himself but also Fritz Feld in the screwball comedy *Bringing Up Baby* (Dir. Hawks 1938), Fred Astaire in *Carefree* (Dir. Sandrich 1938), Peter Sellers complete with a tongue-twisting German accent and manic haircut in *What’s New, Pussycat?* (Dir. Donner 1965) (Fig.11) and Mel Brooks in the Hitchcock spoof *High Anxiety* (1977). Walter (1989) although not wishing for all portrayals to be of Olympian heroes, suggests that such representations contribute to a notion that psychiatry is itself essentially unworthy, spurious and suspect, and that its practitioners are hardly any better. Bruhn & Parsons (1964) in the United States, Furnham (1986) in Britain and Sharpley (1986) in Australia all testify to the prevalence and durability of this perception.

The treatments of the Dr Dippys of the movie world is the equivalent to the burlesque of patients which could be seen in some of the earliest silent comedies. The lunatic posturing, grimacing and monkey antics simply ape caricatured conceptions of the mentally ill as figures of fun. This is a representation well established from the Georgian cartoons of Newton, *A Visit to Bedlem* (1794) and Hogarth, *The Rake’s Progress* (1735-63) (Fig.4), (although both Newton and Hogarth also wished to make a savage satirical point concerning the quacks who made their living at these institutions and the grotesques who went to view the inmates as well). It is not co-incidence that the bizarre minstrel show to which these representations resorted conflated the ideas of race (the patients were most often black) and a dehumanising Psycho-Social Darwinism, as for example in *The Escapees from Charenton* (Dir. Méliès 1901) [also known as *Off to Bedlem* in Britain and *Off to Bloomingdale Asylum* in the USA).

The comic treatment of the Psychiatrist should not be regarded as occasionally problematic because the subject should be beyond criticism, but rather because it can, if placed in conjunction with clearly mentally ill patients and treated without depth, trivialise the subject and the object. Sacred cows and those who would take themselves too seriously are obvious targets and the comic potential of the contrast between an apparently sane patient and the patently crazy doctor is able to exploit the tension in the question of what it means to be mad. However, if the concern is the experience of the mentally ill and this is
demeaned, rather than a puffed up and self-important individual psychiatrist, or even the
corruption of the norms of a profession being lampooned, the situation changes
somewhat, and may border on a dismissive condescension. A word of caution should
always inform such a discussion in that, perhaps even more so than beauty, humour is in
the mind of the beholder.

Perhaps the first true Dr Wonderful to appear was in the D W Griffith film The Criminal
Hypnotist (1908). After being called to examine a young woman who has been hypnotised
by the evil cad of a hypnotist who tried to get her to steal her father’s money, but
(fortunately) was unable to succeed, the “mind specialist”, as it says on his shingle, rushes
to the rescue, assesses the problem and saves the day. He revives the girl and assists in the
capture of the hypnotist. The contrast between the two “mind specialists” is an important
moment in the development of the “movie psychiatrist”. From Mesmer through to Charcot
and Freud, and of course later on to Dr Caligari, hypnotism has occupied an ambivalent
position between the charlatans, the music hall and serious psychiatry. It seems to feature
as much in the back yards of school boy experimentation as in the laboratories of controlled
scientific research or cabaret showmanship. As Francis, the narrator of The Cabinet of Dr
Caligari (1919), demonstrates it is a not uncommon feature of systematised delusional
belief in psychiatric symptomatology. This trend continues to this moment.

Dr Wonderfuls show themselves to be “invariably warm, humane, modest and caring”
(Schneider 1987 p.997). They are never pressed for time, more patient than Job and
always ready to ride to the rescue - the desperate midnight call is an almost obligatory scene
to confirm this, although a comic treatment like What About Bob? (Dir. Oz 1991) deflates
that idea by having the psychiatrist driven to screaming pitch by his obsessive and pestered
patient. In contrast to Dr Sensibles, who seem to be of the same pattern but cut of a slightly
inferior cloth, and do not quite have the same charismatic qualities, they are masters of their
profession (rather than just being competent), yet “especially skilled at improvisation,
coming up with the appropriate, if unorthodox, maneuver or interpretation at just the right
time ...at unconvicing the traumatic event - the royal road to the instantaneous cure”
(Schneider 1987 p.997). As befits their deeply humane and caring attitudes they prefer to
talk with their patients rather than use physical or pharmacological treatments. They make
psychiatric treatment a shared experience rather than an imposed one; they graciously
facilitate recovery but, very often, becoming as it is, this is a false modesty.
Significant Dr Wonderfuls have emerged at crucial moments in the historical development of film. By 1926 feature length silent films were becoming common and *Secrets of a Soul* (Dir. Pabst 1926) ran for 96 minutes. We meet Dr Orth when he observes the strange behaviour of the central character Dr Fellman, a research chemist, in a restaurant. We are placed in a bourgeois world of relative material comfort and success; all is not well, however. We have already seen Fellman reacting erratically while cutting his wife’s hair and experiencing a sudden desire to murder her and most significantly becoming obsessed by the arrival of his favourite cousin and the present of an Indian fertility goddess he has brought with him. Fellman distractedly eats his meal alone, but when he leaves he “forgets” his house keys which remain in clear view on the table. Dr Orth picks up the keys and follows Fellman to his house where he watches him while he hesitates. At this point Dr Orth interrupts and says, somewhat cryptically, “You do not seem able to enter your own home”. Clearly this is not the most orthodox way of making small-talk, and Dr Orth is marked out as a remarkable man. He hands Fellman his keys, tells him that he is a psychiatrist and knows about these things, and offers his services should they be needed. Increasingly desperate, Fellman eventually decides to consult Dr Orth and through a series of Freudian explorations, including heavily symbolic dream sequences, the childhood origins of a pathological, but unconscious, jealousy are uncovered (Fig.12). Fellman and the audience is told that all pathologies originate in childhood. Orth says that “All other manifestations are secondary. I have made your subconscious fears known to you”. It now seems possible that we can all be set free, we can all have our psychological burdens lifted because people like Dr Orth know the secrets of all our souls.

Like any other patent medicine, psychoanalysis is credited here with not only restoring Fellman’s psychological equilibrium, but also curing, not altogether co-incidentally, his impotence. The film closes with Fellman and his wife on holiday proudly cuddling their new baby. *Secrets of a Soul* is celebrated for the collaboration in its script development of Karl Abraham and Hanns Sachs who are credited with supplying “technical advice”, and indeed Sachs (1926) wrote a brief monograph which accompanied the release of the film. Both were trained psychoanalysts and Freudian disciples, and in the case of Abraham, who was ill for much of the time and died before the completion of the film, a close confidante of Freud in Vienna. Although the extent to which the film carried Freud’s own imprimatur is debatable it was considered important and serious enough as a cinematic representation to be shown at the celebrations of Freud’s seventieth birthday in Berlin in 1926. Pabst, as director and driving artistic force, researched current psychoanalytic thought and was in contact with a number of analysts. He indicates tacit permission from Freud’s inner circle
although Freud's own public declarations at least are quite negative (Chodorkoff & Baxter 1974). Despite the controversy, Fleming & Manvell (1985 p.76) note that it had an enthusiastic welcome in European and American psychiatric circles as well as considerable box office success, and in this respect created a distant presage for the reception accorded to _One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest_ fifty years later (Rabkin 1977). Nevertheless, even if the details of psychoanalytic theory are inadequately conveyed, the lasting impression is of the wonders worked by Dr Orth and his insight. The torment and confusion of Fellman is made terrifyingly clear with swirling and vertiginous dream sequences and obsessive, frozen concentration on images of knives and blood. But this Dr. Wonderful is able not only to see the roots of this trauma, but also to explain it. It may be that Freud was being a little over-protective of his off-spring, an interesting psychoanalytic study in its own right; Friedberg (1990) detects a suspicion of reaction-formation as well as the hint of a possessive father.

In 1948 Anatole Litvak's _The Snake Pit_ appeared. It was a reasonably faithful adaptation of a popular novel by Mary Jane Ward (1957) and concerns the breakdown of a young middle-class woman, Virginia Cunningham played by Olivia de Havilland (Fig.13), her descent into a profound state of madness, her incarceration in the "snake pit" of a refractory ward and her eventual recovery. The man at the centre of her recovery is Dr Kik (Leo Genn), a handsome, pipe-smoking, gently humanitarian psychiatrist with an essentially psychoanalytic outlook, to the extent that Freud makes a personal appearance in the form of a framed portrait that hangs on his office wall. Dr Kik's inexhaustible patience with Virginia is finally rewarded. He never stop persisting with the talking cure even when the rest of his colleagues have either given up hope or resorted to physical treatments and custodial care, both portrayed in the film with shocking effect. Kik's virtue is rewarded and he is able to explain to her at the end of the film that all her repressed fears and anxieties which date back to her earliest childhood, have led her to experience irreconcilable psychological tension. It should be noted that the inclusion of a great explanatory scene seems to be a feature of many of these films, as it was in courtroom and crime dramas such as _Psycho_ (Dir. Hitchcock 1960), and serves a lay educational function as well as a dramatic one. It may be there primarily to enable the audience to understand the film, rather than an explicitly pedagogic diversion, but they still have considerable impact; they equip the audience with a shorthand clinical lexicon and introduce new concepts into the discourse. In _The Snake Pit_ we learn that as a result of an unresolved Electra Complex (although these terms are not explicitly used) she retreated into Schizophrenia (a term that does appear in the film but not the book). Eventually however, she has come to realise that
“husbands and fathers can’t be the same thing”. Dr Kik is less specific on what doctors can or cannot be.

Once again the progressive movement in psychiatry is shown to be a humanitarian psychoanalysis which can reveal the hidden, excavate the buried and illuminate the darkness that we all have within our psyches. However, in some cases, the more far-fetched or anti-intuitive aspects of psychoanalysis, in particular the Freudian sexualisation of psychopathology, gave way to an American pragmatism that seem to combine Harry Stack Sullivan and Carl Rogers. Dr Jaquith in *Now Voyager* (Dir. Rapper 1942) declares that he has no faith in the “fakers and writers of books” (although he may have possibly said “fakirs”) and treats his somewhat romanticised patient with a good dose of common sense, and his knowingness is modest and avuncular rather than arrogant and remote. In all of these representations we know that if we learn to trust them, Dr Wonderfuls are capable of truly liberating us and leaving us to pursue our life, liberty and happiness. This is a world in which doctors certainly know best and, despite the existence of many troubling practices left over from a less enlightened age, may be seen as one of the high points of psychoanalytic movie psychiatry.

By the time Robert Redford made *Ordinary People* in 1980, psychiatric practice had been subjected to a more critical eye. The anti-psychiatry critique had questioned some of the assumptions of the psychiatric system, omniscience in any sphere was more open to question, those in positions of power were regarded more sceptically and Dr Wonderfuls were not so readily or uncritically accepted. Fleming & Manvell (1985), writing in this period, suggest that by the 1980s psychoanalysis was regarded by mainstream psychiatry as a peculiarly old-fashioned treatment of psychiatry, belonging more to the case history approach of the 1950s (p.29).

Dr Tyrone C. Berger, played by Judd Hirsch in *Ordinary People* (Dir. Redford 1980), is clearly a contemporary character. His name presents us with the first of a number of co-existing contradictions. The given name, Tyrone, is itself imbued with a mixture of Hollywood symbolism and Irish ancestry and appears almost oxymoronic when paired with Berger, a very cosmopolitan, Jewish tag (the middle initial C is not explained, apart from it hitting the right note as the middle C). Fleming & Manvell (1985) hint at an incipient anti-Semitism in some of the clichés and stereotypes in his characterisation. First of all, they note that Dr Berger is a Jew, and so perpetuates the myth that all psychiatrists, although they probably mean all psychoanalysts, are Jews like Freud, and it is the
archetypical Jewish science. They suggest that this makes him an outsider who, like all outsiders, cannot be fully trusted. It is important that the first defining characteristic is that he is a Jew, although, arguably an assimilated, secular or non-religious one because of his name and the absence of any religious paraphernalia. He is, however, "a Jew", not Jewish, and that seems to convey a far stronger categorisation than religion alone, it is an iconographic characterisation. It is as though there is a substrata of acceptable professions and psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses are like night-soil men, useful, if not essential, but not doing a job for a respectable person and certainly not one to be talked about in polite company.

Nevertheless, Dr Berger is a humane figure, albeit sometimes as confused as his clients. His flawed nature underlines his humanity, and places psychiatry on a human scale. His personal life is not a model of consistency, something we would never have thought about Dr Kik, if we had ever thought of him having one, and his office is a mess. He is not blessed with an aura of omniscience or perfect order, but his heart is shown to be in the right place. He speaks with vernacular emotion, and can admit to bewilderment (Dr Kik would have professional puzzlement, Dr Orth would be intrigued intellectually). Also, "[al]s an outsider, Berger (dresses) appropriately" (Fleming & Manvell 1985 p.183) in a casual jumper, while Dr Kik is in the suit of a successful bourgeois business man and Dr Orth has an air of the academy about him. Dr Berger has an informality in his approach in contrast to the very ordered worlds we have seen before, and he listens in quite a different way, leaning forward intently. He is intensely engaged in the dialogue, rather than analysing it one remove. He examines his own feelings and reactions, and allows glimpses of himself to show through his professional persona. He does not convey quiet certitude, he is animated and unsure at times. He recognises therapy as a journey that both client and therapist undertake together; he may have skills at recognition and navigation, but it is uncharted territory for him as well. He has a sense of improvisation and spontaneity that realises that theories do not always fit the reality of experience, and if he has to choose, he will choose to believe the experience. Dr Berger does not flinch from physical contact and he and Conrad Jarrett (Timothy Hutton) do embrace. Neither Dr Kik nor Dr Orth would have considered it for a moment, but this trait does serve to heighten the cathartic moment of the great curative breakthrough.

Dr Berger is a more complex and ambivalent character than psychiatrists like Dr Dippy, Dr Orth or Dr Kik had been before and is reflective of a more ambivalent cultural understanding. Monological explanations no longer satisfy the audience of ideas, and the
future is less certain because of the erosion of the possibility of faith, and it less optimistic because the tragedies of the past are only too clear in the memory and preserved too well by the mass media. Schneider (1985) suggests that Dr Berger is "what the public wants a good psychiatrist to be and, judging from the profession's response, what good psychiatrists want to be" (p.1002). He becomes a role-model for patients and psychiatrists alike; those who have expectations of how psychotherapy is to be conducted and those who fulfil these expectations. Dr Berger is a Dr Wonderful for the 1980s as Dr Kik and Dr Orth were fitted to their time. They all reflect the way in which the nature and promise of Reason was regarded, and as such show us reflections of our own wrestling with the idea of a Reasonable, a Reasoning, society. With Dr Berger in particular we see the re-emergence and re-valuing of feeling which tempers the single hard edge of cold logic.

Where Dr Dippy has an essentially comic character and Dr Wonderful makes most appearances in melodrama, Dr Evil operates in the thriller/horror genre, indeed Schneider (1985) speculates "where the horror film ...would be without the psychiatric casebook" (p.1000). Although he made some earlier appearances, 1919 marked a watershed with the release of The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (Dir. Wiene). Caligari is seen as the archetypal malefactor, he is "the Dr Frankenstein of the mind, using others to achieve his goals and unleashing evil on the world" (ibid p.998). It seems that Dr Evils are such effective representations because they are ethical transgressors. By virtue of their profession they have, or are presumed to have, special insights into the human condition, but they abuse this privilege and that makes us all vulnerable. If our trust is betrayed, if the most secret parts of ourselves which sometimes we cannot know or admit to is exploited, nothing is safe any more. The ethical relationships that bind society together are not reliable, and the smell of anxiety permeates the air. Just as animals are supposed to be able to smell fear, so these people can home in on our weaknesses and leave us exposed.

A number of different subtypes, to use Schneider's term, appear as Dr Evils. The alchemist figure, such as Caligari, dabbles in the forbidden and occult reaches of the mind. In many respects this is analogous to the Frankenstein of the biological sciences as the essential factor appears to be control over nature. The exploiter of the weaknesses of others as in The Criminal Hypnotist (Dir. Griffith 1908) is someone who uses his extraordinary powers for evil and personal gain rather than the common good. The sadist is a punisher without a spark of common humanity and who, traditionally, refuses to listen to the appeals of the patient and indulges in revenge and discipline through excessive physical treatments such as ECT or psycho-surgery. Such examples can be found in the assessment panel in
*The Snake Pit* (Dir. Litvak 1948) which refuses to discharge Virginia Cunningham despite the good Dr Kik’s advocacy, or the similar scenario in *Frances* (Dir. Clifford 1982). A final type is the murderous psychiatrist (often paired with the wrongly accused client) such as Dr Robert Elliot, played by Michael Caine in *Dressed to Kill* (Dir. De Palma 1980), the “transsexual driven to insane homicidal rage by any woman who excites the masculine element in his make-up” (Fléming & Manvell 1985 p.216). Variants are described by Schneider (1985) as “a psychiatrist who when sexually aroused becomes a homicidal, transvestite amnesiac” (p.998) thus neatly encapsulating a number of stereotypes in one character, or Dr Murchison (Leo G Carroll) the true villain of Hitchcock’s *Spellbound* (1945) who is a man who is so obsessed by power and control that he will kill to maintain it and when faced with its loss, as well as public exposure, kill himself.

It can be seen that for some analyses of these films, or from the perspective of some filmmakers or some audiences, the profession of the psychiatrist is largely irrelevant. From this point of view it may be more important that we recognise Dr Elliot’s Jekyll and Hyde nature in *Dressed to Kill* (Dir. De Palma 1980) and consider the sexual politics of a transsexual (or transvestite) who murders women, than interpret what it may be saying about psychiatry. For others, those in the “Frankenstein of the mind” mould, the nature of psychiatry is of the utmost importance.

The thread that binds these representations together is the belief that knowledge without a guiding morality, without the reasonable application of Reason, is dangerous, indeed, it tips over into madness. Perhaps the most famous, and infamous, psychiatrist of the 1990s, and a man with no moral core, has been Dr Hannibal Lecter in *Silence of the Lambs* (Dir. Demme 1991) who is at once something of an alchemist and clearly dangerously clever, definitely a sadist, carries allusions of sexual perversity and is an undoubtedly killer. He is also witty, charming, urbane, versed in art and literature and so civilized that he insists on a good wine and high cuisine to accompany his victim’s liver. He is poised and controlled except, very briefly, when indulging a literal blood-lust. He is an urban animal, a cruising amoral predator, perfectly adapted, feeding off others, blending into the background, seemingly in total control of his destiny and completely sure of his own superiority. He is sleek as a cat and as unblinking as a shark. He is truly disconcerting because he lets us know that all our secrets are known to him, he makes us feel naked and bare, and the moment in which he trades his knowledge for Agent Starling’s (Jodie Foster) childhood secrets pricks every guilty secret in the audience. Lecter is a transgressor of frightening possibilities because he acts purely for pleasure; in some respects he is the embodiment of
pure will. It is a major signal to the audience that he is a cannibal because we now know that no taboo will be left intact by this man. He is a character able to transcend the boundaries of a normal classification, a man of Faustian complexity and darkness.

Lecter plays with weak-minded characters like a monstrous school-boy pulls the wings off insects. His character re-establishes the mind as somewhere rather murky and unsettling and the set-design and the architecture of the film as well as the use of darkness and night emphasise this. Lecter is not kept in a prison cell, it is a dungeon at the furthest end of the deepest recesses of the prison built to contain the worst humankind can produce. Buffalo Bill stalks his prey in the confusing warren of his cellar (his mind turned to bricks and mortar) even if his house, like the American nightmare, is in small town suburbia and completely ordinary from the outside we know that it contains subterranean passages where it is dangerous to go and the horrors that are kept in the garage only emerge when Clarice Starling sneaks in under the door - we know that Lecter would have a key.

The sexual and gender dynamics of the doctor-patient-nurse relationships in psychiatry are well-documented (Kaplan 1990, Ussher 1991). In traditional treatments the patient’s gender is flexible, but the doctor has been male and the nurse female. Samuels (1985), Gabbard and Gabbard (1988), Ussher (1991) and Quadrio (1996) are among those who have begun to question how and why the representation of female psychiatrists has significance, although a narrower definition than Schneider’s (1985) is used, including psychologists at times. Quadrio argues that Schneider’s three stereotypes do not successfully incorporate the female therapist, although he does mention them and recognise some of their particularities. She proposes that a fourth category, Dr Sexy (p.118), is required to fully explain the representation of women acting as therapists to men; sometimes a case may also be made for a complementary Dr Frigid. Dr Sexy is represented as “a sexually repressed and vulnerable woman (lacking) normal domestic traits and unable to sustain a relationship with a man” (p.118). She is “inevitably tainted, her maternal function corrupted by the image of the whore and its incestuous nature” (p.119). She cannot be wonderful, except as a mother or as sex object, and her intellectual power will always eventually be subordinate to her emotions even if this means jettisoning her professional ethics and surrendering to the strong embrace of the male lead; her dippiness or evil tend to conform to the usual female portrayals of empty-headed fatuousness or the femme-fatale who, as Doane (1991) has it, is “not the subject of feminism, but a symptom of male fears about feminism” (p.2).
Samuels (1985) notes the persistent sexualisation of female therapist/male patient relations. The treatment this subject is given in *The Prince of Tides* (Dir. Streisand 1991), *Mr Jones* (Dir. Figgis 1993) and *Basic Instinct* (Dir. Verhoeven 1992) tend to confirm this view, indicating that in some ways little movement has taken place since *Spellbound* (Dir. Hitchcock 1945). In all of these films no matter how competent, intelligent, successful or professional these women are, no matter how much they take on the trappings of masculine success (witness the leather and oak office of Dr Susan Lowenstein in *Prince of Tides*), they are all seen as incomplete without a man in their life. A *frisson* of sexual tension and game playing always intrudes throughout their consultations: Tom Wingo (Nick Nolte) directs his male gaze to Dr Lowenstein’s shapely legs as he expounds a difficult point and he lays on the couch (this is also the view that we, the audience are invited to take because that is what we are shown by the camera). These men may be wounded but they can still give a woman not only what she wants, but what she needs: in *Mr Jones* we are told that the very things that made him crazy made her love him. The effect of this is to diminish the reality of the mental disturbance, and to undermine the skill and knowledge of women, except of course to be mothers when being a lover is out of the question.

Curiously, when both the therapist and the patient are female we are presented with different sub-texts than with male therapist:female patient or female therapist:male patient scenarios. We are presented not so much with life-affirming feminist stories of consciousness-raising reflection and realisation where a troubled woman is saved by a good and wise man or with an empty woman’s life being fulfilled by the love of a man, but the re-establishment of the relationship of caring mothers and wayward, troubled daughters. *Sybil* (1976) demonstrates this tendency when Joanne Woodward as Dr Cornelia Wilbur guides her charge through the uncovering of the roots of her Multi-Personality Disorder, and this brings them emotionally close to each other after a very antagonistic beginning. In this sense female therapists of female patients tend towards Dr Wonderful, but female therapists of male patients tend to be Dr Dippy, Dr Evil or Dr Sexy.

The troublesomeness of women in positions of power has been articulated by Ehrenreich & English (1988), for whom it is tied to a patriarchal authority structure which allocates men the intellectual and material worlds, and confines women to the family and the world of emotions. By stepping outside these constructed boundaries strong female therapists are liable to become framed as a threat, as the Other. Quadrio (1996) suggests that this may become a punishable transgression because they usurp male spectatorship or subjectivity.
and may even adopt the gaze themselves. She hints will probably be seen as a greater insult to the profession than engaging in sexual relations with their patients.

This social sexual delineation also finds expression in the approved forms of psychopathology in that women become sad and depressed while men take on a much more sanguine madness, raw and roaring. Male psychiatrists are also far more likely to be associated with technological and physical treatments (it is difficult to find a woman giving a patient ECT or psychosurgery), while women, Dr Wonderfults notwithstanding, will be represented as gentle and humanitarian psychotherapists. However, the career path of Dr Wonderfults is not without its perils. One familiar theme that may be seen as a fallen Dr Wonderful, but may not always be so easy to fit into Schneider’s (1985) categorisation, is Dr Burntont. In this case we have a world-weary psychiatrist, more likely to be male rather than female, more likely to be middle-aged than old or young, more likely to be a reflective psychotherapist than a physician; who is suddenly revived in spirit, and we presume in body, by his encounter with a patient. We see that eventually a strict rational psychiatry, without a sense of meaning, becomes an empty experience and a denial of nature. The typical Dr Burntont has come to realise this but is powerless to change both himself and the system.

Gabbard & Gabbard (1987) offer a basic guide to stereotypical psychiatrists based on attributes, but also showing how that may manifest itself in good and bad practice (p.16). In this way while a faceless one may, in the best scenario, cure by presence alone, in the worst cases he/she would be simply ineffectual. An active psychiatrist can be either caring and effective, or manipulative, criminal and vindictive; an oracular one may be omniscient and a good detective, or arrogant and misguided; one who is a social agent may be either good at reconciling, or repressive and malevolent; the eccentric may be seen as human and fallible, or neurotic and ridiculous; emotionalism may come over as compassion or psychosis; overt sexuality may be interpreted as the acts of a healing lover or an exploitative lecher or libidinous clown. This perspective cuts across the broader strokes of the taxonomy of Schneider (1985), and does not seem to highlight ideological considerations to the same degree, but it does importantly emphasise that more complex characters can have conflicting and contradictory elements in their make-up. Unfortunately, not all psychiatrists in films display such complexity.

Peter Shaffer adapted his own stage play Equus (Dir. Lumet 1977) in which a young man, Alan Strang - so nearly strange - (played by Peter Firth) is psychiatrically assessed
following a bizarre incident in which he deliberately blinded six horses at the stable at which he worked. Dr Martin Dysart (played by Richard Burton) is a crumpled middle-aged man whose whole life seems to be crumbling and who is rapidly becoming Dr Burntout. His marriage is in difficulty, his body is deteriorating, he is losing his confidence in his abilities and his faith in his profession which he fears "can so deaden a patient's responses to life as to deprive him of all the enriching possibilities for passionate feeling" (Fleming & Manvell 1985 p.224). However, Dysart comes to wonder whether it is better to experience a brief moment of ecstasy, with all its dangers, than never feel anything at all but be safe. He wonders if feeling true and unfettered emotions gives purpose and meaning to life, and to engage with the full range of possible experience is fulfilling the potential of the human condition. Once more we are presented with the possibility that psychiatry functions to confine human experience rather than improve or catalyse manumission and, from a libertarian standpoint, people should be free to be a little mad. This difficulty, exposed by Strang's blinding of the horses, features more as an ethical dilemma in this film, than it does in others such as One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975), which is less even-handed. More recently, Don Juan DeMarco (Dir. Leven 1995) explored similar territory but without the element of danger posed by Strang. It was a more romantic treatment of re-enchantment in which the psychiatrist (Marlon Brando) learns the beauty of fantasy from a young patient (Johnny Depp) who believes that he is the re-incarnation of the legendary Don Juan. In these representations we are faced with a proposition that a little touch of madness can re-establish our link with nature that society and too much Reason grinds down. If this is a reasonable claim, and the putative patient is not harming anyone, what right does a psychiatrist have to interfere? He may learn he has much to learn.

In Dr Burntouit we see echoes of the Dr Sexy/Frigid scenario, but there do not appear to be examples of a male therapist being sexually reinvigorated or re-awakened by a female patient, or indeed a male one. Instead, they seem to recover their potency in a spiritual sense, which then presumably leads on to physical resurgence. It is again a familiar theme that a corporatist approach that denies the expression of people's essential individuality acts against nature, and Dr Burntouit demonstrates that it can damage the practitioners just as much as the clients. Perhaps that makes them more human.

The implication that involvement in someone else's madness can change or reinvigorate the psychiatric worker begins to suggest a sub-category of Dr Patient. In this scenario we recognise that the psychiatrist is really working through his or her own demons rather than those which exclusively belong to the patient. Indeed, the two perceptions that arise from
this are first, that the psychiatrist and the patient are not all that different in their concerns, worries, experiences or fallibilities, and second that you get the answers to the questions that you ask. The therapists, unless omniscient Dr Wonderfuls, would, like Nurse Alma (Bibi Andersson) in Ingmar Bergman’s Persona (1966), almost carry on a monologue in which the concerns of their own lives are examined, and out of which the patient, and the audience, divine the sense of psychotherapy. Nurse Alma demonstrates the experience of an established culture or society, with its rules, conventions, beliefs and secrets, which, when confronted with Madness, begins to examine its own sanity, and to consider what sense there is in it. The questions in which a therapist may be interested may reflect not only the orientation but also the anxieties of the therapist as a person. Patients are not the only ones who may engage in projection.

Mad patients and psychiatrists as representative of official sanity are bound together. It is in part because they represent the obverse side of the coin that psychiatrists have proved to be such a rich source of portrayals of Madness, although with the exception of Dr Edwardes/John Ballantine in Spellbound (Dir. Hitchcock 1945) or the conceit in The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (Dir. Wiene 1919) they are rarely true patients themselves, even though they are imposters or fantasists. If the good doctors show us that there really is nothing to be afraid of, that all can be understood if we shine a little light on it, as Drs Orth and Kik do, then mental illness can be shown in a reasonably positive or compassionate light, and that treatment should be humane and open. If, alternatively, it is a place where monsters lurk and we should be afraid of it, and only those who are on the dark side themselves, like Hannibal Lecter, can really survive there, we are more likely to develop a defensive attitude, to want to separate ourselves from the dangerous margins. This does not always have to mean that there must be a return to vast Gothic asylums. It will do just as well to consign the mad to the fringe, to let them become part of the underclass living in a place we would rather not go and from which we can remain hygienically protected. The logic that follows from this is that psychiatry is cast in the role of risk management, it is there to protect us from those who we know are not really like us. However, when the protectors use their special knowledge for evil rather than good, as in the case of Hannibal Lecter, we do not really know from where the greatest risk comes. The fallen angel may pose the greatest threat. What we do learn is that Madness is a foreign country, they do things differently there.
Madness and Risk

Opinions differ, some men hold
That he's the sanest of all sane men,
Some that he's really sane, but shamming mad.

W S Gilbert, "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern", 1891

It is apparent that in recent times two distinct and sometimes conflicting approaches to the study of risk in society have emerged (Royal Society Study Group 1992). One grouping tends towards an attempt to define and quantify, to establish statistical relationships and develop a positivist, actuarial science. Others will seek to examine the appreciation of risk through an examination of socio-cultural cognitive frameworks. They are not discouraged by any apparent irrationality or inconsistency, but are excited by the assumptions and values inherent in the perception and definition of risk. From this point of view, risk, as it is perceived, emerges out of the interaction of social forces including dominant cultural and economic values, competing ideologies and hegemonic struggles. Social practices of risk-management do not emerge out of or sit in reference to a cultural vacuum. As has been indicated before, the attempt to produce a sense of a single true reality has to be tempered by its context, and the perception may produce a far more powerful psychological moment than any rationalist argument. Any attempt to define or deal with a perceived risk in society, as for example the risk posed by the presence in our midst of Madness and the Mad, needs to examine the reflexive relationship of values and practice. The values of a society will influence what it chooses to identify or concentrate on as a risk or a threat, the definition of risk will affect the social management practices, and the practices will affect the value systems and the definitions of risk. All social practices involve a choice, and very often the choice is not so much between risks of different magnitude, but of risks of different acceptability, although this may be based on different perceptions of magnitude.

The problems posed by living in a society that is overly concerned with the notion of risk and trust, and their mediation and management, has been increasingly explored recently, sometimes from quite different positions (Giddens 1991, Beck 1992). Giddens explores the problem of the self-creation of identity in a period of late modernity through the reflexive working and re-working of our own sense of self and self-narrative, and the problem of what can and can not be trusted. Beck has contrasting concerns. Although he most often speaks in terms of the environmental or physical risks of modernisation, and considers the “concept of post-Enlightenment ...so dark (that) even a cat would hesitate to venture into it” (ibid p.9), Beck’s arguments bear some consideration. There has been, he
argues, a “change from the logic of wealth distribution in a society of scarcity to the logic of risk distribution in late modernity” (ibid p.19). Beck is not convinced that scientism has been wholly displaced and maintains that the dominant frames and discourses of risk remain firmly instrumentalist and reductionist, which gives rise to severe tensions. He suggests that “risk determinations serve as implicit ethical statements” (ibid p.28) yet are most often couched in terms that appeal to technological solutions and the technical expert. For him “risks depend on decisions; they are ...politically reflexive ...(and) are the reflection of human actions and omissions, the expression of highly developed productive forces’ (ibid p.183). The consequence of this is that “the sources of danger are no longer ignorance but knowledge” (ibid p.183, italics in the original). The problems of the progress of Reason are inherent in its process.

Beck explores the issues in a way that he describes as looking for the emerging contours in a new landscape. He argues that social agendas, which can be read in general hegemonic constructions, reshape cognitive frameworks to the extent that what he terms secondary or reflexive scientization acts to maintain the dominance of the positivist paradigm by absorbing some of the elements of the critique that had been directed against it and excluding reflexivity. This simultaneously acts to undermine the potency of the opposition and encourages it to feel that it has some influence. However, Bauman (1992b) interprets this differently and argues that Beck’s analysis could be seen as a more sophisticated apologia for scientism, serving it in the same way that the embourgeoisement of the working class may work to confirm rather than undermine the dominant economic class.

Elements of epistemological and ontological uncertainty may lead to policies of risk minimisation, protectionism and conservatism. If the assumptions of reason and rationality do not apply, the foundational value systems of the Modernist Project may be undermined. It may be suggested that this could lead to increased fragmentation and a sense of individual isolation. It is almost as though society has failed its constituents in some sense; the apparatuses of government are no longer acting with a common purpose and there is a pervasive uncertainty. Once more, the centre cannot hold. It is clear that social policies informed by such a context will affect the treatment options offered to the mentally ill, and will also colour the impression of Madness that becomes most prevalent. It becomes more important to protect citizens from risk than to act primarily from a therapeutic imperative. Social action is motivated by negative reactions, that is, as a consequence of something going badly wrong or the fear of that happening, rather than from a positive drive to improve that which can, and perhaps ought, to be improved.
The three categories of people who present risk with which psychiatry is concerned appear to be the nuisance, the criminal, and those who inhabit the border areas in between. *What About Bob?* (Dir. Oz 1991) and *Cosi* (Dir. Joffe 1996) show how the control and pomposity of psychiatrists and psychiatry can be subverted by a nuisance who refuses to obey the rules of the therapeutic game, who do not respect normal boundaries, who step outside the accepted governing parameters of the socially defined encounter. The first example concerns a psychiatrist who is much better at giving advice and directing others than controlling his own life when faced with the same problems. In *Cosi* (1996) we see how the lunatics can take over the asylum, albeit in a very friendly and unthreatening way. Both representations undermine the fragile sense of control with which psychiatry is associated. However, there are other conceptions of risk in the area of forensic psychiatry.

The publicity campaign that accompanied the release of *Psycho II* (Dir. Franklin 1983) told us that “Norman is out”. The implication is clear. Even 22 years in prison has not removed the threat, and the audience is quite certain what is going to transpire; this is not a film destined to be a paean to psychiatric success. The only thing to do is sit back and wait for the inevitable. Unfortunately, the only real interest in the film rests in this single message, it is not particularly memorable for any other reason. McCarty (1986 p.90) notes that the director, Richard Franklin, had said that he did not wish to emulate Hitchcock - sadly, he was successful.

It would seem that certain conventions, some of which can be seen in *Psycho II* (Franklin 1983), pertaining to the representation of the risk posed by psychiatric patients can be detected. Despite the crudity of the characterisations, the implications of dramatic irony, the mad-eyed stares into the camera which are all heavily underscored, the doubts cast over psychiatric cures are important to consider. If we are led to believe that at best psychiatric treatment is symptomatic, then a pall of uncertainty is thrown over the whole enterprise. This leads to a culture of unease in which appearances cannot be trusted. Psychiatrically disturbed patients find it terribly easy to fool doctors; they smile and repeat the platitudes of insight psychology and then take a very easy walk to freedom.

This populist view has surfaced repeatedly. Fritz Lang’s *M* (1930) (Fig.14), which is considered in more detail in a later chapter, concerns the dilemma posed by the child-killer, Becker, and is based in some ways on the real case of Peter Kürten (Fleming & Manvell 1985 p.81). Becker, after being caught and cornered by a mob is tried by a kangaroo court assembled by the underworld and chaired by Schraenker, a leather-coated gangster who
himself is wanted for murder, but of an “honourable” kind. In the quasi-legal debate that ensues, which also can be seen to parody the looming Nazi threat and the Soviet Union’s show trials, the question of how to nullify the risk he poses is examined from different points of view. There is the suggestion that he, Becker, could be placed in hospital for a few years, comply with some kind of soft-centered treatment programme and skip away “happy as a sandboy” as it put by Schraenker, unless proper justice is meted out. The threat he poses will only cease when he is dead, as Schraenker, speaking as the “Chair of the court”, unambiguously tells him. Justice is equated not only with retribution, but also with the sensible and reasonable course of action, whereas the therapeutic option is cast as well-meaning, but misguided, and needs to be tempered by a realistic appraisal of the risk posed by Becker. It must also be reminded of its greater responsibility to the community. There is a clear implication that psychiatry fails to do its social duty in this regard, and cannot be trusted. It is seen to be gullible and negligent. Although no psychiatrist is ever presented, the audience is left within the impression that they must all be Dr Dippys; Dr Sensibles are, apparently, not very common.

The successful creation of terrifying characters who are clearly not entirely normal, but neither definitively criminal nor diagnosably mentally ill, as defined by DSM IV (1994), indicates an important way in which to construe someone’s behaviour as Madness can become a more emotionally powerful than to call it psychiatric or mental illness. Typically these characters display either a disordered personality, an obsessive and domineering character and an mixture of straining and tense control and sudden moments of explosive anger, or alternatively, a far too normal exterior which masks something very dark and nasty. Max Cady (successively and successfully played by Robert Mitchum and Robert De Niro) in the two versions of Cape Fear (Dir. J Lee Thompson 1962, Dir. Martin Scorcese 1991) is terrifying in large part because he does not, until very late in the film, do anything outside the law. He is, however, a figure of menace who is always there whether he is seen or not, until we really cannot be sure. Even when he is not obvious, his presence is. He looms over the whole film as a predatory menace. A large part of the film is concerned with the impotence that the upright lawyer, Sam Bowden, (played by Gregory Peck and Nick Nolte) feels because there is nothing he can do. He is met with a bland response from the police that they can do nothing until Cady breaks the law.

