


ความบ้ำที่เป็นอาการของสังคมอเมริกันในนวนิยายอเมริกันศตวรรษที่ 20 โดยศึกษา
จาก *เดอะซาวนด์แอนด์เดอะฟิวรี* ของวิลเลียม ฟอล์กเนอร์, *แคทซ์-22* ของ
โจเซฟ เฮลเลอร์ และ *วัน ฟลุ โอเวอร์ เดอะ คูคูส์ เนสต์* ของเคน คีซี



นางสาวเจนใจ ปุณโณปถัมภ์

สถาบันวิทยบริการ

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาหลักสูตรปริญญาอักษรศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ ภาควิชาภาษาอังกฤษ

คณะอักษรศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

ปีการศึกษา 2550

ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

MADNESS AS SYMPTOMATIC OF AMERICAN SOCIETY IN
TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN NOVELS: A STUDY OF
WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*,
JOSEPH HELLER'S *CATCH-22* AND KEN KESEY'S
ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST



Miss Janejai Punnopatham

สถาบันวิทยมนริการ
จุฬาลงกรรมหาวิทยาลัย

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in English

Department of English

Faculty of Arts

Chulalongkorn University

Academic Year 2007

Copyright of Chulalongkorn University

Thesis Title Madness as Symptomatic of American Society in Twentieth
Century American Novels: A Study of William Faulkner's *The
Sound and the Fury*, Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* and Ken Kesey's
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

By Janejai Punnopatham

Field of Study English

Thesis Advisor Assistant Professor Dr. Carina Chotirawe

Accepted by the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree.

.....Dean of Faculty of Arts
(Professor Dr. Theraphan Luangthongkum)

Thesis Committee

.....Chairperson
(Associate Professor Dr. Pachee Yuvajita)

.....Advisor
(Assistant Professor Dr. Carina Chotirawe)

.....Member
(Assistant Professor Dr. Darin Pradittatsanee)

.....Member
(Assistant Professor Simon Jeremy Peter Wright)

เจเนใจ ปุณโณปถัมภ์ : ความบ้าที่เป็นอาการของสังคมอเมริกันในนวนิยายอเมริกัน
 ศตวรรษที่ 20 โดยศึกษาจาก *เดอะซาวนด์แอนด์เดอะฟิวรี่* ของวิลเลียม ฟอล์กเนอร์,
แคทช์-22 ของโจเซฟ เฮลเลอร์ และ *วัน ฟลู โอเวอร์ เดอะ คุกคูส์ เนสต์* ของเคน คีซี
 (Madness as Symptomatic of American Society in Twentieth Century
 American Novels: A Study of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*,
 Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* and Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's
 Nest*) อ. ที่ปรึกษา : ผศ. ดร. คาริณา ไชติรวี, ๑๓๕ หน้า.

