

A beautiful mind



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Name Instructor Course Date A Beautiful Mind The biographical film is based on the book by Sylvia Nasar with the same title.

It tells the story of John Forbes Nash, Jr., a mathematical genius, who struggled with paranoid schizophrenia. The symptoms experienced by schizophrenic patients, the turmoil the illness created in Nash's life and the recovery he makes after years of recuperation make the film a useful learning tool for anyone interested in the field of psychiatry. Despite its shortcomings, the film provides an insightful look at the struggles and triumphs that plagued the life of a genius.

Summary of the film The film begins with the acceptance of John Nash to Princeton University with a Carnegie Scholarship for mathematics. His visual and auditory hallucinations are shown to begin in graduate school, in the form of his roommate a literature student named Charles Herman. The film continues to depict Nash's life in college and the pressure he experienced to publish papers due to his obvious aptitude in the field. Nash's success at developing the game theory leads to an appointment to Massachusetts Institute of Technology with his colleges from Princeton. An appointment to the cryptology department in the Pentagon leads to another hallucination in the form of a supervisor from the United States Department of Defense, William Parcher. His hallucinations are shown to take a political turn, as Nash is convinced of a plot the Soviets have hatched to gain American intelligence.

Meanwhile, Nash meets a graduate student Alicia Larde, with whom he falls in love. Upon encouragement by his former roommate, Charles and Charles'

young niece Marcee, Nash proposes marriage to Alicia. Nash's involvement with Parcher begins to unnerve him after witnessing a confrontation between Parcher and the Soviets.

While delivering a lecture at Harvard, Nash attempts to escape from what seems to be Soviet agents led by Dr. Rosen. Nash punches the doctor, which leads to his sedation and commitment to a psychiatric hospital. Dr. Rosen explains to Alicia that Nash suffers from schizophrenia; therefore, Charles, Marcee and Parcher are only a figment of his imagination. After a bout of insulin shock treatment, Nash is released but finding the side effects of the antipsychotic medication frustrating, he stops taking the medication.

This causes a relapse where Nash meets Parcher and Marcee. Nash eventually accepts that the three people exist in his imagination, and he is admitted to the psychiatric hospital. Despite Dr. Rosen's protests, Nash discontinues his medication believing there are better ways to deal with his condition. Alicia supports this decision and stays with him. Later, Nash returns to Princeton and is accepted back into the academic community. The film ends in the year 1994, when Nash receives the Nobel Memorial Prize for his work on the game theory. As Nash and Alicia leave, Nash sees his hallucinatory characters Charles, Marcee and Parcher watching him.

Relation to published work The film is an exemplary demonstration of how psychosis affects the life of not only the patient but also of his family.

Disruption of normal life is a common consequence of psychosis (Beidel et al. 468).

In the film, Nash's schizophrenic hallucinations cost him his position in the academic community and delayed his Nobel Prize award. He has to work hard and wait for years before the academic community is convinced of his recovery. The psychosis threatened to take away his family due to the violent episodes he experiences as part of his hallucinations. Functional impairment is explored in the class text. The portrayal of mental illness in the film is positive compared with other releases dealing with this subject matter. The life of John Nash is portrayed as realistically as possible. His battle with schizophrenia is shown in a coherent manner. All the classic symptoms of a person suffering from this psychosis are depicted with a few slight exaggerations for dramatic effect.

Apart from the fact that those both visual and auditory hallucinations have not been documented to take place at the same time; the other symptoms are as experienced by patients. Nash's cognitive deficits are a cardinal sign of the onset of schizophrenia (Rosenstock). As outlined in the film, he is unable to understand nonverbal cues and stylistic devices used in daily conversation by his classmates. He begins to lose social cognition by being unable to understand how to convey the truth in a tactful manner. The modes of treatment of schizophrenia illustrated in the film are consistent with the methods used in the 1950s to 60s. The use of antipsychotic drugs such as chlorpromazine and other methods such as Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) where electricity is used to induce seizures is depicted in the film. The most controversial as far as the film is concerned is the use of insulin shock therapy considering that this form of remedy is forced on the patient, Nash.

Antipsychotic drugs are the main regimen given to schizophrenic patients to prevent a resurgence of the hallucinations.

The film states that Nash continued to receive treatment in the form of new atypical antipsychotics. This is an inaccurate representation of the real events. Nash, in real life, has not been on medication since his discharge in 1970. Nash has successfully managed to control his psychotic episodes and has been able to regain some of his cognitive acumen although quite slowly. The effectiveness of modern healthcare in the area of psychiatry has improved greatly since John Nash was diagnosed. The amount of work required to restore some of the functions the patient lost due to the illness is immense, as reported in the film.

Summary of personal reaction The film did an excellent job in accurately showing the struggles faced by a schizophrenic patient and the impact the psychosis has on his life. His family, friends and colleagues, are also affected by his illness. The film evoked my sympathy for the main character, John Nash. The toll that the illness has taken on his life was immense, and the fall was tragic considering he was a respected member of the academic community before the psychosis forced him into an institution for treatment. The pain and frustration his wife Alicia experienced was well shown in the film and helped to explain the anguish families undergo. The depiction of Nash's hallucinations as both visual and auditory was a dramatic effect employed for the benefit of filmgoers and has no basis.

Documented patients' records have described either auditory or visual hallucinations. John Nash Jr. had auditory hallucinations but the director of

the film took liberties with the biographical film to create a more appealing film (Nordstrom). Such liberties displace the credibility of the film as a teaching aid in psychiatric study.

The film is uplifting in the way it ends with the character overcoming his illness. Nash reintegrates himself back into the academic community through sheer hard work and determination. This is not always possible for many schizophrenic patients. He is honored due to his contribution to the fields of mathematics and economics. The film ends with Nash still seeing his hallucinations, but he has learned to overcome the hold they previously had on him. Seeing the hallucinations does not seem to affect Nash as it had before.

The portrayal of Alicia as a loving, omnipresent force in Nash's life was another liberty that director took with the film. In real life, Alicia and Nash divorced in 1963 at the height of his psychosis. The toll Nash's mental illness took on their marriage might have been a significant factor in the disintegration of their marriage. A large number of personal relationships are affected negatively by schizophrenia.

The misrepresentation of the facts in the film may lead to misconceptions on the role that family plays in the life of a mentally ill patient and the subsequent strain on relationships (Brain). A scene from the film provoked a strong reaction. It was when Nash was dragged out of the rostrum by a team led by Dr. Rosen. It showed the health workers as menacing enemies out to get Nash. Despite this being a popular take on psychiatric health workers in the media, the truth is far from it (Green).

They provide a service that has enabled the likes of John Nash to recuperate and integrate back into society. Such mythic portrayal of psychiatrists and related professions only serves to propagate the stigma associated with psychiatric health. Conclusion In summation, the film is positive and uplifting to the public. It provides a useful resource material for lecturers, students, patients and families of psychiatric patients to learn more about the manifestation of psychosis. For a commercial film, the director tried to stay true to the life events of the genius John Forbes Nash, Jr. it is incisive and gives hope to patients and their loved of triumph over the tribulation that is schizophrenia. Works Cited A Beautiful Mind Dir. Ron Howard.

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