The position of the systems that are there to protect citizens, or to deal with a man like Cady, are central to the film. We are presented with a situation in which the Police palpably fail the Bowdens; they have to wait until Cady legally transgresses before acting. The letter
of the law fails; it is not without irony that Cady is a legal autodidact and that Bowden, a devoted professional lawyer eventually steps outside the law and turns into as violent a primitive as Cady, the man he despises. The prison system has failed; Cady has become even more dangerous as a result of his prison term and seems neither punished, penitent nor reformed (Fig.15). The psychiatric establishment is implied to the equally impotent; their attempted interventions have been arrogantly dismissed by Cady while in prison - he is stronger, smarter and far more cunning than them anyway. All that the bourgeois dream holds most dear, the law, the family and the small town house with a white picket fence, even the family dog, is under threat. The metaphorical understanding of these presentations work on a level of perceived threat and a suspicion that civilisation may only be a veneer after all, perhaps the jungle will overtake us, perhaps the barbarians are at the gates. The final response that the lawyer Bowden makes is to resort to physical violence, all reason having failed. In this way he is able to prove his manhood, save his family and defeat the maniac all at the same time. The implication is that people such as Cady, or other obsessive stalkers such as Alex Forrest (played by Glenn Close) in Fatal Attraction (Dir. Lyne 1987) need to be dealt with firmly, but the legal system is often impotent to do this. We are left with the suggestion that such transgressors of personal integrity must be dealt with ruthlessly or they will destroy the fabric of our society. The problem with Cady is not so much that he has strange or obsessive ideas, but that he poses a threat to the established order; he is a risk and something ought to be done about it; the question is, what.

Both Philo (1996) and Hazelton (1997) direct their attention to the way real events are reported. Taking examples from Britain and Australia respectively, they both point out that the issue of the secure detention of psychiatrically disturbed criminals, especially killers, is likely to be taken up by the mass media whenever real events intrude. The real life poisoner, Graham Young, was the subject of The Young Poisoner’s Handbook (Dir. Ross 1994). Young did in fact spend many years in a Special Hospital (an institution in Britain specially designed for and concerned with forensic psychiatry and the mentally ill offender) before being discharged, murdering again, going to prison and eventually, after becoming clearly psychotic, being re-admitted. However, the film does not quite manage to maintain a consistent tone and becomes rather confused as a result. It is not really clear whether it is intended to be a black comedy or if it is a critique of the forensic psychiatric system and seems, in the end, to do neither. However, without the stereotype of psychiatry on which to anchor these arguments it would be more difficult to propagate the treatment and care of those who pose a risk as a public issue. It would seem that there is an impression that psychiatry is not to be trusted, either in its judgements of motive, its assessments of risk or
its province of inquiry. It is of course because he believes that psychiatrists are easily fooled that McMurphy in *One flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Dir. Forman 1975) agrees to go into hospital in the first place. This suggests that psychiatry's incompetence can damage the innocent as well as benefit the guilty.

The representation of psychiatrists as dupes is compounded by the number of films in which the criminal (mastermind or not) impersonate psychiatrists themselves. It would appear that any behaviour, no matter how outrageous, can be rationalised and accepted when framed as that of a psychiatrist. *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (Dir. Wiene 1919) and *Dr Mabuse, The Gambler* (Dir. Lang 1922) were perhaps the most infamous early examples of this characterisation. Both concern a criminal mastermind impersonating a psychiatrist and bending others to their will. Kracauer (1974) suggests that both films hint at the fragility of a civilised veneer and how closely tyranny and chaos are entwined. In *Spellbound* (Dir. Hitchcock 1945) Hitchcock does not overtly play with such grand social critiques, but does suggest that psychiatry is itself out of kilter, that again the lunatics are in charge of the asylum, and that it can be used to pervert rather than illuminate the human condition. However, in contrast to some of his later treatment of psychiatric themes, the ending is traditional, in that the hero and heroine become romantically paired, rather than unsettling with a final twist of macabre humour. The lasting impression is that the these films question the value and insights of psychiatry to deal with the truly dangerous person. It cannot deal with the risk posed by the madman. It is split into factions and cannot agree on anything, and if it cannot even get its own house in order, how can it aid anyone else? Good old-fashioned common sense may provide better and more reasonable solutions to these problems, but, as has been shown, the acts of vigilantes, retribution and revenge may easily be confused with justice.

The sense that a person's nature is fundamentally unalterable, so that once bad always bad, questions the illness concept of psychiatry. Therefore, although it may be a Szaszian right of anyone to seek (and pay for) treatment, the only point at which psychiatry can or should intervene is the moment at which that person becomes a danger to his or herself or to others, and then the threat to oneself may be seen as a right also. This position is consistent with the thesis of oppressive conformity and denial of individual rights that was evident earlier in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Dir. Forman 1975) where the machinery of the psychiatric establishment is invoked to crush the threat posed by McMurphy, and only cranks into action when it is attacked. It is indicative of the extent to which the system will go to defend itself that so much time and effort is expended on a man, who from one
perspective, is nothing more than a petty criminal, a very small irritant in a very large organisation. However, we are led to believe that although you can snuff out a man, you cannot erase an idea. The trustworthiness of someone who is mentally ill and whose reason is disturbed is a troublesome concept. Is it possible to fully believe someone who is mentally unbalanced, perhaps delusional or hallucinating? If someone’s mental processes are unpredictable, might their behaviour be likewise? The potential of danger is always close to the surface. There is both a sense of present and of future risk, and this can have effects on the function that psychiatric care is seen to have.

The two closing scenes of *Psycho* (Dir. Hitchcock 1960) present interesting meditations on the notion of risk. Dr Richmond, the very self-assured Psychiatrist, is confident that the risk has been eliminated, however, the speech of Mother, played over the face of Norman, gives us other ideas. It tells us that what we see on the surface may not be what is really happening underneath. Appearances can be deceptive, and when viewed through a prism of fear, the danger that lurks beneath the surface can haunt us. In any risk assessment those who would testify to Norman’s subsequent rehabilitation or cure or harmlessness would be fools if they did not err on the side of caution - and the sequels proved that to be true.

The trust in Reason has been one of the themes around which this chapter has revolved. The question of Madness in relation to modernism and the philosophical basis of Reason, and the way in which the anti-Psychiatry critique has challenged, and changed, established positions, has been considered and found crucial to the representation of Madness in film. In addition, the portrayal of psychiatrists, if only because they are the most frequently seen kind of professional mental health worker, has been shown to have a distinct history of its own, and is replete with typologies, significant images and representations that reflect the place that Madness holds in our imagination, the construction of a sense of self, a knowledge of the world and the creation of identity.

It seems most apposite that in practice, as well as in films, psychiatrists, who are always more psychological than medical specialists, were once termed alienists. Madness is not only seen as alien to Reason and normal, civilised behaviour, but those who become mad also become alien. They are cast as outsiders with experiences, thoughts or identities beyond the norm. Whichever way they transgress the established boundaries, by hubris or with malign intent, they enter into, and may only ever be able to escape from with the utmost difficulty, the domain of Otherness.
CHAPTER FOUR
MADNESS AND THE OTHER

(the) body (of Saartje Baartman, the Hottentot Venus) was "read" like a text, for the living evidence - the proof, the Truth - which it provided of her absolute 'otherness' and therefore of an irreversible difference

Stuart Hall (1997) p.265 (Fig.16)

Ricouer (1965) observed that the discovery of "the plurality of cultures" is never without its trauma. It is no great importance how much a single adopted position may be based on empirical evidence. The image and its effect on our imagination, its ability to sensitize anxieties and articulate communal fears, is not necessarily rational; it is visceral and its amenability to reason is questionable. This becomes a profoundly ontological issue in that it places the security of our position in the world in jeopardy. As Ricouer adds, the realisation of the existence of the Other will make us feel "threatened with the destruction of our own discovery. Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just others, that we ourselves are an other among others" (1965 p.278, italics in the original).

A position which examines a postmodern condition from a critical perspective sees plurality as a cornerstone concept. It will always find the Other of central concern but will not forget to explore its context, and to relate this to the dominant social, cultural, economic and ideological interests. The particularities of the Other in representations of Madness take on a number of significant forms which often reflect the contemporary historical or geographical concerns, but they are always informed by the suggestion that while not all Others are mad, the mad are always Other.

Significant Others
existential and non-existent images of other worlds impinge in different ways on the image of the self.

Peter Mason (1990) p.9

Hall (1997) begins his investigations into Otherness by asking some admirably simple and straightforward questions about the representation of people and places which are seen to be significantly different from ourselves. He does this not to be unnecessarily uncharitable to expressive or qualitative language and description, but to seriously examine how we
construct and defend our world view, and how the certainty we seek in ourselves may sometimes be achieved by the imposition of uncertainty on others. It becomes important and illuminating to problematise representation as a social practice. He notes a fascination in Western societies with "otherness" and "difference" and proceeds to try to explicate its origins, its features, the shifting epistemes within which it appears, and its significance. Hall propounds a contested view of representation in which there are a number of paradigms and templates and does not shrink from invoking a political dimension when he examines the power differentials involved in the use of stereotyping as a signifying practice. As has previously been shown, this is to suggest that a monological model of understanding is inadequate for fully comprehending the interactive and reflexive nature of areas of interpretation, and that contextual and socio-political dimensions inform the inflection and the value systems inherent in moments of choice and preference. There is a strong hint of the influence of a Jamesonian (1991) political unconscious of dominant cultural discourses.

Like Wahl (1995), Hall notes the importance of colloquial descriptions and the common parlance of newspapers and magazines, just as Barthes (1970) regards advertisements with such intensity, and de Certeau (1984) deconstructs the demonology of Otherness in travel literature. It is as if, in the unguarded moments of disposable cultural artefacts, revelations of depth and a sense of self can still be found. Wahl is almost solely concerned with the representation of mental illness, but both he and Hall note the way in which, in all mass media including newspapers and television as well as the cinema, the bodies of the Other are portrayed as odd, peculiar, not quite like us and very often dangerous. Visible signs act as markers of belonging and difference and, for Hall, the clearest and most striking example is skin colour. The principal examples that come to Hall's mind are concerned with race and ethnicity but he notes "that what is said about racial difference could be equally applied in many instances to other dimensions of difference, such as gender, sexuality, class and disability" (1997 p.225). Arguably different societies emphasise different characteristics at various times in their history, but the thread of continuity would appear to have significance. Norden (1994) takes a special interest in the representation of physical disability in the cinema, believing that it is implicit that these characters are deservedly kept separate, isolated from the rest of society. This isolation may be in an institution, as in Even Dwarfs Started Small (Dir. Herzog 1970), or in a circus or side-show, as in Freaks (Dir. Browning 1932) or The Elephant Man (Dir. Lynch 1980), and emphasises the implied notion that the physical monstrousness is matched by psychological Otherness. Young (1996) takes another example and suggests that contemporary concerns
of gender and race reflect and post-date earlier class or religious foci. Snead (1985) agrees about the importance of this, and argues for a reappraisal of the representation of race (specifically of the oppressed black) which, he believes, can come about through the actions of independent film-makers who can place themselves in a position of opposition, rather than mainstream ones, who tend to reflect the concerns of the dominant social and economic interests. Thus, the depth of characterisation in the films of Spike Lee such as *Do The Right Thing* (1989) can be compared to the stereotyping in the “blaxploitation” genre epitomised by *Shaft* (Dir. Parks 1971) and its sequels. Aspects of religion, physiognomy or age could be added to the list, as could, it must be suggested, Madness. It may also be considered that factors such as race, gender, sexuality, manner of speech or dress, class and disability give particular representations of the Mad as the Other extra depth and vibrancy and figure large in our imaginings. On occasion, as will be discussed, it becomes of significance in the representation of Otherness whether the Mad are black or white, male or female, homosexual or heterosexual, rich or poor, or psychotic or intellectually disabled. Indeed the representations of psychiatric hospitals in particular (*The Snake Pit* Dir. Litvak 1948, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* Dir. Forman 1975, *Family Life* Dir. Loach 1971, *Cosi* Dir. Nowra 1995), to take examples from America, Britain and Australia respectively, are often skewed away from the racial and gender mix that a census of actual occupancy might reveal, and may be compared with Wiseman’s documentary of the Massachusetts Correctional Institution for the criminally insane, *Titicut Follies* (1967). But then again, the former are representations and not taken from life.

Hall (1997) considers a number of explanations for the importance and significance of the Other. He examines the process of signification and how encodings and decodings may be approached, assessing their influence, origins and precepts. His continual refrain stresses the commonality of a basic assumption that difference matters because it is essential to meaning; Otherness, he argues, assists us in the understanding, classification and ordering of our world. The centrality of this notion for the representation of Madness is not diminished by its application to different examples of the Other, indeed it becomes a central plank of the thesis.

The central importance of ideology is emphasised by Schulte-Sasse (1996) in her consideration of the efforts to render “the Jew as Other” in the film culture of Nazi Germany. That said, she argues that an analysis of ideology itself is not enough. It is also necessary to take account of the dominant narrative paradigms with their inherent modes of identification, overt ideological positions and their filmic articulation. She does, however,
warn against an automatic assumption of the translation of even the most overt of ideological texts into practical action. She hazards that even rabid ideologues respond to films as films, which can mean that “assumptions of cause-and-effect impede rather than further understanding of the complex ways in which ideology and practice function” (1996 p.91). Nevertheless, these factors do tend to work together to begin to form a representation of identity, what is us and what is the Other. The question of the construction of identity often requires that we must know what we are not in order to know what we are. The importance of difference in Saussurean linguistics is that it posits that it is not possible to know what “black” means without also having a concept of “white”. Meaning is in some sense relational and emerges from contrast and oppositional positions. Saussure gave emphasis to the relationship between the signifier and the signified, and what may be seen as signifying practices, but not, as has already been seen, to the role of referents after the manner of Peirce (1931). However, although there appears to be a lot of intuitive evidence to support the analysis, simple binary oppositions can be rather reductionist and unable to cope with the complexities of contextual modifiers and have difficulty with imbalanced power relationships. Derrida (1972), for whom there are few neutral binary oppositions, therefore wished to develop some of Saussure’s insights without losing the essence of his contribution. Later, Derrida (1987) was to compare the whole of the problem of deconstructing construction to preparing oneself for the coming of the Other, and so a full understanding of the place of the Other requires deconstruction, and deconstruction will almost always reveal an Other.

For Bakhtin (1981) it was more important to emphasise the dialogue through which meaning is mediated, and the crucial role served by dialogue with the Other in the construction of meaning. This position influences Hall’s (1997) description of contention, and helps to contextualise the critical notion that colours the plurality of postmodernism. In this way Bakhtin was developing an idea of the Other as something with more resonance and imbued with more implications and connotations than “difference”. However, although the Other may be seen as a common feature of cross-cultural meaning-making, it cannot have a common appearance. Each context can and does create its own image for Otherness.

Barthes (1970) considers both connotative and denotative meaning in the creation of myths, and the Other appears in this because of the connotations that can be read beneath the surface of difference. For Barthes there is a knot of meaning bound up with the subject, the signifier and the Other. There is, however, almost always a degree of ambiguity about the readings and interpretations of the semantic field whether they are the preferred ones or

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whether they are more marginal, but they still retain an identifiable ideological content. For Barthes this is the way in which the discourse is engaged and meaning is formed and reformed.

Some functionalist anthropological explanations assign importance to difference because it can serve as a marker for social stratification, order and value as well as meaning. It can not only identify that which is us, but can also, in the creation of a cosmology, give balance in opposition; for an understanding of good there must be a notion of evil, to know what is sanity we should know what is Madness. This can be on a symbolic level and so become part of the shared understanding that binds together identity, and purpose and creates areas of the taboo, suggesting that it is as important for members to know what they must not do (and what they are not) as it is to know what is permissible (what they are). Kristeva (1982) suggests that such processes are part of a larger move towards the closing of cultures to outsiders who may in some way dilute the purity and strength of a cultural position. This is not a concept that is intended only to have relevance within the analysis of French or Western European culture, but acts in wider contexts. As such, it has resonance for the sequestration of the Mad, for their exclusion from the discourse and for the veil of threat with which they are draped.

These social constructions also develop and seek to define areas of transgressions and are able to frame them in an effort to order conceptual representations. The mad transgress the rational discourse which may be seen as the only legitimate one, and as a result their voice is marginalised, but their behaviour is scrutinised and their threat monitored. This position has been most characteristically expounded by Goffman (1966, 1968) who identified transgressors in mental hospitals and other enclaves of the stigmatised, and illuminated the many ways in which these disenfranchised groups seek to subvert the processes of their oppression.

Other sociological perspectives which concern themselves with the creation, maintenance and legitimation of personal and social identity can tend towards a symbolic interactionist viewpoint. This perspective, in which Goffman (1966, 1967, 1968) is once again a major figure, articulated the meaning that can be found in the dramaturgical study of asylums, those with spoiled identity or indeed the everyday life of us all. These insights have particular importance for the study of Madness and those who are deemed mad, in that the definition that identifies them as Other may be in reference to both symbols and interaction, and the images of identity. Jung (1964) is concerned with pan-cultural representations in
his notion of archetypes emerging from the collective unconscious. He introduces the concept of the shadow self in which many of the mythic qualities ascribed to the Other appear. The dualism that Jung saw as an essential characteristic of human nature finds its expression in many different mythological cosmologies, and especially in its play of humankind’s relationship with civilization and nature, can also be detected in a significant number of cinematic representations. This may have some dramatic advantages, not least in the more interventionist clinical strategies favoured by Jung, but it is also a comforting support for the portrayal of archetypes within a collective unconscious (Eckert 1977, Wilson 1977).

The notion of the Other also makes an appearance in different interpretations of psychoanalytic theory, most notably in the work of Lacan (1977) for whom it has a slightly different, and for some (Casebier 1991) a slightly confused and under-supported function. It is again connected with meaning-making and identity-creation but concentrates on inner psychological processes rather than outer social ones and in particular the way a child, who is at one point without a sense of separateness, begins, in an emerging mirror stage of development, to forge an identity separate from its mother by realising the contrast between the self (what is myself) and L’Autre (what is not me, outside me, different from me). Lacan however, does not always see that this has to be couched in terms of threat, risk or danger. It is by nature an ambivalent concept and a necessary one. Some authors (Lo 1993, Zizek 1992a, 1992b) have also sought to lay a Lacanian template over a wider cultural analysis as well, seeing social processes as reflective of intra-psychic ones, and this has led to some inter-cultural debate. When Lacan goes to the movies he is invoking the concept of the Imaginary, which acts as part of the unconscious, to generate illusory unities. It is part of the construction of a sense of identity of an individual’s place and relation to the world, and although it is, for Lacan, detectable in the child’s construction of the world, it is also constantly used by adults to bridge, validate and make sense of their own experience. Lacan suggests that the Imaginary is the mediator through which we are able to distinguish ourselves from the non-self and the other. The Imaginary creates representations, and as Casebier (1991) notes, representations “continue to have the power to foster false senses of unity and autonomy insofar as the Imaginary may be activated” (p.113). The image is beginning to usurp the possibility of a single truth and attention is shifting to the creation of the representations. For these reasons Metz (1982) argues that the cinema and the cinematic experience can be seen as “imaginary signifiers”.

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The activity which most characterises the cinematic experience is watching the screen. Lacan (1977), perhaps not least because he began writing in a French intellectual climate flushed with the excitement of film theory and the emergence of the Cahiers du Cinéma, the nouvelle vague and the theory of the auteur, gave a great deal of attention to the gaze and the scopic drive. He is concerned with the very notion of what it means to watch in this way. This can linked to desire, possession and objectification, particularly so in the feminist analysis of Kaplan (1997) in which it is seen as imperialistic, so that the way in which the camera directs our vision also influences the manner in which we regard what we see. Foster (1982) and Owens (1983) agree that the alienation of the gaze tends to reify its object, but also acts as a mirror-mask which also reflects back the desire of the observer as well as the observed. For Owens this causes a “trembling around the edges of identity” (1983 p.75) for which we need and construct representations and images and imbue them with meaning.

Jameson (1990) considers that Lacan may be a “useful and suggestive point of departure for grasping the postmodern image as a phenomenon in which the scopic consumption of the veil has itself become the object of desire” (p.140). In the dark of the cinema we sit and gaze; we gaze at images and in that gaze we begin to construct ideas of self (what we think ourselves to be), desire (what we would wish ourselves to be) and Otherness (what we see ourselves not to be and what we would not wish to be).

The breadth of both Freudian and post-Freudian theorising make it difficult and probably futile to try to characterise the psychoanalytic movement within narrow confines. Within the spectrum of Freudian and post-Freudian thinkers it seems possible to find areas of agreement or commonality, for example in the importance of symbolism in our inner psychology, without a wholesale acceptance of the superstructure of the analysis of the subconscious. Indeed, the influence of Freud’s thought has become so pervasive that it is impossible for any contemporary cultural analysis not to take a position in relation to it. The mix of Marxist and Freudian thought in some Frankfurt School writings (Marcuse 1972) may be taken as evidence of this. The particular understanding of difference that is most often cited in more traditional Freudianism is sexual, both in terms of biological and behavioural characteristics, and the crucial importance of the child’s moment of realisation. Those Freudian analysts who have paid particular attention to the development of self-identity during childhood, such as Winnicott (1965), have explored this issue at length. However, as Hall (1997) emphasises, sexual or genital differences may not be the only or most striking or most socially emphasised point of differentiation. Freud (1974) also
considered the importance of taboo in social security and the drawing of contrast between
the permitted and the forbidden. It became important to consider what both attracts (albeit
sometimes morbidly) and what, at the same time, repels. The Other became entwined with
the fascination of the unattainable, the unknowable and the grotesque. Representations of
race and gender, the sacred and the profane, danger and safety, family and outsiders,
madness and sanity may be equally significant in these processes. Although the importance
of comprehending Freudian notions and their expression in film is well-noted, it may be
more important to consider the implications of the argument than to embrace it fully.

There is a sense in which the Other is representative of areas of unknowability as well as
what is known. From one perspective there are things that cannot be known, and sexual or
racial differences may serve, as examples here, cross-dressing and black-face
notwithstanding. There are also things that are not yet known, some of which we would
welcome, like adulthood seen from a child’s position or the experience of parenthood for
many, and some of which we may fear, like death and madness. Like Gilman (1985,
1989), Doane (1991) draws attention to the language which is commonly used to describe
these constructions. She sees images of darkness, impenetrability and fearful fascination
strewn through Western commentaries of Africa in particular. It cannot be viewed as a
coincidence that Conrad’s novella, which later formed much of the sub-text of Apocalypse
Now (Dir. Coppola 1979) and its meditation on the Other, conveyed duality in its title The
Heart of Darkness. This was the darkness of the human soul as well as the Dark Continent.

Said (1995) and Kristeva (1980) are amongst those who point out the eroticisation and
exoticisation of the Other. Said’s concern is with the Western construction of the Oriental,
but what he argues has some pertinence for the consideration of madness. He suggests that
it is part of the political and socio-cultural agenda of Western hegemony to marginalize the
perceived threat of the Other, and that this is achieved by manoeuvring it away from the
centre of debate. To objectify the Oriental is also to undermine and subjugate it, and in part
to fetishize it, because it smothers rather than engages the moments of contention. Social
thorists like Abercrombie et al (1980) and Featherstone (1991b) have noted the processes
of Western hegemonic thought and the cultural, social and economic dominance sought by
globalisation. Doane (1991) sees similar forces at work in the treatment of threatening or
destabilising women in which the entrenchment of the identity of the Western male subject
is a prime concern.
Gilman (1985, 1989) and Doane (1991) also detect a morbid fascination with the depiction of the unknown in the sexuality, and for Doane this means especially the female sexualisation, of the Other. The representation of the animalistic, the lustful and the awesomely endowed are more serious constructions than insulting caricatures. They are truly exotic; they are foreign to us, they are, in Mason’s (1990) phrase which indicates the long and often imperial tradition of the process, Plinian races, after Pliny’s categorical analysis of natural history. They have infinite plasticity but consistent meaning. The macabre side-show that Saartje Baartman, the Hottentot Venus (Fig. 15) (Gilman 1989, Hall 1997), became is born of the same sensibility and attitude towards the Other that allowed visitors to the Bethlem Royal Hospital in London in the Eighteenth Century to gawp at the lunatics (Masters 1977), and for Joseph (or John as it was in the film version) Merrick, the “Elephant Man” to be displayed as a circus freak. When Merrick’s story was dramatised in *The Elephant Man* (Dir. Lynch 1980) a crucial point of the story came when he cries in a heart-breakingly plaintive, strangled voice that he is not an animal. That of course was true, but it was also true that Merrick, because of his gross physical deformities, was always trapped into being the Other, and was never quite seen as human either.

There is an area of overlap between the representation of the Mad and the representation of the physically repulsive or deformed. Mason (1990) locates a moment of change in the Fourteenth Century when the Twelfth Century Madman who is an “ugly and deformed naked man with long hair” (p.45) conflates with the Wild Man and begins to mix physical and psychological attributes; one seems to slip and shade into another. Norden (1994), in a history of the representation of physical disability (his own term) in the cinema, considers that it is important to note the different treatment accorded to the congenitally deformed and that given to those who acquire a disability. Although never referring directly to the seminal work of Goffman (1968) he is similarly much concerned with notions of spoiled identity and the social attribution of personality characteristics and assumed traits. He charts an array of characters from the sweetly innocent such as Tiny Tim to the wronged but obsessive avenger like Quasimodo who, at least when played by Charles Laughton (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame* Dir. Dieterle 1938), howls like a plaintive and wounded animal. Norden accentuates the power of the gaze in cinema, and for him the gaze is the locus of power and control and is almost always that of a “retrograde male fantasy” (1994 p.323). There is a suggestion that, to some extent, the male gaze is both more easily excited and more easily repulsed by the visual representation, more prone to judgmental classification
than the female. Norden’s analysis indicates that there is always a sub-liminal Freudian sub-text in the frame in which we view things.

Norden (1994) takes the view that very often it is the image that remains the most defining and memorable characteristic of the movie experience and argues that in most films the disabled characters have been isolated “from their able-bodied peers and themselves” (p.1). The politics of isolation are also those of division and differentiation. It is a method to control and contain difference. Norden notes examples such as *Freaks* (Dir. Browning 1932) (Fig.17) as offering a social critique of the construction of Otherness. *Freaks*, with its collection of human skeletons, living-torsos, bearded ladies, armless girls, pinheads, Siamese twins and, in its main protagonist, Hans, a dwarf, has become a particularly pertinent example and something of a *cause célèbre*. Although it has been much discussed and considerably re-evaluated in recent years, having been banned in many countries and in the UK for more than thirty years (Mathews 1994 p.79), *Freaks* puts a twist on the usual interpretation of the terrible revenge motif. Rather than having their physical pathology reflecting a similar psychological state, the physical freaks are the ones with whom, along with the token accepting able-bodied couple, Bozo the Clown and Venus, the audience identifies, and the wisdom of the clown is an important element in highlighting the superficial and easy generalisations made about the characters. The film tells the story of how a collection of circus side-show attractions band together, in communal and supportive action, to avenge the exploitation of the unrequited love one of their own, Hans the dwarf, has for a conventionally beautiful but venal trapeze artist, Cleo, who, like her arrogant strong-man lover, Hercules, is able-bodied but lacking in all decent humanity. The final *dénouement* in which Hercules, slithering in panic, is stalked through the mud of a torrential rainstorm and killed, has Cleo mysteriously turned into a chicken-woman, and so becoming a side-show freak herself, the very thing she mocked and despised. This shocking ending is said by Norden (1991) to have contributed to its disastrous performance at the box office and the ruination of several careers, including Browning himself, and almost the whole Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio. Indeed, even while it was being made, the film was apparently under constant threat from Louis B Mayer, the studio head, and, as one compromise, to keep the crew placated, the disabled actors were banned from the studio canteen so they would not be seen while the able-bodied were eating (Norden 1994 p.118). The final product seemed to be totally unacceptable to both critics and audiences and was rapidly, and for some tragically, re-cut and re-packaged, but still without success. It seemed to be inconceivable that a fully-grown, clearly normal woman, even one who only loved money, could ever truly love a dwarf, albeit a rich one, but Browning wants to
suggest that the real freaks are those without common decency who cannot see beneath the surface of physical appearance. The reactions from the public showings were often more outraged than if the suggestion had been inter-racial sexual relations. Norden sees physical disability as one of the last outposts of Otherness. The implication that can be drawn from Norden (1994) is that the Other is quite acceptable and may even be allowed access to the dominant world only on the condition that it is not threatening and does not seem to subvert the established order.

Dissanayake (1993) argues that the "significant other is vitally connected to the marginalized other ...(and) relate interestingly to questions of the patriarchy, colonial gaze, textual authority, production of cultural differentiation, discursivities of domination and resistance and asymmetrical relationships between Self and Other" (p.ix). In this there is a sense of continuing reinforcement of a hegemonic position of one perspective and the oppression and marginalisation of others. This developed perception can then lead to social action and can serve to justify, legitimise and rationalise oppression.

Smith (1980) suggests that myths and mythologizations are narratives of alterity that work on separate and dual levels to both define and blur boundaries. They define them because of the artifice of the exercise, while blurring them by allowing the audience, through identification and suspension of disbelief, to enter, albeit briefly, other worlds. The Otherness involved may be fantastic or prosaically emblematic but, in what Mason (1990) calls the "anthropology of the imaginary", the effect is very much the same. For Mason, the Other is a product of the process of exclusion and "witches, Wild Men, madmen and animals are (all) aspects of the European self that self cannot tolerate" (1990 p.41).

Mason (1990) makes it clear that the psychological and cultural reaction is based on the perception of the image whether or not the subject exists in the real world or just in the imaginary one. It is not of primary importance what any substantive or empirical fact may tell us about the subject of the representation, be it women, the mentally ill or blacks; it is the representation that forges the imagination. Thus, although there are many myths which surround mental illness, such as preponderance of violence or the continual misuse of the meaning of schizophrenia, the simple rebuttal of them, in which Wahl (1995) engages, will not, by itself and by the force of its logic alone, fundamentally change anything. The importance of Otherness is such that it will never let the truth get in the way of a good representation.
It would appear to be a defensible and articulated theme that the notion of Otherness assumes such importance because identifying it allows the redefinition and continuous re legitimation of some essentialism that binds social groups together. To know that we share some supposed universal concepts of morality or behaviour is wholly reassuring to a sense of identity, but it is sometimes necessary for the Other to appear in order to draw the contrast and for what we are to become defined. If we as a group are able to identify ourselves because of what we believe, or what we would or would not sanction as acceptable behaviour, we know that those who do not agree or conform are not like us; in fact they are the Other.

As has been suggested, the Other can appear in various forms. Physical differences may be important, behavioural ones are clearly unsettling, but perhaps the most disturbing of all are the psychological ones or moral ones when all outward appearances are the same. It is far more subversive of our sense of security, of our control of the notion of risk that we face, if the Other who haunts us cannot be distinguished from all those who are like us, and Shortland’s (1997) analysis of Science Fiction films again becomes pertinent. It could be our neighbour, the person next to us on the bus or the person in the queue at the shops. Equally, it could the teacher of our children, the carer of our infirm or our political and social leaders. The most innocuous may, in actual fact, be the most dangerous. The sense of risk and uncertainty leads to a fearful construction of the world: what is more, everyone else may feel the same way about us personally. Just as we do not know for certain that they are not the other, they do not know what we are. The sense of uncertainty and dread that this dissolution of the boundaries of certainty brought about by the fragmentation of the rationale of reason in a postmodern context leaves us with a diffuse and pervasive ambivalence towards what we can and cannot define, for ourselves, as Madness.

One crucial aspect which distinguishes the Mad as the Other from those conceptions based on skin colour or sex for example, is that there may be the chance that we too could become Other. We will not, in normal circumstances, change our skin colour or our sex, but we must deal with Madness differently. If it is possible that we may go mad we cannot represent its Otherness in the same way as we would if we choose to imagine that Madness is something that happens to someone else. We may have to come to terms with the idea that sometimes the Other may be always there as part of us, even if it is latent or buried and remains unknown, that Madness and its Otherness exist on a continuum and move through shades of grey rather than stark contrast. Alternatively, we may find that the mad are really nothing like us at all, at least in those areas that truly count, that no matter how much we
have in common, the difference will always be the crucial defining characteristic. The third option, is that it may be a little of both, and if that is the case, perhaps even more than in the first or second constructions, we may have to ask how we are to distinguish and differentiate, and how we are to understand and represent it.

As has been suggested, it also remains to be established whether or not all those who at one time or place or another have been cast as the Other, are characterised in the same way, or whether there are significant variations and idiosyncratic interpretations. This question asks whether women or black people or the Mad need or deserve, or can only be understood by, their own history. That the Mad deserve their own history, as it has been shown by the representation of them in film, is a core understanding of the current project; that they need it is answered by the relatively poor treatment they have endured in traditional accounts, and the relative paucity of full accounts, Peterson (1982) and Porter (1989) notwithstanding; whether their history is unique or does have commonalities can be further explored by an examination of some seminal examples in which the full flourish of the ambiguities of the representations of Madness may be seen.

The Other That is Us

*We all go a little mad sometimes. Haven't you?*

_from “Psycho” (Dir. Hitchcock 1960)_

The representation of the extent to which all people are capable of, susceptible to, prey to, vulnerable to or contain the germ of madness is an essential question in the present discourse. Is the difference between us and them qualitative or quantitative? If we recognise that under the right circumstances or given a certain set of events we could all descend into madness, it suggests a very different conceptual framework from a position that assumes and emphasises the qualitative difference in the experience of Madness and of the mad themselves. If we regard the mad as quite unlike ourselves, as different from us as we are from the beasts of the land, we may represent madness in a certain way and introduce a correlating set of social and cultural practices than if we understand madness differently. The characterisation of the mad in film, and the comparison and contrast that this entails with those who are not mad, is at the centre of this issue.
There is a key point at which the audience of a film is asked questions about the degree to which it can or chooses to identify with the central character. This is not just a case of transposing the events, the experiences and the emotions on the screen to our own lives and examining the degree to which they match or coincide - to say to ourselves, “Yes (or no), I have (or have not) felt or would (or would not) feel like that.” If we cannot or do not feel a degree of identification with the mad protagonist, it will affect our conception of Madness.

While talking casually with the soon-to-be-deceased Marion Crane over milk and sandwiches which could hardly be more wholesome or innocuous, Norman Bates, in Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960), remarks that “We all go a little crazy sometimes. Haven’t you?” Ignoring for a moment the ironic chill that this sends to us, the audience, (after all we know that something is going to go wrong sooner or later), it is pertinent to ask how we are to view the madness that is seen to overtake Norman in the next few minutes. We already know, for example, that Marion, who seems such a nice young woman and is clearly well-liked and trusted by her employers, has had her moment of madness. On an impulse she stole money and decamped to set up a new life with a yet-to-be-divorced man. Surely, she must have taken leave of her senses. She has acted quite irrationally and recklessly without fully considering the circumstances, and cannot really believe that she will get away with it despite the changing of cars and false names she uses to disguise her flight. Yet, there seems to be a qualitative difference between her behaviour and that of Norman. We are led to believe that perhaps, given the right circumstances and the passion of the moment, we could all act like that, but we could never do the things Norman does. Our identification with Marion’s crime is placed on a level with stealing money from our mother’s purse or a lollipop from the corner store. It is really a submission to temptation rather than an evil or malicious act. We know that if she did go home and say that there had been a terrible mistake and that she was very sorry, she would be forgiven. She would be chastised, perhaps she would be punished as a naughty child, but she would not be seen as evil or beyond redemption. After all, we all succumb to temptation now and again, but it is a mark of maturity and rationality to act responsibly and not give rein to our impulses.

We are also asked to distinguish between a number of examples of impulsive behaviour. Not only is there a contrast between Marion taking the money and Norman being unable to control his actions and desires, there are the two moment at which first the private detective, Milton Arbogast (Martin Balsam) and then Marion’s sister, Lila (Vera Miles), go up to the great Gothic house on impulse. The audience knows that something dreadful is likely to happen, and so we are presented with the proposition that acting on impulse is
dangerous and risky. It is much better and safer to weigh the options carefully and proceed cautiously. Only a madman acts impulsively and this is an identifying characteristic that takes him beyond the reach of reason. The heroic action at the end of the film of Sam Loomis (John Gavin) as he rushes up to the house to save Lila is based on intuition or instinct, not impulse which is seen as altogether more animalistic, the dark side of nature. It may be that acting on impulse is sometimes seen to save the day, but in *Psycho* rationality is the real hero, only it may have feet of clay.

As has been noted in a previous consideration of the notion of risk assessment, remorse and consequent expiation are powerful indicators of the commonality between ourselves and the transgressor. The value that is placed on the confession of our sins and subsequent forgiveness, especially by a paternal figure such as the law or Mr Lowery, her erstwhile employer, with or without penance, enables us to draw a contrast between Marion’s misdeemeanour and Norman’s horrific act of madness. Yet, when we get to know Norman a little better, we have to consider how circumstances may exploit or magnify a flaw in our own character. Given that we all have some imperfections of character we must confront the possibility that a hermetic and traumatic life such as Norman’s may be enough to tip any one of us into the abyss. We learn that Norman has suffered the loss of his father, and his step-father may have displaced Norman from prime place in his mother’s affections. We know from the novel rather than the film that we are meant to consider the chain of alliteration between Norma (the name of Mrs Bates, the mother), normal and Norman, although there are still enough hints of it in the film as well (Fig.18). It is as if the cumulative, and in the end, irresistible pressure grows and grows until the fractures appear and the entire structure of the personality collapses like a rock face eroded by a persistent tiny drop of water. We are made to consider whether extraordinary circumstances can make any of us do extraordinary things.

Fleming & Manvell (1985) consider the subject of war as a most extraordinary circumstance and its relation to the depiction of madness. They hazard that part of the cinema’s fascination with the subject is not just because of the possibilities of dramatic stories, but also because war, in itself, “represents such an overt contradiction of the principles that allow societies to exist” (p.112). This suggestion is underpinned by the understanding, or perhaps it is the fear, that civilisation is just a thin veneer that is fragile and liable to crack at any moment. It can easily be ruptured and then all manner of wild beasts may be let loose. The representation of the psychological affects of war, rather than the set-piece spectacle has received various treatments. Fleming & Manvell (1985)
concentrate on the Twentieth Century in part for a sense of practical verisimilitude, and also for a greater sense of identity with the direct experience of the audience. It is arguable that historical dramas of battle-axes and sword fights do not carry the same potential for documentary acceptability, and certainly there is the implication that ancient battles are most often metaphorical treatments of contemporary concerns.