จากแนวคิดของนักปรัชญาชาวฝรั่งเศส มิเกล ฟูโกต์ ที่กล่าวว่า "ความบ้า" มิใช่อาการเจ็บป่วย
 ทางร่างกายและจิตใจอย่างที่คนเข้าใจ แต่เป็นเพียงมายาคติที่สังคมส่วนใหญ่สร้างขึ้นเพื่อตรากลุ่มคนที่แตกต่าง
 และไม่สามารถทำความเข้าใจอยู่ร่วมกับผู้อื่นในวัฒนธรรมได้ วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ตั้งข้อสังเกตว่า ตลอดเวลาที่
 ผ่านมาในประวัติศาสตร์ "ความบ้า" นั้นเป็นปรากฏการณ์ที่จำกัดไว้ให้คนส่วนน้อยในสังคม ที่มีพฤติกรรม
 แนวคิด หรือการกระทำอะไรบางอย่างที่ไม่สามารถสื่อสารกับคนทั่วไป หรือเป็นภัยคุกคามต่อสังคม แต่ด้วย
 สาเหตุที่ลึกซึ้งบางอย่าง ในสังคมอเมริกันร่วมสมัยนั้น "ความบ้า" ที่เคยเปรียบเสมือนคนแปลกหน้า กลับกลาย
 มาเป็นปรากฏการณ์ที่พบเห็นได้ทั่วไปในผลิตผลของวัฒนธรรมกระแสหลัก เช่น นวนิยาย หรือ ภาพยนตร์
 นอกจากนี้ คนจำนวนไม่น้อยในสังคมยังต้องพึ่งพาวัฒนธรรมจิตบำบัด (Psychotherapy) และยอมรับได้อย่าง
 ไม่อับอายว่าตนมีปัญหาทางจิต ตำแหน่งทางสังคมที่เปลี่ยนไปของ "ความบ้า" นั้นบ่งชี้ว่าต้องมีการเปลี่ยนแปลง
 อะไรบางอย่างในระดับสังคม การเมือง เศรษฐกิจ และวัฒนธรรมของสังคมอเมริกันร่วมสมัย จึงทำให้ "ความบ้า"
 เปลี่ยนฐานะจากปรากฏการณ์ที่ถูกกีดกันรังเกียจ กลายเป็นส่วนสำคัญส่วนหนึ่งของวัฒนธรรม วิทยานิพนธ์
 ฉบับนี้จึงมุ่งศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่าง "ความบ้า" และสังคมวัฒนธรรมอเมริกัน ผ่านนวนิยายสำคัญสามเล่ม
 ประจำศตวรรษที่ 20 คือ *เดอะซาวนด์แอนด์เดอะฟิวรี่* ของวิลเลียม ฟอล์กเนอร์, *แคทช์-22* ของโจเซฟ เฮลเลอร์
 และ *วัน ฟลู โอเวอร์ เดอะ คุกคูส์ เนสต์* ของเคน คีซี เพื่อชี้ให้เห็นถึงความเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสังคม การเมือง
 เศรษฐกิจ วัฒนธรรม รวมไปถึงการใช้วาทกรรมในบริบทของวัฒนธรรมอเมริกันร่วมสมัย ที่มีผลให้การตีความ
 การนิยาม และความเข้าใจของสังคมส่วนใหญ่ที่มีต่อ "ความบ้า" นั้นเปลี่ยนแปลงไปอย่างน่าแปลกใจ ในการนำ
 เสนอประเด็นเหล่านี้ วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ยังชี้ให้เห็นด้วยว่า "ความบ้า" ที่เคยถูกกีดกัน จำกัด และเนรเทศจาก
 สังคมตะวันตกมาหลายศตวรรษนั้น ได้กลับกลายมามีบทบาทสำคัญอีกครั้งในสังคมอเมริกันร่วมสมัยตั้งแต่
 ทศวรรษที่ 60 เป็นต้นมา

ภาควิชา.....ภาษาอังกฤษ.....ลายมือชื่อนิสิต.....
 สาขาวิชา.....ภาษาอังกฤษ.....ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา.....
 ปีการศึกษา.....2550.....ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาร่วม.....

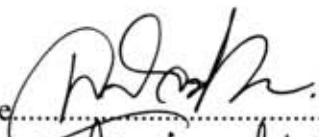
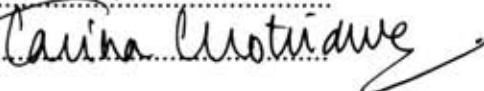
4780117722 MAJOR: ENGLISH

KEY WORDS: MADNESS / INSANITY / 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN NOVELS / 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN HISTORY / AMERICAN SOCIETY / WILLIAM FAULKNER / JOSEPH HELLER / KEN KESEY

JANEJAI PUNNOPATHAM. MADNESS AS SYMPTOMATIC OF AMERICAN SOCIETY IN TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN NOVELS: A STUDY OF WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*, JOSEPH HELLER'S *CATCH-22*, KEN KESEY'S *ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST*. THESIS ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. DR. CARINA CHOTIRAWE. 135 pp.

This thesis studies three twentieth century American novels: William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury*, Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* and Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, which deal with the issue of madness in different ways, from the level of individual plight to the phenomenon of social epidemic. This study is prompted by the ideas set forth by Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilization* (1961) and his other writings, which propose that each culture's varied discourses on madness reflect more about that culture itself than what psychiatrists define as mental disorders. This thesis will therefore question how the literary presentations of madness in these three selected novels mirror the changes in sociopolitical structure, cultural trends and general sensibilities in the twentieth century. It will discuss how William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* (1929) represents a transitional period in American history when the unsullied values of the Old South were being replaced by the vulgarity of the modern world. It will also discuss how Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961), one of the quintessential anti-war novels in the past century, depicts madness of modern discursive, and sociopolitical practices in postwar America. Finally, the thesis will explore how Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) portrays madness as a means for political and social control in contemporary American society.

