

- 12 Thompson SA, Graham KS, Patterson K, Sahakian BJ, Hodges JR. Is knowledge of famous people disproportionately impaired in patients with early and questionable Alzheimer's disease? *Neuropsychology* 2002; **16**: 344–58.
- 13 Schmand B, Huizenga HM, van Gool WA. Meta-analysis of CSF and MRI biomarkers for detecting preclinical Alzheimer's disease. *Psychol Med* 2010; **40**: 135–45.
- 14 Lonie JA, Herrmann LL, Donaghey CL, Ebmeier KP. Clinical referral patterns and cognitive profile in mild cognitive impairment. *Br J Psychiatry* 2008; **192**: 59–64.
- 15 Petersen RC, Thomas RG, Grundman M, Bennett D, Doody R, Ferris S, et al. Vitamin E and donepezil for the treatment of mild cognitive impairment. *N Engl J Med* 2005; **352**: 2379–88.
- 16 Lonie JA, Herrmann LL, Tierney KM, Donaghey C, O'Carroll R, Lee A, et al. Lexical and semantic fluency discrepancy scores in aMCI and early Alzheimer's disease. *J Neuropsychol* 2009; **3**: 79–92.
- 17 Lonie JA, Tierney KM, Herrmann LL, Donaghey C, O'Carroll RE, Lee A, et al. Dual task performance in early Alzheimer's disease, amnesic mild cognitive impairment and depression. *Psychol Med* 2009; **39**: 23–31.
- 18 Nelson H, Willison J. *National Adult Reading Test (Part II) Test Manual*. NFER-Nelson, 1991.
- 19 Benedict RHB, Schretlen D, Groninger L, Brandt J. Hopkins Verbal Learning Test – Revised: normative data and analysis of inter-form and test-retest reliability. *Clin Neuropsychologist* 1998; **12**: 43–55.
- 20 Rey A. Psychological examination of a case of post-traumatic encephalopathy. *Arch Psychol* 1941; **28**: 286–340.
- 21 Reitan RM. Validity of Trail Making Test as an indication of organic brain disease. *Percept Mot Skills* 1958; **8**: 271–6.
- 22 Della Sala S. Paper and Pencil Dual Task. University of Edinburgh, undated (<http://www.psy.ed.ac.uk/people/sdsala/tests/sdsdualtask>).
- 23 Benton, AL, Hamsher K. *Multilingual Aphasia Examination*. AHA Associates, 1983.
- 24 Holm S. A simple sequential rejective multiple test procedure. *Scand J Stat* 1979; **6**: 65–70.
- 25 Mebane-Sims I. Alzheimer's disease facts and figures. *Alzheimers Dement* 2009; **5**: 234–70.
- 26 Whalley LJ, Starr JM, Athawes R, Hunter D, Pattie A, Deary IJ. Childhood mental ability and dementia. *Neurology* 2000; **55**: 1455–9.
- 27 Petersen RC, Smith GE, Waring SC, Ivnik RJ, Kokmen E. Mild Cognitive impairment: clinical characterization and outcome. *Arch Neurol* 1999; **56**: 303–8.
- 28 Lu PH, Edland SD, Teng E, Ingus K, Petersen RC, Cummings JL. Donepezil delays progression to AD in MCI subjects with depressive symptoms. *Neurology* 2009; **72**: 2115–21.
- 29 Clare L, Woods RT. Cognitive training and cognitive rehabilitation for people with early-stage AD: a review. *Neuropsychol Rehabil* 2004; **14**: 401.
- 30 Dubois B, Feldman HH, Jacova C, DeKosky ST, Barberger-Gateau P, Cummings J, et al. Reserach criteria for the diagnosis of AD: revising the NINCDS-ADRDA criteria. *Lancet Neurol* 2007; **6**: 734–46.
- 31 Mioshi E, Dawson K, Mitchell J, Arnold R, Hodges JR. The Addenbrooke's Cognitive Examination Revised (ACE-R): a brief cognitive test battery for dementia screening. *Int J Geriatr Psychiatry* 2006; **21**: 1078–85.



## psychiatry in the movies

### Of course it is (the delusion that's really true)

Peter Byrne

William Burroughs described the paranoid man as one 'who knows a little of what's going on'. In that rare beast, a mainstream Hollywood film that portrays schizophrenia with humanity and without a murder, *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), John Nash (Russell Crowe) irritates his wife when he says he heard the garbage truck outside at night. He has been hospitalised with psychosis and in that movie convention much imitated in life, anything he says must be taken as fantasy, unless proven otherwise. But the garbage guys are outside and thus begins a process where she (and the audience) begin to trust and identify with Nash again. This is the exception that proves the rule. When a filmic character with mental illness reports the 'unfortunate event' on which the film turns, nobody believes him/her: *The Couch Trip* (1988), *Twelve Monkeys* (1995), *Independence Day* (1996), *Conspiracy Theory* (1997) and *K-Pax* (2001) all milk this conceit for its full comic potential. Director Alan J. Pakula's paranoid trilogy *Klute* (1971), *The Parallax View* (1974) and *All the President's Men* (1975) project the angst of the unbeliever onto a battered American audience, reeling from Vietnam and Nixon. A flavour of paranoia excites modern science fiction (*Total Recall*, 1990 and the Matrix trilogy, 1999–2003), and infuses the contemporary celebrity film, *The Truman Show* (1998).

Melodramas take the 'unbelievable mental patient' a stage further. *Gaslight* was a popular drama (filmed twice: 1940, 1944), where a scheming husband tries to convince his dutiful wife that she is losing her mind by making things go bump in the night. The hero-journalist of *Shock Corridor* (1963) feigns psychosis to gain admission to the asylum. He identifies the murderer but no one believes him; his continued incarceration drives him insane. The parents of Claudia Draper in *Nuts* (1987) conspire to undermine her testimony against a murder charge. Despite her histrionics, Claudia (Barbara Streisand) wins out. Her battle with a bullying psychiatrist is mirrored in *The Changeling* (2008). A woman's child goes missing but the Los Angeles police return the wrong boy. To avoid further embarrassment to the police, an unscrupulous psychiatrist declares her insane.

Where *A Beautiful Mind* succeeds is in drawing in the audience into seeing and believing the content of Nash's delusions. By the time the film demarcates reality from illness, we have been seduced by his experiences, and we feel his confusion and loss. True empathy.

The British Journal of Psychiatry (2010)  
197, 140. doi: 10.1192/bjp.197.2.140