A distinction is drawn by Fleming & Manvell (1985) between the treatment of World War I and the Korean War, and World War II and the Vietnam War (they do not give a great deal of attention to other conflicts) and they relate this in part to the dominant psychiatric theories of the time, although a consideration of the political and cultural impact of the conflicts may be more fruitful. The American presentation of World War I tends towards the thesis that war may be hell, but the individual soldiers are thoroughly decent and upright men, and embody the American ideal. Hearts of the World (Dir. Griffith 1918) filmed on location with unprecedented access, and later on Salisbury Plain with the British Army acting as extras, or The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse (Dir. Ingram 1921) may have dealt with the costliness of war but did not really examine the psychological effects of life in the trenches. Even the much later Sergeant York (Dir. Hawks 1941) did not seriously subvert this convention, but its timing in relation to World War II and the question of American involvement must be considered. Significantly, it was the European cinema in films such as Westfront 1918 (Dir. Pabst 1930) and J'Accuse (Dir. Gance 1919), which first depicted the effects of shell-shock, and it was the adaptation of a German novel that produced All Quiet on the Western Front (Dir. Milestone 1930) and the first American meditation on the horrors of this particular conflict. It would seem that for a long time, and perhaps until the first major revisionist treatment in Paths of Glory (Dir. Kubrick) in 1958, World War I was still regarded as the last of the noble conflicts where manly men did their duty.

The Korean War has featured rather less in the cinema than other major conflicts. It is difficult to cite many examples apart from M*A*S*H (Dir. Altman 1970) which is primarily satirical, albeit, like the long-running television spin-off, tempered by a humanistic view of the madness of war per se and the lunacy and the fractured logic that can ensue in the efforts to fight or survive it. Fleming & Manvell (1985 p.114) suggest a number of explanations for this. The relatively small numbers of American combatants, especially when compared with World War II which had ended within the previous decade and the way it was labelled as an “action” rather than a war (as indeed was the Vietnam War in the earliest stages) are advanced as reasons for its comparatively weak hold on the public.
imagination, but it may also be instructive to regard the contemporaneous growth of Science Fiction Invasion and conspiracy films as metaphorical contemplations of the same issues that dominated cold war rather than hot war thinking (Shortland 1997).

The films that emerged out the Vietnam war, especially after the American withdrawal, seem to have a different ideological standpoint than those that went before. Not only is the war itself questioned in a way that World War II was not - the justification for being in Vietnam is critiqued, while almost without exception World War II is seen as a just war - but the soldiers are represented as going into an alien environment where their values and touchstones no longer apply with any certainty. Cultural norms, personal expectations and epistemological yardsticks fail in this heart of darkness, and the soldiers, and by implication all that Western civilisation represents, are ontologically adrift. The jungle into which the soldiers plunge seems to contain secrets, fears and monsters which the sands of Iwo Jima never did. The further you go into the jungle trying to find your way out, the more lost you become. It is somewhere modern man, for all his technology, is completely at a loss. Indeed, he may even be severely disadvantaged because of his reliance on the technological solution and also the way in which it has broken his instinctive link with the natural world. The metaphorical presentation of the darkness of the jungle as the dark reaches of the mind, most notably in Apocalypse Now (Dir. Coppola 1979) and The Deer Hunter (Dir. Cimino 1978), indicate what can happen to a person when the certainties of life are questioned or are no longer quite so reassuring. We know from the case of Kurtz in Apocalypse Now that absolute power has corrupted absolutely, but we are also presented with a man who has somehow peered into the abyss of human degradation and although he recoils, he cannot escape his knowledge. Long before we actually meet Kurtz we are told by a senior officer that “In this war, things get confused - morality and military necessity. It becomes a temptation to become a god - temptation between the rational and the irrational, the good and the bad. Every man’s got a breaking point. Kurtz has reached his and gone insane”. At this point we are led to assume that although Kurtz is now something of a monster in our imagination as well as in his behaviour and in his physical presence, at some time in the not too distant past he was a paragon. However, when forced to travel into the nether world he has gradually lost all sense of proportion, he no longer has limits to what he can think of doing, he has to confront the awful possibility of being anything he can think of. Clearly this is not the province of mere mortals. Like Prometheans ancient and modern, Kurtz has transgressed the boundaries and madness seems to be the price he must pay, until he is killed (and we come to believe that he wants to be killed to be relieved of his dreadful burden) in an equally mythic manner in a moment of redemption for both the killer
and the killed. It is only mildly surprising that it does not take a silver bullet or stake through the heart to put an end to it all. The madness of Kurtz represents the Other within. He shows what can happen when we lose the touchstones of our existence and our place in the world. Once more we see the recurrence of themes of hubris and the penalty that must befall those who seek forbidden knowledge. Kurtz dared not just to dream, but to act on the dream. He is a modern Lucifer, a fallen angel, he was after all, once a soldier of remarkable promise, but while he must realise that all utopias are mirages, and all the more tempting because of that, he also demonstrates the fundamental flaw of humanity that all power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. What is especially chilling is that the monsters that beset him are the monsters of his own imagination. We know that what he sees when he speaks of the “horror” at the end of the film, may well be lurking there for any of us, if the circumstances are right.

The dark possibilities of what may lie hidden in our nightmares has proved a lucrative theme for *The Nightmare on Elm Street* (Dir. Craven 1984) and the subsequent series of horror films, which also have one of the main characters grow up to be a psychiatrist specialising in dream therapy. Although they do not take themselves as seriously as some other treatments of similar material, they do, nevertheless, indicate the acceptability of the idea that the sub-conscious world of our dreams, which only infrequently breaks through to the surface of our everyday life, does have a connection with the material world. There is the possibility that the Other can enter into our world like an alien infestation or an intruder who breaks into our house each night and lives there while we are asleep. Perhaps the Other can steal into and steal off with our dreams.

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**The Small Step From Genius**

*Great wits are sure to madness near allied,*  
*And thin partitions do their bounds divide.*

Dryden, *Absolem and Achitipol*, (1681)

The presumed ability of true genius to be able to so transcend the normal confines of imagination has parallels with the supremely logical illogicality of systematised delusions (Storr 1994). It is as if they are capable of such completely original leaps of thought that they are able to do or say or think things that all others before them simply could not have imagined. It sometimes appears to be suggested be that they are able to ask questions that
are of such piercing simplicity that the world is never quite the same again. However, we may also be warned that looking too deeply into the mundanities of life that the rest of us accept just to be able to get on with the ordinary activities of daily living, may send us mad. There is a price to be paid for sublime achievement (Ludwig 1995), and the Promethean theme of forbidden knowledge (Shattuck 1996) resurfaces as a leitmotif. To be constantly questioning and asking the meaning of it all can be a hindrance to buying bread and milk in the supermarket or catching the bus to go to work. Whether or not Einstein actually wondered what it would be like to travel on a beam of light when he was travelling to work at the Patents Office on a Basle tram is less relevant than the notion of a single blinding insight, nevertheless, we may still have the impression that he would have missed his stop. Compared to this conception of genius, Newton’s humble explanation, the falling apple and his interpreted attack on the dwarfish Boyle notwithstanding, that he only saw further than others because he stood on the shoulders of giants, or Edison’s maxim of ninety nine per cent perspiration and only one per cent inspiration seem positively prosaic and much less suitable for mythologisation. Despite evidence and logic suggesting that mental illness, with its fragmentation and disorganization of thought, is a hindrance to creativity (Rothenberg 1994) the cinematic representation of the troubled genius still seems remarkably resilient.

Nevertheless, aside from the dramatic potential of a gripping story of extraordinary people well-told, the potential narratives of the mad genius take on a number of important aspects. When the borderline between genius and madness is blurred we are presented with an image of Madness quite different from anything yet considered. In addition to the evil genius or criminal mastermind who is drawn in contrast to the concept of Reason, a staple villain in any of the James Bond films or the eponymous scientist in Dr Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (Dir. Kubrick 1964), there may also be the tortured genius in, for example, Lust for Life (Dir. Minnelli 1956). Clearly, one must suffer for one’s art, and great art cannot be made without suffering. We are shown the great creative artist who in a moment of sublime creativity, of orgasmic catharsis, tips over into the shadow world of madness, usually to be rescued by the love of a good woman; a scenario which has most recently appeared in Shine (Dir. Hicks 1995), the biographical film of the pianist, David Helfgott. Even Kirk Douglas as Michelangelo in The Agony and the Ecstasy (Dir. Reed 1965), a landmark in bravura over-acting, never got his man, and the same actor was also out of luck but for different reasons as another troubled soul playing van Gogh in Lust for Life (Dir. Minnelli 1956). The thin line that separates us from them is a major component of these storylines.
The central characters of genius are shown to be most unlike us in many ways, most often the intensity with which they experience life or their art, but also most like us in their human failings. Although they are monomaniacal (van Gogh cares for nothing but painting in *Lust for Life* Dir. Minelli 1956) we are able to identify with them in part because they transcend the normal experience, but they are also prey to all the normal human emotions (all Michelangelo really wanted in *The Agony and the Ecstasy* Dir. Reed 1965 was to feel love). We are often encouraged to extend our sympathy to them because they seem unable to manage the mundane aspects of ordinary life (the treatment of the adult David Helfgott in *Shine* Dir. Hicks 1995 often resembles patronising tolerance). Therefore, although they are in some very special way beyond our knowing, they are also helpless and inadequate in others. This draws a distinct contrast with the evil genius because of the degree of control and competence in daily life. If an evil genius is coddled and protected by a host of servants it is because of the control he exhibits over them (Rotwang, the dictator in *Metropolis* (Dir. Lang 1926) lives above it all, in a penthouse, surrounded by flunkies and lickspittles). It is not because the servants feel a parental protection towards their leader, it is because they are dominated and cowed. They respond to threats and the fear of punishment, although they may on occasion share some megalomaniacal ravings, and do not feel that they are caring for someone who is incapable of looking after himself.

It would seem to be an important issue that the majority of the films which deal with the tortured genius are to some extent biographical. The concentration on the life events of a single individual allows any analysis to skirt the socio-cultural perspective of the representation. It may then be possible to suggest that only single individuals are of importance either because they are great or because they are mad; in either case they are exceptional. Fritz Hippler (1942), prominent both as a film-maker and a Nazi official, was able to suggest that the “only possible subjects for successful historical films are personalities ...with which people of the present are familiar or with which they can identify” (p.79). He thought that such personalities possess timeless authority and are thus able to give meaning to life. When, as an audience, we view something presented to us a history we are more likely to accept it as a realistic portrayal and come to believe that what is clearly and always a constructed representation is actually a truth. In this regard, Schulte-Sasse (1996) suggests that Nazi films are not that different from other examples from the Weimar republic or Hollywood spectacles “in making literal and figurative capital out of history” (p.30). This is not to suggest that the biographies are not without interest, but that they concentrate and legitimate a particular representation of madness and Otherness, and
cloak themselves in a particular authority, often to the exclusion of contextual issues. Individuation becomes of more significance than social construction.

The most recent example, *Shine* (Dir. Hicks 1995), crystallises a number of these issues, and has generated passionate debate over what it represents (Helfgott 1996, Leggatt 1996). First, the central character, the real life David Helfgott, is not only possessed of a certain musical genius, but he is also quite clearly someone who has suffered a major psychiatric illness (even though the film leaves any diagnostic question blurred and unanswered). He is also, and this is a most unusual aspect, still alive; it has always seemed somewhat safer to concentrate on those who are safely dead. He is shown as someone who is quite out of touch with the normal mundane skills that we use to negotiate our way round our everyday life. He may play the piano like an angel, but he cannot manage to put on a matching pair of shoes. During his time as a music student in London he is shown eating cat food and wandering down to collect his mail wearing a pullover but no trousers or underwear (his landlady, who sees this, shakes her head in an affectionate maternal way). His nails grow to an enormous length, his hair grows wild and his eyes take on an obsessive zeal. Most of all, the portrait of the artist as a madman emphasises that he is not dangerous. He is not to be feared and he does not present a threat because he has been infantilised. The audience is meant to regard him with an indulgent sympathy and tolerance.

The Helfgott character is presented to us as emotionally and pragmatically retarded. We are presented with a man who wanders about in the rain, muttering to himself. Grinning in a slightly lunatic way he wanders into a restaurant, oblivious of any of the rules of normal social discourse, and sits himself at a piano, where, with his cigarette spilling ash on to his shabby coat, he reveals his genius. However, because of his unthreatening nature, because his Otherness can be contained and sanitised he seems to evoke the same protective response from those he encounters, generally middle-class women, as a particularly cute and over-enthusiastic puppy. He is not presented as a fully rounded, complex or mature adult. He is still emotionally a child and his pleasure in a trampoline or swimming pool are presented as childlike, without guile. Some of his psychiatric symptoms such as glossolalia or pressure of speech are seen as charming rather than disturbing. This is not to suggest that the mentally ill cannot be charming, engaging, likeable and personable, but the treatment in *Shine* emphasises a bourgeois maternalism in place of any sense of empowerment, insight or self-agency. Helfgott is indulged as a freak, eccentric or oddity rather than respected as an adult. In this way his Otherness and marginality is maintained.
by suffocating good intentions, and any threat of subversion that may have been perceived on account of his strange behaviour is defused.

There are manifest difficulties that *Shine*, for all its charm, bravura performances and laudable intentions, fails to resolve in relation to the representation of madness. The implicit paradigms of cause and cure are troublesome in their naivety and ill-considered in their implications. However, not least because it won an Oscar for Geoffrey Rush as Best Actor and was nominated for numerous other awards it has become a film of major importance.

It becomes apparent during the film that David Helfgott is unbearably sensitive to the harshness of the real world, or so we are encouraged to assume. This is as true in his childhood as it is in his adolescence and adulthood, and as a result he needs to be protected both from the outside world and the pressures it brings to bear on him, and the true, dangerous passion that he feels for his music. He needs someone to take care of him in a protective way, rather than with just simple human kindness. He needs someone to shelter him and organise life for him and not to frighten him with the fearsome realities that lurk out there, as his father does. His father, a Holocaust survivor, seems to have all the hallmarks of a classic over-controller, almost a schizophrenogenic parent, who mixes approbation and love in equal and confusing measure. He has an obsessive desire to toughen and protect his children so that they will never have to experience the trauma and dispossession that he faced, and this creates an intolerable pressure for the sensitive young David. We see David face humiliation when he fails to reach or exceed his father’s exacting standards. We see his way to a musical scholarship in America blocked by an over-protective parent even though we already have the impression of a socially fearful young boy hardly into his teens. In these scenarios we are presented with a thesis that suggests that if only his father could have been less strict or demanding, more caring or compassionate, none of this need have happened and David could have enjoyed the brilliant career that clearly awaited him. But it is not just the emotional pressure cooker that leads to madness, there is something in the mix as well. When, in a moment of extraordinary ecstasy, he collapses while playing the oh, so dangerous Rachmaninov Third Concerto we realise that there is a link between the descent into the abyss of madness, quite literally tipping over the edge as he falls from his stool, and the great single artistic insight. It is as though there is a Faustian bargain and madness is the price that he must pay for his audacity in venturing into areas that are by right the province of the Gods.
The relationship between artistic creation and madness is not in *Shine* suggestive of a world in which all creativity, which by definition is disruptive to the established order, is the work of the devil. Only a medieval world-view in which mannerism becomes the dominant artistic form and the purpose of art is to continually refine and restate the perfection of God's creation would be consistent with such a position. Instead, in *Shine*, we see a neo-Romantic version of Madness in which those whom the Gods wish to destroy they first make mad. *Shine* is more suggestive of a Greek madness than a Catholic one and from that perspective sees Helfgott as a wounded warrior, as one who dared but failed to transcend the gap which separates mortals from the Gods.

*Shine* is of course not alone or unique in drawing a link between Madness, Genius and Insight. Recent examples such as *Being There* (Dir. Ashby 1979), *Rain Man* (Dir. Levinson 1988), and *Forrest Gump* (Dir. Zemeckis 1994), even though the central characters have more in common with intellectual disability, have all propagated the notion that a piercingly simple and revealing view of (American) life can illuminate the true texture that lies beneath the veneer and gloss. There is an innocent abroad and it would seem that in the American context it is a nostalgic view of some lost value that these simple characters can recapture for us all. The redemption of the cynic in these films, such as the Tom Cruise character in *Rain Man*, is a major feature that suggests that sentimentality is better than critique, soft acquiescence is preferable to contestation, and that nostalgia is to be chosen before analysis. As we are encouraged to learn more about ourselves from the example of anthropomorphised animals we are also taught about the lasting values of life by the unworldly character of disarming and charming innocence. We are subject to the discreet charm of the very unthreatening.

**Aliens, Outcasts and the Outland**

*Deluded imagination which is not only an indisputable but an essential character of Madness ...precisely discriminates this from all other animal disorders: or that man and man alone is properly mad*

*William Battie “A Treatise on Madness”* (1758) p.8

As has been suggested throughout the discussion, there is always some sense in which the Other is perceived as being alien to us or to our experience (Grant 1996b). Some authors (Hering 1994) have adopted the Alien as emblematic of the Kleinian conception of the
destructive life-force, something horrible and monstrous that dwells "not only (in) the
nethermost depths of our psyche, but no doubt also (in) our contemporary political
unconscious" (p.405). Sometimes this might be a giant monster from the deep, lagoons
and the ocean are good for this, sometimes it might be something from deepest outer space.
Wherever they come from, Hering suggests that the very best (or-worst) of them give flesh
to the "absolute psychotic reality of destructiveness" (ibid p.405).

There is, within the history of the cinema, a rich and varied representation of literal aliens,
that is to say extra-terrestrials. Some of these fit with conceptions which have already
appeared, such as the supremely rational Mr Spock from the Star Trek television series and
the films which followed or the evil genius and megalomaniac Ming from Flash Gordon
(Dir. Hodges 1980). However; madness, except in the case of the latter is a rare
commodity. Even when there is a strong suggestion of it, or at least psychiatric disorder, as
in The Man Facing South East (Dir. Subiela 1986), it is presented as more of a puzzle of
morality than a treatable lunacy (a term which is not without significance). In this case the
mental disorder has more analogies with the peaceable Christ being ill-fitting or subversive
in his purity than any indication of clear psychosis, although this construction may be at
odds with the actual experience of formal psychiatry where anyone claiming to be an alien
would be deemed clearly and quickly as severely deluded. This would suggest that the
concept of Madness is not just an eccentricity that is misunderstood or misinterpreted. It is
not a premise around which a comedy of manners can be built, based on an outsider's
over-literalness or social gaucherie. Madness is regarded as a particularly human
characteristic. If only humans can possess the full qualities of a poetic imagination, at least
in the cinema, then only humans can truly go mad.

Admittedly, we do see occasional androids and computers malfunctioning and misbehaving
as in 2001: A Space Odyssey (Dir. Kubrick 1968), Westworld (Dir. Crichton 1973), Alien
(Dir. Scott 1979) and Blade Runner (Dir. Scott 1982), but when they do so they in fact
become more human; they become endearingly or chillingly more like us and sometimes we
are not quite sure whether they are completely android after all. Alien life forms, at least the
walking talking ones, are often a little different. Just as Mr Spock is intriguingly created as
half-human and half-Vulcan, there is an attempt to imbue these characters with some
essence of humanity and humanness. Even when the eponymous extra-terrestrial in
Spielberg’s E.T. (1982) becomes marooned it becomes sad, rather than depressed or
deranged by its isolation.
In contrast, we often see humans becoming quite unbalanced when placed in alien environments. Not only do we have the bickering and descent into a madness in outer-space dramas such as *Alien* (Dir. Scott 1979) or the more comic pastiche, *Dark Star* (Dir. Carpenter 1980), but we see it when it on our own planet as in *Apocalypse Now* (Dir. Coppola 1979) or *Aguirre, Wrath of God* (Dir. Herzog 1972). For the lost conquistador, Aguirre, the Amazonian jungle is as strange and threatening and incomprehensible as any far off planet, and the river serves a similar function to Coppola's use of the Mekong, leading, as it does, into a heart of darkness. There are examples, however, in which we go into alien territory rather than having them come to us. In these cases our own planet features as just as strange, threatening and unfathomable as anything from outer space. While *Apocalypse Now*, *Aguirre, Wrath of God* and *Fitzcarraldo* (Dir. Herzog 1971), again with the splendidly monomaniacal Klaus Kinski, situate themselves in the denseness of the tropical jungle, others such as the Australian examples of *Walkabout* (Dir. Roeg 1971) or *Wake in Fright* (Dir. Kotcheff 1971) are placed in the equally disconcerting desert, or as in the case of *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Dir. Weir 1975) in a land of mystery which we do not understand, yet may also exert a power over us. In one set of examples the alien landscape is so luxurious, luscious and overcrowded with variety that we, that is the Western eye, cannot discern the detail and we are quickly reminded of our folly to think that we can control it by the force of our will and the power of our technology. In the desert however, it all appears so bare and disconcertingly devoid of life we cannot see the richness that is there. Again hubris is not far behind, and we are chastened by our complete helplessness while the Aboriginal hero (David Gulpilil) in *Walkabout*, whose name, significantly, we never learn, co-exists with the land and does not try to bend nature to his will.

However, while there are significant differences in the way in which the land itself is portrayed as the Other when it is the desert and when it is the jungle, that is, as something that will reclaim what has been ripped from it and can summon up deep forces beyond the control or understanding of mortals, there are also important similarities. McDonald (1997) goes so far as to wonder if, had Conrad gone into the interior of Australia rather than Africa, would he have had to change anything but the place names in his novella *The Heart of Darkness*. In both the jungle and the desert the Other is out there watching us. In the jungle it may be behind the next tree, it can slip silently away, it could be standing next to us and we would never know it; in the desert it surrounds us but is never there when we turn around, it is always just out of sight, it can be sensed and sometimes we may feel that we have hold of it, but when we open our fingers it has gone.
The desert and the Outback hold a peculiar duality in the Australian imagination. It is not without irony that while the Aboriginal population has been characterised as fringe-dwellers, the urban, and predominantly White and Western, population clutches desperately and fearfully to the coastal edges of the vast continent, and the explorers and voyagers into the centre are tragic characters. This is a land that can kill and, to the European sensibility, it does not submit to reason. When the European invaders are seen as the outsiders they become the fringe-dwellers themselves. The power of Western hegemony and technology cannot entirely suppress the fear that the land itself may yet revenge itself on the impertinent intruders.

Of course, there are memorable and disturbing images of the city, or at least parts of it, as the Other and the place where Madness dwells. In *Taxi Driver* (Dir. Scorsese 1976) we see the deeply disturbed, paranoid and soon to be homicidal Travis Bickle driving through streets of appalling urban decay which are positively Stygian. Steam, which is almost sulphurous, escapes from ruptured pipes beneath the road, clearly the infrastructure of society is broken, neglected and now almost beyond repair. The marginalised and detritus of the city, prostitutes, pimps and junkies, move in and out the light of his headlights, and even as we watch this we know that outside in the streets of our own cities the homeless are gathering their cardboard boxes and sleeping in doorways. Mad faces either leer or stare blankly, and we wonder how we will respond to strange looking beggars who approach us for loose change when we leave the cinema. This is a place without hope, without humanity and awful in its perversion of values. It has the intrusive obsessiveness of a nightmare, and is meant to haunt us. The overwhelming disgust that Bickle feels makes us almost smell the vomit in the gutter and the putrefaction in the alleys. We know that this is the place of the Other. It is the obverse of the manicured lawns and white picket fences of the American bourgeois dream, but we also know that unless it can be controlled it may swamp us; the Other is dangerous.

Like some Greek tragic hero, Bickle enters into this other world, but we are not sure whether Madness is the price he has to pay or whether it is because he is already tipping into the abyss himself, that this is the only place he can truly be. What we, the audience, do know is that this is not a place we want to be; we know that this Other is a place to be feared; we know that if this is where Madness is, then the Mad must be dangerous too; we know that our world may be under threat and not be as strong as we believe. We are not quite so certain about our place in the world because where there is Madness, so there is
doubt. It would seem that however much we may value logic, or strive to be rational, it is actually perceived as being more human to be intuitive, emotional, illogical and irrational at times, unpredictable and complex. It may actually be preferable in some circumstances to go mad rather than lose one's humanity. We are presented with a perspective of humanness which contradicts the rationalist project, but at the same time wants to reap its supposed benefits.

**Gender Gerrymanders of Otherness**

*the archaeology of modernity is haunted by the feminine*


The feminist critique that begins to challenge the unspoken acceptance of patriarchal dominance and a social structure that is oppressive to women has generated a growing literature. Recently, some authors have begun to direct their attention to the socio-cultural aspects and importance of the cinema and cinematic representations of women (Kaplan 1990, 1997). Doane (1991) advances the position that gender has become one of the most vital areas in which what can and cannot be known is contested. She speaks of an “imbrication of knowledge and sexuality, of epistemophilia and scopophilia (as having) crucial implications for the representations of sexual difference in a variety of discourses (including the cinema)” (p.1). Even though she is more likely to use the term sexuality rather than gender, the latter may be more appropriate because it seems that even lesbianism is constructed from a male point of view, sometimes literally the male gaze. Doane (1991) argues that, notwithstanding the importance of handsome looks and perfectly honed torsos for many men, the body is central to the cinematic construction of the female and she cites with approval the words of Héléne Cixous who said that “More so than men ...women are body” (p.22). In general for Doane the *femme fatale*, the vamp, the predatory female epitomises the allure and threat of the potential epistemological trauma that the other can bring about.

Neale (1980) does not consider women’s reactions to such representations of their own sexuality, but argues that the male anxieties brought about by the fear of female sexuality which it cannot control, and specifically castration anxiety, is at the root of the representation of women, or at least one characterisation of a certain type of woman, as Other. By adopting a Freudian framework in which women are both castrated themselves
and threaten castration to any male (even if this is a misconception), Neale posits that “it is woman’s sexuality, that which renders them desirable - but also threatening - to men, which constitutes the real problem that the horror cinema exists to explore, and which constitutes also and ultimately that which is really monstrous” (1980 p.61). While not every man in the audience of a horror film may be consciously wrestling with the anxieties to which he alludes, he does make the interesting point that there is a fascination about what we are not but may become (given certain circumstances), even if that other state is Other or horrible. Neale underlines the cinema’s importance in this as it is often the site of the constructed gaze. Kaplan (1997) interprets this gaze as imperialist as it at once seeks to possess and flirt with the exotic. For her, one root of the imperialist desire lies in the constrictions of the home culture.

There is something essentially unknowable about the *femme fatale* of the *films noir* of the 1940s. Danger lurks for any ordinary man who may innocently wander into the web of these spider-women. They are not exactly medieval monstrosities with teeth in their vaginas, the *vagina dentata* (Mason 1990), but the perceived threat of emotional if not physical castration looms large in the constructed imagination. It is tempting, as Doane (1991 p.8) admits, to put this into a psychoanalytic frame without examining some of the problematic aspects of psychoanalytic assumptions, not least its more traditional concept of female sexuality. However, despite some short-comings and discredited ideas it is still an important aspect to consider because, as Doane puts it, “psychoanalysis enhances the legibility of the ideological effects of Western culture’s construction of femininity” (1991 p.8) as a result of the psychoanalytic ideology Western culture has so often embraced.

Chesler (1972) argues that such a tendency can be observed from much earlier than the present age, and that by the end of the Nineteenth Century the “portraits of madness executed by both psychiatrists and novelists were primarily of women” (p.32). There is something of the patriarchal male desire to rescue, but also a conception that women in this way can never quite attain the rationality of men. Although her contention that this numerical predominance continued into the films of the Twentieth Century may be more debatable, the representative models they adopt are significant and Kinder & Houston (1975) suggest three categories into which they fall. First, there is the situation in which “the woman’s inherent evil, weakness or sensitivity creates her own madness” as in *The Three Faces of Eve* (Dir. Johnson 1957) or *Persona* (Dir. Bergman 1967); secondly, where “a woman-hating man tries to drive a woman crazy and is aided by her own limitations” as in *Gaslight* (Dir. Cukor 1944) or *Diary of a Mad Housewife* (Dir. Perry 1970); and,
thirdly, where “the whole society exerts pressures to bring on a woman’s madness, but her vulnerability is a contributing factor” (ibid p.2) in, for example, *The Snake Pit* (Dir. Litvak 1948). In all these three categories, Kinder & Houston maintain, the madness is often is often linked to motherhood which is seen as the defining experience of womanhood: it both makes someone a real woman and also irrevocably distinguishes her from men., an analysis that Kaplan (1987) would endorse. It is argued that Women are also presented as less than self-actualising and are always, in one sense or another, “under the influence” (Kinder & Houston 1975 p.1).

In a critique of psychoanalysis, and its predominance in cinematic psychology, Walker (1993) offers a thesis which emphasises the oppressive nature of the psychiatric and, as most often seen in the cinema, psychoanalytic orthodoxy. In particular she feels that orthodoxy is unable to deal adequately with deviant and resistant women. She sees this as a hegemonic rather than a monological process and welcomes the debate that films can engender as they place the question of normalising models of femininity on the social and cultural agenda. Furthermore, it can be seen that there is no sense of the normal without some conception of the Other.

The historical nature of the connection between monstrosity Otherness, sexual difference and deformed procreation, from Aristotle and before, is emphasised by Huet (1993). She notes that the monstrous mother was “credited with the power to create beautiful, but false and misleading resemblances” (ibid p.100), and thus even the safest of all places of refuge, the womb, cannot be entirely trusted. Pinedo (1997) suggests that the objectified, even misogynist, characterisation of women is an essential factor for the audience of the horror film, whom she sees as quintessentially young and male. Grant (1996a) also notes that there is a fascinated dread in the audience of the horror film, and follows many psychoanalytic precepts about the male obsession with female sexuality. Creed (1991) also uses a psychoanalytic framework to identify at least seven aspects of the female monster, all of whom may be seen to be Other in some way. She uses Kristeva’s analysis of abjection to suggest a typology which includes the archaic or primeval amoral mother (*Aliens* Dir. Cameron 1983), the possessed body (*The Exorcist* Dir. Friedkin 1975), the monstrous womb (*The Brood* Dir. Cronenberg 1979), the vampire (*The Hunger* Dir. Scott 1983), the witch (*Carrie* Dir. De Palma 1976), the monstrous mother and the castrating mother (*Psycho* Dir. Hitchcock 1960), and these have a long and lurid history, especially in the horror film. She cites the writings of Freud and Joseph Campbell (p.1) to suggest
that this is neither a new nor unique phenomenon; however, the particular treatment it has received in popular film is worthy of some close attention.

It is Creed's contention that the monstrous is a significant representation of women in film, but that crucially this "speaks to us more about male fears than about female desire or subjectivity" (1991 p.7). She advocates a "re-reading of key aspects of Freudian theory, particularly his theory of the Oedipus complex and castration crisis" (ibid p.7). She presents a feminist critique of Freudian phallo-centrism, but still appears to accept many of its tenets. The key image often appears to be the castration fears of the male viewer who, it is suggested, fears that his penis will be snipped or snapped off by the devouring vagina, and this leads, by extension, to the metonymic representation of the reproductive nature and organs of the woman. It does not seem necessary however, as Creed tends to do, to see psychoanalytic explanations of the representations of women as monstrous. Indeed, if that theoretical position is itself deconstructed, it becomes possible to suggest that the Freudian frame is located in a particular social and cultural context, and, while it retains a deal of influence, it is more significant for the uses to which it is put, or the ways in which it is seen as a source of authority. The Other, and the way the women are constructed as such, may receive more revealing analysis in its socio-cultural deconstruction.

However, Bergstrom (1990) argues that psychoanalysis, while being the most discussed mode of psychological representation, is not, and should not be regarded as, the only one. There is, she suggests, a case to made for a more general psychological approach that is sensitive to aspects of narrative, symbolic resolution or internal motivation for example. Films can be seen to be attempts at depicting understandings of the human condition and Bergstrom posits that this may be done either by a focus on realistic characters "who are carefully individuated through psychological depth" (1990 p.163) or through the "abstract use of characters as types" (ibid p.163). This proposition seeks to understand the reasons and rationales behind the choices involved in the manner of representation. Bergstrom attempts a more contextual analysis which "allows us to observe and analyze significant variations in theme, structure and style within the same national cinema, with a view toward a more detailed understanding of the function and development of its conventions" (ibid p.164). She illustrates her argument with reference to three Weimar films of considerable importance: Secrets of a Soul (Dir. Pabst 1926), Pandora's Box (Dir. Pabst 1928) and M (Dir. Lang 1930). She notes how the medium itself can generate a feeling and mood; tight interior shots can reflect tense internal states of mind, wide, open shots may suggest disconnection and isolation. It is important, however, to relate these aspects to their
context and psychological perspective. In comparing and contrasting their treatment of Otherness in general and women especially in the case of Pandora's Box, she attempts to show that film is an intensely psychological medium. This is because not only does it allow the audience to enter the mind and the thoughts of the characters on the screen, it allows the entry into the synaesthetic imagination of the film-maker, and it reflects on ourselves.

Petro (1989) and McCormick (1993) both detect traces of misogyny and Otherness in films of the Weimar period, and both attribute this in some degree to a response to male anxieties and frame their analysis within a Freudian context. However, the context does receive substantial attention and for them it not a coincidence that the social and political role and visibility of women had changed radically in the years following World War I. McCormick (ibid p.641) notes the challenging autonomy of the "new woman" who could be socially, economically and sexually assertive. The thesis expands to recognise the reflexive relationship of cinematic representations, socio-cultural anxieties, as in Metropolis (Dir. Lang 1926) or Der blaue Engel (The Blue Angel) (Dir. Von Sternberg 1930) in which the women are confronting and strong, and in the latter, the cause of the downfall of the bourgeois, archetypically pre-War Professor Rath.

In some cases it is suggested that women may get their come-uppance if they overstep their prescribed roles, and Jacobs (1995) notes the genre of the fallen woman in which this is a staple theme. Biskind & Ehrenreich (1987) advance the opinion that the crucial moments in Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960) can be understood as a way of showing that "women who rip off men go down the drain" (literally it would appear) "and men who take women as role models go off their rocker" (pun intended) (p.203). this should serve as a warning against stepping outside the normal bounds of social roles. It would appear that neither crime nor madness can be seen to pay.

In summary then, the image of women in film is socially constructed, and is to be seen in relation to the dominant (male) hegemony. It would seem that women who challenge the dominant ideology provoke a reaction to the way in which they must be represented and contained. It may be the case that social fear or response to a perceived threat of the disruption to the order, and the established order at that, rather than some essential subconscious reaction, is the primary motivator. In this way, women, or at least powerful and unconventional women, are seen to be excluded from the dominant discourse and marginalised from the positions of influence.
Sexual monsters also appear in male guise as well, but they are usually immoral ravishers of tender young flesh. The sexual appetites of Mr Hyde although more evident in the novella than the film treatments suggest that it is only the bounds of social restraint that keep animal passions in check. Madness is therefore equated with a lack of self-control and, by implication, with a sub-human state. The forced sterilisation of intellectually disabled and mentally ill people from the early part of the century to the present day is not entirely explained by the eugenics movement (Gilman 1988, 1989). It is also a way of controlling the Other. Eradicating genetically weak material may be advanced as a possible rationalisation, but the fear of being confronted by the unacceptable Other may be a stronger motivation. It is of course tempting to introduce a sense of reaction formation as a mechanism to deal with this dilemma, but even if a Freudian view is not invoked the social acceptability of certain manifestations of sexuality would appear to figure prominently in the representations of the sexuality of the mad.

Until very recently the portrayal of psychiatric patients having and enjoying (mutual) sexual relationships did not appear on the screen. The Snake Pit (Dir. Livotak 1948) hints at transference between Virginia and Dr Kik, but this is not mutual romance. Family Life (Dir. Loach 1971) shows Janice flirting with a fellow patient in the hospital grounds, and while there is sexual innuendo and banter it is again not a sustaining romance. Billy Bibbit in One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Dir. Forman 1975) has a sexual encounter with a prostitute, but it can hardly be categorised as a loving relationship. In Shine (Dir. Hicks 1996) David Helfgott is loved and marries, but it still important that one partner is not a patient or is not mentally ill. Thus, the love in which the mad can engage is less than full adult commitment and retains an element of protectiveness. However, in Angel Baby (Dir. Ryrner 1995) Harry (Goodman by name as well as nature) and Kate meet at a psychiatric day hospital and genuinely fall in love, enjoy a vigorous sex life and, despite the well-meaning advice of Harry’s brother and his family, decide to have a child. The major difference lies in the patient status of both partners, indicating that people with mental illness are quite capable of forming and sustaining deep and rewarding personal relationships which involve ordinary love, profound passion and a very human sexual expression. Nevertheless, in Angel Baby, we do see a realisation by Harry’s family that the relationship may have as much genuine feeling and intrinsic worth as any other, and, more so than in most cases, they are seen to be supportive when most needed.
The Other in the Closet

gayness is even scarier to some people than femaleness or blackness

John Lombardi, in “Village Voice”, 30th June 1975

In contrast to the treatment of women and to a large extent aliens of various kinds, the representation of versions of homosexuality, be it male or female, simpering or assertive, submissive or dominant, sweet or perverse, has a far greater and far-reaching connection to the representation of Madness. Clearly, one reason for this is that until relatively recent times, in addition to being commonly illegal, it was often regarded and in many cases listed and treated as a psychiatric disorder (Berrios 1996). But it has also been subjected to a different level of heated debate, public scorn, police action and representative difficulties than some other Others.

Russo (1981) tries to deal with the initial question of what can and what cannot be seen as a representation of homosexuality. When the question of Otherness is to the fore the focus of the present concern will pay more attention to the representations outside the self-consciously *soi-disant* gay or queer cinema because of the intended audience. Certainly recent queer cinema has made interesting and important contributions which tend to be more inclined to celebrate plurality and the sexuality of their characters, but they are not aimed at the mainstream audience, and their position of contention is less discursive. Russo (1981) recognises that the theme of homosexuality may not always be explicit, and the subtext or symbolic representations may be of more significance than what is overtly on the screen. By equal measure, he cannot be certain that transvestism, or even men dancing with men, as in the early experimental sound film *The Gay Brothers* (Dir. Dickson 1895), should be seen as subject matter for his study. Nevertheless, he does put forward a number of typologies that characterise the treatment of the homosexual experience in film, including the homosexual as psychologically disturbed or abnormal.

The earliest film to which Russo (1981) feels confident in assigning a clear homosexual plot is the German feature *Anders als die Anderen* (Different From the Others) (Dir. Oswald 1919) which should not be confused with *Der Andere* of a few years earlier. As was not uncommon at the time a fulsome programme was produced to coincide with the release of the film and contained an essay by Magnus Hirschfeld who, as Director of the Scientific Humane Committee and the Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin, was prominent in the publicisation of the debate. While pointing out that “homosexuality is an inborn tendency for which the individual cannot be held responsible” (in Russo 1991 p.19) and

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that approximately 3% of any given population can be regarded as homosexual irrespective of class, education or status, Hirschfeld also commented on mental health issues. Railing against a law, Paragraph 175 of the German Penal Code, which forbade male homosexual acts, he argued that many were “driven to disgrace, despair, and even insanity and suicide” (in Russo 1991 p.20) which indeed is what happened to the protagonist of Anders als die Anderen, played by Conrad Veidt only months before he was to become a major star as Cesare in The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (Dir. Wiene 1919).