From William Faulkner to Ken Kesey, each literary representation of madness can serve to illustrate the relationship between madness and society, and explain how the issue of madness, once misunderstood and silenced, has been reassessed in the latter half of the century.

Department.....English.....Student's signature.....
Field of Study....English.....Advisor's signature.....
Academic Year.....2007.....Co-Advisor's signature.....

Acknowledgements

I would like to express deepest gratitude to Assistant Professor Carina Chotirawe, my advisor, for her kind efforts in helping and advising me through the period of my thesis research and writing. But above all, I would like to thank her for the patience and understanding she has shown me throughout the years, no matter how many times I failed to meet up expectations. Without her help and kindness, this thesis would never have been completed. I also would like to thank Associate Professor Pachee Yuvajita, Associate Professor Simon Jeremy Peter Wright and Assistant Professor Dr. Darin Pradittatsanee, the thesis committee, who did not only spent hours comprehending this thesis, but have been and will always be my source of wisdom. Had they not been my teachers, I would never have had the attitude and insights that allowed me to look at things at deeper level in the first place. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation towards my parents, who have always attempted to understand and support me.



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CONTENTS

	page
Thai Abstract	iv
English Abstract	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Contents	vii
Chapter	
I Introduction	1
1. General Introduction	1
2. The Many Faces of Madness: Brief Overview of Madness in Western History	6
3. Madness in Literature	10
4. Madness in Selected Twentieth Century American Novels	16
II William Faulkner's <i>The Sound and the Fury</i> and the Hermeneutics of Madness	19
1. Introduction	19
2. A Tale Told by an Idiot: Benjy the Holy Fool	22
3. To Be or Not to Be: Quentin the Neurotic	29
4. "You Talkin' to Me?": Jason the Psychotic	40
5. A Marginalized Voice: Dilsey the Silent Observer	47
III Joseph Heller's <i>Catch-22</i> and the Lunatic Language of Absolute Power	51
1. Introduction	52
2. <i>Catch-22</i> in Practice : Language of the Will to Absolute Power.....	57
3. <i>Catch-22</i> Dissected: The Anatomy of A Logical Loophole.....	78
4. Rediscovering Rationality and Salvation: To Counter Madness with Madness.....	90

IV	Ken Kesey's <i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> and Madness as a Contemporary Counterculture	91
	1. Overview: The Historical Context and a Comparison with <i>Catch-22</i>	93
	2. Madness and Its Relationship with the Society in the Age of Psychiatry.....	98
V	Conclusion	121
	References	128
	Vita	135



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

MUCH madness is divinest sense
To a discerning eye;
Much sense the starkest madness
'T is the majority
In this, as all, prevails.
Assent, and you are sane;
Demur, -you're straightway dangerous
And handled with a chain.-
– Emily Dickinson

I just want to be normally insane.
– Marlon Brando

1. General Introduction

Although the origin and nature of madness has always been subjected to much debate and controversy, arguably throughout history humans have always recognized the manifestation of madness in that which strays away from the standards of right and wrong set by the dominant culture. Emily Dickinson's poem quoted here best epitomizes this notion. Dickinson's poem, written in the mid-nineteenth century, argues that the social majority plays the most important part in defining what and who should be deemed 'mad' and need to be confined. While some might argue that Dickinson's view in this poem completely ignores the possible scientific explanation of the human phenomenon called madness, it does offer a dialectic of madness and civilization that was to be thoroughly discussed in the twentieth century. According to Dickinson, by not conforming to the hegemony, a person risks the chance of being deemed as 'mad' and therefore seen as a social threat that must be "handled with a chain". Her poem is therefore representational of how Western society positioned madness in the pre-twentieth century era, where madness was the marginalized experience of a few social oddities who, in simple words, did not fit in.

