

# Madame curie and a beautiful mind: a comparison

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



There is a lot to commend about the two movies which are the subjects of this paper. The former is a biographical film about the Polish-French physicist, Marie Curie who was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize in Science and also the first to have won two in the same field; while the latter is also about the life of John Forbes Nash, a Nobel Laureate Mathematician.

These two films that tackle at a personal level the lives of prominent individuals have arrived at certain commonalities and distinctions, however unintended. It is the aim of this discussion to identify these similarities and differences in a way that we will also be able to identify some elements of the stories. An assumption however is made which is that a classic film such as Madame Curie may have a lot to learn from relatively modern movie A Beautiful Mind, possibly for any intentions for a remake of the first.

The idea of Madame Curie is to be able to reveal the personal characteristics of the great female Physicist; how she came to be popular with her discoveries, and how she had lived her life to the fullest. She was disclosed to us during her early childhood as a poor student who had tendencies of fainting in class because of her unhealthy condition. Her name is Marie Sklodowska.

Her enthusiasm in science nonetheless led her to an occasion where at the same time she met her future partner and husband, in the name of Pierre Curie- whom she have met in a soiree which was thrown by Professor Perot's wife. It was coincidental that the couple is both interested in science being a physicist himself, Pierre at first offered Marie his laboratory then had asked

him to marry her in a scientific, logical and philosophical way - this added on to the thrill and fun part of the story.

The movie has indeed been successful in being able to combine the factual knowledge about Marie's work and her social and love cumfamilylife. For instance, her attempt to discover a third radioactive element in the rock which she found to have enough energy to take small photographs also led her to divulge to Pierre's family about her pregnancy.

At the same time, the film has socio-political implications. It has presented to its audience some of the issues and problems in the scientific research and academe. Sorbonne Physics Department for example did not want to provide financial support for the implementation and pursuit of their project. In search for the element, radium, they had to withstand the old building where they had to conduct their experiments. The movie had shown the pain and difficulties of a scientist like Marie Curie only for the sake of knowledge and discovery.

The movie hence was able to share virtues that humans need to uphold for development and success such as patience, dedication and hard work. Such grand consequences are expressed in their world tours and vacation, engagement in press conferences and acceptance of Nobel Prize not to mention the new laboratory that was given to them by the University since its discovery's fulfillment.

Yet scientists and intellectuals however serious and devoted people suffer from desperation too especially in the midst of a tragic death of a loved one.

It is interesting how the life story of Madame Curie had been translated into a love story too which has a beginning and an end. Marie almost lost her mind with Pierre Curie's accident. However, the movie's finale proved itself a movie worthy of remembrance as Marie attended and delivered a speech in the 25th Anniversary Celebration of Radium's Discovery. To her, science which is her craft and her husband's too is the way to a better world. Inspiring and challenging indeed are the commentaries of critiques to this much celebrated film in the forties.

A Beautiful Mind is a 2001 film about John Nash. The movie evolved from a Pulitzer Prize nominated book in 1998 by Sylvia Nasar. Like the Madame Curie film, the beginning of the story is the early life of Nash in a university setting. He studied then at Princeton where he planned on his unique perspectives aimed at improving the future of Mathematics as a recipient of Carnegie Scholarship in Math.

To most people who did not know John Nash, the movie may appear to be a story of a schizophrenic. Just like the first movie we dealt with above, A Beautiful Mind is a creative way of presenting the ideas of a genius like Nash while invading his private family and social affairs. For instance, the movie utilized a scene at the bar with his friends where a rejection of him by a woman has induced his interest in the concept of governing dynamics, a theory in mathematical economics which became his thesis' subject.

Similar to the interpretation of Marie Curie's character as physicist; Nash' mathematical skills led him also to relate and mingle in the practical world using math reasoning and solutions - again to provide excitement among its

audience. Like Curie, Nash too got interested in teaching after graduation. He taught Calculus in MIT, but Marie Curie was more driven by Pierre to study further in her area of interest. In the same context, Nash met and fell in love with his student, Alicia Larde whom he married eventually.

The movie benefitted from the modern visual effects of the twentieth century in successfully portraying the paranoia and delusional episodes of the main character. Like Madame Curie, a mixture of happiness, pain, sorrow and difficulties traversed in the various acts in the story.

However, unlike the first, this second film has been criticized for the inaccuracies of John Nash's life in several accounts as portrayed here. Perhaps, an understandable exaggeration of the latter has been advised to make the story more moving and appealing.

The main difference with this film against the other one is its more complicated plot and additional conflict elements. The story becomes an action film at the same time when Nash was subjected to a mission of decoding an encryption of the enemy's telecom at the US Department of Defense. The mission has deepened into an anti Soviet-related plot. The pressures and tensions provoked in the scenes of gunfire had caused Nash to behave erratically. He has turned paranoid which made his wife bring him to a psychiatric hospital where he thought everybody were Soviet kidnappers.

The twist of the film is that the other characters like Marcee, the girl he became fond of, Charles, his bestfriend, and Parcher, the secret agent are all

products of his hallucinations. The story revolved in this kind of set-up where the three would appear and would tell him things he often believed and reacted to; to the point that one of them, Parcher, has convinced him to kill his wife.

Like Madame Curie, A Beautiful Mind is a love story which showed the loyalty, and patience of Alicia to her husband John. Imagine how hard it was for Alicia to join Nash in his psychosis and relieve him of his worries and dilemmas not to mention the almost murderous act of Nash of drowning their baby during bathing. In reality however, John Nash suffered only from auditory hallucinations, not visual. Like Madame Curie, the movie ended in a pleasing way nonetheless, where he earned a Nobel Prize in Economics for his famous Game Theory.

In conclusion, Madame Curie film is equally a powerful attempt at telling the real story of Marie Curie while preserving the details of her life. A Beautiful Mind however has evolved into a commercialized film which sought to gain interest among the watchers by complicating and fictionalizing on several scenes. It does not pain however doing this in a similar occasion for a revival of Madame Curie movie. I would suggest an inclusion of twists and conflicts as well; say, infidelity, dishonesty or money and power status competition. In this way, the movie is not only modernized, it also becomes more challenging on the part of the audience and the film makers. It is nevertheless important for any movie to announce which details are made up and which are real.