The fate of the homosexual character was seen as an important element in the moral subtext of the films. Russo (1981) makes the argument that the suicide was to become almost obligatory for male homosexual characters for many years. So great was their transgression that suicide was the only acceptable option. However, it was not a suicide brought on by a clinical and treatable depression, but as a way of coping with shame, guilt, despair, disgust, self-loathing and irredeemable Otherness. Homosexuals were, at this time, exactly that: defined by their sexuality first, and only seen as people as a secondary consideration. They were archetypically Other because their primary defining characteristic was their difference to, not their commonality with, the dominant mode.

In addition to self-destruction the other main treatment possibilities for homosexual characters seemed to be either denial (Night and Day (The Cole Porter Story) Dir. Curtiz 1946), sublimation (Ben Hur Dir. Wyler 1959), camp mockery (The Choirboys Dir. Aldrich 1977), freakishness and social outcasts (Midnight Cowboy Dir. Schlesinger 1969), the dirty secret (The Children’s Hour Dir. Wyler 1962, originally intended to be titled Infamous) or death and murder (Pandora’s Box Dir. Pabst 1929); happy endings with or without a love interest, or even simple acceptance, have, until recently, been rarities. Homosexuality is cast as a defining characteristic of the Other because although it is recognised to exist and although it is a viable alternative, it is never considered to be a viable one and its existence is denied.

It would seem that, especially in the case of portrayals of lesbian characters, it is a love that can be permitted to exist as long as it does not speak its name. In The Killing of Sister George (Dir. Aldrich 1968), as in The Children’s Hour (Dir. Wyler 1962), the sin does not seem so much the act itself, but rather being public about it. The plot concerns Beryl Reid’s character, the soap opera actress June Buckridge, whose livelihood, playing the cheerful and popular nurse Sister George, is cancelled (the eponymous killing). However, Buckridge is undone because her lifestyle as a lesbian is revealed and her public persona
unravels. Similarly, it is the public revelation that brings about the downfall, the disgrace of the two teachers in *The Children's Hour* played by Audrey Hepburn and Shirley MacLaine and causes the latter's suicide. Although in both films the characters are undone by malicious lies, both end with the liars unpunished and the lovers destroyed. It would appear that although coming out of the closet is regarded, from a liberal perspective, as the right thing to do, when reality hits home, the closet is the only safe place to be. Thus, Otherness must learn to know its place.

In addition to the tragic killer of those they love, there is also a lengthy tradition of the homosexual as murderer. While the sexuality of Becker, the murderer in *M* (Dir. Lang 1930), is ambiguous, in other representations there seems to be a link that if people (and principally men) can be so perverse as be unrepentantly homosexual, then committing murder is hardly something that is going to repel them. In *Rope* (Dir. Hitchcock 1948) a homosexual pair of privileged, elitist and arrogant Ivy League alumni, apparently based on the real-life murderers Leopold and Loeb, plan the perfect murder, simply because they think they can; homosexuals are Others because they cannot and do not share family and human values. Even their veneer of sophistication is portrayed as a slightly distasteful affectation; it is decadent, foreign and decidedly un-American. The coldness, detachment and unsentimentality we see in these characters were among the terms that "would be increasingly used throughout the Fifties to define gays as aliens" (Russo 1981 p.94). The erotic thrill of murder is similarly implied in the characters of Joel Cairo (Peter Lorre) in *The Maltese Falcon* (Dir. Huston 1941), Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker) in *Strangers on a Train* (Dir. Hitchcock 1951) or the real-life Perry Smith and Dick Hickock (Robert Blake and Scott Wilson) the central characters of *In Cold Blood* (Dir. Brooks 1967).

Benshoff (1997) is more interested in the more lurid side of the horror genre, especially in the homosexual sub-texts in the relationships between the creator and his monster, as in *Frankenstein* (Dir. Whale 1931) which was not the first, but is certainly the most famous treatment of the Mary Shelley story. There were, it may be noted, at least three previous films using the same source which, like *The Bride of Frankenstein* (Dir. Whale 1935), Benshoff does not consider. *Frankenstein* (Dir. Dawley 1910), *Life Without Soul* (Dir. Smiley 1915) and, from Italy, *Monstro di Frankenstein* (Dir. Testa 1920) were little more than shorts, but the tendency Benshoff notes is probably more obvious in the comparatively recent and merciless parody, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Dir. Sharman 1975). Benshoff also turns his attention to the monster and victim relationship, for example *Dracula* (Dir. Browning 1931), in which he also detects a homosexual sub-
text. He argues that it is only the monster, the Other, who could indulge in such activities, and so the feelings as well as the practices are banished to the outlands of the civilised world.

The implications that representations of homosexuality as Otherness have for the consideration of Madness as the Other lie in the suggestion that sexual preference is not like a preference for the colour green over the colour blue; it is not a matter of taste. Nor is it an inclination according to lifestyle or abilities as one might have a favourite sport or pastime, although a postmodern preference for plurality and experimentation in a supermarket of pleasures may view this differently. It may be generally possible, however, to detect some indication that homosexuality is something that one may grow out of, like an adolescent crush, or that it can, be rescued by the true love of a good and faithful heterosexual (more likely to be woman rescuing a man than the other way around), or that it could be beaten out of a person; but more often we are reminded of the terrible fate that awaits us should we ever fall prey to temptation. Homosexuality is intimately bound up with the notion of identity, both self-defined and socially ascribed. It is seen as part of one’s essential psychological make-up, and, as such, not something that can be fundamentally changed, although it can be controlled or kept in check. This makes us believe that the Other is always Other, and we should not be too trusting of the reformed, the cured, the contrite or even the remorseful.

Murder, Mayhem and Monstrous Others
The nights are not made for the masses.
Night divides you from your neighbour

Rainer Maria Rilke, “The Book of Images”, 1899-1906

Neale (1980) suggests that the monster signifies the boundary between the human and the non-human. He does not add the inhuman, even though many actions of a terrible nature are commonly typified as monstrous or inhuman, because the inhuman still retains some vestige of human characteristics. Monsters rarely show emotional characteristics, unless they are anthropomorphised, as in the case of variations on the Frankenstein theme. It is more interesting when humans begin to show the characteristics of monsters. As in similar cases the question is thrown into sharpest relief in extreme circumstances. While within some definitions all criminals may be regarded as Other, that is to say outside the
established order, not all crimes can be seen in the same light. Some, most notably murder, capture the imagination like no other.

The investigation of the links between murder and madness has generated a large literature (Colaizzi 1989) from the earliest days of Phillipe Pinel and Benjamin Rush. Colaizzi argues that the debate has seen the emergence of certain psychiatric phenomena which have come to be associated with homicidal insanity, in particular, delusions, command hallucinations, lack of remorse, morbid impulses and frenzy (p.7). Clearly, not all of these signs and symptoms, or indeed any of them, are solely associated with murder, and some might wonder whether some of them, lack of remorse or frenzy for example, can be seen as indicative of madness at all. However, even within this frame there are qualitative differences in the way in which they are regarded or sympathetically understood. A person who has a systematic delusion or hears irresistible command hallucinations may be regarded as clearly mentally ill, and their dangerousness is an additional factor as it is quite possible for someone to suffer from these symptoms and not be dangerous in the least. However, to show no remorse, to have morbid impulses (which might be presumed to be controllable) or to submit to frenzy alludes to a sense of Otherness because it is assumed that such people should be able to control themselves, and it is either weak or wilful not to do so.

It is instructive to return to some of the cinematic representations of these issues because of the particular questions they raise. In M (Dir. Lang 1930) (for which the working title was Murderer Unter Uns (Murderers Among Us) and which had one later release as The City Seeks a Murderer) we see many of these issues played out in the parodic court scene mentioned earlier in which Becker, the child murderer played by Peter Lorre, is confronted by the underworld figures in their form of justice. Becker manages to encapsulate the aspect of being subject to inner demons that make him go whichever way they chase him and over which he has no control, and at the same time show ambivalence in his contrition. When confronted by the underworld mob who seem intent on giving him a fair trial before he is executed, Becker is first of all cast as a monster who preys on small children and should be put down as one would put down a mad dog. The argument is put that if he was in the hands of the state authorities he would be able to plead insanity, be sent to an institution from which he would either escape or be released “as harmless”, and so it would all begin again. These people, who know as much about true justice as they do about artificial laws, were not going to countenance that. As Schraenker (played by Gustaf Gründgens in a long leather coat and an Otto Dix Derby hat) memorably says to Becker,
“You won’t be harmless until you are dead.” At this point, the audience on the screen, who we must assume are there to represent us, the audience in the cinema, cheers and shouts agreement. Then Becker begins to speak. In a speech of mesmerising power, Becker exposes his thoughts in what is not so much a plea for his case as a great cathartic explosion and revelation of his psychological confusion and torment. He cries out at the voices that drive him to commit these terrible acts, drive him on like an animal, and the audience in the film is seen to be nodding sympathetically with him as it is presumed the theatre audience will. The monster has become a much more complex figure. He moves the audience with the authenticity of his suffering. He even says that he can remember nothing of the murders themselves and only discovers the details of his crimes when he reads the newposters like everyone else. He stands there wondering if this is what he has done. As his “Defence Counsel” says, this man is “ill”.

However, there is a moment at which a small note of dread is introduced. As Becker, almost in as great a frenzy in the telling of his story as we are to imagine he is in when he commits the murders, speaks of the actual moment of killing his mien changes. He closes his eyes and looks wholly satisfied with relief and pleasure, his face takes on a quite different expression and the still point is suggested to be, perhaps literally, orgasmic. This momentary chill, in which we are shown that despite this man being clearly mentally ill, quite unable to control his demons and obviously in need of treatment, he still actually enjoyed killing little girls, is profoundly disturbing to a monological sense of order. Becker straddles Colaizzi’s phenomenology in a way that it is uncomfortable for him. He must ask how is he to regard himself. What is he to make of his internal experiences, or his murderous acts? How is he to understand how other people respond to him? Becker is problematical for any social institution which deals with crime, punishment and justice, and disturbing for a social construction of good and evil, or sanity and madness. Becker awakes the anxiety about the Other because of his ambiguity, our ambivalence and the dread of uncertainty.

The film is particularly interesting in the construction of the Other for additional reasons. Peter Lorre, for whom this was probably the defining role of his career, was not German, but Hungarian. Although it would not have been apparent to an audience reading sub-titles, his accent would have certainly made an impact on a German-speaking audience. The assumptions that may be readily associated with the accent with which one speaks are not restricted to any one language. For a German in the late Weimar and early Nazi period a Hungarian voice would have been that of an alien. The manner of speech would act as a
signifier of difference, of an intruder, of someone from the outside who was poisoning the core. Aliens are the worm in the bud. One can almost hear the thoughts of the audience thinking that Becker, despite the name, is not even a proper German.

The inherent problem for xenophobic impulses is evident in a sub-text to the film which questions our ability to identify the Other when it is in our midst. How are we tell who is safe and who is not? If we do not have markers and signifiers we have no way of knowing, and if we have no certainty we may begin to lose the full sense of ourselves, especially when the definition of the edges begin to fade. We cannot be sure who is genuine and who may be masquerading, and we may have to develop tests and physical criteria. At various historical times and in certain contexts it may become important, and common practice, to judge Jewishness by the length of someone’s nose, to categorise race according to the proportion of forebears who were black or aboriginal, to divine homosexuality from a speech pattern, to deduce criminality from the bumps on the head, or to identify murderers by of the way they look. As Norden (1994 p.1) suggests, when a film audience sees a character with a disability or peculiarity it is likely to assume the worst.

Some authors (Fleming & Manvell 1985) have suggested that Lorre’s physicality is important in his performance and his convincing portrayal. He is noticeably small, but slightly puffy and girlish in the face. However, although the sexual aspect of his crimes is left unexplained, it does not seem to be a wholly persuasive argument. It is probably more important that the intensity of his expression, the sustained fixity in his eyes and the way in which he almost tears at himself as the demons torture him as if he can rip the voices physically out of his head are all credit to his acting and his complete embodiment of the character.

However, there does appear to be a moral centre to the film, even if it is somewhat conditional and layered. From one perspective we can see that the mentally ill are dangerous, uncontrollable and unpredictable. They cannot be assumed to be safe with our children or trustworthy. We know, because Becker deliberately duped little girls with gifts of ice creams and balloons, that they can be sly and cunning. However, the very tricks that he used also led to his downfall: his whistling of the Peer Gynt theme is recognised by the blind balloon-seller. We are therefore presented with one resolution in which evil cannot triumph. We are also shown that if we do not have the rule of law, respect for the judicial process and a judicial process that deserves respect, we can easily slip into mob rule, and if in a validation of Acton’s dictum, we fear that although all power corrupts, absolute power
corrupts absolutely. We must have a system of checks and balances. While it may be laudable to assume that every accused person is innocent until proven guilty, we may be wise to assume that every institution is incompetent until proved otherwise. The allusions to the incompetence of psychiatrists and the success of the underworld in tracking down the murderer when the police are either helpless or lagging behind suggest that scepticism is a healthy and self-preserving attitude.

Kracauer (1948) notes how the particularities of the period may also be taken into account in a complete reading of the film. There are references to the predominant movements within German psychiatry of the period, most notably a tension between a descriptive orientation which favoured close examination and categorisation and alternative psychosexual or social explanations; and these debates are still unresolved. Similarly, there appears to be foreshadowing of the Nazi sense of certainty and decisiveness in direct action which will cleanse a society of moral ills, although this may be something that is read into the film more by post-Nazi viewers using the benefits of hindsight. Nevertheless, M challenges and problematises simplistic constructions of the Other. It makes clear that notions of good and evil, nature and nurture, certainty and doubt, sanity and madness, science and the irrational, compassion and care, the social and the individual, responsibility and excuses, of justice and retribution, ourselves and the Other, are all a little more complex than they might first appear.

**Devilishly Tricky Others**

*There was an enormous void risen in Nature's plan. Who or what should fill it? The Christian Church was ready with an answer: the Demon, everywhere the Demon - Ubique Daemon.*


Although the connection between the Devil, possession and Madness is well-documented as a historical rather than contemporary model of understanding (Szasz 1974, Woods 1975), cinematic representations are quite rare outside of historically situated features such as *The Devils* (Dir. Russell 1971), although the symbolic nature of ECT as shock treatment or the analogy of the snake pit in *The Snake Pit* (Dir. Litvak 1948) may owe something to the image of the driving out of demons. Possession, however, is not uncommon, as in *The Exorcist* (Dir. Friedkin 1975), neither are appearances by the Devil himself, but there are
few instances of demonic possession directly causing mental illness. However, as Burnett & Martell (1932) show in a book of little contemporary merit but some historical interest, The Devil's Camera, there is a line of criticism that links the very nature of the cinema, or at least of the popular and salacious kind, as a tool of the Devil. They cite Atkinson writing in The Methodist Times as saying that "Hollywood knows what excites morbid interest in people ...there is nothing haphazard about it." (ibid p.3). Of course this perspective sees itself as more concerned with morality than formal mental illness but, nevertheless, the cinema, because of the power of its reach and its unchecked progress, is seen as a threat to the moral order, as a subversive element. Civilisation, as it is constructed, is endangered. The dedication of the book, which is "to the sanity of the white races", begins to conflate a number of perspectives of the Other, as does the characterisation of the cinema as "the Hun of the modern world" (ibid p.12).

Although Fleming & Manvell (1985 pp.57ff) identify possession as one of the principal characterisations of madness, and they argue that as possession involves not being ourselves it becomes "a major aspect of the phenomenon of madness" (p.68), it seems to be a difficult argument to sustain unless possession is extended to incorporate evil forces, as they do in Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (Dir. Mamoulian 1931). However, the evil that Mr Hyde embodies is the evil that lurks within us; it is not some outside force that takes possession of him. If Mr Hyde inhabits another world of experience, it is a subterranean or subconscious not an alien one. Consequently, it is uncomfortable to fit Dr Jekyll in the category of the possessed.

The Devil, Satan himself, may make cameo appearances in films which deal with the bargaining of souls, the satanic pact. This is not a particularly rare theme, as examples such as The Picture of Dorian Gray (Dir. Lewin 1945) or Angel Heart (Dir. Parker 1987) show. However, they are not so much concerned with the Devil as a cause of madness, although the temptations may drive us out of our senses, nor necessarily concerned with the madness of those who sell their souls. The theme of such films is more concerned with the moral choices of individuals, and those who succumb are seen as morally flawed rather than mad.

The Exorcist (Dir. Friedkin 1975) presents a slightly different case in that it is clearly about a demonic possession. The overlap of possession with psychiatry is underlined by having first a psychiatrist attempt, and fail, to hypnotise the possessed Regan in a clear reference to a Freudian understanding of hysteria, and later a priest, who is also a psychiatrist, attempt
to heal her. Unfortunately, he becomes possessed himself and leaps to his death from Regan’s bedroom window. The only person who seems able to help is the “enigmatic and mystical Father Merrin” (Fleming & Manvell 1985 p.68), whose methods are more in tune with the supernatural than the scientific.

The historical moment at which The Exorcist appeared, 1973, as with One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest two years later, may be seen to have a considerable bearing on the representation of psychiatric themes. Although hospital psychiatric care was largely dominated by biological orientations and pharmacological treatments (Shorter 1997), there was still a continuing and influential anti-psychiatry critique (Basaglia 1981). However, by 1970 it was estimated that one woman in-five (20%) and one man in thirteen (6%) in the United States were using minor tranquillisers and sedatives, most commonly benzodiazepines (Parry et al 1973). In 1969 the two top selling prescription drugs in the United States were Chlordiazepoxide (Librium) and Diazepam (Valium) which had been, up to the introduction of Fluoxetine (Prozac) the single most successful drug in pharmacological history (Sternbach 1980). Anxiety over the “psychiatricization (sic) of everyday life” began to emerge in the literature (Breggin 1993). Realisation that there were still some things before which the scientific enterprise seemed impotent, and a reaction against the incipient reductiveness of biological psychiatry were beginning to erode the certainty of the established techno-psychiatric order. Furthermore, as a result of this representation, Fleming & Manvell (1985) suggest that we are “left with little faith in rationality” (p.68). Identifying themselves as the audience, as to some extent all writers must do, they feel that they must “deduce that a strong tendency exists to ascribe undesirable feelings to the supernatural” (ibid p.68). While this may be an intuitively persuasive argument, however, it only begins to account for the internal forces being let loose among us when we consider it as a representation of the Other rather than the Devil per se.

The problems raised in a secular conscience by the identification of evil with the devil, and the devil with a theology, has caused some authors to reconsider the necessity of the nexus (Oppenheimer 1996). Although it may be possible to apply alternative labels such as criminal, deviant or sociopathic to those who so obviously and repeatedly transgress, Oppenheimer suggests that none of them encapsulate the entire meaning and implications of “evil”. Neither do they necessarily capture the full sense of evil as it is actually experienced by people; Oppenheimer wants to give “the first systematic exploration of evil as people actually experience it” (1996 p.ix), and he wants to give a name to it. He offers a brief
working definition of evil as that “which wreaks havoc in an environment conducive to annihilation” (1996 p.ix), but this is not the chaos of an accident which might be explicable, rationalisable or forgivable. Further, he argues, evil can be taken to refer “to a unique type of human behaviour (which) ...is familiar (and) also has a horrifying character of its own” (ibid p.ix) and is a “seductive nightmare recognizable to millions” (ibid p.ix); this is much closer to the conception of the role that evil may play in the construction of the Other.

Moreover, the evidence he presents to substantiate his case acknowledges its debt to literature, legal histories and psychology, and “most of it is assembled from film” (ibid p.ix). He says that the “chief reason for this is that the perfection of cinematography over the past hundred years has led to a cinematic, or at least cinematic-influenced, perception of reality” (ibid p.ix). The cinematic representation of evil is seen to both create and reflect public concerns, and the way in which the characters are presented physically and emotionally, allows us to identify evil in our real lives. There is little doubt, judging from the tone of his argument, that Oppenheimer is talking from a sense of reflection on his personal experience as well as attempting to move the consideration of evil and the demonic out of the restrictive provinces of theology and philosophy and into a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary position.

Oppenheimer (1996) only seems partially successful in his endeavours, but what he does achieve is significant. It is easier to separate evil from its causal relationship with the Devil than it is for him to exclude the moral component, not that it is totally clear that the latter is his purpose. He would like to suggest that evil is identifiable, and if something becomes identifiable by its actions it may also become predictable. He would like to think that we may be able to identify incipient evil and so prevent its full fruition. This argument has difficulty, however, in accounting for the unknowability which defies intelligibility and so often characterises the Other. Sometimes, we may not be aware of it until it is too late (although there is often the character whose warnings are ignored), and this is clearly a favourite motif of the cinematic representation because of the tension it can lend to the drama. It also suggests that from a semiotic perspective, rather than the empirical one Oppenheimer hopes to suggest, Otherness and evil are not fixed, but interpreted. This is a prime reason why the representations are crucial to the notion of evil, and Oppenheimer’s search for evil seems to resemble nothing so much as van Helsing, the hunter of Dracula, telling a disbelieving world that “there are vampires out there”.

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The term evil, from Oppenheimer’s (1996) position, is not to be seen as an empty metaphysical construction dreamed up by unworldly philosophers, but to have identifiable behavioural characteristics. Oppenheimer, like the films we all watch, wants us to believe that it has real manifestations in a real world; but the question remains of how we are to know it, how we are to recognise it. He notes the seductive power that many of those who characterise evil seem to wield over more ordinary people, either individually or en masse and, indeed, considers that the cinema’s fascination with the portrayal of evil may be one of the last great secret pleasures. He also considers the psychological dominance of some individuals and the fascination they can evoke, but at the centre of this is the sense that in some way, although these people are different to the rest of us, there is always something of ourselves that we can see in them. In that way even the purest evil has to be human in some way. Even if we fear it, we must live with the seed of doubt that there is something of the Other in us all. It becomes apparent, therefore, that the ways in which the Devil and notions of Evil are represented are more usefully regarded as particular manifestations or characteristics of the Other, and attempting to give then an empirical reality, an identifiable form may detract and distract away from the importance of their signifying power.

**Recognising the Other**

*man and man alone is properly mad*


As has been discussed, the notion of the madman being the Other is a central tenet in the representation of Madness in film, and this, as Hyler et al (1991) note, contributes substantially to the stigmatization of mentally ill people. Otherness takes on a number of different guises, and while at times it has been portrayed as a dark part of everyone’s psychological make up, or associated with those on the extreme borders of human ability as in the case of genius, or something that is essentially alien to us, or is found in the representation of gender and sexuality, or may show itself through barbarous acts, the common factor is the significance that the Other has for a sense of identity.

It has been suggested that a full conception of who we are is not possible without knowing who we are not. This is not to say that difference, even unchanging physical difference such as skin colour or gender, has always been seen in the same way historically. Such well-documented examples as the attributions given to the experience of epilepsy or the
interpretation of the hearing of voices (Szasz 1974, Porter 1989) clearly demonstrate this view. Historical context and cultural values, allied with the dominant representations, contribute to a perspective in which, although an Other is always present, just what constitutes any particular other changes. The ideological context within which a specific Other appears is essential for a developed understanding of its meaning, its place in a culture and its signifying rôle.

The cinematic representations of Madness are replete with Others because the mad are always, in some respect, Other. Even if the mad person is not physically dangerous, even if the madness is temporary, the state and the experience is one of Otherness, or so we are led to believe. When it is suggested that a germ of madness may lurk within us all, only requiring the right circumstances to show itself, as in the extremes of war, madness is not portrayed as a desirable state. Those who recover may go on to lead a normal life, but for most it will not be serene. Madness, even temporary madness, is a life-changing event; for those who do not recover there is only misery, perhaps hubris and often death. The contrasts between Willard and Kurtz, the two major protagonists in Apocalypse Now (Dir. Coppola 1979), both of whom are American army officers in an alien land, both of whom are faced with extreme circumstances and impossible missions, both of whom undertake physical journeys into the jungle and metaphorical journeys into themselves, both of whom confront madness, and both of whom see himself in the other, illustrates the point. Willard, who emerges from his experience, is a scarred survivor who will never live with himself peacefully, whereas Kurtz, who succumbs, must die, for the moral centre of the film and the sensibilities of the audience. It takes someone with the sadistic humour of Hitchcock to subvert this slightly in Psycho (1960), by having Marion Crane killed when she is on the cusp of redemption. Only when madness is refashioned into eccentricity, as in Shine (Dir. Hicks 1995), or absorbed into an acceptable marginalisation as in Bad Boy Bubby (Dir. de Heer 1993), can the experience be seen to have a tranquil outcome.

While this chapter has been primarily concerned with exploring the notion of the Other, and its various forms, it is pertinent to recall previous chapters in which the importance of representative frames in popular culture in general, and films in particular, was discussed, and a critical postmodernist perspective, which emphasises contextualised plurality, was advocated. The Other, by virtue of being mutable, is inextricably bound up with both these aspects; representative frames appear to us on the screen, and act within the context of ideology and values to present for us the way Madness is understood as Otherness, and Otherness is mutually bound up with how we see ourselves. However, the individual’s
experience of Madness is not fully explained by its location within Otherness, and it is appropriate to begin to move in that direction. The history and nature of the transformation that may occur in Madness, is, on occasion seen as significant for those who seemingly retain their sanity.
CHAPTER FIVE
MADNESS, REDEMPTION AND TRANSCENDENCE

_He that sinneth in the sight of his maker shall fall into the hands of the physician._

_Ecclesiasticus 38:15_

It has been noted that there are numerous historical examples, often religious, of the notion that a person may be redeemed or experience transcendence as a result of (a passing) Madness. It is as if the temporary insanity may allow a glimpse into another world to which entry is ordinarily denied. Other traditions revere dreams experienced in a drug or trance-induced state (something of which Kesey, with his advocacy of the psychedelic experience, was well aware), and there is a substantial Western tradition of flagellation and redemption. So, if real Madness, rather than the temporary kind, is a sign of sin, suffering can redeem the sin, and if the Madness is temporary it can serve as a salutary lesson. It would seem that altered states, and Madness is certainly that, are seen to allow temporary, and it is important that it is only temporary, Otherness, and knowledge of Otherness is part of the creation and comprehension of identity. This may be interpreted as a spiritual awakening, as in Shamanism where the “insanity” is privileged. However, “insanity” with redemptive qualities can be portrayed in a positive light. It can be seen not so much as an illness in need of urgent treatment, but as a less explored facet of what it can mean to be human. This Madness is not the chronic schizophrenia and personality disintegration of the back wards of _The Snake Pit_ (Dir. Litvak 1948), but something altogether more benign. Within the novel _One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest_ (Kesey first published 1962), as opposed to either the play (Wasserman 1963) or the film (Dir. Forman 1975) where the tendency is much less marked, Chief Bromden’s hallucinations indicate some sympathy with this position. There is, when contextualising the novel within Kesey’s own life, a suggestion that psychedelic drugs can mimic this liberated state where the controlling conscious mind is attenuated and the deeper reality can come through (Boyd 1972). As Huxley (1956) was to document a few years before Kesey, and Castaneda (1968) was to echo a few years afterwards, this was not an isolated sentiment. It was felt that this bordered on a spiritual experience, and so drew a connection between aspects more normally associated with madness, such a hallucinations, with a deeper insight into the essential human condition. Even a more sensational treatment such as the shaman dreams of Jim Morrison (Val Kilmer) in Oliver Stone’s film of the story of _The Doors_ (1991) is informed by the same sentiments. As a consequence of this cultural theme many films of the period, and later, explore similar territory, and are therefore important for the following examination.
Lost Souls, Found Souls

Long ago people were put into snake pits so they would be shocked back into sanity as they had been shocked into madness.

Virginia Cunningham (Olivia de Havilland) in The Snake Pit (Dir. Littvak 1948).

Ever since we learnt of the story of the madness of Nebuchadnezzar there has been a tradition, albeit not a dominant one, that Madness can be likened to a journey of the soul out of which a better, wiser, more insightful, perhaps even reformed person can emerge. The implication is that if one is a lost soul, one can enter the labyrinth of Madness, confront the Minotaur of the subconscious, and “find oneself”. Even Freud (Dir. Huston 1962) has its eponymous hero entering a strongly metaphorical cave in his pursuit of knowledge, for here is a man prepared to go to unexplored depths for the sake of his vocation (Fig.19). A romantic notion informs this metaphor, even if, in many cases, most serious mental illness brings more misery and sense of fragmentation than luminous insight. The celebrated case of Mary Barnes (Barnes & Berke 1973) contains a similar message that one can pass through madness and, in some senses, in order to recover fully one must be allowed to go through it, although again the metaphor may now be more significant than the prescription and for every Mary Barnes there is a back ward filled with less hopeful cases. That is not to dismiss the deep humanity that often informed the thought of Laing (1968), and drew attention to the subjective position of the designated patient. Indeed, Laing’s desire to reconfigure the construction of mental illness to acknowledge philosophical and ontological dilemmas continues to inform much of the debate about the representation of madness, even in the light of the advances of biological psychiatry. Consequently, it is becoming less of a question of what mental illness may be in terms of its physical character, and of greater importance to consider what it means to the society in which we live. It is necessary to confront the questions of representation raised by recent developments and paradigmatic changes in psychological theorising and psycho-pharmacology which have made it possible for psychiatry to make active and passive decisions, acts of commission and omission, about what and who and how to treat, and, if deconstructed, these observations lead to the question why.

Although treatment of the mentally ill, rather than just care of them, was always part of the agenda in psychiatry, and informed much of the great drive towards the establishment of the great Victorian asylums, the emerging critique of Laing (1968), Cooper (1971) and
others, which was substantially developed by Scull (1989), posed the question about just what psychiatric hospitals, or any form of institutional care, can or should be doing, and whether treatment was always the most ethical option. It may be necessary to consider that the madness may have served a purpose for the individual, and that, by intervening in ways that were not fully understood, psychiatry may be interfering in some grander plan. If some people will recover from their madness with or without treatment, almost despite rather than because of it, the role of psychiatry may take on more symbolic meanings than have often been recognised. While appreciating this perspective, psychiatrists, especially the Dr Wonderfuls of Irving Schneider (1987), do assume an important role in the experience of Madness, but they can become guides who encourage the putative patient to trust both in the experience and in the guide. It is noteworthy that the term putative is used because, as often as not, the patient is not the only one who changes or recovers as a result of the experience. Both “doctor” and “patient” may have undertaken many similar journeys in the past, and sometimes they have learnt that they can also become fellow travellers.

The journey into and out of Madness receives a famous treatment in The Snake Pit (Dir. Litvak 1948), a dramatisation of Mary Ward’s novel, first published in 1945, which was extremely popular at the time and in many ways was an even stronger indictment of the psychiatric system. Purportedly based on Ward’s own experience of eight or nine months in a state mental hospital (Anon. Newsweek 1948), the novel was a best-seller. It was serialised in Harper’s Bazaar, became a the choice for the Book of the Month Club, was published in condensed form by Readers’ Digest and was translated into several languages. It was not viewed as overly sensational at the time, indeed its restraint was praised by Frederic Wertham (1946), Director of the Psychiatric Service of Queens General Hospital and President of the Association for the Advancement of Psychiatry. In a very positive magazine review, he considered it more powerful, and perhaps all the more shocking for portraying Juniper Hill (the hospital in question) as “far above the average” (p.484). We might ask, if that was a good one, what on earth were the bad ones like? Roffman & Purdy (1981) call the film Hollywood’s first serious exposition of mental illness, but add that it “simply dresses up psychology in problem film conventions” (p.260). Nevertheless, it does have a reformist consciousness.

The central character, Virginia Cunningham, an aspiring and socially concerned writer, is already in hospital when the film opens. We learn, through a series of flashbacks interwoven with psychiatric interviews of herself and her new husband, Robert, that she has become increasingly distressed both somatically and emotionally, until, on the
significant date of May 12th, she finally collapses, sobbing that she cannot seem to love anybody. However, we are not given a clear idea of Virginia’s symptoms whereas in the novel she puns on her name and a magazine title (Virginia Quarterly - Virginia Hung (sic), Drawn and Quarterly), has thought disorder and obvious delusions. Throughout the opening scene in the film the doctor’s voice seems to Virginia to be almost an hallucination, she is not in a state of full awareness and consciousness and we are to learn later that she has been given the diagnosis of “Dementia Praecox Catatonia”. The interview is carried out efficiently and patiently but without any particular dynamic warmth. We have the impression that at least these are competent, orthodox professionals, probably overworked, but still struggling against the odds and trying their best, a tone more in keeping with what we see twenty years later in Wiseman’s documentary Titicut Follies (1967) than with any life-affirming point of human contact. At the end of the interview with her husband, Robert, the psychiatrist recommends with calm assurance a course of ECT, to allow her “to make contact, to get in touch with the real problems”, and Robert gives his consent. Like Virginia, he puts himself in their hands.

Virginia then appears to spend some months in hospital undergoing a routinised treatment régime that expands to include “narco-synthesis” and sedative drugs (of the pre-phenothiazine era), hypnosis (another short-cut to the troubled psyche), restraints and, in a particularly memorable scene of hallucinogenic power, hydrotherapy. There is also, and again the drive for resolution in conventional Hollywood representations becomes important, a Freudian detective story. Carried on by the shingly humane Dr Kik, who is much more in keeping with a cinematic Dr Wonderful than the figure in the novel, it sets out to uncover the reasons behind Virginia’s illness. Half of this was however, not a completely unrealistic portrayal of psychiatry as it was at the time. Multiple and somatic treatments were still the most regularly used therapies, whereas the profile of psychoanalysis as an active therapy if not an orientation is, if anything, over-estimated (Fleming & Manvell 1985 pp.45-48). The contrast that was being drawn between the Psychoanalyst’s private consulting rooms with its comfortable couch and bourgeois furnishings and the over-crowded and frightening state system is beginning to become an important motif. The ward, quite realistically, contains a dormitory full of beds crammed together, the nurses’ station has bars on the windows, the hospital is compared to a zoo where one can feel sorry for the animals (while watching and still being apart from them), or a prison (which at one point Virginia thinks it is) with the Doctors as the wardens and the nurses as the guards. There is a sense of degradation although the film shrinks from
showing toilets without doors and the nurses handing out rations of toilet paper, though such scenes appear in the novel.

The hospital and its resources are stretched to the limit. It has “too little of everything except patients”, and Dr Kik’s methods are seen as a luxury it can’t afford. When Virginia is brought before a panel of psychiatrists to consider her discharge, despite Dr Kik’s protestations about the progress being made and still being made, her mental fragility is emphasised by a swirling confusion during which, as we learn later, she eventually bit the jabbing and accusatory finger of a badgering, questioning senior psychiatrist. The audience is left to work out the Freudian symbolism of this act (and it must be assumed that this was not beyond its ken), but the result for Virginia is that she is transferred to Ward 12, “for difficult cases”. Virginia seems to improve for a while, is transferred to a pre-discharge ward, but is still without Dr Kik. It is this deprivation that provokes a crisis in which she locks herself in the bathroom. When she is tricked by the nurses into coming out, she is immediately, without any explanation or discussion, bundled up in a strait jacket and taken to the worst ward of them all, Ward 33, the eponymous snake pit.

The scene in which Virginia sees Ward 33 as an entry to hell, and so those who enter must abandon all hope, is filmed with a swirling overhead shot which totally disorientates the audience and induces nausea and vertigo to underline the nightmarish tone of her experience. The imagery is a mixture of Doré and Dante and populated by gargoyles and grotesques. In this place patients seem to live in cells not rooms, no-one wears individual clothes and there is an incipient threat of violence. It is clearly no place for a nice middle-class girl to be. It is all filmed with great vigour and the stunning cinematography was an additional reason for the immense impact the film had at the time of its release.

Virginia is surrounded by the most obviously mad of patients, and, if a previous reference is recalled, the cast seems to suggest Hogarth’s Rake’s Progress (1763) (Fig.4) come to life. However, in the next stage of the drama, Dr Kik re-enters the scene, and this leads to her eventual recovery. The ward of lost causes has the advantage that as no-one really seems to care about the patients, nobody interferes with anything Dr Kik might want to do. Together they begin to unravel the mystery of her illness. Patiently and sympathetically Dr Kik guides Virginia’s recovery of her memory, always in his office where, in a significant part of the mise en scène, a portrait of Freud hangs in homage and mutual approval (as it does in other films such as in Dr Bernhardt’s office in The Day the Earth Stood Still.(Dir. Wise 1951) and in Dr Benjamin’s (Dudley Moore) office in Lovesick (Dir. Brickman
1983). Dr Kik's interviews can be usefully compared with the scenes of analysis in the biographical film *Freud* (Dir. Huston 1962) (Fig.20) but not, perhaps with Freud’s real technique, a point which emphasises the cinematic version of “Hollywood psychiatry”. Dr Kik (like the cinematic Dr Freud) looks deep into his patient’s eyes, fixing her with a knowing gaze, seeing into her soul. He encourages Virginia to begin writing again and she commences her confessional with the words that “Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of Virginia Cunningham”, and we all know who the good man is. In a sequence not in the book but indicative of the prevailing Hollywood conception of psychiatry, we move through a simplified Electra complex, a case of repressed guilt over the death in a car accident of her first fiancé, Gideon, on one May 12th (the unconscious anniversary of which she was later to commemorate in the most dramatic way) and her final realisation that “husbands and fathers can’t be the same thing”.

The film ends with a patients’ dance at which Virginia, on the brink of discharge, dances with Dr Kik as a woman dancing with a man, not as a patient dancing with a carer. She tells him that another reason she knows she is getting well is that she is not in love with him any more, and he replies that she never really was, a conversation that alludes to and skips around a suggestion of transference and counter-transference by re-affirming the impression that Dr Kik is married to his profession and his patients take the place of children. As Robert arrives to take a restored Virginia away and to give her back her wedding ring, (she is once more fit to be a wife, and she wants to go back to that life as well), the other patients, in a most plaintive moment, sing *Going Home* to the tune of Dvorak’s *New World Symphony*. However, we know that although Virginia may be going home, and may be going out into a new world, Dr Kik is already home and the poor anonymous patients are not going anywhere.

The impression that *The Snake Pit* gives of the experience of Madness is that although the tunnel is dark and very scary, if you go through it when you emerge from the other end you will be a stronger, better, more secure, happier, more insightful and more content person than you could have ever without the experience. It suggests that, given time and understanding, even the most severely ill patient can be helped. The case history with which Virginia is furnished contains many classical elements of psychoanalytic theory, the father-child relationship, guilt and sublimation, and creates an aura of scientific credibility. Such was the success and the enthusiasm for the film that, for Fishbein (1979), “seldom have reel life and real life coalesced with such effusion” (p.641). However, it does much to demystify mental illness as something that happens to someone else. Virginia observes that
people “go to a psychiatrist as secretly as they go to an abortionist” and that “it was not an insane asylum, it was a mental hospital (where) the ladies had not lost their minds; they had had nervous breakdowns”. Even this point is further subverted by Virginia’s perception that “only the wealthy and very brilliant had nervous breakdowns” (presumably, the rest, the poor and the ordinary were simply mad).