However, the stark contrast between Dickinson's poem and the words of legendary actor Marlon Brando vividly illustrate the changing position of madness in

Western culture and America, in particular, over the course of the past century. It seems astonishing that, only a century later, a respected actor like Brando could proudly proclaim that he just wanted to be “normally insane”. In Dickinson’s time, Brando’s remark would not have made any sense, because being “normal” stood at an exact opposite boundary of being “insane”. However, now this statement seems precisely to capture the essential paradox of the contemporary world. Madness, which was once banished outside the culture and seen as a negation of civilization, has become arguably normalized and popularized in the contemporary Western mind. While gory violence and senseless crimes were not an unprecedented sight before the twentieth century, they were never so ubiquitously claimed as a product of insanity. Moreover, accelerating numbers of “normal” people who have neither a criminal nor a medical record also feel the need to seek psychotherapy, giving rise to what is widely cited in journalism as the “shrink culture”. The gallery of “mental disorders” is constantly expanding to accommodate and medicate all kinds and levels of unhappiness or anxiety. Insanity is no longer an exclusive experience of a few social misfits, but a pervasive reality experienced by the majority, a far cry from Dickinson’s days. Brando’s oxymoronic statement therefore rings with some truth about current socio-cultural reality, particularly on his home soil, America, whose population now embraces insanity and psychiatric treatment as a fact of everyday life.

1.1 Madness in Contemporary America

The intimacy between the American public and madness in the contemporary cultural scene comes as a surprising irony at the time when America has emerged as the sole world power, well equipped with political supremacy, financial wealth and advanced technology. However, America finds the mental health of its citizens has noticeably degenerated, especially in urban areas where quality of life should be at its finest. Research from The World Health Organization (WHO) has repeatedly confirmed that the numbers of people diagnosed with schizophrenia are much higher in developed countries, the U.S. in particular, than in poorer countries (Whitaker). This statistics is echoed by the findings of The National Institute of Mental Health that state that an estimated 26.2 percent of Americans aged 18 and older — or one in every four adults — suffer from at least one diagnosable mental disorder, ranging from anxiety disorders, depressive disorders and bipolar disorder to post-traumatic stress and

schizophrenia. This figure translates to approximately 58 million people. Increasing numbers of American youth seek clinical help for their mental problems, and many end up in suicidal or sometimes even homicidal behavior. The epidemic of mental illness in contemporary America is so extensive, especially among youths, that it seems faddish. True to Brando's words, these days a person is more likely to fit in and be considered "normal" if he or she suffers from at least one mental disorder.

1.2 Situating Madness in Western Discourses

Looking beyond the current American context where madness occupies a continuously expanding space within the society, it can be argued that Western culture in the modern era has been obsessed with the dysfunctional nature of the human psyche. Shoshana Felman writes in *Writing and Madness* that "Modernity at large (including postmodernity) can be defined ... by its relation to the age of psychiatry" (3). She further explains, citing theories previously proposed by the influential French philosopher Michel Foucault, that "the age of psychiatry" is "the age of the establishment of the hegemony of psychiatric discourses" which, deriving their major premise from the age of reason, labels madness as a disease and aims to seek a cure for it. Michel Foucault introduces this well-established idea in his *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, the abridged version of which is known in English as *Madness and Civilization* (1962). His complex ideas can be most simply summarized to assert that madness represents another form of epistemological experience through which humans can gain knowledge of the world. But madness was robbed of power by the Enlightenment, which emphasized reason as the only legitimate way to knowledge¹. The tyranny of reason over the past few centuries seems, according to Foucault, to have conspired to reduce madness into a form of disease and has put an end to its role as an alternative way of pursuing truth.

According to Foucault, not only are the mad physically confined and politically oppressed, they are also robbed of subjectivity. In other words, they

¹ Foucault writes in *Madness and Civilization* that madness is knowledge, whose vision is a result of "a difficult, hermetic, esoteric learning" (18). But the Cartesian worldview puts the prominence exclusively on reason, "authorizing (it as) a knowledge, then a science" (101). Foucault argues that this shift strips madness its status as an alternative access to the Truth.

become objects to study, observe and discuss, but are never allowed to express themselves as autonomous subject. Their experience and discourses are rendered invalid. Foucault's genealogy of madness in *Madness and Civilization* is therefore a study of social injustice imposed upon a group of people and their experience throughout Western civilization. However, Foucault's historical treatment of madness does not go on to explain the more recent phenomenon that not only has madness become a pervasive cultural reality but it has also come to gain and enjoy a curious, subversive sense of power over the course of the last century. Evidence is everywhere to be found. Insane criminals, while still seen as social threats, are no longer silenced or excluded but instead given so much voice and glorified to an extent that they become the center of public attention. Likewise, not only is it no longer shameful for ordinary citizen to be diagnosed with mental disorders, it has even become a perverse sign of social status. In twentieth century America, psychiatry has emerged as a socially powerful and financially successful institution that exists to endorse madness despite its claims to "cure" it.

The significance of madness in the current cultural scene is also inevitable. In academic circles, much attention has been given to controversy about its nature and relationship with the society. While Michel Foucault leads the pack with his immensely influential *Madness and Civilization*, Thomas Szasz, a professor of psychiatry, simultaneously published several books on the topic, namely *The Myth of Mental Illness* (1961) and *The Manufacture of Madness* (1970), which propagate the same argument as Foucault's that madness is a cultural construct rather than a fact of nature. But Foucault and Szasz, no matter how significant and provocative their ideas have been in recent academic discourses, are not without their critics. Many other medical personnel and fellow scholars have continued to counter-argue that if there is a continuity in the symptom of mental dysfunction over the time, then madness must be a pathological reality with an authentic organic origin (Porter 4). Although there is yet to be a final answer to the nature or origin of madness, the heated debate about insanity in the contemporary academic climate arguably illustrates that madness is no longer banished from discursive practices, but has become a significant subject publicly discussed and debated in medical and theoretical texts.

1.3 The Role of Madness in Current Cultural Discourses

Apart from medical, philosophical and cultural studies, madness has also enjoyed immense popularity in both high and lowbrow literature throughout the twentieth century. Arguably the face of madness was always familiar in literature prior to the modern era. Writers from previous ages thoroughly explored this human condition through many recognized characters, some of the most famous being Shakespeare's King Lear and Cervantes' Don Quixote. Nevertheless, it can also be argued that the description of madness in these classical works is still provided by a rational outside observer, while Modernist writers in the twentieth century have made the fragmented, incoherent experience of madness the center of their writings. For example, Virginia Woolf or William Faulkner do not simply examine the condition of the mentally troubled characters from the outside, but are also stylistically devoted to mimicking the schizophrenic narratives of the mad subjects, as can be seen in the characters of Septimus Smith in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* or Quentin in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. Likewise, the American poet Sylvia Plath also gains her legendary status from her account of insanity presented in the autobiographical novel *The Bell Jar*, where she subjectively traces the internal experience of the protagonist Esther Greenwood as she descends into insanity. Madness, which was once an object to be observed, examined and discussed, has thus become a speaking subject in literature, through which the readers can gain a first-person, if imitated, experience of being mad.

While high culture has focused on exploring the disturbed psyche of modern man through fragmentary discourses, madmen and psychopaths have also become regulars in popular culture – sometimes as heroes but more often as villains. Lowbrow fiction and B-graded movies often make use of mad characters to elicit excitement and employ schizophrenia as a plot device that ensures elements of shock and twisted endings. The popularity of madmen in popular culture implies that the general audience has come to seek refuge in the experience of the mad, an escape from the burdening social expectations. Some fictional psychopaths have gained a place in history as a representational figure of the era, such as Travis Bickle – the protagonist of Martin Scorsese's controversial film *Taxi Driver* (1976). Bickle has come to be seen as an antihero who embodies the disturbed psyche of the post-

Vietnam generation in America on the verge of breakdown. His alienation leading to a final outburst of gruesome violence provided a generation with a source of catharsis.

The concurring rise of madness in both its contemporary social and discursive aspects can thus account for the triumphant resurrection of madness in the twentieth century. Felman insightfully observes that such inflation of discourse on madness can argue for madness itself (14). This raises a crucial question: what is it about the contemporary world – especially American society – that has made it return to madness the power it has been denied since the dawn of the Enlightenment? The key rationale of this thesis is derived from Foucault's fundamental argument that the economic, sociopolitical, and ideological structure of each cultural context plays a large role in determining the perception of madness. The main purpose of this thesis is to explore how the representation of madness in three twentieth century American novels – William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1928), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) and Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) – help illustrate the paradigmatic, cultural, economic and sociopolitical shifts in twentieth century America which have resulted in this changing position of madness from the level of individual plight to social epidemic.

2. The Many Faces of Madness: Brief Overview of Madness in Western History

To illustrate how the Western perception of madness and its association with the notion of power has evolved over the years, it is inevitable that we must briefly refer to the historical background of the subject. Western civilization arguably has come to recognize madness through either theoretical or literary fashion. While theoretical discourses attempt to explain and rationalize madness, literature seeks to reproduce the voice of the mad and its symbolic significance. Yet, although theoretical and literary languages may assume different stances and stylistics today, their roles in defining madness in the Western imagination are often intertwined or sometimes even interactive. Medical theories can influence a poet's interpretation of madness, while Sigmund Freud was perhaps the most famous physician who, vice versa, openly adopted the poet's and artist's portrayal of the troubled mind to construct his psychoanalytical theories. In order to grasp how the Western

imagination has come to recognize madness throughout history, it is therefore necessary to review both the theoretical and literary representations of the subject.