The heroes of films like *The Snake Pit* are the refugent Dr Kiks, the Dr Wonderfuls and the potential, if not always the reality, of modern psychiatry. The talking cure leads to understanding, and recovery comes with understanding. The villains are the institution itself and any society that would allow it. The staff sometimes seem to be cruel in their unfeeling brutality, but they themselves are brutalised, oppressed and under-resourced, while Dr Kik’s peers are more often autocratic, despotic and callous in their certainty. As a result *The Snake Pit* offers both a moral of the psychological strength of the nourished, not to say cherished individual, and an important and highly controversial attack on the inhumanity of institutionalised hospital systems. Although, as Fishbein (1979) notes, it suggests a Freudian remedy to a social problem, at least where the conditions of psychiatric hospitals are concerned, it should be understood and given due credit for the fact, that it did pose the question as a social problem. In this it did not stand alone, and Fleming & Manvell (1985) detect a tradition dating back through Dorothea Dix to the moral treatment of the Eighteenth Century, which was reactivated by the crisis in psychiatric care institutions and in psychiatric ideology brought about in part by the condition of many returned servicemen from World War II. Psychiatric care may have been in a scandalous state for a hundred and fifty years but the film, with its reach, its publicity and its drama, brought it into the public sphere in a way that had not been possible before. However, as a document or critique the film is not without its weaknesses from a contemporary position. As shown by the final acceptance of Virginia as a restored, married woman, it may not have critiqued the construction of the feminine as much as more recent critics would like, and it may, despite Virginia’s success as a writer, tend to support a patriarchal world-view. Nevertheless, that should not detract from the importance of its impact and its significance as a representation of madness.

Darryl Zanuck, the producer, is cited by Roffman & Purdy (1981 p.261) as claiming credit for up to 26 states in America changing their mental health laws as a result of the scandal raised by the film. The image was becoming more real than actuality, or at least more important in the public imagination, and the legislative reaction to the image is indicative of a tacit understanding of this. However, as Frances Farmer (1974), both a film star and a
psychiatric patient of the period (she was in hospital from 1945 to 1953 and suffered the full gamut of treatment from ice-baths to padded cells) and like Virginia a socially concerned activist, pointed out in her autobiography, also later filmed as Frances (Dir. Clifford 1982), not every case had a happy ending. She felt there was still some way to go before psychiatry, at least the real world rather than the Hollywood version, could be sure of its humanity. As the examples of the unreformed Norman in Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960), the mute Janice in Family Life (Dir. Loach 1971) or the emotional scarring and suicide of Mark Lewis in Peeping Tom (Dir. Powell 1960) illustrate, not everyone finds themselves through madness.

The case of Titicut Follies (Dir. Wiseman 1967) bears an instructive comparison because although it was a documentary, at least in the sense that the people featured were real and the situations were not fictitious, it is certainly concerned with benighted souls and in many scenes, including patient parties, exercise yards and the back-wards it seems to directly echo The Snake Pit (Dir. Litvak 1948) and met with a similar degree of reaction from the psychiatric community but without the same public acclaim. Photographed in a starkly realistic style, and with many repeated scenes and images, the film was seen as just as subversive to the ideology of the dominant social interest as any fiction. Although Charles Gaughan, the Superintendent, was, in the initial stages, seemingly quite keen to "educate the citizenry about the variety of service at Bridgewater and the difficulties the staff encountered" (Anderson & Benson 1991 p.11), when faced with the final cut the Commonwealth of Massachusetts took Wiseman to court to restrict distribution and exhibition of the film on the grounds that he had "violated an oral contract to allow the state editorial control over the film and that he invaded the privacy of an inmate" (Anderson & Belson 1991 p.4, pp.161-173). In its judgement, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts was so concerned about the impression given by the film that it insisted on a coda in which it was stated that conditions in the prison had improved since the film had been made; something which Wiseman does with an end-note of ironic flatness. However, it is not difficult to see what perturbed the authorities. Apart from modern day dress there is little to distinguish the treatment of the inmates from that shown in the final plate of Hogarth's Rake's Progress (1763) (Fig.4), which has begun to take on some of the attributes of a documentary itself. Indeed, some of the characters seem to reappear: men are shown being routinely stripped and walked through the corridors, some scream and stamp, some are kept naked in cells which were bare except for a matress on the floor, one man, who later died, is force-fed when a naso-gastric tube is inserted against his will by a doctor who casually dribbles his cigarette ash, toothless men grinning grotesquely and posturing
freakishly, sit aimlessly in corridors while others gaze vacantly into the unfocussed distance, men are physically restrained and subjected to a regime that continually undermines humane values. When the inmates are given some time to wander in the exercise yard, it is again Hogarthian as the camera picks out an array of characters who are medieval in their madness. There is a man with paranoid religious delusions who rants continually to no-one but the birds, a man harangues an amused crowd with communist dogma, a man stands on his head and sings hymns, a man, dressed only in a dhoti, continually marches up and down exercising vigorously, a man fidgets alone in the middle of the yard distractedly masturbating, a man stands by himself and tunelessly plays *My Blue Heaven* on a trombone; it is a picture of despair framed by a host of slouching, dispirited inmates squatting in doorways and against walls but having no contact with each other. The staff are seen as treating the patients either in the most casually mechanical way, or as something of a nuisance, if they happen to challenge authority, or as infantile as, on his birthday, one patient is serenaded, without any sense of irony, with a chorus of *Have You Ever Been Lonely, Have You Ever Been Blue?* Wiseman’s film, and the reaction it brought from the authorities, clearly shows the way in which the representations of Madness both frighten and disturb because, whether in fiction or documentary, they force us to confront ourselves. It is truly an island of lost souls, while the staff may be brutalised, it is the patients who, having lost their humanity, really suffer.

**Suffering and Sin**

*Do I get a crown of thorns?*

McMurphy (Jack Nicholson) just prior to receiving ECT. *From One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Dir. Forman 1975)

In 1975, almost thirty years after *The Snake Pit* (Dir. Litvak 1948), Milos Forman filmed a version of Ken Kesey’s novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Although the character of McMurphy has been considered earlier in relation to the anti-psychiatry critique, especially concerning the individual and freedom, the theme of his transcendence in the film, and the extent to which a Christ analogy can be interpreted invites further examination. It may be, as Boyd (1972) said, “a parable of costly grace” (p.161), although admittedly he was speaking of the book rather than the film, and also in connection with *Wise Blood* (Dir. Huston 1979), a similarly powerful book by Flannery O’Connor that became a film, as a depiction of a visceral religious monomania.
To fit the progress of McMurphy within the familiar conception of the Christ story, rather than necessarily the exact references in the scriptures, does not require a great stretch of the imagination. Into a world of lost souls and spiritual emptiness comes a stranger, an outsider whom the authorities would call mad. Here we are presented with a man who challenges the oppression of the controlling regime and for this he is persecuted. The substitution of ECT and a leucotomy for scourging and crucifixion emphasises the point. Not only is he singled out for special treatment, he becomes symbolic to the hospital staff and patients alike, although for different reasons. In the film we see a man who re-invigorates his fellow inmates and promises them a future paradise. We know that it may be an Eden full of beer, baseball games and happy women but it is made to seem within reach if only they can pick up their beds and walk. Although he is denied by some of the other patients, whom Boyd (1972) unambiguously calls disciples, it seems that once they start regarding themselves as self-actualising human beings and not as helpless or powerless victims with no control over their lives, the world becomes a place of possibilities rather than oppression, and it becomes something to be engaged with and experienced rather than hidden from and feared. McMurphy’s rhetorical manner and example appears to be able to revitalise the lame (that is the psychologically crippled) and to make the blind see in a metaphorical sense. Although McMurphy is, in some respects, a fraud and a charlatan, he may even come to believe in his own destiny, he makes it possible for the meek to believe that they will inherit the earth.

He is a man who dominates and inspires by virtue of the charisma of his personality rather than his temporal authority, indeed, in many respects, he is quite abject. He acts as the fisher of men, literally taking them out on a boat to prove the point. He shows the power of belief over daily reality when he subverts Nurse Ratched’s control over the television by inventing the commentary to the World Series baseball game (Fig.9). Clearly, if you believe you can enter the kingdom of heaven. He is telling the establishment and the audience alike that whatever happens to him physically, nothing can take away or control his thoughts (of course, he may have been mistaken about that).

Within this context what passes for cure may also be interpreted as adjustment. McMurphy is a radical and is a threat to the established order. Both his rebellion and its suppression can be seen to be lesson for the others. It is necessary to make an example of him, and in that we see that society and the psychiatric establishment may sometimes act in defence of its own position rather than for the good of its clients. Total client-centred therapy (Rogers
1960) by transparent therapists (Jourard 1971) still seems some way off. Those in charge, principally Nurse Ratched rather than the more spineless Dr Spivey, are not only without compassion, they are without insight. As a result of his impertinence McMurphy is punished and scourged, but this is not without a degree of knowing self-sacrifice. His is a death that will eventually lead to the liberation of those who have the courage to follow. It may not be certain that McMurphy died for the sins of his fellow inmates, but he may have died so that they might live. There may be a few casualties along the way but, as the Chief demonstrates, the future is there, just beyond the window.

McMurphy is presented to the audience as a liberating saviour but also, and here there is an important departure that should be seen in the light of the developing interest in the image of Christ the man, as a flawed one. He embraces life in a rude and raw state. He has human appetites and human weaknesses but he is also more in touch with the true kernel of humanness than any of the emotionally constricted staff or the emasculated patients. Whether or not he is physically resurrected is left unclear but we know that his spirit will live on. Boyd (1972) comments that “as with Jesus, McMurphy’s influence on his disciples is stronger in his absence than in his presence” (p.164).

We are left with the impression that not only are his fellow patients better for having known him, but that McMurphy himself is a better person for his suffering. However, the price he has to pay for his liberation, for his moment of grace, is his death, about which there is an ambiguous foreshadowing because it assumed that most of the audience will be familiar not only with the Christ story and its resolution but also the necessity for a tragic death in the creation of a martyr, and so will probably be beginning to anticipate the direction of the narrative. Brode (1987 p.186) feels that it is possible to identify Harding as the Judas amongst the disciples, and so introduce a note of betrayal to juxtapose with the true believers such as Cheswick, Bibbit and the Chief. McMurphy becomes a martyr and, through sacrifice and suffering, an icon of the struggle of the individual, of the essential human quality, against the stultifying effects of a society that has lost sight of its true values. It is suggested that those who are called mad are really the sanest ones around.

In addition to its analogous telling of the social revolutionary in Christ, the film may also be located within the context of contemporary social critique. The influence of Schef (1966) and his exposition of the relationship of deviance and labelling theory was far-reaching and clearly pointed out that once the label of psychiatric disorder had been applied to someone all their actions (or inaction) would be interpreted within that frame, something
which Rosenhan's (1973) famous study demonstrates empirically. Thus, if they were obstreperous it was because of their illness, if they were withdrawn it was because of their illness. As in a double-bind, they were damned if they did, and damned if they did not. McMurphy and his fellow residents were, as Laing (1980) might put it, tied in knots.

McMurphy's suffering is at the hands of the system rather than as the result of madness. We, the audience, always know that McMurphy is not insane and so although we see how he, and by implication all mentally ill people, are kept in appalling, dehumanising conditions and subjected to humiliating, punishing and infantilising treatment, we get no impression of any suffering that being mentally ill may bring either to the person or to the carers and families involved. We do not see any fear and terror in the eyes of the inmates that can compare to the wild beast of Blake's Nebuchadnezzar (1795) (Fig.2), nor is there the unbearable sorrow such as we find in Dürer's Melancholia I (1514) (Fig.3). The articulation of his internal demons with which Becker defends himself in the closing scenes of M (Dir. Lang 1930) seems absent from One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (Dir. Forman 1975). We can believe that Becker would become so distressed at some point that he would, in depression, commit suicide but, we could not imagine McMurphy doing such a thing, despite Billy Bibbit; McMurphy's death may be a sacrifice, perhaps even, in Durkheim's (1952) typology, an altruistic suicide, but it is certainly affirming not despairing. Suffering, as we see in cinematic representations of Madness, seems only to apply to martyrs or penitents, those who have to live with mental illness, their families and the carers, do not seem to get the same consideration.

Amour Fou

True, Madly, Deeply

Dir. Anthony Minghella (1991)

There are times when taking leave of our senses, behaving irrationally or to "act real loose, like a long-necked goose" (to quote Jerry Lee Lewis) is not necessarily regarded as an altogether bad thing. To be madly in love is seen to be a paramount experience, one in which ordinary life can be experienced by ecstasy. In a very similar way religious ecstacies are considered to be transported, or transport themselves, to another realm of experience. These are states in which, as in Madness, ordinary consciousness is transcended.
From a rationalist perspective, to make life-changing decisions when in a state of heightened emotion may not appear to very sensible. We may recognise illogicality, irrationality even a certain manic excitement in our behaviour, but they are all viewed positively because being in love is regarded as the epitome of the human experience. Being able to love, being able to experience transcendental moments are, like being mad, something which is essentially human. It is something that distinguishes us from the animal or the alien. It is also, importantly, one of the characteristics to which we refer when attempting to define human transgressors in the form of psychopaths. We believe that although a psychopath, a very human monster as well as a very monstrous human, may be capable of passion or infatuation or may become besotted, this can be explained as lust or hormones. A psychopath may be seen as capable of sentimentality, child-murderers may be tender towards small kittens, but that is not adult love. A psychopath may profess emotional excitement, but that is not spiritual engagement. The madness of love is not, in these terms, an Other to be feared; it is one that within the Western cultural sensibility is to be sought out and embraced.

However, when love tips over into obsession it takes on a slightly different and more threatening character. To love may be one thing, but to possess is another. Possession of another is seen as a monomaniacal state, one that only comes to light when particular circumstances arise and when the audience is suddenly forced to regard the character in a quite different way. In *The King of Comedy* (Dir. Scorsese 1983) the central character, Rupert Pupkin (Robert De Niro) (Fig.21), initially appears to be a fantasist; Gabbard & Gabbard (1987 p.213) consider him to be a narcissist with grandiose delusions and point to classical psychoanalytic precepts in his character development. Thus, Rupert appears to be someone who is eccentric and possibly a little odd, but someone who does not seem to be dangerous (even the gun with which his friend and accomplice Masha (Sandra Bernhard) holds the talk-show host, and hero of Rupert and Masha, Jerry Langford (Jerry Lewis) captive turns out to be a toy). His performances in the seclusion of his own basement (a location not without some symbolic value), where, imagining himself to be a star television talk-show host, he pretends to be interviewed and adored are presented as incongruous only to the extent of their elaboration and because he is an adult. The idea that neither children nor madmen can be held to be legally responsible for their actions because of some lacking or underdeveloped faculty. If we saw a child playing out the same fantasies we would be happy to accept the normality of the situation. However, we also know that he is still living with his mother and that he does not seem to be able to develop satisfactory relationships with other people, and so we categorise him as a rather immature individual,
perhaps deserving of some sympathy, perhaps a little pathetic but not someone to strike fear in our hearts. As the story unfolds we gradually become uneasy about the lengths to which he is prepared to go to fulfil his fantasy and the degree to which his ability to distinguish fact from fiction deteriorates. It slowly becomes evident that Rupert has an encapsulated delusion which is beginning to break its bounds. It is leaking inevitably into his outer world. The transgression of the boundaries between private fantasy and public action is Rupert’s real problem, not his obsession per se. Just as in a clinical interview in which any psychiatric worker would be more concerned about the extent to which an individual is bothered by an obsessive idea, or the extent to which it interferes with daily life, or the extent to which compulsive action becomes an unavoidable or uncontrollable correlate, the problem for Rupert, and the problem he poses to the audience, is that the normal strictures of social behaviour fail to hold him back. That means that anyone we might meet in any ordinary social situation cannot be trusted to restrain themselves, and to keep a tight rein on the fantasies that properly belong inside the imagination and the privacy behind closed doors.

The adaptation of Steven King’s novel Misery (Dir. Reiner 1990) explores similar issues in that the object of the obsession is a famous individual with whom the obsessive, in this case the novelist Paul Sheldon’s (James Caan) number one fan played by Kathy Bates, believes him or herself to have a special affinity which will be recognised sooner or later and which will excuse any action they take in their pursuit of the special relationship. While Annie Wilkes is revealed to be a person with a dangerous past (she has been implicated in mysterious deaths while working as a nurse), and is capable of dissociation to a greater degree than Rupert (as for example in her switch in moods and unconcern about the violence with which she breaks Sheldon’s legs to prevent him from escaping) she is still to some extent a lonely and pathetic character. She is not presented as someone who is sexually attractive, she dresses and walks frumpily, and although she has been successful as a nurse it is because she is in vocational service, and this success is not concomitant with charisma. Alternatively, in Fatal Attraction (Dir. Lyne 1987) the character of Alex Forrest, played by Glenn Close, is disturbing because she is successful, sexy, charismatic and desirable. Alex is even more worrying than Rupert or Annie. She seems even more driven to possess and control, or even because she is capable of more extreme violence (she is clearly murderous), greater intrusion (she involves the family), more horrible transgression (boiling up a pet rabbit is not really acceptable behaviour) or wilder frenzy (she attacks like a “deranged harpy” McCarty 1993 p.212). Alex makes us worry that the danger that we can compartmentalise as unlikely to ever affect us because we do not inhabit the shadow
world of obsessive stalking fans or the isolation of the hermits in the backwoods, is, in fact, present in the very things that we desire, that we strive to become, and that we wish for. She is truly a worm in the sweet-smelling bud.

A shared obsession can cause lovers to act bizarrely in their enclosed world and the murder sprees of *Badlands* (Dir. Malick 1973), *Natural Born Killers* (Dir. Stone 1994), *The Honeymoon Killers* (Dir Kastle 1969) or *Deep Crimson* (Dir. Ripstein 1997) (all to some degree based on true events) explore the way in true love is tested by extreme behaviours. In this way it is suggested that a mad love can heighten all emotions and move the lovers beyond the bounds of reason and constraints of order. However, while their situation is dangerous it is not love itself that is inherently dangerous, for it can be sedate, warm and comfortable, but the loss of reason. When the lovers are swamped by fierce passion they rise above the law and become transcendent, but they transcend the nature of evil rather than grace.

The link between love and aggression is considered by Fleming & Manvell (1985) and the thin line between love and hate. This is not simply a narrative convention in which the two protagonists repel each other on first sight, irritate the life out of one another and finally fall into each other’s arms as the final reel closes. It is, in their reading, indicative of a Freudian reading of the love and death drives, and important as a representation of how love is supposed to be. By watching the movies we know that this is the way of true love; our own lives have a template to emulate. It signifies that when the emotions decide to take control there is really nothing that anyone can do about it. We cannot help how we feel. Good sense and rational argument go out of the window. We are reminded that to be only human after all, is to be a creature of emotion and feeling, and to be capable of being swayed by compassion and something intangible. Human experience cannot be reduced to its functions or component parts, and there are some things that we cannot explain, perhaps things that are diminished by critical dissection. Love may be as incomprehensible to the outsider as Madness, but it does not make us the Other, it makes us whole.

All-consuming love need not only be between people. In the case of religious ecstasy the love-object is, superficially at least, God, although it may be suggested that it would be more accurate to say that people can become as easily besotted by the idea of the religious ideal as they can fall in love with the idea of being in love. However, as in romantic love it is a question of degree and while deep and profound religious conviction can be portrayed as worthy and recent, a religious mania is disturbing. *As Elmer Gantry* (Dir. Brooks 1960)
demonstrates, with Burt Lancaster raving impressively in the title role, the line between the charlatan and the zealot are blurred because of the extremity of the feeling. The wild glint in his eye and the manic grin can convince the willing and discomfort the sceptical because it promises certainty over dread and control over the unpredictable. And yet, they are promises inflated by puffery and ballooned by bluster. If Gantry really believes his own hyperbole he may well lose his touchstone for reality.

In a world of postmodern sensibilities that appreciates the power of the image, and notes that the image may have everything to do with being convincing and need have nothing to do with authenticity, monological manias may give rise to a certain discomfort. The maxim of the confidence trickster, that once you can fake sincerity everything else is easy, introduces a note of doubt and scepticism. It becomes difficult to believe that public protestations of true feelings are more than skin-deep. It is recognised that a public figure may have to act publicly in one particularly acceptable way, and in a religious, contemporary America, more so than in other countries of the West, being publicly religious is conventional. That does not have to be carried over into private behaviour, and when it does zealotry is uncomfortable.

When Hazel Motes (Brad Dourif) in Wise Blood (Dir. Huston 1979) begins his street evangelism which ends in his own Passion of self-mutilation, he is contrasted with shams and frauds in the characters of Asa Hawkes (Harry Dean Stanton), who pretends to be blind whereas Hazel actually blinds himself, and Hoover Shoates (Ned Beatty), who sells divine insurance whereas Hazel sets up a “Church Without Christ” with no belief in sin or redemption. Nevertheless, we are certain that Hazel is the one whose reason is impaired and who is eventually overcome by his own monomania while the other two are simply wily crooks, snake-oil merchants and cheats. Hazel is too honest for the reality of the world, and his innocence, the innocence that might actually lead someone to believe what they say, is so naive as to be pathological.

Purity of spirit is not always shown in such a light and clearly the many treatments featuring nuns and priests doing good works with a social conscience, even among the most abject and downcast (Black Narcissus Dir. Powell 1947, Boys Town Dir. Taurog 1938), do not portray a religious vocation as evidence of a disturbed mind in itself. However, Agnes of God (Dir. Jewison 1985) provides an interesting counterpoint to this particular tendency in the way a young nun with a touchingly clear view of faith is examined by, and challenges the rationalism of, a psychiatrist when she claims to have
been made pregnant by an angel, but although firm in her faith the nun is not aggressively dogmatic, merely sweetly persistent. The crucial factor would appear to be the fanaticism or equanimity with which the beliefs are held, and the vigour with which they are forced on others. A state of mind that brooks no dissent or acknowledges no alternative runs counter to the humane liberalism shown in more favourable treatments of religious calling, and the certainty of the zealot may well be rigid to an excessive degree because the soul is in torment rather than comfort. Heaven and hell, sanity and madness are seen in correlation. Within this context it becomes apparent that, as in a systematised delusion, the loss of balance can topple into madness, and madness can be destructive.

It is a moot point in the debate over psychiatric diagnosis whether or not a person who wishes to or successfully commits suicide is therefore, by definition, mentally ill. Doomed lovers and suicide pacts bring out this question, but frame it in a slightly different way. It cannot be assumed that in the cinematic world every person who commits suicide is mentally ill. Indeed, it may sometimes be that the person who resolves to kill him or herself does so not because of a disillusion or disconnection with life, but for motives that are portrayed as noble, enduring and idealistic. Clearly there are examples of those who die for love, from Romeo and Juliet in its various treatments to Elvira Madigan (Dir. Widerberg 1967) or Anna Karenina, but soft-focus photography and orchestral string music are not necessarily reflective of a world in which youth suicide may account for more deaths than road traffic accidents however much they say about the idealisation of love. These scenarios may be regarded as tragedies, noting that the essence of tragedy is often that the very quality that makes a person great or gives meaning to life is the same thing that destroys it. Thus love, especially mad and all-consuming love is a wild and dangerous emotion, but the gain is almost always seen to be worth the risk. Those who do not accept the gamble are always seen to be regretful and diminished by their failure to grab life’s opportunities with both hands and take the ride to the end, to live out the extremes of the human experience. Living a little on the wild side is supposed to remind us of what it is to be alive; it reminds us of what it is to be human. The significance of this representation of what might well be regarded as grossly irrational behavior, ignoring for the moment its internal consistency, may lie in the conception of love as a peak human experience and one that gives life its meaning. Life, it may be assumed, is not worthwhile without meaning, and to love is to give meaning to life.

Equally there are those who sacrifice themselves for the greater good, or love of others, either people but also, given the suitable circumstances, country. The echo of Durkheim’s
(1952) taxonomy, especially of the altruistic type, is clear, as has already been suggested. Seemingly, the cinematic representation seems to concentrate on the suicides that can be seen, at least obliquely, as encompassing a positive message. It may be simply too bleak to consider the utter misery that many of those experience who do in reality kill themselves. The particular choices made in the representation of the motives experienced or articulated by those who kill themselves becomes ripe for deconstruction. The image of people who decide that they no longer wish to live, or more actively, that they wish to kill themselves is replete with assumptions about attitudes and understandings of what it means. The influence of the dogma of the Roman Catholic church in Western cultural constructions of suicide would appear to accentuate the affront to God that this act involves. Consequently, although Catholicism is arguably no longer the dominant moderator of moral issues that it once was, the emotiveness of suicide remains acute. As a result there is an ambivalent attitude to suicide, and by extension in this context, to plunging too deeply in love as well.

The somewhat uncomfortable question that is raised by the intersection of madness and transcendence may suggest that to be truly human, to experience all that heaven allows, may also mean coming dangerously close to madness. Living on the edge will also mean that sometimes people fall off. A tension then emerges between what we would like ourselves to be, what we know ourselves to be, what we fear ourselves to be and what we might become. We find ourselves, perhaps even unwittingly, having asked a question which may have a disturbing answer. We may then go on to consider how families and upbringing, and we are all products of families or family-like structures whether they are biological or not, on what we might become and how this may affect those who go mad.
CHAPTER SIX
MADNESS, THE FAMILY AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

You want it both ways. You want her to be herself and at the same time do what you want

Psychiatrist to parents in “Family Life” (Dir. Loach 1971)

It is not only due to its melodramatic potential that the representation of Madness has been so often and so seriously concerned with the family. Perhaps even more so than in hospitals or in the psychiatrist’s office, the drama of the emergence and the effects of Madness are seen in family settings and marital or inter-generational conflict. It is not necessary to agree with Leach (1967 p.44) that the family (at least in its traditional Western bourgeois manifestation) “with all its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets, is the source of all our discontents” or that it is the context which in itself generates mental illness to recognise that this is most often the place in which it shows itself, where the emotions run highest and where the relationships are the most complex. The intensity of the interpersonal relationships within families allow a distillation of experience. Parents and children, siblings, spouses and partners create matrices that are not only rich in dramatic possibilities and tensions but have also figured large in psychiatric theory. The image of the double bind (Bateson 1978, Laing 1980), or indeed the triple or quadruple bind, is a potent one for dramatising family tension, and emphasises the external irrationality that can govern family and interpersonal interactions, and also their own internal Möbian logic. As a concept, the double bind should not be restricted to parent-child relationships but is like a weed that wraps itself around the matrix of family communication, distorting and mutating the message and poisoning the interpretation, as Dr Donaldson in Family Life (Dir. Loach 1971) clearly articulates. Cinematic exploration of these positions may sometimes concentrate on what happens to a family within which mental illness or a mentally ill member is pivotal, or alternatively begin to represent the family as the crucible of Madness. In many cases the cinema, like theories of psychopathology, has an ambivalent relationship with the notion of the family and what passes for family values. While the family is often seen by mental health workers as a haven, offering a supportive and familiar alternative to institutional care (and this is supported by official reports in Britain including Griffiths (1988) and the Department of Health and Social Security, Northern Ireland (1990)), it is equally likely to be indicted as the crucible which forges and nurtures the illness in the first place (Prior 1993 p.143). The latter position, while, unsurprisingly, being less frequently shared by the family members themselves and, so Prior suggests, losing some favour in the professional discourse of the 1990s, still retains its popularity as a cinematic treatment.
While investigating the behaviours and relationships of family members, especially in those families in which at least one person was diagnosed as having a major psychiatric illness, Leff & Vaughn (1983) formulated a position which emphasised the importance of “expressed emotion”. Families which showed high expressed emotion, and this did not relate solely to the amount of noise they made, were also characterised as being more volatile and unstable, and less conducive to the care of the long-term patient. As a result, family members, although not necessarily more susceptible to major mental illnesses, were more likely to relapse after treatment. While seeming to have a good deal of intuitive validity there were some problems with the conclusions that could be drawn from the findings. Certainly the notion of a peaceful atmosphere being conducive to psychological convalescence seems obvious, but to equate low expressed emotion with a low level of criticism, implied or otherwise, may not be so justified. Nevertheless, the research is typical of the intellectual climate of the time, and focuses on the interaction of people, especially in the family, which, while not necessarily being the single causative factor in major mental illnesses, is a clear and vital moderator.

The dramaturgical understanding of the importance of roles within networks of relationships (Goffman 1967) lends itself to exploring the dramatic potential of family life. The consideration that parents act as role models for their children in emotional and psychological ways as well as behaviourally necessitates more than a single-person approach to treatment. Similarly, the therapist will often become more of an involved facilitator of productive interaction and less of a distanced prescriber of treatment. The development of Family Therapy whether it be of a psychoanalytic orientation (Bateson 1978) or a systems based approach (Minuchin 1974) allowed psychiatry a re-focussing of its attention and the exploration of dramatic resonances that could hold meaning for us all. However, it is also noteworthy that as the family acts as a metaphor for society the relationships between parents and children in particular explore the nature of change, maturation, dominant hegemonies and old orders, the search for individual identity, retaining and letting go, and the emergence and tolerance of difference. In Family Life (Dir. Loach 1971) the mother, Vera Baildon, asks her daughter’s psychiatrist, “Are we to be dictated to by the rising generation?”. The answer is as clear and as ambiguous as Norman’s relationship with his mother in Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960). It is contained in the question of the dynamics of difference.
Mother Knows Best

*Psychology isn't dirty, Mother.*

*From “Psycho” (Dir. Hitchcock 1960)*

The relationship between the increasingly clear fractures in the social edifice and the changes in family structures, at least within Western culture, presents an obvious but still powerful opportunity for metaphorical treatment. What happens to the family at the centre of the drama can be read as indicative of what is occurring on a larger social scale. Within this trope the contention of attitudes and values, the re-evaluation of tradition and the conflicts of power, force, responsibility and loyalty can be played out. By utilising this dramatic potential it may also be possible to see the way in which the Otherness of Madness is constructed, what Madness is understood to be and how different positions and ideologies respond to it.

The context out of which *Family Life* (Dir. Loach 1971) came was a period of challenge and re-evaluation, of changing priorities and power-structures, of an emergent generations of different experience and unassimilated technological possibilities. It should not be forgotten that Loach and his collaborators, writer David Mercer and producer Tony Garnett all had a strong history of socially committed television and stage drama and had taken up political themes and a socialist agenda in their other work. As a result, their work is informed by the view that the psychiatric establishment works to protect its own interests and those of the dominant class. It may be expected from their point of view that, after the fashion of the report by Hollingshead & Redlich (1958 p.335), “significant interrelations exist between class status and the ways patients reach psychiatrists, how their difficulties are diagnosed, how they are treated, and expenditures on their treatment”. Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend (1969) while also emphasising the importance of class, were more equivocal in their conclusions, but still demonstrate the prominent concerns of the time. It seems that the accepted wisdom of Loach and his collaborators was that the poor, the abject and the subversive were more likely to be diagnosed not only as mentally ill, but as more psychotic than the middle classes and expressed their symptoms differently. Furthermore, the expectations of treatment (particularly relevant to the attitude of Mr and Mrs Bailydon) were substantially more compliant in the working classes. Psychiatry is, from this perspective as Ingleby (1981) underscores, essentially and undeniably political and can be the focus of a radical social critique. Such a position emphasises the importance of ideological positions, hegemonic discourses and class interests in the social practice of psychiatry. Some of the trends in psychiatric theorising have already been mentioned, but there is a moment at
which what was once the avant-garde begins to be seen as the mainstream, but also as McGuffin & Murray (1991), in a report published by a major mental health charity or the report of the Medical Research Council (UK) (1987), indicate, the pendulum has swung back again in more recent times towards biological psychiatry, inspired by the advances in the identification of genetic markers and the promise of “the schizophrenia gene”. In common with most moderate practitioners, it may be wise to note Lewontin’s (1992) note of caution in accepting any “ideological package” without a healthy scepticism and a predilection for deconstruction, but definite tendencies and hegemonic schema can still be detected.

The primacy of the psychoanalytically informed dynamic that can be detected in Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960) and Psycho IV (Dir. Garris 1991), and the pathological relationship of Norman and his possessive mother (a schizophrenogenic staple) had already been subject to considerable re-evaluation although it was still influential. Of particular importance was the move in Family Therapy away from simple Mother-Child relationships to a more contextual appreciation of the dynamics of a complex of relationships (Grob 1991), and the influence of the “Therapeutic Community” advocated by Maxwell Jones (1952), and both these elements are infused with a communitarian conscience rather than a sole interest in the psychology of the individual. Human beings are recognised to be social creatures and the political-cultural context in which they live is acknowledged to affect and perhaps dictate the course of their experience of madness.

As with The Snake Pit (Dir. Litvak 1948), we know from the opening scenes of Family Life, which are set in a psychiatric interview, that the central character, Janice Baildon (Sandy Radcliffe), is the focus of psychiatric attention. However, because the film takes the position of an observer rather than giving a subjective experience, we are faced with a different treatment of mental distress, which at times seems to have more in common with a documentary like Titicut Follies (Dir. Wiseman 1967) than a feature film. Indeed, the scenes of the Occupational Therapy or the psychiatric review board in Family Life and Titicut Follies seem so similar as to be interchangeable, and the supposed realism is an important factor in how it is intended for the audience to respond to the film. In many ways, because we do not have the opportunity to experience hallucinations or the subjective point of view of Janice in Family Life, as we do with Virginia in The Snake Pit, we are confronted more bleakly by the unknowability of other people, even those who are closest to us. The challenge to understand other people, let alone those who seem to be psychiatrically distressed, lies at the core of the naturalistic treatment of tragic themes.
When we first gain some knowledge about Janice's history we see her being helped from a train and being asked questions in a Police Station, but we feel like we are observing it as another passenger on the train, or we are sitting in the corridor and watching. We are disconnected from the events: we witness, yet they intrude and we gawp at them with a guilty fascination and a numb gaze. However, it is not the gaze in control, this is the randomness of life. The very ordinarness of the setting, of the patterns of speech, of the habits and mannerisms, is disconcerting because we cannot safely categorise the film as a fiction. It continually slips into representation as a document, and becomes deeply pathetic in its alienation. Madness, even more than ordinary human existence, is, as Scull (1993) has indicated, a profoundly solitary experience.

The emotional desolation of Janice's family is seen as a reflection of the sterility of the social structure and the possibilities of simple pleasures and joy and laughter are bleak indeed. Although some of the signifiers attached to Janice's parents may appear to be archly constructed we are still left with an impression of people who are tragic because their intentions are, at least in their eyes, good. They desperately want the best for Janice, yet it is a blinkered vision. They cannot see that she may not want what they do, that she may not wish to emulate them. It is incomprehensible that she may not share their world-view or their sense of right and wrong, their social values, their search for meaning or their expectations or desires. By having firm views of correct behaviour and appropriate life-goals they are subscribing to an antithetical world-view from the liberal persuasion of Janice, Tim (her boyfriend) and Dr Donaldson (her doctor).

The gulf between Janice and her parents is emphasised by their incomprehension in the face of the methods and concerns of the treating psychiatrist, the fashionably informal and liberal Dr Donaldson (Michael Riddall), a man who has clearly been reading his R D Laing (1968) and David Cooper (1971) and puzzles over the complexity of knotted pathways of communication and double binds. Dr Donaldson is every bit a product of his generation as the Baildons are of theirs; he is comfortable with comparative sophistication and unconscious of material comfort, they seem to have struggled for everything. It would be no surprise to find that he lives in a slightly bohemian flat with fashionable posters, a guitar in the corner and Bob Dylan records; he probably eats foreign food. He is a young man who is treated with some deference by Mr and Mrs Baildon because of his position and his education, and significantly this is part of the same hierarchy of respect to which Janice is expected to conform. He is a confusing figure to the parents; he is a professional man but is
happy to be called by his first name, not his title, he is informal but inquisitive to the point of intrusion. To the Baildons he cannot be seen to be the natural ally they were expecting, but he sees himself as interacting with the whole family rather than treating a single individual. We are presented with a changed social model of psychiatry, both in terms of aetiology and treatment. The location of the genesis of major psychiatric illnesses within the dynamics of a dysfunctional family unit may still be controversial and debatable, but it spawned a therapeutic orientation which, although a mainstream idea after thirty years, was, within the context of the film and its historical position, a challenge to the established order and the delineation of roles, responsibilities and knowledge. Dr Donaldson is both allusive and conversational and is clearly not acting in the straightforward question and answer mode that is anticipated. He suggests that parents may sometimes be responsible for the behaviour of their children, even perhaps their troubles, but that is an intolerable suggestion and Mrs Baildon is forced to exclaim that without a set of values “We might as well go back to the jungle”. However, the thought that they might be making some mistakes or that their values might not be in the best interests of Janice, and their incomprehension that there might be alternatives, is a major theme to emerge; not that it necessarily affects the symptoms of mental illness (although it might), but that it will affect how it is regarded, how it is perceived, how it is represented and how it is to be treated and managed.

Through a series of extended flashbacks we are informed about the events that led up to Janice’s present situation. Her parents are positioned as working class with, at least in the case of Mrs Baildon, aspirations to gentility. Janice does once seem to have had numerous friends and an art student boyfriend, Tim, and one day finds herself pregnant. This, compounded by the conservative attitude to sexual matters of her parents (“Vera’s not like that. Funny. Tells me to get covered up” is how Mr Baildon explains it to Dr Donaldson with some embarrassment), leads to a major confrontation in which Mr Baildon suggests an abortion. Mrs Baildon wants the same thing but cannot bring herself to say the word, and Janice is confused and ambivalent although she sees the baby as symbolic of and important for her own identity.

We witness Janice attempting to make sense of the confusion in her life and in her mind. Tim appears to be supportive if a little naive, while her parents seem to be controlling yet still exert a pull of loyalty and trust from childhood. It becomes clear that as the crisis grows around her, Janice’s sense of self, sense of control and trust in her own sanity is diminishing. Although the film does not feature the abortion, it is explained when, closer to
the present time and in hospital, Dr Donaldson asks her about it. Dr Donaldson is a man who will ask the difficult or taboo question because he feels certain that they are the really important ones, and even if the answer is difficult and painful, it is good to talk. Although he is keen to encourage conversation on topics the patient (or informant) wants to talk about, what interests him are the things people avoid; that is where the insights of real value lie. He is, nevertheless, within the tradition of the Dr Wonderfuls, and his sympathy with Janice is evident.

As the film moves past the opening scenes and the narrative progresses we discover that Dr Donaldson, like Dr Kik before him, is not without opposition in the psychiatric establishment. He encourages informality and self-expression in his patients and the scenes of the hospital ward show young people talking and lounging around, nurses moving in and out and music playing ("It's not like the usual ward" says Janice, but her father wonders where the discipline has gone); the influence of Jones (1952, 1968) is clear in the representation of the therapeutic régime but perhaps it is not over-stated as a depiction of then current practice. However, in a replay of The Snake Pit from more than thirty years earlier, Dr Donaldson is praised for his innovation but still found out of step with the hospital policies, and the senior men. As a result his contract is not renewed, but unlike Dr Kik he will not return, and the patients in his unconventional care are transferred to a more orthodox psychiatrist who prescribe ECT for Janice.