2.1 Madness in Pre-Modern Eras

It has been held that, at the earliest stage of civilization, there was no clear demarcation between art and science. Myths and legends played an indispensable role in forming the basis of ancient men's metaphysics and theology. Madness was commonly seen as supernaturally inflicted – whether it is by the gods or demons. The perforated skulls recovered from the Stone Age debatably mark the very first trace of medical attempt to cure madness. Although the holes made by prehistoric surgeons in these skulls suggest how the seed of insanity has been identified in the head from antiquity (Thiher 1), this primitive medical remedy, however, is more likely an act of exorcism than what modern physician would consider as clinical treatment. The holes, it is speculated, were made in an effort to release the possessing demons inside the heads. Believed as caused by external supernatural power, madness therefore represented to ancient men a form of mystical, destructive force that was not only rather spiritual than physical, but also lied above control of humans and their civilization.

It was not until the latter Greeks that Western men started to develop a worldview that was more naturalistic and rational instead of superstitious and mythical. Greek philosophers in the fifth and the fourth centuries BC began to adopt reason and logic to find a sense of order in all aspects of their existence, from nature, society to their own psyche. Madness therefore ceased to be seen as the manifestation of fearsome wrath from the random hands of the gods, but was rather viewed as a state of disorder with logical reasons to it. Plato, one of the most prominent forefathers of Western philosophy, opined that madness is a result from the excess of passions and fleshly appetites. In other words, for Plato it is the loss of equilibrium that caused a self to fall into the state of madness. At the same time in the medical scene, Hippocrates and his classical holistic medicine propose that madness is a

symptom of humoral imbalance¹ *within* the body rather by any external supernatural forces. Although Platonic and Hippocratic texts differ in their approaches to the issue of madness, they share some crucial similarities that marked a development in Western perception of madness from the previous age. Not only do Plato and Hippocrates eliminate the supernatural aspect of madness and humanized it, but they also agree that the loss of equilibrium, whether it is moral or physical, accounts largely for the dysfunction of the soul. This paved the way for later philosophical and medical tradition concerning madness in following centuries.

For Plato and his contemporaries, the only thing that would prevent the excess of destructive passions and save mankind from catastrophe was therefore reason. Rationality thus became a pinnacle of both ethical and political ideals. This dialectical thinking set forward a prototype of hierarchical dualism that was to be the basis of Western frame of thoughts in later ages, including Cartesian dualism² in the eighteenth century. However, it is noteworthy that Plato and his contemporaries did not deny or undermine the reality of the Unreason or its power. In fact, they were highly aware of its destructive force that they suggested that men could build sense of order only by championing reasons. To the Classical thinkers, rationality hence is only a precaution against madness that always remained a possibility, a potential that lies within every human being waiting to surface when the balance of mind and body was lost.

2.2 Madness and Modernity

From this point of history on, it is impossible to avoid or ignore Foucault's towering shadow on the subject. First of all, it is important to understand Foucault's concept of *epistémè*, one of the most significant ideas in Foucault's illustrious career. Rooted from Greek, *epistémè* refers to "absolute, systematic knowledge" (Margaroni 112). Foucault, however, borrows the term to specifically refer to a specific set of

¹ Hippocrates and Classical medicine explain that human health and illness could be understood in terms of "humors", which are the elementary fluids of a human body. The interactive disposition of these humors accounted for the distinctive quality of each individual.

² In articulating the nature of existence, Platonic metaphysics not only polarize the world into binaries, but also put a sense of supremacy on one principle over the other – the abstract over the concrete, the mind over the body, the reason over the unreason.