From the perspective of the hospital, and her new doctor, Janice does improve. She is stabilised on medication and, given that the days of long-stay hospitals are over and the hospital will supply all the drugs she requires, in the words of the psychiatrist, she returns to her parents. She starts work in a small factory and soon renews her relationship with Tim with whom she has the one moment of liberated, uninhibited joy we see. In a scene of childlike exuberance she and Tim take a can of blue spray paint and paint first the garden (the true object of her father's love and the expression of his creative energy), then their hair and finally the garden gnomes (a symbol of stultifying bourgeois pretensions and values). More than anything else this is taken by Mr Baildon to be evidence of Janice's irredeemable state; if she was capable of such defilement, she would be capable of anything, and certainly not capable of looking after herself or a baby. The garden is presented, somewhat ironically, as a sign and suggests the false consciousness of Mr Baildon and his class which gives rise to an severely impoverished imagination and hobbled aspirations. It is seen as petit-bourgeois, a small, imagined piece of rural arcadia in a faceless suburban sprawl, but that is perhaps not sympathetic to the position of Mr
Baildon who may, poignantly and unsuccessfully, be trying to introduce some element of self-expression or individual acts of creation into his life. It is possible to regard the Baildons as equally oppressed, albeit in a different way, as Janice, and in the way that false consciousness operates, they, in their turn, become the oppressors. Nevertheless, to attack the garden is an act of defiance, and, coupled with the explosive family meal with Janice’s independently-minded sister and her two small children, are the incidents which push Janice beyond the pale, and irrevocably change her parents’ attitude.

Like the symbolic gnomes in the garden, the family Sunday tea is full of formalism and class aspirations. Mrs Baildon presides and wishes it to be polite and well-mannered. Mr Baildon cannot conceal his rising frustration with his daughters, both of whom flout everything he has striven for in one way or another. Barbara (the elder sister) seems to be reliving her own rebellion and takes on Janice’s cause as her own. Janice in the meantime is talked about and talked over until, unable to bear it any longer, she holds her head and screams. Barbara, despite her obvious concern, support and offer of the physical comfort her parents find impossible to give, is unable to persuade Janice to go with her and grabs her children and leaves. Janice is left there, unable to leave and incapable of doing anything but staying.

Later that night, while we presume that her parents have gone to bed, Janice is alone in the dark, sitting at the dining table, the scene of the furious argument. Slowly and deliberately she is gouging great lumps out of the table, but she might as well be gouging out her own flesh such is the intensity with which she concentrates. With equal but sudden ferocity she turns her attention to the room and begins to smash the crockery, the ornaments and importantly, the small carriage clock her father received from his work (she says she is “killing time”). This is one more symbol of the smothering conventionalities of her parents, but also, more poignantly given Mr Baildon’s obvious pride, another signifier of false consciousness, a theme that has been emerging throughout the film. The idea is promoted that if the Baildon’s, or any oppressed group, could rid their eyes of the blinkers the dominant hegemony imposes on them, they would be kinder to their own as well as moving closer to their own potential. But Mr Baildon becomes more and more frustrated at his inability to make any impact on Janice and his wife’s withdrawal from responsibility or engagement with the issue, and after one piercingly insulting argument over traditions and standards he and Janice physically fight.
As an inevitable result of her final assault on the icons of conventional standards Janice is admitted to hospital again where we see her begin to develop the characteristics of a career patient. She wanders in the grounds and flirts with other patients. Her parents visit but without a spark of enthusiasm, and more to satisfy a sense of duty than out of love. Tim, however, does still see in her the potential of what might have been, and in an impetuous moment persuades her simply to pick up her coat and leave while her parents are sitting in the day room thinking she has just gone to her room to get some cigarettes. However, Janice is not able to cope and Tim, worried and equally unsure of himself, calls in a doctor who carries the foetal Janice away and back to hospital. In the final and wholly depressing scene we see Janice, seemingly suffering from a chronic psychotic disorder, being presented by a lecturing psychiatrist to a lecture theatre full of students, the bored, the curious and the interested, as an objectified example of “extreme mutism”. Any last vestige of life or individuality seems to have been drained from Janice who now appears physically and mentally cadaverous.

Fleming & Manvell (1985) suggest that the ending indicates that, although in her love for Tim Janice displayed “the healthiest, most positive human values”, because she is “surrounded by overly possessive feelings on all sides, she can escape only into insanity” (p.234). However, the crushing of the human spirit points to the tragedy of a social system as well as an individual. Sometimes this may be done knowingly, as in the treatment of both the unconventional and challenging Dr Donaldson and Janice herself by the psychiatric establishment. Alternatively, it may be done less-knowingly, and certainly in a state of being unable to prevent the damage they were doing because of an illusion of good intentions; such is the case of Mr and Mrs Baildon and, later, Tim. Family Life tends towards an anti-psychiatric critique informed by a broader Marxist analysis of bourgeois false consciousness which acts in concert with the dominant political socio-economic system, and it certainly excoriates the system and easy resort to pharmacological treatment, and it remains essentially humane in its concerns and liberal in its values.

On balance, the film endorses the position that family dynamics may worsen and exacerbate a condition, and fail to see the issues of importance to the individual or to recognise distress, but they do not cause it as such. The question of whether or not Janice was seriously mentally ill or what that illness may be called is left relatively undeveloped, apart from the substitute psychiatrist telling the Baildons that Janice was “schizoid” but treatable. It becomes more important to examine our reactions to Madness, because we know, and the film tells us, that if only the Baildons had been able to be more open and tolerant, and
perhaps Janice had been able to trust that she might be accepted rather than rejected, and the psychiatric system was concerned more with its treatment of people and their dignity rather than its own position and privilege, it might all have turned out differently. In that regard, the way in which Madness is constructed and the manner in which it is treated is a social and communal concern and not so much a libertarian one.

Almost ten years after *Family Life* depicted the suburbia of working class Britain, the theme of the problems of ordinary communication about ordinary feelings resurfaced in the affluent middle class America of *Ordinary People* (Dir. Redford 1980). This Oscar-winning film tells the story of a family placed under strain by the accidental drowning of the elder son. The remaining son, Conrad Jarrett (Timothy Hutton) suffers from guilt and after a suicide attempt is referred for treatment. The boy is the ostensible focus of the psychiatrist, Tyrone Berger (Judd Hirsch) a restructured Dr Wonderful, but the more affecting themes of the sub-text deal with the emotionally constrained parents. Mrs Jarrett (Mary Tyler Moore) seems to be cold and withdrawn, while Mr Jarrett (Donald Sutherland) is seen as confused and emotionally timid. Neither parent seems to be able to reveal their feelings, and despite being aware of the harm they were causing, are still unable to change. The tragedy they face is that they cannot, or do not listen to their inner voices; the ones that would tell them how much they loved one another, or who would tell them to simply reach out and physically embrace one another. We watch, helpless to intervene as the words that need to be said rise in their throats, but fail to come out. The Jarretts seem petrified of the consequences of showing their true selves. Fear is eating their souls, and it left to the son, guided by the psychiatrist who has his own doubts and dilemmas, to act with courage.

While the mental illness component of the film is not a Madness as might have been seen in other films under consideration, the theme is that the a fear to communicate, to invest in human relationships rather than material chattels, blights everything and this underlines the conception of unnecessary psychological suffering. If only a loving word, an embrace, a human touch had been possible instead of silence and withdrawal we know that the suffering need not have happened. We are shown that amongst all the material comforts, the house and cars, and holidays by the lake, there is a spiritual emptiness, and without attention to that nothing is of any value. The Jarretts are the most ordinary of families, perhaps because of rather than despite their pathologies. Their tragedy is that they have lost sight of what is really important. They are more to be pitied than blamed, their position is all the worse for being both self-inflicted and needless.
Certainly Conrad is in need of some help, and this he receives, but so is Mr Jarrett who would be happier in himself and better loved by his family if he only had the courage to follow his heart. Also in need of help, for she too is drowning, if only metaphorically, is Mrs Jarrett. If she could let a tear fall or realise and express her emotions, she too would be rewarded by the love that is so obviously missing from her life. It is a simple solution, deceptive in its ordinariness and its application, to a clear but complex problem. It does however, make us wonder if mother does always know best.

In the cinematic adaptation of the 1939 play by Tennessee Williams, *Suddenly, Last Summer* (Dir. J Mankiewicz 1959), we are presented with a much more pathological and consciously destructive mother, rather than one who cannot help herself. Despite a melodramatic plot of covert homosexuality, family secrets, mysterious deaths and madness the film was still highly regarded enough to garner Academy Award nominations for Katherine Hepburn and Elizabeth Taylor as the mother and her mad niece respectively, and Taylor did win the Golden Globe for Best Actress in 1960. The film tells the story of a wealthy southern American family whose sole scion, Sebastian, a homosexual poet, mysteriously died while on holiday in Europe with his cousin Catherine (Taylor). As a result of witnessing his death, the horrific details of which are revealed in the dénouement, Catherine has gone mad and has been confined to a psychiatric hospital. Mrs Venables (Hepburn), Sebastian’s mother, tries to induce Dr Cukrowicz (Montgomery Clift), a brilliant young neuro-surgeon, to perform an unnecessary lobotomy (leucotomy) on the promise of a generous donation to the hospital which will fund his research. However, Dr Cukrowicz is an ethical fellow and he resists the temptation and the pressure from the more venal director of the asylum. At the last moment, as he is about to pick up his scalpel, he changes his mind. Despite being a surgeon rather than a psychiatrist, the good doctor gives Catherine a “truth drug” which enables her to tell the whole story, and begin her recovery, while Mrs Venables, unable to bear the shame, retreats into madness. Apart from suggesting that the mad mother destroys life around her until, like some wicked witch, she is destroyed herself, usually by the very thing that made her strong, her madness, the film manages to combine a number of themes of more than passing interest, but rather inconsistently and unconvincingly. There is the *Snake Pit* (Dir. Litvak 1948) imagery of the hospital, although its administration is rather more corrupt; the Dr Wonderful who affects a psychological cure although he is a surgeon; the notion of depraved sexuality bringing everyone to a bad end; the introduction of the “truth drug” which has since become a staple filmic device and achieved mythological status; the single traumatic event theory of madness and the restorative power of catharsis. Gabbard & Gabbard (1987) suggest that
the film, although weak in many areas, still contains moments of importance. The treatment of madness suggests a monster that must be slain, and is melodramatic which rather negates any feeling in the audience that this could happen to us. However, it remains significant because it does finally locate a place of madness in the bosom of the family, and, like Family Life and Ordinary People, which are consciously commonplace in their titles, attempt to show that, rich or poor, families are still alike.

Although they have many themes in common, some of the important contrasts between Family Life and Ordinary People emerge in their treatment of social pressures and socio-cultural hegemonies. In Ordinary People although we are presented with a sense that the middle-class materialism, which from one perspective is quite attractive, is at least a contributor to the psychology of the Jarretts, the key for their recovery, the solution to their pathology lies in their own hands. They have to change themselves. In that way the individualism of the American political discourse is emphasised. Society should be compassionate and supportive, but essentially their tragedy is an individual one and the personal insight is the first step to restoring family and personal happiness.

Family Life develops a more far-reaching social critique and the final hopelessness, that nothing will change until there is systemic change, underlines the aching but inarticulate sadness of the mute. Janice’s mutism may be read as indicative of the voicelessness of all her class and her kind. The established order eventually reasserts itself and while the lecturing psychiatrist is able to see Janice as little more as an object with which he can illustrate his point, the audience is left to wonder what Mr and Mrs Baildon will ask themselves before they go to sleep at night.

The Parent of the Child

*Give me the child until he is seven and I will give you the man*

*Proverb*

The effects of living in a clearly pathological environment, or with a manifestly disturbed parent are explored in significant but different ways by both Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960) and Bad Boy Bubby (Dir. de Heer 1993). Both films explain the psychological troubles of the sons, Norman and Bubby, in terms of their relationship with their mothers. Both are men in their thirties, both have been brought up without a father, both live proscribed lives.
in enclosed worlds, both have disturbing sexual proclivities, neither have any relationships with the world or other people, both are outsiders and Other, both kill their parents, but whereas Norman is outwardly acceptable and inwardly terrifying, Bubby improves on acquaintance. In the case of Psycho the pathology of the mother is less clear, if only because she never appears as a character except in the prequel television film, Psycho IV (Dir. Garris 1991) which nevertheless, does present childhood experience and current madness in a causal relationship. In Bad Boy Bubby the behaviour of the mother (Claire Benito) is equally to blame and seems both pseudo-psychotic and malevolent. It is pseudo-psychotic in that the fiction by which she controls Bubby (Nicholas Hope) and which she has used to rationalise his confinement to the dungeon-like home for his entire life, namely that there has been some kind of nuclear disaster or environmental catastrophe which makes it dangerous to venture out of doors without the gas mask that she keeps by the door, does not extend to her own thinking when she is outside the house. It stops short of being a delusion because she is able to distinguish between the home and the outside world. She does not wear the gas mask in the streets or to go shopping, she only wears it to leave and re-enter the room and to convince Bubby of the continuing danger from which she is protecting him. Her behaviour is seen as malevolent in the way that she dominates and bullies him. She ties him to a chair when she goes out, even if this means that he will have to urinate in his trousers because he cannot move. She beats and berates him, but at the same time soothes him with incestuous seduction which has them strip-washing each other and engaging erotically.

We are left with no alternative but to believe that his upbringing is the root cause of Bubby’s pathological personality and behaviour. He has never had the opportunity to interact with ordinary people. His only contact with any form of life apart from his mother is the cat and the cockroaches which infest the foul room which is his experienced world, and these he kills with an innocent, conscienceless fascination. Bubby has no yardstick against which to measure values or behaviour, and when he eventually reaches the outside world and begins his picaresque adventures he is the innocent at large, and in this there is an important contrast with Norman. Bubby does not know the rules of social behaviour and must gradually learn some of them; behaviourist assumptions account for most of his actions throughout the film and point to his lack of any “natural conscience”. In the meantime he may break conventions, but where he transgresses it is without conscious malevolence, and without will or knowledge he may not sin. Norman however, knows the rules but breaks them anyway. The psychiatric evaluation of Norman suggests that he was
unable to reconcile the major psychological conflict but, in the sequels that follow, the
question of his conscience, choice and control still remains.

Bubby kills his mother and recently returned estranged father by wrapping Clingfoil around
their faces. Although he has already done this to the cat in an emotionless moment of
experimentation, and still seems to be a little perplexed by the fact that it appears to have
died, he does it with an air of a child who is playing with things he does not understand.
Indeed, he stays around the house for some time afterwards, seemingly oblivious and
unconcerned by the seriousness of what he has done and, when he does leave, he puts the
dead cat in his suitcase and takes it with him. Although it is stiff and smelly and wrapped
up in plastic, it still seems to be his only friend and he conducts several conversations with
it before he develops human relationships.

Bubby, in his innocent guise, subverts the adult construction of the world and the
conventions of behaviour, the real and the veneer of religion, even orthodoxies of attraction
and beauty. When a dog barks at him, he barks back; when a child crawls around a
furniture shop, in and out of table legs, over and under the items on display, he does the
same. His conversation consists of parroted phrases and echolalia which are sometimes
apprise in the most lateral and literal of ways. But here he is viewing language as form and
not meaning or function. He does not conduct conversations but constructs an interaction
like a cut-up novel. Jump-cuts and absurdities sit alongside non-sequiturs and nonsense.
The words are sounds that have certain effects on people and Bubby delights in the
attention it brings. His relationship with and acceptance by children and later by the
residents of a nursing home is significant and something Norman Bates could never have
achieved. The impression is that children would have cowered behind their parents and
dogs would have barked when Norman was near because they can still sense something
that the adults cannot.

Bubby is held up as something of a litmus test for public reactions to and attitudes towards
Otherness. He is introduced in turn to a standard array of characters. He meets the rich and
poor, the upwardly mobile and the down and out, the young and the old, the conventional
and the rebellious, the protectors of social values and the transgressors, the friendly and the
aggressive, the accepting and the rejecting, the loving and the cruel. He merges effortlessly
into each situation because, like similar characters before him such as Kaspar Hauser in
_The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser_ (Dir. Herzog 1974) or Chauncey Gardner in _Being There_
(Dir. Ashby 1979), he has no personality of his own and his purpose, at least dramatically,
is to show us ourselves. He is a cipher on to which a range of different people are able to project. While we see urban bourgeois chic taking up a new fashion, the real care is given by those with least to give, people who, like himself are also Other.

The acceptance he receives may also be seen to be framed within an Australian approval of the larrikin. This is not a context wracked by bourgeois angst or introspection. Bubby’s literalism, his lack of conventional reticence to comment on the people and behaviours around him and his enjoyment of the moment do not expect or employ an interrogative or problematising frame of mind. Within an Australian context it is suggested that it underlines at least one of the set of social groundrules, in that if he is causing no harm to anyone he should be left alone. Even if he commits the odd spot of murder, you can be sure that he really did not mean any harm; he seems a decent enough bloke. However, the film and its attitude is not clear on the issue of providing caring for as well as caring about the mentally ill. The charity workers are portrayed as naive in their lack of true penetration of the underworld from which Bubby emerges and in which he moves most easily, but the nurses and attendants in the nursing home are both sensible and earthy. The comedic intent may puncture some of the pomposities of bourgeois sensibilities, but it may also create a sense of bland, blind, unconcerned indifference in those who are secure towards the nature of those on the periphery. It is a short step from a policy of laissez-faire to abandonment.

As might be expected, the film compresses and exaggerates experiences. It may be that being seduced on first meeting by a Salvation Army Officer or becoming a cult singer in a rock band are not ordinary occurrences for most people, but the final message of the film is intended to be. When he finds love and acceptance from an ordinary, unprepossessing, motherly and entirely genuine woman, who is appropriately called Angel, we learn that simple, unaffected love makes all the difference. Angel too is rescued by love. We first see her as a woman who will live an unfulfilled life, transferring her love to the residents of the nursing home. However, she gathers the courage to reject the snobbish pretensions of her middle-class parents (clearly class is no barrier to oppression between the generations) who shun Bubby. Giving love, being able to love, is as redeeming as receiving it because the ability to love is one more defining human characteristic. It is not instinct, devotion nor loyalty; it is an affair of the spirit. Without it we may not be animals, but we are less than fulfilled.

The madness of Bad Boy Bubby is in the dark cruelty of the outside world. The film is presented in terms of dark and light, and the fact that the sun is shining in the final scenes
of domesticity, where Bubby is playing in the garden with the children while Angel looks on, should not be lost on the viewer, even if we are also shown that it is small pool of sunshine in an otherwise grim industrial landscape. The sun never shone in his mother's house but, as he is redeemed and as he discovers the essence of being human, we suspect that the sun will always shine on this particular little house. His past as a murderer and a freak slips away because he is, as a result of his ultimate harmlessness and forgivability, able to find the love of a good woman. But, in contrast to some other treatments that end in the same way, it is a very ordinary and unglamourised love.

In the cases of *Family Life* (Dir. Loach 1971), *Sweetie* (Dir. Campion 1988), *An Angel at My Table* (Dir. Campion 1990) and *Lilian's Story* (Dir. Domaradzki 1995), where the central characters are all women, the question of potential marriage is raised. In all cases the women, who are either seen as unattractive and/or deranged, as in *Sweetie* and *An Angel at My Table*, or, as in *Family Life* or *Lilian's Story*, sexually active and promiscuous, “rutting like a cat in heat” as Lilian Singer’s father puts it, they are seen as damaged goods, something no respectable man would want (and the men they do find are often not very respectable as if to underline the point). It is clear that this is not only a reflection of the social construction of women, but also of madness. Madness taints and, it would seem, makes one unfit for ordinary human relationships.

On occasion it is not the children who are the subject of psychiatric attention, but the parents and elders. In *She's Been Away* (Dir. Hall 1989) Peggy Ashcroft plays Lillian Huckle, an old women who has spent her life in an old-fashioned psychiatric hospital which is closing down. Her niece Harriet Ambrose (Geraldine James) and her husband Hugh (James Fox) are as prosperous and middle-class as their names suggest, and take over her care more out of a sense of obligation than genuine desire. Initially the relationship is troubled and there are predictable scenes which emphasise Lillian’s institutionalisation and the dependence that has been fostered by a totalising hospital regime. However, as she begins to express her individuality and as both aunt and niece begin to see beyond the surface of the preconceived ideas of each other, we are reminded that individual relationships matter more than class or social conventions. Once more the humanistic perspective underlines that the essence of being human is in the establishment and maintenance of meaningful personal relationships. Their absence may not always result in madness, but will always result in an impoverished life. Their presence may not always redeem the most profoundly mad, but will at least make them human.
Fearsome Fathers and Perplexed Patriarchs

The optimalization of experience and the enhancement of sensitivity.

Robert Michels (1981) p.9

While much of the focus, especially in the psychoanalytic literature, has been on the role of the mother within family dynamics, the figure of the father also looms large in many cinematic considerations of madness and its origins. Weak, remote or absent fathers may be used to draw a contrast with, or facilitate the emergence of, dominant mothers, as we see in Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960), Bad-Boy Bubby (Dir. de Heer 1993) or Family Life (Dir. Loach 1971), but these depictions often share the weakness of the singular image of the schizophrenogenic mother and can be revealingly subjected to feminist and critical analysis (Doane 1991, Creed 1993). Chesler (1972) in particular pointed out the socially constructed and undue emphasis on women as mothers, which may then have led to a corresponding diminution of the role of fathers in the equation. This may also be put alongside the pre-eminence which Bowlby (1969) gave to the mother-child bonding relationship which, it may be argued, in its turn influenced much social work practice and social policy related to the treatment and custody of children. Although it is possible to suggest that behaviours are completely genetically determined, without any social moderation or learning experience, the position put forward in these films is largely dependent on social conditioning, albeit sometimes from a very limited social circle. As we see in An Angel at My Table (Dir. Campion 1990), Shine (Dir. Hicks 1996), Lilian's Story (Dir. Domaradzki 1995) or Distant Voices, Still Lives (Dir. Davies 1988) the figure of a brooding, often violent and usually threatening father is a significant type in the explanation and dynamic of cinematic representations of Madness and we often witness the terrible effect they can have on a sensitive child.

A child who lives in terror may, it is suggested by these treatments, retreat into the safety of madness, and while madness may be too strong a term for some the currency of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the concern for victims of various forms of child abuse, much of it sexual, testifies to its continuing prominence (Busfield 1996). It is the alternative to reproducing the abusive behaviour themselves (as we assume the father may be doing), and may be the only place where fear cannot reach them. Fantasy becomes a sanctuary and in the case of An Angel at My Table, Lilian’s Story, Shine and Distant Voices, Still Lives, which are all biographical to some extent, all three protagonists, Janet Frame, David
Helfgott, Terence Davies and in her own particular way Lilian Singer (the Bea Miles character whose pseudonym is surely no coincidence played by Toni Collette as a young woman and Ruth Cracknell when older) find self-expression in the arts. Frame became a well-regarded author after her period in a psychiatric hospital, Helfgott’s musical career has sandwiched his in-patient career, Singer/Miles recited Shakespeare on the streets of Sydney and Davies, as a film director of some acclaim, has made a trilogy of affecting films about his Liverpool working class childhood. It should be noted in passing that although Davies did not have any formal psychiatric care (or if he did it plays no part in his films), this seems more by luck than judgement, nevertheless many of the themes in his films are similar to those of the others. In the case of Davies, the struggle for a personal identity is focussed on his childhood and his understated developing sexuality; however, it frequently brushes psychiatric questions.

The monstrous father is seen in these films as a destructive and consuming force. His anger reduces the children to abject terror, and its inarticulate presence often seems to fill the atmosphere of the home like poisonous volcanic fumes; it is in the breath of the family. The family as a unit, held together as much by their conflict as their confederacy, demands a focus in which the contrasts emerge. The recurrent scene of the family dining table in these three films, a potent setting that also appears in Family Life (Dir. Loach 1971) and Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960) as has been mentioned, emphasises that even at what should be a moment of shared family intimacy and sustenance, communication between the father and his family seems impossible. There are no words that can be spoken without a forced self-consciousness, there are no emotions that can be expressed without a fear of judgement, there are no moments of unforced, unconscious, tacit understanding and tenderness. This is not to say that the fathers in these films do not have such feelings, but they are unable to articulate them. Their emotional constipation, the ominous sense of building frustration, what Leff & Vaughn (1983) might rightly take as a measure of expressed emotion, is more destructive to the psychological and emotional development of their children than their violent outbursts. The brooding silence which infects the gathering storm is where the terror lies. The waiting and anticipation is the most terrible moment.

Yet, these characters are not one-dimensional. Most noticeably in the case of Peter Helfgott (Armin Mueller-Stahl) in Shine and Mr O’Brien, the father (Pete Postlethwaite) in Distant Voices, Still Lives, we see a mixture of profound, ambivalent and genuine emotions. Although we may feel that it like being in a very small room with a very large and unpredictable animal, we also know that these are men who decorate Christmas trees in the
middle of the night as a surprise for their children, they gaze mutely and with inexpressible longing at their children in their beds at night and, when left alone in the house, sit hunched over and stare into the fire. They are not monsters of cruelty, they are mountains of inarticulation, which, as has been shown, is not the same as being inexpressive.

The fathers we see in these cases are also all victims of varieties of social oppression. Peter Helfgott has survived the Holocaust, and it seems understandable that this experience may have scarred him for the rest of his life. He has lived through inexpressible horror and, once he has lost everything of value, he may not be able to bear the thought that it might happen again, even if, tragically, he cannot communicate this to his children. Although he has a Middle-European sensibility, and a strict regard for the Great Canon of Culture, as demonstrated by his love of classical music, Peter Helfgott is no more articulate or able to communicate than Mr O’Brien whose life is counterpointed with sentimental popular songs sung over a glass of beer in working class public houses. Mr Frame, also a violent and sometimes drunken patriarch, lives in grinding poverty and lives a life of very little promise, as little as that which awaits Mr O’Brien. Although one is agricultural and rural and the other is industrial and urban both are only of social value as anonymous units of the labour force, casually discarded when their back is no longer strong enough, and neither is rewarded with even a brief moment in the sun. Working to barely survive was all either knew and both died before their time.

The least physically violent of these fathers, but just as controlling and domineering, is Lilian’s father, Albion Singer (Barry Otto), “a man of moustaches and of shiny boots” (Grenville 1985 p.5) who is so determined to be in control of the emotions of himself and his family that he counts the number of times he smiles during the year. Mr Singer, a writer by profession and with some education, is a scientific man for whom emotions are an encumbrance. Recounting his marriage he explains to Lilian that he found her mother charming, so he courted her, and they were married in the rain. It is his emotional distance from Lilian, and his inability to show affection, that so badly affects her as a free-spirited and artistically inclined young woman, but he does still visit her in hospital which her more sensitive mother never does. He seems unchanging and while he does not physically die at an early age, but emotionally withers for lack of nutrition.

The tragedy of these fathers, which may have been visited on their children had they not discovered an artistic medium and been able to express themselves rather than having to deal with it in some internal struggle, is that these men cannot make simple contact with the
things that they hold most dear, and they seem helpless to prevent the damage that they do. The language of emotions is a stranger to them. They do not know how to articulate their complexity. They are forced to live in isolation, imprisoned in their inarticulate world, and the sadness that pervades these representations of family life is that it need not have been that way. Because it was not a question of intent, but of skill or ability or knowledge, it could have been different, if only they had known how. They do not mean to be cruel and they hate themselves for it. Nevertheless, they repeat the pattern of the past because they cannot make the full cognitive leap to understand what it is that they do. Although these men are not inmates of a psychiatric hospital, Goffman's characterisation that they have "been exiled from living" (1966 p.68) seems sadly appropriate. They are abject in their material and communicative poverty.

1960, according to Tudor (1989), was a seminal year and saw the release of the two films he credits with the beginning of the modern psycho-movie (p.192). Only a few months before the release of Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960), Peeping Tom (Dir. Powell 1960) appeared, and both were remarkable in the way that they "so clearly departed from the genre's traditionally secure view of insanity" (ibid p.192, italics in the original). This made them very dangerous indeed and, in Tudor's view, "changed the horror movie's conception of insanity" (ibid p.193), and so, it might be suggested, popular culture's view as well. In Powell's British film, Mark Lewis (played by Carl Boehm) is a son whose most peculiar and homicidal behaviour is directly linked to the treatment he received from his father who brought him up alone. Mark is a focus-puller and keen amateur photographer and filmmaker who earns a little bit of extra money by taking low-budget pornographic pictures in the rooms above the local newsagent. He is the son of a distinguished behavioural psychologist (played in only a few brief scenes by Powell himself, with his own son as Mark as a child) who thereby manages to combine the terrifying father with a touch of the mad scientist. Mark lives on the sprawling top floor of the family home and rents out the lower floors as flats. However, the jumble of rooms in which he lives, overflowing with accumulated canisters of film and remnants of the past, contain his deep secret. His father was most interested in the physiological effects of fear, or, to more accurate, abject terror. To that end Mark, even when a small child, was subjected to sadistic experiments so that his father could observe the results. These experiments were all carefully documented and recorded on films which Mark watches over and over again each night like a man entranced and obsessed. But Mark also has a film project of his own, and is making a documentary film about the experience of fear. His method of data collection is to pick up women, most usually prostitutes and some of the women he takes to the newsagent's, and to begin
filming them with a small cine-camera on a tripod, asking them to pretend to be afraid for the camera. However, as he gets closer and closer to them he lifts the camera up and points a tripod leg, in which he has fixed a very phallic dagger blade, at their throats. Not surprisingly, they show real terror on their faces as he continues filming up to the moment at which he pushes the blade into their necks. He relives his bizarre side-line each night as he watches his films with apparent sexual satisfaction as well.

Mark is the product of his upbringing; the film suggests it is not to be wondered at that he turned out this way. His scopophilia is explained in classical psycho-dynamic terms and when, in a moment of self-awareness, he seeks treatment, he is told that it may take many years. Like other cases, Mark has sought some relief from his torment in artistic expression, although his is notably more perverse and less artistically successful than the others. In fact, so concerned is he that the final resolution to his problem can only be successful if captured on film that, in the dénouement of the film, as the police are closing in on him he rigs a series of cameras, somewhat after the fashion of Muybridge’s serial photographs of movement, which will record him running onto the same blade on which he has impaled his victims. The final scene of Mark’s film is his own face in the terror of the moment of death. This concludes his life, his film and his torment.

A feminist reading of the film may suggest that it is informed by a sadistic misogyny and that the scopophilia is really secondary to the pleasure Mark achieves from actually terrorising the women; even killing them seems to be incidental even if it is an unavoidable consequence. It is doubtful if the audience is supposed to feel much sympathy for Mark for what he did, even if it is ironically suggested that it too is scopophilic, but it is his father, remote, cold, austere, unemotional and domineering, who is the real villain.

It is suggested by these films that children who live and grow up in such conditions will be psychologically damaged in some way, and perhaps their only escape is into madness, but the conclusions that can be drawn can be substantially more positive and bear some relation to the socio-cultural context from which they emerge. Firstly, the madness is not a state of no return. Even David Helfgott, who at one point appears to be a hopeless case, sitting on a hospital bench, is recast as eccentric rather than ill, despite his time in hospital and some evidence of ECT being used. In the final analysis, however, a degree of redemption is possible with suitable care and compassion, providing he keeps taking the tablets. We learn from the principal characters that the artistic enterprise is one way in which the shackles of the past can be transcended, and in that there is a further sub-text which points to the
relationship within which the audience and the film it is watching, even at that very moment, are engaged. Films, as cultural products, enter the consciousness and the conscience of the individual members of the audience as well as the audience as a social mass, to contribute to the process of representation, meaning-making and re-evaluation. The experiences of the audience are being represented by the film; and at the same time the film, because of the ways it is representing them, is helping to redefine those experiences.

Secondly, a deep level of meaning can be found within this experience and context. Frankl (1963) makes the case that the search for meaning drives psychological and material behaviour. Without a developed sense of meaning we lose a primary characteristic of humanness. These films give the protagonist a sense of meaning after a trial of misadventure and misery. The psychotherapeutic role of intervention, whether formal (as a Dr Wonderful) or informal (usually by a spouse) is to aid the patient’s rediscovery of meaning in life. It is a particularly hopeful and optimistic view of the human condition, and in that plays an important role in the development of humanistic psychiatric care (Birckhead 1989). Psychiatric care is in this case, not co-terminous with psychotherapy in that it can be taken to include the facets of everyday living around which much institutional nursing practice is focussed. Similarly the self of the nurse, or whoever the psychotherapeutic agent may be, is always present in the relationship. The sympathy evident in these representations of madness does suggest that a tender and profound understanding of the crisis of identity brought about by the fragmentation of mental illness is both moral and productive.

Thirdly, the value that is put upon communication and understanding within the therapeutic ideal is based on a premise which underpins much of the dynamic approach to psychotherapy where people summon the courage to speak and to listen, and this, it is suggested, remains an ideal even within the most biologically oriented psychiatric practice because it retains the human component. It is underscored by the suggestion that the experiences of an individual, irrespective of who may or may not be psychiatrically disturbed and clinically diagnosable, are moderated by the reaction they receive from others around them. The influence of a humanistic psychotherapy in which some essence of understanding, some germ of Rogerian positive regard (1960), is often the principal therapeutic tool, indicates an important moment in which biological approaches are seen to be insufficient. It also signals the broadening of the concept of mental health to include the "worried well", who may be worried sick, and gains a sensitive, self-aware, introspective caché. Rogers does not devote much of his energy to a reconsideration of social structures,
and places a great deal of his faith in the action and interaction of single individuals. This is a position which may not consider the oppression so apparent in the background of some of these emotionally disabled fathers. Nevertheless, it is both a serious and influential attempt to deal with the crises of living and the relationships of becoming (and being) a person, at least for those who do not have to worry to greatly about food and shelter, but who remain unhappy, unfulfilled or unsatisfied. It is now difficult to imagine any form of counselling or psychotherapy that does not have some debt or pay some homage to these Rogerian ideals (Jourard 1971, Corey 1991, Shorter 1997), and, as has been seen before, they infuse a major manifestation of the Dr Wonderfuls of contemporary psychiatry, nursing and psychotherapy, as well as much of their idealised images. It is a positive and hopeful ideological position, and if it sometimes a little elusive, it remains the way in which psychiatry would wish to see itself. Support and acceptance are construed in such a way that they help to heal even if they do not cure, that the non-malevolent Other is capable of rehabilitation and re-integration. It suggests that there is something of value to be found and developed in us all, that human beings are social beings and have social responsibilities, that how we treat those less fortunate than ourselves reflects more on us than them, that social action cannot be separated from social morality and that change is always possible. It would appear that the idealised psychiatrist is still a Dr Wonderful, although he may now more readily reach for his prescription pad at the end of a session in practice than in film.

The position of the family is likewise characterised as either that of angels or devils. We have seen how the nurturing family remains the ideal, while portrayals of both mothers and fathers would sometimes suggest that the last thing anyone should want, if sanity is a high priority, is a set of parents. Only rarely, as in the case of Sweetie (Dir. Campion 1988) or Angel Baby (Dir. Rymer 1995), does the relationship with siblings or the disruption to the family unit brought about by mental illness figure as a principal concern. However, when it does, as in Angel Baby it emphasises the humanity of all concerned, it steps around the demonisation of either parent, it does not seek to blame the putative patient, it recognises the complexity of aetiology, it presents a messy multi-dimensional reality, and it is concerned with the binding issues of Madness, the family and personal identity.
CHAPTER SEVEN
MADNESS AND THE FINAL REEL

Again, Madness as a test case

Sander Gilman (1995) p.33

In returning to the main themes of this thesis, a number of substantial issues assert themselves. Castoriadis (1988) elaborates how the imaginary constructs that a society builds up are used to deal, in a safe and regulated way, with their inherent terror. It may be a case of demonisation or exoticisation, but always it results in a case of Otherness. This is pertinent to the representation of Madness which, as Foucault (1973 p.15) hazards, may be even more terrifying than the prospect of death. It is also, as has already been noted, crucial to the resolution of our own identity. In the process of questioning the nature and construction of identity we not only ask ourselves who we are and why we are as we are, but also what distinguishes us from others and in what ways we are similar or the same. We seek comparison, contrast and commonality. Central to this search is the need to confirm and know of our own sanity, and the necessity to identify, know of and affirm insanity. In order to do this we must create a representation of Madness so that even if we may not know what it is, or much about it, we can recognise it when we see it. Our trust in representation may be far more reassuring than any recourse to reality; it may be more irrational, but it may also be more comforting and safe. These representations may or may not value empirical evidence above metaphorical constructions, but through them, and the choices made about what to include or exclude, what to emphasise or ignore, we may come to know, or see, ourselves as who we are, by being able to show who we are not. Gilman (1995) suggests that where there are causes for anxiety and doubt, we will try to exercise control through representation; and the mode of representation that most vividly characterises our contemporary concerns and strikes most deeply at our common dread may be the cinema.

In the definition of difference, representations of Madness contribute to the ontological pursuit of the conception of the Other. They raise the question of how our minds and our thoughts, which are among the most profound aspects of what we regard as central and crucial to our selves, may be altered, affected, damaged, deranged or demeaned and how that may affect the essential nature of ourselves. As this helps us to know ourselves,
Bergson (1977) was not seeking glib epigrams when elevating the importance of this experience to philosophical discourse.

In order to grasp more fully the implications that Madness holds for us it becomes necessary to consider the way in which the narratives which are told and the images which are shown in the cinematic representations of Madness contend meaning, act in a subversive manner or, more often, concern themselves with subversive or dangerous natures, and how it is best to deal with them. The more frequently chosen of the possible choices may include to discipline, punish, or treat, more rarely to leave alone or celebrate, but the presence of madness in our midst always poses questions of fundamental social and cultural importance, because it is evidence of the Other.

It is recognised that the images we see can convey an array of meanings and moments of significance according to the context and culture within which they are produced and within which they are perceived, although this does not guarantee that any two will be identical. Indeed, the plurality of meanings, interpreted from a multiplicity of representative frames, is a touchstone of a postmodern sensibility; attempts at monology now seem inappropriate and unworkable. To some this may suggest a carnivalesque promiscuity where there are no standards of judgement, where nihilistic mockery is the form of discourse and serious debate is devalued but, despite these criticisms, plurality is still able to reveal a raft of significances when contextually analysed and culturally located. In this way, representations of Madness may at times function in opposition to, necessary antagonism to or subversion of the dominant, hegemonic discourse.

In an effort to contextualise the construction of the representative frames of Madness it is important to consider the ideological basis from which the content and ethics of representations of Madness derive. It would be dilatory to do otherwise because, as Kellner (1995) points out, ideologies will often act as “a rhetoric that attempts to seduce individuals into identifying with the dominant system of values, beliefs and behaviours” (p.112). He argues that ideologies will tend to present the interests of a specific group as universal rather than sectional, and are therefore ripe for deconstruction. Deleuze & Guattari (1987) support this view and remark that the real question is not whether the status, position or experience “of those on the bottom is better or worse, but the type of organisation from which that status results” (p.210) and, it might be suggested, the ideology which supports
and allows such organisation. The disputation in the ideological debates which were apparent in the earliest films are still raging in the most recent productions. The position that Madness holds in our thinking is still not clear, and this lack of certainty, which may well be inevitable, can be quite unsettling. It becomes of importance to consider when a person whose behaviour of thought processes seems bizarre, incomprehensible or transgressive should be seen as simply mad, incorrigibly bad or dangerous to know. However, in the middle of this anxiety, a historical perspective shows that there are detectable shifts in emphasis, different fashions of explanation and multiple models which are exemplified in some of the films under consideration, and in them it is possible to see moments of significance.

Differential diagnosis and treatment is a recurrent theme in the cinematic representation of Madness, and while it is acknowledged that it also exercises the minds of health professionals, that particular question is to be set aside. The position that the same actions of assessment and care would be taken for the same person in different situations, let alone different times, becomes difficult to sustain when subjected to any comparative analysis. The socio-political context, embroidered by economic and moral considerations, becomes of as much influence as the detection of any empirically corroborated signs or symptoms. The treatments of the context of diagnosis suggest that the maxim that to be mad is an irregular verb contains more than a germ of interest: while I may be an individual and you may be eccentric, he is definitely mad. This is particularly so in the case of representations which do not argue on the same plane of understanding as taxonomies of symptomatology: Madness, like beauty, is often in the eye of the beholder.

The Australian eye may also have a particular perspective on the place that Madness holds in the cultural construction of a nation's sense of self, its projected image or any recognisable cinematic identity. The significant number of Australian and New Zealand films dealing with questions of Madness that have emerged since the late 1980s are all, in some sense, dealing with aspects of identity, the Other and the relationship of the individual to society. When examining the representation of Madness, it becomes important to consider not only what the Mad may represent to us, but also how much the Mad may, in fact, represent us. Final and conclusive words are almost always inappropriate and certainly obsolete before they reach the printed page. Nevertheless, some summation of the tenets of the discussion can distil particular moments which then lead to further areas for consideration, directions for continuing exploration and the next steps in the process, for it
should not be forgotten that analysis of this kind no more exists in a cultural or ideological vacuum, than do the representations of Madness which have been discussed.

The representation of Madness in popular film has been perceived in this thesis through the lens of an observer and participant who tries to make sense of the surrounding world. It includes allusions to a world-view, on the principle that understanding how individuals construct a view of the world will illuminate the opinions they have of it. A theory of society, whether consciously articulated or not, is not only needed to critique the social or the cultural, it is an unavoidable precondition, and leads to artefacts, such as the representations of Madness in film, being socially and culturally situated. The representation of Madness in popular film is contested territory, it cannot easily be claimed by any single theoretical perspective and seeps across any artificial boundaries which disciplines or methodological constructs may wish to define. It is at the edges of our experience and is best suited to an approach that recognises the fluidity of its content and the flexibility of its meaning. Accordingly, it is suggested that a critical postmodern understanding of the world, in which absolute truth-claims are challenged, but which a contextual analysis is retained, may yield a productive and fruitful base for analysis. The clay feet of cinematic grand theories, whether pertaining to film production or matters of a grander aesthetic sweep, have been continuously exposed in recent years (Bordwell & Carroll 1996), and there is a need to re-assess the false choices presented by either endorsing one school of thought or denying another. However, a flexible response does not indicate a lack of rigour. Nor does the attention given to more disposable or apparently trivial aspects of culture, exemplified by the high/popular culture divide, distract from meaningful analysis. Cultural products of all kinds, films as much as any, can be effective and affective. Accepted or dominant representations can be demythologised and deconstructed without losing sight of their original power, importance or influence (Vattimo 1992). Ryan & Kellner (1990) argues that films require a twofold reading because although they can “disclose the contours of ideology” (p.485) and show the way the hegemonic discourse channels fears and desires, they also “provide a record of popular energies emerging out of structural differences in society which threaten to disturb (that) hegemony” (p.485). Popular cinema thereby becomes a vital site of contention.

It is argued here that the preferred (or imposed) representation of the world (the dominant hegemonic construct), when viewed with the use of readable signs and metaphors, is more likely to have an impact on the subjective judgement of an individual than any argument
which may have a greater empirical validity but which by-passes the foundations of constructed understanding. Such a position recognises the visceral as well as the intellectual response elicited by films. Nevertheless, these representative choices must be contextualised within a critical framework in which hegemonic processes are deconstructed. Hall (in Grossberg 1986 p.50) reminds us at this point that ideological elements can be seen to cohere together within a discourse and this creates the possibility of a perspective which can therefore be developed and termed “critical postmodernism” and establishes a foundation for further understanding. If we regard the world in this way, it may be possible to draw tentative conclusions and agree with Lilian Singer (in Lilian’s Story Dir. Domaradzki 1995) that “any tale is real if told well enough”.

Constructing the Other

Loonies are not encouraged to admire themselves or even remind themselves who they are

Kate Grenville (1985) p.154

As Grossberg (1996 p.95) notes “difference” is not the same as “Otherness” because, while on one level difference can be descriptive, Otherness is always value-laden; difference can be assimilated, even celebrated, but Otherness is always abject. The conception of the Other which has informed much of this text has taken Madness as its keynote. It is possible to write a history of black people or physically disabled people and include people who are black and mad, or disabled and mad. However, these, like male/female or middle/working class oppositions, are sub-categories in the context of this thesis, undoubtedly important in their own right, but essentially a sub-group of the main theme. In this thesis Madness has always been taken as the primary defining characteristic, but Madness as a concept has more shades of grey than blackness and more forms than disability simply because of its historical and cultural contextuality. As a result, whether Madness is subjected to an economic, political, racial, sexual, psychological, cultural, ethical or representative analysis the resulting conclusions always reflect the anxieties we have about Otherness.
To see the Mad in the cinema as the quintessential Other is to bring all the factors of fear, dread, fascination and fabulation together in such a way as to present to viewers of films in which Madness is represented with a complex of interlocking, overlapping, meshing and contradictory images that work in relation to their conceptions of themselves. The power of the image is such that Felman (1983) suggests that the influence of the "psychoanalytic myth" (which it has been noted informs much of Hollywood psychiatry and is found to be so suited to cinematic treatments) derives "not from its truth-value, but from its truth-encounter with the other ... an expropriating passage of one insight through another" (p.1045), that is to say from its metaphorical qualities. Felman argues that psychoanalysis would not be possible without a conception of the Other, and without psychoanalysis the representation of Madness in films would be very different indeed. Hyler et al (1991) suggest that the spectrum of personalities from "homicidal maniacs to narcissistic parasites" (p.1044) are not those the majority wish to emulate. Once it becomes clear that there is something that we wish to consider as Not-Us, we must ask whether such a thing can be imagined without it really being part of the human experience, simply a part which we find too distressing to confront or accept. The Other is part of the process by which we define ourselves.

It is clearly an act of considerable courage to realise that nothing that is human should be foreign to us, because we then have to ask ourselves whether, given the right circumstances or an alternative set of events would we, or could we behave in that way. However, if one aspect of a postmodern imagination is to begin to challenge and contest the barriers which are constructed for our safety and to relieve our anxiety (without necessarily advocating their total removal), then we can begin to reconfigure the limits of our embrace. It is not suggested that mental illness is entirely a social construction. Certainly, social and cultural conventions, political and economic interests can influence the aetiology, the way it is dealt with and how individuals are treated, as the familiar critiques of Laing (1968), Foucault (1973) and Szasz (1974) have shown. In short, how Madness is created, perpetuated and sustained. These arguments have, as Wulff et al (1990) note, brought moral and ideological positions to the fore and raised valid epistemological and ontological questions concerning the nature of mental illness. However, it is accepted that states of illness do exist; people have hallucinations, delusions and tortured thoughts which are pathological, and whether these experiences are grouped under the syndrome of schizophrenia or dementia praecox is less central to this thesis than the more constructed term of "Madness" and the meanings and attributions that these representations convey.
Madness, per se, is neither a modern nor a postmodern concept, but while modernism seeks to control, analyse, categorise and cure, postmodernism doubts even the strongest certainty and distrusts the most confident of assertions.

Furthermore, it is not suggested that it is either unusual or unproductive to attempt to represent the Other. It is more pertinent to question why the particular representations of Otherness are chosen or developed over alternatives and what this, alongside the Other of our creation, may tell us about our sense of self and identity. Otherness is not without practical ramifications, and these can at times seem grossly unjust. However, within the representations of Madness there are constructions of Otherness, and where there is Otherness, there are tales to be told.

Contentious Narratives

Nothing is impossible for a brilliantly perverse mind

_Umberto Eco (1979)_

Some of the most recent clinically oriented literature, especially in psychiatric nursing (Barker & Davidson 1997), would suggest that far from witnessing the total triumph of empirically-based biological psychiatry there is an active and flourishing interest in the meaning of the experience of Madness, "highlighting the politics of mental illness, the social context of personhood and the spiritual dimensions of mental health" (p.3). The debt which continues to be acknowledged to the "anti-psychiatric" works of Laing (1968) and Szasz (1974) indicates that the fascination with the self, personal hermeneutics and the sense that exploring the furthest fringes of our experience can reveal more about the central and core values of what it means to be human, retains considerable vigour.

The existence of Madness may in itself begin to subvert the notion of normality and as a consequence signal itself as a candidate for special treatment. It does not so much break the rules in the sense that criminal behaviour may, as deny the basis for common understanding; it does not recognise or obey the shared conventions that make dialogue
possible and therefore may be seen as even more suspect or irredeemable. A substantial body of comic and dramatic treatments of the experience of madness will, when acting in a subversive manner, contain the theme that the ones who are truly insane are the ones in charge, and that the psychiatrist, superintendent, nurse, and in fact the system itself, are as bizarre, irrational and lunatic as anything or anyone who is labelled as the mad one. Thus, Dr Dippy is madder than the patients in his sanitarium (Dir. Bitzer 1906), the psychiatric régime against which McMurphy rails in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (Dir. Forman 1975) is more deluded and absurd than anything the patients could devise, the care to which Janice Baidon really responds in Family Life (Dir. Loach 1971) is given by her fellow patients in hospital, and her free-thinking boyfriend outside it, rather than the health care system or her family, and, throughout these examples, we are left to wonder in whose house sanity can really be found.

While these representations can be exploited for simplistic analysis, they do lend themselves to both metaphorical and literal exploration. They may also contain the germ of serious critique in which the plurality of perspective and the breakdown of monological and dominant hegemonies is questioned. This is not to suggest that they are, in themselves, evidence of a complete paradigm shift, but they are substantial moments of contention without which the fabric of the cultural text would be different, and they contain reference points by which we can signify our practice. By extrapolating a mundane observation to the point of absurdity, a film can cause us to re-order the perspective given to certain social values and practices. This can be seen in a variety of ways: the conversation in Lovesick (Dir. Brickman 1983) between the psychiatrist (Dudley Moore) and the portrait of Freud (Alec Guinness) which hangs on his wall; a deflating a moment of seriousness (for example where McMurphy (Jack Nicholson) warns the attendants that he “might fill his boots” while having ECT in One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Dir. Forman 1975)); a broaching the conventions of polite social conversation (as Kate (Jacqueline McKenzie) does in Angel Baby (Dir. Rymer 1995) when describing the exciting and frantic sex life she shares with Harry); or deliberately standing outside the normal frame (as in the clanging word-play bizarre associations and non sequiturs in The Dream Team (Dir. Zieff 1989) or, as in Costi (Dir. Joffe 1996). In this way they set up a stylistic but not necessarily a thematic counterpoint to documentary treatments.

In 1966, after more than a year of negotiations, Frederick Wiseman gained access to the Massachusetts Correctional Institution, Bridgewater, a prison for the criminally insane, in
order to produce *Titicut Follies* (1967), a documentary of the life led by the inmates and the staff. Wiseman had in fact visited the hospital before, in another guise, and, supported by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, had at one-time been a research associate in the Sociology Department of Brandeis University. It may therefore be suggested that, compared to the directors of some feature films, he brought an unusual and differently informed sensibility to the project, and Wiseman’s intentions in making the film, and the effect it had on subsequent institutional reforms have been hotly debated (Benson & Anderson 1989 pp.103-5). In 1966 Bridgewater was divided into four distinct sections, each with a distinct population (Anderson & Benson 1991), all of which feature at some point in the film. There was a state hospital for the criminally insane with 600 male inmates (no women), two psychiatrists and one junior physician who may (or may not) have been among those with partial licenses often employed in “Siberia for correctional and medical staff” (ibid p.10); a prison department for alcoholics and drug offenders with 600-1,000 men; a facility for “defective delinquents” suffering from gross retardation with 150 men; and a treatment centre for the “sexually dangerous”. Wiseman attempts to create “reality fictions” (Benson & Anderson 1989 p.103) not any complete reality, and “allows himself great liberties in restructuring the time and space of the original material” (ibid p.36). He does not make it clear that he filmed in quite widely different settings, even though without some background information the film may suggest that each of these different areas were all in together. Nevertheless, the film does still seem to cover the gross spectrum of images of the insane, and the way in which they are represented is shocking, moving and significant. The bleak, descriptive feelings of those held in seclusion in psychiatric hospitals, including forensic establishments, as surveyed by Alty & Mason (1994 pp.161-173), seems to echo directly the inmates who speak in *Titicut Follies* and those who watch the film. Anger, helplessness disgust, resentment and humiliation feature much more than any positive feelings. Films have the power to outrage and move but they can also, whether a “reality fiction” or a “fictional reality”, disturb, offend and antagonise. It is not surprising that some of these images are considered subversive, discomforting and contentious, and that they have, at times, been censored, cut, curtailed and banned.

Alongside sex and violence, treatments of madness seem to have suffered from censorship more than other themes in films. Mathews (1994) notes how it not just *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (Dir. Wiene 1919) which has attracted attention because of the distress it may cause or the implicit message it contains. He argues that the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) has, until comparatively recently, always regarded the mental
hospital as a "no-go area" (p.164). This may be partly explained by middle-class Britain being seen as a less psychiatrically, or at least psychoanalytically, self-interested or self-absorbed society, and it has been noted how certain sections of the American middle-class embraced psychoanalysis in a way not witnessed in other countries, and this was the way their lives were presented. Thus, although the clinical culture was, and probably still is, different in significant respects, notwithstanding the influence of Laing and the Tavistock Institute (Prior 1993 pp.90-92), the real question is psychiatry as it appears in the cinema. *Shock Corridor* (Dir. Fuller 1963) was banned apparently because the conditions in American hospitals bore no relation to their British counterparts, which hardly seems to be valid as the same may apply to practically any other aspect of social life that one may care to name. Additionally, it was said that the film’s plot was irresponsible because it implied that, firstly, a sane person could gain admission to a psychiatric hospital by pretending to be mentally ill (which might lead to imitation) and shows Rosenhan’s (1973) research in which his stooges infiltrated hospitals in an interesting light, but more serious was the implication that being in a psychiatric hospital could bring about mental illness in its own right, for this was clearly a heretic position. Furthermore, it was alleged that the film may adversely affect any mentally disturbed person who watched it (Mathews 1994 p.165).

*Peeping Tom* (Dir. Powell 1960) caused an uproar even when it was released, and, perhaps because it was continuously realistic, without obvious dream or fantasy sequences, was treated harshly by censors and critics alike. When it was released in the USA it had lost almost 30 minutes in cuts and according to Derek Hill, a critic with the *London Tribune*, the "only really satisfactory way to dispose of (it) would be to shovel it up and flush it swiftly down the sewer. Even then the stench would remain" (McCarty 1993 p.193). The reaction was hardly more temperate when it was re-released in 1980. It still attracted strong feelings against its perceived misogyny and was actively picketed (Fleming & Manvell 1985 p.277); its disquieting power had not diminished.

In some ways, the British treatment of *M* (Dir. Lang 1930) was even less explicable, even though it was a considerable box office success in Germany. The closing scene in which the child-murderer, Becker, reveals his internal torment and compulsion to kill was cut entirely in order for it to receive a more general release. It was not allowed a more restricted "adult only" certificate and so the film would have appeared to conclude that rough justice was quite appropriate and should give no cause for ethical concern. In an act of what may be considered self-censorship, some films altered themselves in order to achieve the
necessary approval. Sometimes this made them almost unrecognisable. In the case of
Pandora’s Box (Dir. Pabst 1928), the ending became completely the opposite of the
original and rather than being stabbed by Jack the Ripper, Lulu, the femme fatale played by
Louise Brooks, was saved and redeemed by the timely intervention of the Salvation Army
which gave her the opportunity to repudiate her previous life, its decadence, intimations of
homosexuality, the heady scent of eroticism and a conspicuous lack of conventional
morals.

Sex between men, which has been treated as a psychiatric disorder (Hunter & MacAlpine
1963, Skultans 1975, Shorter 1997), caused similar moral and practical problems for the
censors when they came to approve Victim (Dir. Dearden 1961) even though (or perhaps
because) the film was socially concerned in its self-conscious position in the debate to
reform the sodomy law in the United Kingdom, and avoided hysterical stereotypes.
However, it was sympathetic towards the ordinary love felt by the homosexual characters
and tried to humanise rather than sensationalise the predicament in which the characters
found themselves. Mathews (1994) cites Trevelyan, the Chief Censor of the British Board
of Film Classification, as saying that the reasons for his decision were that the “film’s
statement that “adolescent boys” knew whether or not they were homosexual was “too
sweeping” or where the case for gay sex was “too plausibly put and not sufficiently
counteracted” (p.158, quotation marks in the original). Nevertheless, Mathews agrees with
Russo (1981) and Dirk Bogarde who played the main character, the lawyer Melville Farr,
that it was a significant film which added considerably to the public debate and marked a
watershed in the treatment of the subject. However, lesbian sex was instrumental in the
failure of The Killing of Sister George (Dir. Aldrich 1968) and as such underlines the way
in which the transgressors who are considered to be the greatest threat are likely to be those
that approach or test moral or ontological limits. They are the ones who are more likely to
cause moral panic. Violence more so than crime has sometimes attracted the degree of
attention that has been given to sex and madness, but it may be possible to suggest that it is
the latter categories rather than the former are perceived to be most dangerous to public
morals and sensibilities. It is they which are truly subversive, a point with which Foucault
(1973, 1991) may well have concurred for it suggests that while we can turn our eyes away
from sexual behaviour, or we can protect ourselves against violence, we may be able to do
nothing to ward off the randomness, the unpredictability and the greater Otherness of
Madness.
The Australian Eye

The films of a nation reflect its mentality in a more direct way than any other artistic media

Siegfried Kracauer (1974) p.5

Any member of any film audience will begin to make a number of judgements and critical assessments from the first frame of the film. Sometimes, initial predictions of what is to follow and how to respond may be made, sometimes rough categorisations may be constructed, sometimes it may be asked whether or not, without any pre-knowledge or clues, a film can be said to be recognisably a film not just of a certain genre, but of a particular country. A significant number of films from Australia and New Zealand, and concerned with issues of Madness, have been considered in the preceding text although, curiously, many of the major psychiatric care concerns of the government (Commonwealth of Australia 1996), which include youth suicide, particularly in Aboriginal communities, have remained untouched by these. It has been noted that many of them take real-life characters for their inspiration, and this may be a reflection of what O'Regan (1996) sees as the disproportionate representation of non-fiction subject matter and documentary influenced styles in Australian cinema (p.190), although he sees this as a parochialism rather than an opportunity to explore universal themes from the foundation of the particular. It has been suggested that these films are, nevertheless, justifiably bound together by anxious concerns with identity, Otherness and the relationship of the individual to society, and, while this is not to minimise the critique of the mental health system or the construction of madness that they may propose, what madness can be seen to exemplify acts as a bass line to them all.

Kellner (1995) suggests that “as the pace, extension and complexity of modern societies accelerate, identity becomes more and more unstable, more and more fragile” (p.233). This places the Australian experience in a peculiar situation. On one side it is in the trap that postmodernism sees in the very notion of identity itself; identity is problematized, and a single and constant one seen as a myth and an illusion (even if it is one that is vainly sought for very understandable reasons of psychological security, certainty and self-concept). However, Australia, as a culture and a nation, is in a position of striving to rid itself of a
colonial and Eurocentric past of a nation of immigrants which, while not entirely being a dependent appendage, may also be not quite an autonomous entity. Thus, it may be trying to find a still moment between the two positions before embracing a plurality of postmodern possibilities.

The geography of Australia presents problems in itself and, of course, many Australian painters, such as Russell Drysdale or Frédéric McCubbin, have taken it as a major theme in their work. This is not simply the “tyranny of distance” of which Blainey (1966) speaks; not only is it an enormous land mass, but it is drier, more inhospitable to human habitation and more sparsely populated than any other continent except for Antarctica; even the animals are a mixture of the bizarre and the deadly. It contains some of the most isolated human settlements on the planet. The European population, which has often seen itself as some unfortunate annex of the homeland which inexplicably is 20,000 kilometres away, clings to the coastline, and seems, at least on the East coast, to barely venture beyond the mountain range which sits less than two hours drive inland. The land itself has mythical qualities and retains exotic appeal, a sense of strangeness, an air of danger and an inscrutability. It is difficult for non-aboriginal Australians to feel that they belong to the land; it is not possible to possess the Other.

If a nation-state in its Western form is, in these cases, a fairly recent creation, and both Australia and New Zealand (with all due respect to the indigenous peoples) as non-colonial states are younger than cinema itself, it is not unreasonable to suggest that, like individual human beings, there is a period in which the characteristics which make them unique entities are formed, and the self-expression of the nation forms a part of this. It may lead to a consideration of the possibility of a national cinema which reflects and engages in the process, but without exaggerated or parochial nationalism. When developed further, the question of the Other assumes importance because they are lands in which almost everyone is an alien, or is transplanted or is dislocated. In addition they are societies which have struggled with the imposition of a cultural hegemony, the colonialism of the British Empire, which has often been seen as repressive, controlling, locked in the past, patriarchal, invested in the status quo, intolerant of challenge, class-ridden, suffocating, punitive and ripe for the overthrow. O'Regan (1996 p.304) discusses four “problematizations” of nationhood and their translation into film, which can be seen to co-exist rather than stand as alternatives to each other. The country can be conceived of as a European-derived society, a diasporic society taking in the Irish, the Greek, the Chinese
and the Vietnamese among others, a new world society with its settlers and its bravery or a multi-cultural society which can be celebrated for its “postnational(ist) politics which would move beyond jingoism ... and allow for some Aboriginal and (Torres Strait) Islander accommodation” (1996 p.324), but, as O’Regan notes, “problematizations of nation do not structure all other social problematizations” (ibid p.332) and do not fully account for, among other things, gender, class or, indeed, madness. O’Regan asserts that they “are simply one more problematization to be coordinated, ranked and associated with other such problematizations in the film milieu” (ibid p.332).

Lotman (1990 p.146) considers that there are five stages through which a culture must pass before it can be said to have a national identity, although they are not necessarily sequential or mutually exclusive. He speaks of the way in which first, other, outside interpretations are preferred to the local product, and in the area of film this may be seen not only as the valuing of foreign films above local, but also the privileging of the outside eye over the local. This suggests that a people may believe that those from outside know more, see more and can express more about their lives than they can themselves. Thus, the Hollywood melodrama, having completely supplanted the British view, will be able to say more about Australian life than an Australian film, and it will be the Hollywood interpretation and representation of Madness that is seen, by the public at large, to be valid rather than an Australian one. It will be assumed that even if what is seen on the Hollywood screen is not actually how life is, it is life as it should be; the “receiving culture” sees itself as, at best, striving to become just like the “transmitting culture”. The language of the Australian audience will now be the Hollywood vernacular rather than its own, so that patients may be “committed” rather than “recommended” for compulsory treatment, behaviour will be superficially described as psychotic and the vocabulary of Hollywood psychiatry will dominate the discourse.

The second stage involves the restructuring of outside cultures by the home one, mainly for home-market consumption. This means that Australian film-makers remake Hollywood films, but with some attention to the local circumstances. It is characterised by the recycling of plots and formats, moderated by the occasional local accent or place-name. O’Regan (1996) suggests, for example, that Far East (Dir. Duigan 1982) is little more than a remake of Casablanca (Dir. Curtiz 1942) in a different setting, albeit one that is still exotic to an Australian audience. In these cases this is still a culture operating under a domination from outside, but some attempts at articulating a local voice are made.
In the third stage, Lotman (1990) suggests that rather than emulating foreign perceptions, and just reproducing them with local accents, the home culture absorbs and recreates them, thus producing something unique, new and distinctive. This is a stage at which a mastery of the old forms is apparent without a complete transformation of the genre, but something recognisably Australian would be produced. The films of Jane Campion, *Sweetie* (1988) less so than *An Angel at My Table* (1990), may be seen in this light, as films with a great deal of critical acclaim, international credibility and domestic kudos but not, in themselves, revolutionary. This is not damning them with faint praise, but to recognise that their focus, intent and concern lie in a particular frame.

In the fourth stage, imported texts are seen to entirely dissolve in the home culture. At this point the home culture is beginning to examine and reflect upon itself in a more self-conscious, knowing and aware manner. Genres are no longer copied, but refashioned, and out of the old comes a new from. The importance of this begins to emerge in the representation of Madness, because in films like *Angel Baby* (Dir. Rymer 1995) and *Bad Boy Bubby* (Dir. de Heer 1995), but not in examples such as *Shine* (Dir. Hicks 1996) or *Cosi* (Dir. Joffe 1996), the vision of mental illness and those who are said to suffer from it is being re-cast in a way that is not purely derivative, but has transcended those limitations and is now setting precedents.

In the fifth stage, Lotman (1990) argues that the “receiving culture (i.e. Australia), which now becomes the general centre of the semiosphere (sic), changes into a transmitting culture and issues forth a flood of texts” (p.146). It is not suggested that this point has been reached but, in Lotman’s view, it is an illustration of the way in which hegemonic discourses displace each other. It is also important that the plurality of images which are available to audiences as well as film-makers, can now be accepted and rejected, played with and discarded in a self-confident and assertive way. Lotman (1990) would see this as reaching a blooming maturity, and O’Regan (1996) and Morris (1988) would agree. Morris is concerned with the issue of unoriginality in Australian cinema, whether it be endemic and problematic as a result of cultural imperialism, positively framed with “cheerful acceptance that (unoriginality) is a natural and necessary thing in modern times” (p.247), or works to ensure the survival of an Australian cinema by avoiding direct conflict or rejecting Hollywood’s hegemony, but subverting it and turning it to Australia’s own interest.
O'Regan (1996), who comments on the applicability of both models to a construction of an Australian national cinema, does not see them as antagonistic to each other but sees limited evidence of Lotman's latter stages of development. O'Regan recognises that Australian cinema is part of the internationalisation of the medium and interacts with other countries in its development. He sees it as inextricably bound to Hollywood by virtue of the shared language, and this is a factor which is omnipresent. He contrasts the more agnostic position of Morris with the greater polemic persuasion of Lotman, and concludes that the "distinctiveness of Australian cinema may be found in its negotiation of cultural transfers" (1990 p.231, italics in the original), and so creates an echo of Hall's (1986) analysis of representation and meaning. He is inclined to give more revolutionary credit to mastery of the genre, as shown by Jane Campion, than might be warranted, and although he does not consider in any detail the place that Madness holds for us, he does, like Lotman (1990), recognise the importance of the Other.

The extent to which a national cinema can emerge and work within the forum of cultural contention to explicate, define and propose senses of identity, can assume considerable importance in the Australian treatment of Otherness. O'Regan (1996), recognising that film is a social practice and a signifying practice, argues that "Australian film (in the sense of a national cinema) attaches itself to social domains and becomes a vehicle for social problematization", and is of the opinion that film-making is one of the prime domains in which these "changing socio-cultural problematizations occur" (p.261) and that "film meaning and film criticism is structured through social problematization" (p.351). This is more than idiosyncratic treatments of familiar themes or genres, it is concerned with "durable cultural differentiations" (ibid p.264). In this way, O'Regan suggests that Australian cinema while being made up of "objects, people, stories and problem solving" is also "a social fact, a figure of discourse, a site for a range of actions and the domain for a range of problematizations" (ibid p.10).

O'Regan speaks of cleavages in the social fabric based on politico-geographical differences (national, state, inter and intra-state and suburban conflict), class, gender, sexuality, religion, and indigenous and immigrant identity. All these oppositions are to some extent seen as manifestations of Otherness and he remarks on the "freakishness" of both the landscape (which often seems to be a major character) and the people who populate it. He
contends that in the "National Geographic imaginary" (p.92) the icons of Australia are the enormous empty land and arch of the sky, very strange animals and the most peculiar mix and juxtaposition of unheroic people. The land becomes so alien it could almost be another world; as red as Mars, as barren as the moon and as spiritual as the after-life. The people cannot be classified according to Eurocentric criteria; the naked man spearing a lizard could be an aristocrat, while the one dressed in the most fashionable style could be one generation away from criminal ancestors or starving and illiterate peasants. However, while O'Regan’s analysis points to some important elements and importantly locates its place in social discourse, the Otherness of Madness goes almost completely unconsidered.

If the putative patients of the Australasian films which have been examined in this thesis, Janet Frame, Sweetie, Kate and Harry, Lilian, Bubby or David Helfgott, are placed in contrast to the oppression to which they are subjected, the characteristics of the ruling regime, and their effects on the very human characters, are such that they severely constrain and at times violate the articulation and growth of individuality. These characters are not allowed to be themselves, and are bent into a deformed shape by the forces of family and the psychiatric establishment; unfortunately, although some may survive the experience, many may break in the process. Ryan (1980) suggests that it is a characteristic of Australian cinema that the protagonists at the centre of the film are more often passive and "a consumer of history rather than a participant in its course" (p.125) or, it might be said, mental health care. Rather than driving the narrative, and becoming an active agent of history, in the Hollywood style, they tend towards quiescence. Thus, the Other is in a different, more passive and less revolutionary relationship with the social establishment. Post-colonial Australia, after all, has never had a civil war or, small incidents excepted, a war of liberation, and the pre-European history is almost unknown and unconsidered by the mass of the population. Its social, cultural and political evolution may have been comparatively peaceful and stable, but it lacks the single defining moments that characterises the nationalist identity of the English Civil War, the French Revolution, the American War of Independence, the American Civil War or many other numerous examples on all continents and in all historical periods. The force with which the non-conformist is treated serves to emphasise the importance with which the problem is viewed. In the Australasian cinema it crystallises around the notion of tolerance rather than confrontation or abrasive aggression, and it does not seem to be a coincidence that the credo of a "fair go" threads its way through these stories in which, in the terms of O'Regan (1996) we are presented with fondly regarded freaks. Hughes (1989) creates an image in
which mateship, fatalism, contempt for do-gooders and God-botherers and harsh humour mingle in the Australian character with a disdain for introspection born of a survivor's mentality and a muffled resentment and ultimate resignation towards authority. Such attributes are found in the worlds of Bubby and Kate and Harry but less so in the other films, and so underline the importance of the representations of Madness in the construction of a sense of self and identity in contemporary Australia. In the more profound moments the dangers of relinquishing control and taking the risk of what may result are explored with sympathy and understanding. It is recognised that if a country (or a régime, a health system or a parent) truly fears for the safety of those for whom it cares and those it seeks to protect, its motives may be more complex than cruelty, control and punishment. Tolerance involves a degree of risk-taking, and a laissez-faire response requires a degree of trust. Nevertheless, in the way it is presented in these films, tolerance is a value to be cherished because its absence has an even more profound human cost, and while they suggest, that contemporary Australia wishes to embrace tolerance as defining virtue, tolerance is not acceptance.

For Australia and New Zealand the Other is always very close at hand, because of its own alien nature. O'Regan (1996) notes the similarity of the topography of Australia and Lotman’s (1990) Russia as frontier areas, vast, partly unknown, rather threatening but also, in some respect, profoundly spiritual. The land itself and the immigrant people who try to live in it and bend it to their own sensibilities often seem at odds with each other. These are societies constructed from the transplanted elements; a mix of misfits, the dislocated, the dispossessed and a dozen other categories of those who leave one culture for something about which they may not be sure. This in itself poses questions about what is to be created out of new opportunity, what will be an attempt to recreate a vision of some idealised past, what will be an effort to jettison the past and shake off the persistence of memory, what guiding values should there be and how can they be articulated, what will be an acceptance of a new plurality and what will persist in a struggle for cultural pre-eminence, will the efforts actually make any difference at all and how all these possibilities will cope with their assured failure to achieve monological aims.

It would seem, therefore, that in an Australasian context, Madness is a test case, because it crystallises many of the issues through which the discourse of identity is conducted. Old or young, brutalised or brutal, eccentric or conformist, disabled or genius, all the primary characters of the films show the stigmata of the Other. They are all marked by difference,
but this difference throws the rest of us into sharp relief. Difference forces an examination of established values and practices because it challenges the categorical criteria. The presence of the Other, and it is timely to recall that the Mad are always Other, is disturbing and disruptive if it is not controlled, contained or categorised. As Castoriadis (1988) has argued, regulating the Other makes it possible to co-exist with it, albeit with a degree of tension. Consequently, the representation of the Other, of Madness, is one strategy by which we make it possible to live in an uncertain world, and to create a viable image of ourselves which keeps anxiety at bay. We may then be led to consider the continuing relevance of Kracauer’s (1974) analysis of how, knowingly or not, the films of a nation, show its self to itself.

Australia, at the present time, stands at the confluence of a number of issues of tension which reflect on, contend and relate to an underlying unease; the significance of identity remains undiminished. Not only does it share with much of the world the anticipation of the millennium with its attendant anxieties and apparent significance as a moment of fundamental change replete with prophecies of doom and second comings, it is also close to the centenary of its federation and modern identity as a nation-state, which has still not resolved the conflict between the jurisdictions, responsibilities and powers of the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. Furthermore, it is engaged in a constitutional debate over its head of state and the possibility and consequences of becoming a republic. It is also wracked by legal and ethical argument concerning the actual ownership of the land and Native Title Rights which dispute the acts of dispossession and acknowledge the traditional relationship and spiritual connection with the land itself of the Aboriginal peoples. The present Liberal-National Party Coalition government of John Howard is beset by the difficulties it sees in apologising for the past policy of taking Aboriginal children away from their natural parents and placing them with white foster parents or in children’s homes, an act which was explained in terms of assimilation and benevolence but may have been motivated by a form of white suprematism. It may have aimed to extinguish traditional Aboriginal practices, and perhaps relieve anxiety concerning the Other, but it had the enduring virtue of subjecting the exotic to control. Similarly, it is only within the last thirty years that Aborigines have been accorded full citizenship rights and counted in the national census, and the White Australia Policy, which restricted the immigration of non-Europeans, was repealed. The question of immigration and refugee policy, how many people and from where, remains a contentious issue, as does the resulting debate of assimilation as opposed to multi-culturalism. There seems to be tension
between its cultural identity, which is hegemonically European and its economic and geographical position, which may place it in South-East Asia. Additionally, the country cannot escape the fact that one of the great world-wide televised spectacles, the Olympic Games, is due to held in Sydney in 2000; Australia will be on show and, in a time of millenarian anxiety, is becoming very self-conscious.

With these points of tension showing the strain, the connecting theme of identity comes to the fore. Kracauer's (1974) thesis indicates that through an examination of the cinema a society produces, certain significant and salient features of that society may be gleaned. It is proposed that a critical postmodern analysis, informed by semiotics, may extend that insight further. The repeated appearance of the Other in Australian films of the last decade may be taken as an indicator of the need to identify what is and is not "us". O'Regan (1996 p.245) comments on the artlessness of many of the central characters and the extreme ordinariness or unfashionableness of their dress, but it is that inversion of the normal heroic appearance that marks a move away from a subservience to an imposed consciousness, such as may be found in the Hollywood glamour of blemish-free skin and perfect teeth, towards tolerance, and perhaps an acceptance, of imperfection. What the films such as Sweetie (Dir. Campion 1988), Bad Boy Bubby (Dir. de Heer 1995) and Angel Baby (Dir. Rymer 1995) tell us on a level that is sometimes more concerned with social relations than the depiction of what is or what is not Madness, is that if we have faith in our own judgement of ourselves we can establish and retain an identity which does not require exoticism to justify it, certainty to establish it or exogenous approval. It is a position that accepts, even embraces pluralism and rejoices in difference, but it retains a contextual sensibility because it does not underestimate the difficulties that people face, the dilemmas with which they have to deal, the prejudice they may encounter or the ideological hegemony which informs the social structures against which it may collide. It is concerned with identity, it deconstructs but does not leave the pieces on the floor. It recognises Madness as a sign as well as for its own worth, it is, in short, a major and significant approach to the question of Madness, identity and their position in the world. However, this process is by no means complete and, as examples such as Shine (Dir. Hicks 1996) show, the traditional treatments of Madness still exert a powerful cinematic attraction.
Polities, Policies and Polite Conventions

*Tis true my form is something odd,
But blaming me is blaming God;
Could I create myself anew
I would not fail in pleasing you

*Joseph Merrick (1886)*

If Madness, or more accurately what is seen to define or exemplify Madness, is seen to be a social construction, it must also be subject to social regulation. Government intervention and mental health care has been discussed in a number of areas in previous chapters, such as statutory definition or the use of censorship. However, on occasion mental health is taken up as a public health issue, with public responsibilities and consequently creates and propagates approved representations of Madness. This recognises rather than negates the possibility of mental distress, but shies away, to some degree, from the concomitant medicalisation, stigmatisation and construction of Otherness that may be implied by any taxonomic imperative within mental health care.

It has been noted earlier how in the case of certain films, most notably The Snake Pit (Dir. Litvak 1948), Titicut Follies (Dir. Wiseman 1967) and One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Dir. Forman 1975), there has been a surge in public concern about the state of the mental health services, and the films have been credited with influencing changes in policies and practice. In these cases the hospital or institution is seen as a place for only the most abject creatures, the main character notwithstanding. They are evidently motivated by humane concern and, despite shortcomings, do serve an educational and provocative function. They may not have a direct causal link to statutory change, but they are indicative of the prevailing zeitgeist and are reminders of both the power and the reach of the cinematic representations of madness.