discursive practices that is developed and accepted as valid and legitimate knowledge at a specific period of time. This concept of *epistémè* is crucial to the understanding of madness discussed in this thesis, for it explains how a form of knowledge accepted in each period directly influences the way each cultural context defines what should be counted as madness. In this framework, Foucault assertively and convincingly argues that the arrival of the Enlightenment between the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century brought about a crucial paradigmatic shift in Western understanding of madness. Hitherto, it can be seen that even though Western culture has dreaded and tried to overcome madness, it was still considerably held in high regards. Madness and madmen still represent some mystical power, an alarming reminder of some undeniable truths about the absurdity of existence and the limit of civilization. However, Foucault argues that the Enlightenment, fuelled by Cartesian epistemology and Isaac Newton's physics, brought about the new *epistémè* that consequently silenced and robbed madness of this sense of power¹. The Enlightenment devoutly believed that human intelligence is capable of accessing absolute Truths through reasons. This mindset established a set of discourses, or as Jürgen Habermas calls "the project of modernity" (Harvey 12), which insist that only the pursuit of reasons would liberate mankind from ignorance and irrationality and bring about universal progress. This project amounted to an enormous effort from the part of Enlightenment scholars in developing many branches of knowledge in order to "better" human conditions. Among many sciences emerging in this era, psychiatry was born.

The way Foucault sees it is that psychiatry is a product of the Enlightenment's obsession with the idea of progress and reformation. It justifies the phenomenon Foucault famously calls "the great confinement", or the institutionalization of social misfits, such as the criminals, the unemployed and, above all, the insane. These asylums served as an administrative measure to bring about order for the society heading towards industrialization. By pathologizing madness, psychiatry provides scientific justification not only positions it as a pest of the mind that must be obliterated just like the social pests, but also robs it of any metaphysical or spiritual

¹ Foucault charges Rene Descartes that, with his dualistic metaphysics that separate mind from the body and disregard any epistemological experience that was perceived through dysfunctional body, Descartes deprives madness legitimacy of its discourses.

status. As psychiatry has evolved, madness came to obtain its present status as a “mental disease” that can and must be cured.

Although Foucault’s ideas that see psychiatry as a repression tool for the society have been widely criticized as over-generalizing and simplistic, he does single out two significant observations that are very relevant to the subject of madness today. First of all, the concept of madness is inseparable from political ideology and power structure within a social context. Secondly, his study points out a break in Western intellectual history whose consequences are significant in the twentieth century. Even though the Enlightenment might not be wholly responsible to the mistreatment of madness and the man in particular like Foucault suggests, at least he is correct in assumption that the Enlightenment brings about the loss of equilibrium in the dualism of Western philosophy. Up until then, humans had positioned themselves as a counterpoint between Good and Evil, between passion and rationality, between madness and civilization. But the Enlightenment’s single-minded emphasis in the positive side of the dichotomy broke this equilibrium and led to the dominance of the positive over the negative end of the metaphysical and moral spectrum. The Enlightenment’s unquestioned faith in the idea of progress and human intelligence claimed rationality as the only legitimate path to knowledge and universal progress (the keyword here is “universal” – one standard for everybody)

In the span of two centuries, the Enlightenment project led the Western civilization to the rapid progress in the realm of politics, science and technology unprecedented in history. Yet, shortly after the dawn of the twentieth century, the Western world also faced unprecedented atrocities – the death camps, the atomic bombs, the rise of Nazism, all of which derived some way or another from the rationale of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment discourse on progress for the human’s good finally lost its credibility and suspicions thus started to lurk that under its seemingly benign and humanitarian discourse, the Enlightenment project hides the logic of domination and oppression, attempting to homogenize all differences under the same model of idealistic society. Foucault, looking through the ruins of Enlightenment optimism, sees that madness is only a social stigma attached on a group of people that deviate from the majority’s standard of what is good and right. Foucault’s theories, arguably most influential among his camp, represent the latest

theoretical discourse that negates the medical view and thrust madness back *within* culture. It was seen, once again, as some sort of lost truth, the truth sanctioned and censored by a society obsessed with reasons.

To this point, one might question why this thesis has so far sidestepped the undeniable influence of Sigmund Freud on the subject of madness. It must be clarified here that the angle of madness this thesis aims to tackle is not psychological, but rather cultural and sociopolitical. This thesis does not attempt to psychoanalyze the condition of the individual psyche as much as to study how the perception of madness varies from one social context to another, as reflected through the writings, both literary and theoretical, of the period. This thesis does not intend to contemplate the nature of a mental disorder in a psychoanalytical light as much as to ask the question why a phenomenon is accounted as madness or diagnosed as mental disorder in the first place. In this framework, Freudian theories can be read as another epistémè that influences the perception of madness. Since the main focus of this thesis is rather cultural and sociopolitical than psychological, Foucault is therefore more theoretically prominent than Freud in the analysis of madness in the three selected American novels further discussed in the following chapters.