Television, and in particular public service announcements with a narrative which are shown in the cinema in the prelude to the main feature, are also evidence of the perceived influence of imagery. One slogan that was prominent during the public health education publicity of Mental Health Week in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 26th October -
1st November 1997) was “Anyone can suffer from mental illness - How much they suffer depends on you”. This catch-phrase, which was featured on billboards, in newspapers and on the television as a public service announcement, was used in conjunction with the creation of an analogy with diabetes and other physical illnesses. In one example, a young man asks his father if his friend can join them on a fishing trip. When challenged that this was the person who has diabetes, the young man replies that “it’s all right, he (the diabetic) is on medication”, the father is reassured and the friend is invited along. The scene is then replayed with mental illness being substituted for diabetes, but it is still “all right (because), he’s on medication”. The image of mental illness that is put forward is one that if it is treated like any chronic physical illness it can be controlled, it need not endanger either the sufferer or those around him, and need not prevent anyone from leading a fulfilling life, having fun, taking part in normal recreation activities and being someone that other people want to know and to be with. Further, it is suggested that mental illness, when seen as a chemical imbalance that can be corrected, loses its fearsome image, and underneath it all, the people who have a mental illness are really just like you and me. It seems significant that the advertisement concerns the illness of a young man not only because it accurately mirrors the mode of onset of major psychiatric illness, but because of the clear educational thrust and policy of identification. It is also of considerable significance that Australia has one of the world’s highest rates of suicide among young men under the age of 25, and this is more so for Aboriginal youths (Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services 1997), and although suicide is not mentioned directly, and this mirrors the curious absence of the subject in feature films, it is of contextual importance. This is not a dismissive or token approach to the notion of mental health education, but seriously underlines the point that, by appealing to the protectiveness of parents and the comradeship of young adults, a change in attitude can bring about a change in behaviour, and, it is hypothesised, a change in outcomes.

The importance of the coda, that continuing (mental) suffering depends on the attitude of the public, emphasises that it is not such things themselves that create unhappiness, but rather how they are regarded. In that sense, all of us who make a society or a community bear some of the responsibility and all of us possess some of the power to make a difference. It is now part of the National Standards for Mental Health Services in Australia to promote “community acceptance and the reduction of stigma for people affected by mental disorders and/or mental health problems” (Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services 1996, Standard 4), and to do this by the “promotion of positive
images of people with mental disorders" (ibid Standard 4.1). However, it does not endorse the social constructionist view of mental illness. It should not be forgotten that the young man remains well because of his implied compliance with his prescribed medication. In respect to the representation of Madness, it becomes clear that a public health policy may be aimed at what is perceived to be an ill-informed polity with the aim of acting in the alteration of polite conventions.

Reel Life Literacy

*Social life is made up of representations*

*Emile Durkheim (1952) p.312*

Very early in the process of developing a thesis about the representation of Madness in the popular cinema it became clear that it would be a fruitless, hopeless and self-defeating ambition to provide a complete or exhaustive account of all the pertinent examples within the limitations to which it must conform; many more films could have been mentioned, and many more examples cited, but it is not the present intention to produce a catalogue. Not only are such ideas counter to the methodological assumptions that have been developed in the preceding pages, but they would also suggest an unbecoming certainty. However, little doubt exists over the importance or the power of the images we see in the cinema, and the way in which they are powerfully real (if not always realistic), pervasive and persuasive. Furthermore, the images and metaphors are decipherable and meaningful, and the extraction of significance leads to the construction of a world replete with relations and values. Such cultural artefacts can, according to Kellner (1995) provide "social allegories which articulate class and social group fears, yearnings and hopes" (p.125) and, when decoded, these allegories yield significant and meaningful insights into both individual and group identities. This thesis aims to contribute to the discourse in which the representation of Madness is socially, culturally and cinematically constructed. If we follow the logic of representation we inevitably find that the world of practice cannot remain separate. The way in which individuals, families, communities, societies, systems, acquaintances, professionals and writers of theses, not to mention film-goers, think about, regard and respond towards the mentally ill and those thought of as mad is inextricably bound up with
the way in which their worlds are constructed and the place the mad hold in them. Madness is everywhere an issue of substance and significance.

Social analogies can prove instructive. Churchill, in an early incarnation, suggested in 1910 that the way a society treated its criminal prisoners was an indication of its true measure (Gilbert 1981). Such circumstances present an opportunity for a society to refuse to humiliate the offender, not to seek revenge at the expense of justice, and to show compassion rather than condemnation. As such, it may be a yardstick of civility. Criminals are more obvious transgressors than the mentally ill but, nevertheless, there is an important analogy to be drawn; the treatment, conceptualisation and representation of Madness is a revealing criterion for analysis. In a curious twist of fashion, having transported criminal forebears has, in more recent years, attracted a certain caché in Australia. To belong to true First Fleeters (that is the transported convicts and those sent to guard them) has not yet attracted the prestige of being descended from the Pilgrim Fathers in America, but is clearly more acceptable than admitting to a family history of lunacy and is reflected in the rapidly developing interest in, and commercialisation of, genealogical searches. Even the sites of early convict settlements have been refashioned into tourist attractions. Port Arthur, a penal settlement with a history of vicious treatment and terrible cruelty as well as the location of a recent mass murder, is now a major tourist attraction in Tasmania. It is now possible to take a tour of Old Melbourne Gaol and see the cell of Ned Kelly, the country’s most famous bush-ranger, who was executed there. In Geelong, Victoria’s second city, the great bluestone gaol, a place of clanging metal doors and long, echoing corridors, now houses small art galleries and stages plays. The past can be reconfigured to minimise any distress caused by unpalatable realities.

It has been a theme of this thesis that representative systems and conventions do not arise immaculate from an acontextual past. There are no innocent, non-ideological moments of cultural production, and the films which represent images madness exist within the politics, ideology and contended issues of their world. They are irrevocably bound up with, part of and in reflexive relationship with the society they serve. Thus, they must always be fashioned by the cultural mores that predominate, even allowing for contention, subversion and resistance. In their turn, they work to fashion the continuing and superseding imagery associated with Madness, and the conceptual frameworks which are built to account for Madness will directly and concretely affect the way in which a society chooses to deal with the social, psychological and cultural phenomena of Madness. A number of films, in
particular *The Snake Pit* (Dir. Litvak 1948), *Titicut Follies* (Dir. Wiseman 1967) and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Dir. Forman 1975), have been associated with changes in public policy or government legislation, even if the effect of one single film in a cultural matrix may be debated, they are indicative of the concerns of the public debate. Some films, such as *Secrets of a Soul* (Dir. Pabst 1925) or *Family Life* (Dir. Loach 1971) have self-consciously situated themselves as part of the social discourse, and have absorbed an educational or proselytising role into their identity. Still others, even comic treatments like *The Dream Team* (Dir. Zieff 1989), would not have been possible without a policy of deinstitutionalisation and a public awareness that such people could and would regularly be seen on the street, and use that to lampoon the dual standards that may agree that it is right that many patients should be freed from forced institutionalisation, but not to the extent that they might move into the house next door or take the next seat on the bus. In this way the language, imagery, conventions, expectations and constructions of Madness and mad people found in popular films enter the public consciousness, becomes social referents, are used as social tropes and, in a reflexive manner, re-emerge, transmuted and modified into new cinematic representations of Madness.

Critical reflection assists the effort to maintain a sense of historical perspective and contextuality, and perhaps a necessary note of scepticism towards any claim of final certainty. The knowledge that this brings encourages and engenders doubt, and that may prove of more use in the consideration of representations of Madness than any epistemological cul-de-sac. Sometimes it may be more important to examine what people believe to be true than to attempt to discover any finite empirical sense of certainty, and a consideration of the representation of Madness may give insights into the history of the treatment of the mentally ill. It would seem that in moments of high ideological consciousness and social dislocation and realignment, for example Germany in the interwar period, the United States immediately after World War II and later at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the United Kingdom around the same period and, more recently, Australia in the decade following the bicentenary of European settlement and leading to the turn of the millennium, issues of identity, and very often the place of Madness, tend to come to the fore. While this does not indicate a necessary relationship, it does suggest a significant one. In much the same way when societies become riven by the demonstration of discontent, cultures declare their position more stridently and families live in a state of stress, secrets, repressed anger and high expressed emotion, fundamental issues of self-understanding, of what it means to be ourselves, “one of us” and not be
Other become crucial. The hegemonic paradigm of personal, social and cultural explanation has a correlating one of action, and the study of Madness provides an opportunity to glimpse these processes.

History can reveal to us a litany of the mad, the bad and the dangerous to know, but not necessarily any durable facts that do not change their complexion with the passage of time or the light of hindsight. We may, if we forget to take a moment for reflection, increase our sympathetic insights, but not our sense of the reality of Madness. However, through close, and continuing, attention to the representation of Madness in popular cinema we may begin to consider what the notion and experience of Madness means to us all as a metaphor and a condition, and how it remains part of what it means to be human. Finally, if we are reassured by the comfort of reality, even if it is an illusion, we may agree, as the curtain closes and the final reel ends, that the important reality "is that of the tradition of representation" (Gilman 1995 p.17). Thus, in the representation of Madness in popular film, we find meaning and see ourselves through a glass darkly.
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REEL MADNESS:

THE REPRESENTATION OF MADNESS IN POPULAR WESTERN FILM

Mark Welch

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, December 1997.
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
SUMMARY

This thesis considers the representation of madness in popular film, in the main from the Western canon and English speaking, and argues that madness is seen and represented as an extreme of human experience, a form of Otherness, which throws into relief notions of ontology, sanity and personal and cultural identity. It progresses from a consideration of the historical representations of madness and sanity in art and literature to a review of the pertinent literature on cinema and representation, and uses seminal examples from throughout cinematic history mostly from English language films, from 1906-1996, to illustrate the argument. It locates popular cinema within a framework of popular culture which itself draws on the traditions of the Frankfurt School of cultural studies and critical postmodernism to illustrate the central concerns of a sense of self, identity and Otherness and their relation to models of rationality, reason, irrationality and unreason.

Alternative methodological approaches are considered for the insights they may provide, and also for the contribution they make to the development of the thesis, in particular the influence of semiotics, both in film theory itself and the assumption that representations, frames, significations and signs, which can be read, interpreted and contended, are inextricably linked to the meaning which is implied in, or obtained from, the images of madness examined. The way in which ideology informs representations is analysed for its effect on the socially constructed notion of madness and for its importance in the choices made about how the mad are regarded, treated, tolerated, welcomed or accepted.

A number of stereotypical portrayals of madness, such as the “mad scientist”, the “crazed murderer” and the “doomed heroic outsider” are examined in detail, as are a recurring situations, hospitals, families or war, and a significant number of Australasian films which have emerged in the last decade, and have dealt with aspects of mental disorder, its manifestation, its treatment and its meaning in the cultural identity of these countries.

Finally, the thesis proposes that the way madness, and mad people, are represented in popular film is reflective and indicative of social and cultural concerns over what can be known, how identity can be established and what it means to live in the contemporary world fraught with uncertainty, anxiety and change.
DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

I, Mark Welch (Student No. 97024226), declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other institution, and conforms to the Rules of the University and Regulations of Candidature.

Mark Welch
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I was student nurse in the very early months of my training I was allocated to a "Long Stay Ward" full of men who had spent almost their entire adult lives in psychiatric hospitals. Some had led this life for more than 30 years, some had been in hospital since they were 18 years old. One man told me (with a certain amount of manic pride) that he held the hospital records for the number of admissions (more than 90 at the time) and the record number of ECT Treatments (more than 250). He also showed me his leucotomy scar and could tell me about almost every doctor, nurse and auxiliary he had ever met. I was in no doubt that this man was quite mad, but I couldn’t always tell why.

One day, as part of the social recreation programme, I went with a couple of other staff and a group of patients to the cinema. We went to see One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (Dir. Forman 1975). I was transfixed not only by the movie, which I had seen before, but also by the men themselves. Were they looking at their lives up there on the screen? Were they laughing at the same jokes I was, and for the same reasons? What were they seeing? I never really found out, but I never forgot the moment either. I realise now the debt that I have to them, and what follows is in some part an exploration of that brief epiphany. I do not feel its importance has diminished over time, in point of fact it seems more vital than ever.

There are also some formal acknowledgments I should like to record. Professor Colin Holmes, who, as the supervisor of the thesis, witnessed the germ of the idea and encouraged me to develop it. He has been a great support throughout the entire process of the thesis, and his generosity of spirit and patience has been as invaluable as his careful and considered thoughts. His good humour and willingness to engage in the debate, his guidance, suggestions and discoveries have all helped to shape the final document and sustained me continually.

The staff of the German Embassy in Canberra, and Herr Müller in particular, deserve special mention for helping me to track down a copy of Secrets of a Soul (Geheimnisse einer Seele) (Dir. Pabst 1926), which then had to be brought from Berlin for me to view.

Others on whom I have imposed my monomania and who have responded with grace and kindness, and deserve thanks, include Tom Politis for his prodigious memory, John Flaus for the breadth of his experience, Professor Jen Ang for her acute insights and that man on
the train one day whose name I never did discover. Also Twilla whose insightful close reading of the manuscript revealed more than I knew. Everyone else, friends, relations and colleagues, know who they are. They deserve the credit; I, however, accept all responsibility for the errors, misconceptions and weaknesses and for the extent to which I have done justice to those without whom this thesis would not have been possible.

Finally, I acknowledge that all the illustrations in the text comply with Section 103c (Fair Dealings) of the Copyright Act, Commonwealth of Australia (1968).

The work is dedicated to those who have-seen their suffering portrayed on the screen in the hope that we can all gain a little more understanding about the representation of Madness.
PREFACE

**the face of madness has always haunted the Western imagination**

Michel Foucault (1973) (translation)

Mental health workers, including those who call themselves psychiatric nurses, live every moment of their professional lives with what they try to understand as madness. At all times they are aware that they, and those for whom they care, are wrapped in a cultural matrix of images and expectations of behaviour and relationships, but the origins and implications of those images are less thoroughly examined.

It has almost become axiomatic that the understanding we have of the world is influenced to an increasing extent by the images that surround us in everyday life. “[T]hose ubiquitous stimuli whose abundance so characterises life in our Information Age” (Bryant & Zillmann 1991 p.xi) in the developed world, bombard us with images from every conceivable angle at all moments of our life. Mass communication media, the television, newspapers, magazines, radio, films now saturate us with a weight of information, opinion and reports and Philo (1994) has drawn the link between media images and common beliefs. It may be that we are now the most informed, perhaps most misinformed, group of people the world has ever known, but that should be tempered with caution. The maxim that data is not information, information is not knowledge, and knowledge is not wisdom may be worth bearing in mind. While we live in a world of images we need to bear in mind that these are images that are created, they are the results of choices that are made to present some and exclude others. McLuhan (1973) makes the somewhat gnomic observation that the map defines the territory, however, and although it has a trite quotability it does bear some of the seeds of understanding of how the contemporary world is understood and the importance of the notion of relative representation. The world that is presented to us is an edited version and unless we follow the Borges (1974) parable of creating a full-scale map of our world, it will always remain so. Nevertheless, as that short story pointedly reminds us, even as a full-scale map it still remains an ideologically and contextually produced representation; it is moot as to where it does, or if it can, ever cease to be a map. The description of edges always plagues any attempt at definition. To that end it is helpful to consider the importance of the Baudrillardian (1983) concept of the simulacrum which challenges the possibility of authentic representation and suggests that any subscription to monological notions may have to be abandoned. Anticipating that further discussion will follow, a simulacrum may briefly be understood at this point to be a representation or a copy for which an original may not exist, but nevertheless encapsulates a potent and
meaningful image, sometimes one that goes beyond or away from that which it is taken to represent. Indeed such is the influence that for Kahn (1995) it is “by the proliferation of simulacra (that) our lives have become fully culturised” (p.ix).

However, many commentators, of whom Raymond Williams (1965) was among the most eloquent, have argued that this information does not come to us without a bias (be it conscious or unconscious, articulated or unarticulated, professed or undeclared), without being edited and going through an intellectual filter that reflects the way in which the reporter sees and understands the world. He saw the cultural world as hegemonic but also a process through which meanings, conventions and shared understandings. If from this standpoint there can be no such thing as absolute truth in regard to the interpretation or representation of social phenomena, it becomes important to examine the way in which certain aspects of our life are presented and represented. Certainly events occur, but the way in which they are recorded, represented, interpreted, and in the course of history revised, re-presented and re-interpreted, and have propositions attached to and deduced from them are more open to dispute and discourse.

Merleau-Ponty (1964), who stands as an example of a movement that leans heavily on the constructs developed by the Frankfurt School of social theory, was able to muse on this conundrum of objective social observation and inescapable circularity of cultural context without seeing this as hopeless or pointless or reductionist or any of these. Rather, there is a joy or, as Baudrillard (1975) has it, jouissance in the delight of a universe of ever smaller and microscopic social selves, a Mandelbrot universe like a set of Russian dolls that illuminate each other. This is not just applicable to an individual’s reflections on personal existence, but can give insights on professional and communal life. Similarly, it also applies to the perspectives developed by groups as well as individuals. The following discussion will seek to examine madness, its referents and the experience of them from this perspective of informed reflection.

The intention of this discourse is to make a contribution to the continuing examination of the way in which we socially construct our world, and this will involve a degree of personal reflection as well as the use of the first person plural to indicate both an authorial voice and an identification with the experience being described. It is also important to note that as nursing is quintessentially understood to be a social practice, the more we, as nurses, mental health workers and concerned citizens, are able to locate ourselves contextually, the more we are likely to be able to engage in enlightened, reflective practice,
even if we end by realising with a little more clarity just how confused we really are. Furthermore it may be possible to (among other things):

- examine some ways in which film can be seen as part of the cultural environment and as a component of popular culture
- identify some of the features of film that are particular to the medium and the influence they may have in the development of a contemporary social understanding
- consider the depiction of the mad in films over a historical period
- compare and contrast some chosen representations of the mad and madness with those of mental illness
- relate particular depictions of madness to social context
- present notions of representation as a choice rather than an absolute to cinemtic depictions and discuss the applicability of critical tropic conceptions such as allegory, sub-text, symbolism and textual analysis
- consider the insights afforded by different methodological approaches, and create some allusions to a critical postmodern analysis in which the very notions of madness, mental health care and theory may find themselves being examined, recreated, deconstructed and re-formed
- develop a hypothesis that relates the way in which the representation of madness is indivisible from our individual thought, collective understanding and social action
- examine the importance of a social construction of Otherness in the formation of an established sense of identity and the way in which Madness intersects with Otherness in this process
- demonstrate the centrality and vitality of representations of Madness in popular film to our continuing understanding of ourselves, others and spectrum of the human experience

A number of films will act as seminal examples in the development of the thesis. It is suggested at the outset that close examination of a small number of particularly important or influential films, spanning the historical period, will enable a clearer and more crystallised argument to emerge. They will resurface at moments throughout the subsequent chapters to illustrate and illuminate the themes being expanded. The films in this select group will include Geheimnisse einer Seele (Secrets of a Soul) (Director Pabst 1926), M (Dir. Lang 1931), The Snake Pit (Dir. Litzvak 1948), Psycho (Dir. Hitchcock 1960), One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (Dir. Forman 1975), Ordinary People (Dir. Redford 1980) and Shine
(Dir. Hicks 1996), although others may be discussed in some detail in relation to particular points in the thesis. Between them they span an important historical period in terms of socio-cultural ideologies, psychiatric theorising and practice, important national and cultural traditions and historical events. They are also seen, and this will be discussed in greater detail, as being particularly representative of their type.

Some caveats and disclaimers may be appropriate at this point in that there will of course be more images of madness than can possibly be made part of the study. There will be many influences and perceptions that wax and wane, many that are considered only too briefly because of the constraints of time and space, but perhaps, as Gilman (1982) suggests, “they never seem to die, only recede from the centre of perception” (p.xii) and, of course, return again.
INTRODUCTION

Though this be madness, yet there is method in’t

Shakespeare, “Hamlet”, II.ii

Frederic Jameson (1990), somewhat after the fashion of Virginia Woolf, asks whether human nature changed “on or about December 28th 1895” (p.5) with the birth of cinema as we have come to know it. Charney (1995) suggests that the nature of film, and its ability to represent the world in new and unimagined ways, is absolutely bound up with the emergence of the modern world. It has become a truism that the cinema influences everyone around us except ourselves. It is cited as being responsible for portraying loose moral standards or being a mouthpiece for the dominant class. It is said to glamourise violence and profanity and then be a great educational tool. It can entertain and inform, it can be enjoyed for being self-consciously mindless or emotionally cathartic. It is said to be able to deprave and corrupt or be a mirror of our better selves. It can reflect our nightmares or our dreams. It can become the “perfect reflection of the rapid tempo of contemporary life, and thus of the experience of the masses” (Dreier 1930 p.18). Unfortunately, however, films “are often neglected or scorned as a resource in historical research” (Shortland 1988 p.65)

Any venture in critical analysis must first seek to clarify its principal concern, and in some ways the concepts of Popular Culture and Popular Film, about which this study will be principally concerned, can be problematic. There are some critics (Prawer 1980) who want to try to indicate that there are only aesthetic considerations, to discriminate between good and bad art, what is well or badly done. That may be one legitimate criterion, but it is an essentially narrow and constrictive one. This study, and its concerns, will be located within a more generous socio-cultural framework. It will seek to illuminate the way constructions of madness in film both reflect and re-vision social and cultural contextual moments, and how, by careful attention to the way the mad and madness are represented, and these terms will be regarded more liberally than as strict diagnostic or clinical labels, we can begin to reflect on the place madness holds for us.

Gilman (1995) demonstrates that although there have been pictorial records and the use of images in medical histories for as long as records have been kept, there is “in no small degree ...clear anxiety about the interpretability of such images” (p.9). Alternative and contending positions may be taken in placing artistic and creative works in a social context. Different criteria not only emphasise the various qualities of the art-work, but are informed
by a set of values which may be examined to illuminate the study further. Art when appreciated for art’s sake is, in its most extreme form, a position that does not acknowledge the context, but seeks to able to distinguish and rank works in terms of fine feelings and taste. It is also concerned with hierarchies and taxonomies, distinctions between refined and popular tastes, universalism and classicism and with exclusion rather than inclusion. Such a position does not recognise that there may be a Popular Culture, and by extension Popular Film, which is just as rich in meaning and context, and which can reveal aspects of deep significance for us. It therefore becomes problematic for the current purposes to accept the notion of a pure aesthetic and it becomes important to consider that artistic works relate to their socio-economic cultural context and those of their makers.

Attempts to define Popular Culture have in general been couched either in terms of its content, the things that make up its material, or in terms of what it can be taken to represent. The first position is taken by Hebdige (1979) who suggests that it is enough to recognise Popular Culture as “a set of generally available artefacts: films, records, clothes, TV programmes, modes of transport etc” (p.47). This allows for different societies at different times to have their own “popular culture”, and even for different “popular cultures” to exist within the one greater society at the same time, although it should be remembered that Hebdige went on to discuss “sub-cultures” and extending his definition ad absurdum should be avoided, because, as Williams (1976) reminds us, our culture, wherever we are, is always present for us. It does seem preferable not to hold to any “strict and exclusive definition” (Strinati 1995 p.xvii), but to situate the discussion within a looser framework that acknowledges availability, genuine popularity and shared commonality. The principal artefacts under consideration, the films, are therefore able to be located in a flow of social movements and processes without having to be labelled “popular” or “elitist” or “art house” or “mainstream” or restricted to a constricted genre or demographic identity. Indeed, as Morris (1988) suggests, popular culture can be seen as a way of operating, more a reflected expression of social position than the sum of a set of texts or list of contents. This can lead us to consider the construction of a world, to regard more closely what we read as signs and interpret as signifying practices.

The substance of Popular Culture comes at us in various form and it may be that the particular form of production it takes is significant. Wahl (1995) notes, in a personal reflection on his own circumstances, that he is himself archetypical of the “TV Generation” and is unable to escape from that inheritance or context. Having located himself, he begins to look closely at the television programmes and popular films that informed his generation.
He considers, and accords importance to, the lyrics of popular songs and the cartoons and headlines from newspapers and magazines as indicators of sentiments, popular beliefs and public dreaming. He notes the way in which prominent public figures have fared in the reporting of their troubles. He cites contrasting examples in that there may be those with clear and distressing psychiatric illnesses like the Oscar-winner Vivian Leigh, those who suffered to the extent of suicide such as the Nobel Prize-winner Ernest Hemingway, and those who fell ill, were treated and then recovered, but were never regarded or, he suggests, trusted in quite the same way again, like the one-time American Vice-Presidential candidate, Thomas Eagleton. Wahl is, however, not contemporary enough and too America-centric to speculate on the effect, especially in view of her recent death, the well-publicised experience of Diana, Princess of Wales may have had on the construction of eating disorders, although that discussion does appear to be developing (Re:Public 1997).

Nevertheless, everywhere he looks, from novels to television and billboard advertisements, he sees evidence that seems to carry interpretable signs and understandings of the construction of mental illness and the stigma which is attached to it. Although he addresses the question primarily from his position as a concerned clinical psychologist, rather to the neglect of socio-cultural perspectives and a developed or articulated methodological stance, he convincingly draws attention to the numerous and stereotypical representations in daily interaction. It is with a certain timeliness that he recognises that the reach of Popular Culture is all-pervasive and there is “madness, madness everywhere” (1995 p.1).

Strinati (1995) notes the difficulty of defining “popular culture independently of the theory designed to explain it” (p.xvii). Therefore, he suggests that mass culture theorists will see it as either a pre-industrial folk culture or an industrial mass culture (literally the culture of the masses) whereas those persuaded by the Frankfurt School of post-Marxist critique will see popular culture as a material form of the dominant ideology. Alternatively, feminist theorists may focus on the continuing propagation of a patriarchal social dominance, and the concerns of postmodern theory will be with the way that popular culture works with the definitions of image and reality. Theoretical arguments which emphasise class structures or modes of expression or the material form will also cut across this alignment of positions, creating an impression of interlocking and overlapping analysis.

As will be discussed below, examining the representation of madness in film from different coagulations of assumptions and priorities may bring forth particular insights or perspectives. The analyses will be illustrated by examples of particular films that in general were among the most popular box office successes of their time. These films can be judged
as having had a high profile at the time, and to have been an important matter of debate (newspapers and current affairs magazines tend to support this view, Anon. 1948, 1958, 1963). This encourages the hypothesis that these films entered the public discourse and so the representation of madness that they put forward became part of the public domain. Because they are able to put forward representations in this public way they serve to legitimise points of view, often creating impressions of something of great social and cultural importance but unfamiliar to many. The identification of the different representations, their meaning and how they have a reflexive relationship to social and cultural contexts emerge as the primary concerns of this study.

Nevertheless, there are still discernible differences in the concerns of film critics. Prawer (1980) for example, who seems to take an elitist position and can barely disguise his own tastes for the more traditional, offers the opinion that there “is all the difference in the world between a film like The Cabinet of Dr Caligari, which treats significant themes in fantastic guise in a way that can be recognised as aesthetically shaped ...and a film like The Exorcist. ...which treats them with a heaping-up of shock-effects and ...a deliberately nauseating naturalism” (p.48). He warns that “sick minds and hypersensitive nervous systems may find their sickness aggravated and their anxiety-dreams invaded by powerfully disturbing images” (p.49). He goes on to suggest in a way that presages and mirrors some of the distaste with which representations of madness are treated that “excessive exposure to crudity and violence may desensitise the mind to a morally, as well as aesthetically dangerous degree” (p.49). He makes it clear that finer minds do need distance and protection from such a culture. He makes it appear as if even touching it with protective gloves would make him shudder. He seems to be using a disapproving tone and elitist criteria to devalue a complete body of expression. It is less clear, beyond a subscription to an elitist standard and an appeal to a certain universalism, what is “aesthetically dangerous”, but it may be implicit that the nobility of the human spirit, or at least his idealisation of it, is seen as in some way diminished.

Others, such as Friedberg (1994), Skal (1993) or Tudor (1974, 1989) take a more celebratory perspective of the genre and emphasise its vigour and energy, even stylistic irreverence. They also take a less certain view of direct correlations of danger. When the question of which of the two films Prawer cites had the greater public and social influence is raised, it becomes evident that Popular Culture has a very real place at the table of cultural analysis, and terms such as influence and worth have to be used very carefully.
Yet, despite or perhaps because of all these contradictions, the place that popular culture holds for us cannot be ignored. There is an interplay in which social identity and its concerns find expression in cultural terms. Natoli (1995) suggests that Popular Cinema is a major avenue of understanding through which “we both reinforce our defenses against what haunts us and at the same time what haunts us becomes conceivable to us” (p.x). Therefore, he argues, “popular film allows us to consume and respond to (the) play of order and disorder that is at that very moment overspilling the prevailing order’s capacity to contain it” (p.10). Kellner (1995) also argues that horror films, as a prime example of popular film and popular culture, should be treated seriously. His position is that some “horror films articulate fears ... and provide allegories concerning social anxiety” (p.125). No-one, it would seem, is immune from its influence, because to some extent even those who decry it most loudly define their lifestyle in terms of what they wish to avoid.

The thesis will begin to examine the intersections of madness, representation, identity and film from an assumption that they are both meaningful and significant. An examination of the subject will also question the methodology of social understanding and some of the ways in which a sense of personal and social self is constructed. The theme of what we can regard as “us”, what we see as different or other will also recur and resonate as a bass-line throughout.

In Chapter One the study begins with a small number of basic questions and considerations. It will attempt to move towards a definition of the terms under examination; the interaction of what may or may not be Popular Culture (and when and whether it should be spelt in the upper or the lower case), to what extent it is a meaningful and useful term, questions of representation and the specifics of the cinema interact with notions of madness, mental health, psychiatric disorder and what we can or should or may do about their definition, their classification, their treatments, their place in our society, their relationship in our culture; in short, their meaning to all of us. Within the context of the thesis, Madness will generally be the preferred term in contrast to mental illness or psychiatric disorder or a similar term which may indicate a subscription to an overtly medical definition or speaking only to professionally informed groups. Madness is seen as a far more powerful, emotive and resonant description, a word with visceral appeal much more suited to the cinematic representation and its interaction with the audience.

However, it is also clear that the way in which these questions are asked will have a defining effect on the sort of answers that are obtained, and it is in this area of theoretical
approach that further depth may be given to the context of our observations. Some considerations must be given to the insights that some cultural theorisations may afford, but not without an appreciation of the concomitant implications.

Chapter Two addresses the similar need to establish a framework of analysis. The way the very nature of Popular Culture is perceived is crucial to the treatment of its content. This chapter will examine some of the principal and most influential theoretical orientations to the study of Popular Culture and explore their usefulness and ramifications for understanding the way madness is represented to us or, sometimes, represented for us. The growth of post- or Neo-Marxist analysis with a developing concern with the socio-cultural and aspects of alienation (but not perhaps alienists) and praxis often incorporates the legacy of the work of the Frankfurt School and may be central to the following study. However, the scope of the territory cannot be fully appreciated without a consideration of the insights and influence of Structuralism especially in consideration of language, the value of the semiotic analysis of signs, the continuing ripples of the psychoanalytic explosion in the conceptual patterns of contemporary society, the effects of the iconoclasm and deconstruction of Postmodernism and a contextual grounding of the matrix of meaning. As Denzin (1992) suggests, “human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them” (p.xiv), and in this context things can be taken to refer to the representations of madness in the films we watch. Furthermore, Denzin writes, the “meanings of things arise out of the process of social interaction; and third, that meanings are modified through an interpretive process which involves self-reflective individuals symbolically interacting with one another” (p.xiv).

Hodge & Kress (1988) note discomfort in divorcing semiotic understandings of signs from the social and political thought which seems so relevant to the understanding of other cultural analysis. However, they do not reject semiotics entirely and look to the provision of an “analytic practice for the many people in different disciplines who deal with different problems of social meaning and need ways of describing and explaining the processes and structures through which meaning is constituted” (p.2).

What Gottdiener (1995) calls “socio-semiotics” seeks to address some of the perceived short-comings of acontextuality and incorporate an assumption that signs at some point arise from the material world, although he may be as unfair to characterise all variants of symbolic interactionism as overwhelmingly privileging human interaction, as he is to Denzin in a rather pique-laden reply to a review of his work (1986). Socio-semiotics “takes
as its object of analysis the articulation between sign systems and exo-semiotic processes of politics and economics while recognising the power-knowledge articulation” (Gottdiener 1995 p. 25). This is done in an attempt to account for “the articulation between the material context of daily life and the signifying practices within a social context” (ibid p. 26). In this way it is suggested that some of the more abstract interpretations of postmodernism can be incorporated into an analysis in which structure and agency are real to us. In Gottdeiner’s analysis the ideological and semiotic content are thereby infused with a streak of pragmatism that moves away from the privileging of single, informed observers that he perceives as a weakness of an acontextual deconstruction. He seeks to remind us that for the majority of people reality is real, at least as a working hypothesis, even if truth may be a more contentious ideal.

It becomes important to consider how some intellectual and paradigmatic responses to the Enlightenment Project and the (historical) inevitability of Reason may in one way revision our sense of madness and also secondly reconfigure our sense of ourselves and our world. The particular concern of postmodernist discourse with aspects of representation has an impact on the study, and is found in a consideration that also examines the unspoken ideological sub-texts that may be discerned in the constructions of madness in the films. For some it may seem that there are contradictory and opposing perspectives, but there are also elements, which, when woven together, begin to create a revised social construction.

Chapters Three through Six will consider the major representations of madness and the mad that can be deduced from manifestations in film. Illustrations drawn from a number of significant films will have two major functions. Firstly, they will be able to demonstrate the historical movements within the ninety year period under consideration, from Billy Bitzer’s Dr Dippy’s Sanitarium (1906) to Scott Hicks’s Shine (1996), and be able to contextually situate them. Secondly, they will be used to illustrate the representative characterisations with principal examples being drawn from such seminal films as Secrets of a Soul (Dir. Pabst 1925), M (Dir. Lang 1931), The Snake Pit (Dir. Litvak 1948), Family Life (Dir. Loach 1971), One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Dir. Forman 1975), Ordinary People (Dir. Redford 1980) and Shine (Dir. Hicks 1996), and, in the documentary genre, Titicut Follies (Dir. Wiseman 1967). The cited films are of course only a few of the many examples but, it is contended, they show particular aspects in particularly strong and compelling ways and, especially in the latter examples, they are films with a mass appeal. They have been box office successes and Oscar winning films; they are, or have become, international and have reached an enormous number of people. They are not confined to
arcane discussions in esoteric interest groups and that suggests that their value as Popular Culture will be enhanced and apposite to the study.

A number of themes emerge and deserve special mention here. The dynamic relationship of Madness, Reason and Unreason is examined in the light of Modernist values of progress and positivism and the taxonomic imperative. The inability of madness to sit comfortably within a world view where Reason does not necessarily offer satisfactory explanations and there is often uncertainty and the inexactitude of relativity, causes a nagging and unanswered doubt. It drives the question of what madness can be said to mean and how we can configure our understanding of it.

The recurring motif of the Other within art and literature and the way in which the mad are characterised within this frame cannot be consigned to the margins of the debate. This Other, however, is neither co-terminous with Lacan’s L’Autre (1970), which has more far-reaching implications and a definite place in his therapeutic schemata as the locus of signifiers, instinctual desire and dreams, nor the Jungian shadow (1964), which holds a similar prominence in a different psychoanalytic tradition. Although both have their rhetorical appeal and strong imagery neither is sufficiently free of the psychoanalytic to be entirely suited to the present enterprise. Rather than being reliant on certain psychoanalytic understandings and principles, the Other is here to be regarded as one representation in our metaphorical descriptions and not so much an intra-psychic entity. It is more appropriate to this sense of Otherness to see representations of alterity in the representations of madness. It becomes important to consider and it is increasingly meaningful because it is one of the most important ways in which the mad have been characterised, and as Bisplinghoff (1992) points out, it has often been as a result of an over-literal Freudianism to the exclusion of any shades of meaning, and certainly to the exclusion of alternative models of understanding. Freudian interpretations assume importance in this study because of their influence on film-makers rather than any subscription to their theoretical position in the thesis.

The case of Australian (and New Zealand) films also deserves special mention, although curiously the first feature film in which Australian psychiatry appears may have been the German film Zu neuen Ufern (To the New Shores) (Dir. Detlef Sierck, known better and later as Douglas Sirk, 1937) in which the Parramatta Women’s Factory and Asylum are shown (although it should be said that from a perspective of strict historical accuracy the dates and events are somewhat compressed and liberally interpreted and reordered). There
were earlier portrayals and scenes of asylums as in the 1919 documentary *The Digger Moves On: Repatriation Illustrated* or the 1925 documentary *Incidents in the Treatment of Neurosyphilis by Induced Malaria at Mont Park*, but no feature films. However, in the decade from the middle 1980s to the middle 1990s the themes of madness, mental illness, stigma, alienation and identity recur continually. Jane Campion’s *Sweetie* (1988) and *An Angel at My Table* (1990) are two early examples, and these have been followed by Peter Jackson’s *Heavenly Creatures* (1994), Michael Rymer’s *Angel Baby* (1995), Mark Joffe’s *Cosi* (1996), Jerzy Domaradzki’s *Struck By Lightning* (1990) (although its concern was with intellectual disability) and *Lilian’s Story* (1995) (which was based on the real-life Sydney street character of Bea Miles), Rolf de Heer’s *Bad Boy Bubby* (1995) which can be seen as a reworking of the Kaspar Hauser or wild-child story, albeit a rather savage and dark one, and the aforementioned *Shine* (1996). It is striking that so many of these (more if *Bad Boy Bubby* is included), *An Angel at My Table, Heavenly Creatures, Cosi, Lilian’s Story* and *Shine*, are in some way based on apparently true stories. The sense of exploring madness through biography points to the way in which the crucial notion has intense personal resonance as well as cultural signification. Their importance as signifiers of contemporary Australia is a central part of the developing debate.

For Gilman (1988) “*Madness is often the test case*” (p.9) for the way disease and illness is socially constructed and represented, and violent insanity even more so. It is often suggested that the way in which a society treats its criminals may be an indicator of its core values; it is possible that the way the mad are treated, regarded or conceptualised throws these ideologies into even sharper relief. The ideas we have of *Madness* are indeed real and part of the complex of representation. Without a sense of that reality and that power, the force and dynamics of these ideas could be dealt with intellectually and remain unthreatening; but that is not the case. The extent to which the mad are like us, a dark side of us or the face behind the mirror, is a theme that we return to again and again. Similarly there is a strong tradition of presenting madness as a form of monstrosity, but this can be contrasted with the perception that the experience of madness can lead to a personal and perhaps spiritual redemption and that there are also holy fools who can show the better part of us all. Finally, there are representations that are rooted within a social realism that focuses on the intensely personal experience, which contrasts with sub-texts of social critique.

By placing these investigations within a wealth of cultural and temporal contexts it may be possible to reflect on what we see in our visions of madness. Hall (1986) speaks of the
logics-in-use out of which the forms of personal, public, practical and political consciousness are made. Young (1996) feels "sure that the bulk of (his) taken-for-granted and apparently commonsense knowledge about these things came from the movies" (p.1), and feels a large and important part of his growing up took place there. Ricouer (1980) remarks that the nub of interpretation, which is something that all commentators or analysts must consider, is in "the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning" (p.245). It may be that how we represent our madness tells us something about how we see ourselves. When we look closely we begin to peer into a very revealing mirror.