3. Madness in Literature

While theoretical or medical writings attempt to make sense out of the phenomenon called madness, literature presents another half of discourses that mold human perception of the symptom. It can be said that stylistic differences allows literature to explore the theme of madness beyond theoretical or scientific grasp. Unbounded by the logical structure essential in theoretical writings, literature allows a place for imagination and delirium that is beyond the realm of reasons and sense. In other words, literature shares with madness the ability to enjoy the Unreal, the phantasm that does not exist in reality. Literature therefore is not restricted to analyzing or rationalizing madness, but can attempt to reproduce its experience, mimicking its esoteric discourse, or to present it as symbolically significant in each social context. Although doctors and theoreticians explain madness in a straightforward fashion, the image of the mad presented through literature sometimes more effectively reveals a society's underlying attitude on the phenomenon. In other

words, literary representations of insanity often reflect not only the way a general society perceives and treats madness, but also that society's concept of knowledge and power. It is therefore rather common for poets and writers to utilize the figure of the mad as literary tropes to explore and examine their own culture.

3.1 General Overview of the Literary Depiction of Madness in Western History

Myths are no doubt not only the very first form of literary discourse in human civilization, but also, as mentioned earlier, a foundation of Western knowledge. Madness in particular was no stranger to Greek mythology and first took form as a divine intervention. It is responsible for many heroes' downfall, from Bellerophon, Heracles to Ajax – to name a few. These heroes are literally driven to temporary madness as a punishment from the gods. The tragic fate of these mythic figures reinforces the view that ancient men perceive insanity as supernatural matter whose origin and absolute remedy is beyond any mortal. What is noteworthy here is that madness, assigned as an affliction from heaven, seems to exercise certain degree of power in ancient imagination.

However, the most distinctive figure(s) that illustrate this point is probably the Maenads¹. They are arguably the very first trope of madness that appeared in literature. Unlike the mad heroes, the Maenads are not destroyed by insanity. If anything, they are the manifestation of madness in its most powerful – if destructive – state. Frenzied, wild, and violent – the Maenads embody the pure, primeval force that prevails over sense and reason, crushing everyone and everything in their path. They represent the kind of forceful, divinely-inspired madness that arouse awe and wonder in Western imagination. Interestingly, the constant wandering of these female devotees connotes the idea of boundless freedom unrestrained by any social rules and obligation. It was madness uncensored and let loose, as opposed to the image of confined madmen in later ages.

¹ The Maenads are the female worshippers of Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility. Inspired by Dionysus' wine, the Maenads are in the constant state of frenzy, wild ecstasy and violence. They are said to wander around the earth incessantly performing orgiastic rituals, tearing apart other creatures and devouring their flesh along the way. They represent a complete union with unrestrained, primeval instincts at the cost of order and civilization. The fact that they are devotees to Dionysus, who is not only the god of intoxication but also the patron deity of art, suggests a profound relationship between madness and art.

Madness came to gain more complexity with later Greeks. Works of playwrights like Aeschylus, Sophocles or Euripides dramatize the struggle of human psyche torn by internal conflicts. While the heroes are still subjected to the unrelenting power of destiny, their turmoil is no longer solely a result of external forces, but also self-inflicted. Unlike Homer's heroes, the protagonists in later tragedies are the *conscious* subjects (Porter 14) who degenerate into madness as a result of conflicting desires and emotions like greed, guilt, grief or shame. This dramatization of the psyche echoes the later Greek philosophers and physicians that reduce the role of the supernatural and humanize madness. The corruption of the mind is not solely a punishment from the gods, but also caused by the excess of passions, the loss of internal equilibrium.

To this point, it can be seen that the literary representation of madness corresponds with the intellectual perception of the symptom. Madness stood as an alarming reminder of human fragility. This view was carried onto medieval and Renaissance literature and the face of madness developed in more prominent tropes like Fools and Folly. Unlike the Maenads, madness at this time was not presented as terrifying or destructively powerful, but as a voice of wisdom that reminds us of the equivocal side of civilization. The fools were a major part of medieval and Renaissance culture. The Feast of Fools, a common practice at the time, showed how the Medieval embraced the Unreason at the heart of its culture as another facet of Truth. The fools were commonly perceived as someone who possessed an intuitive vision that is superior to logic, granting them an understanding of another level of reality that a rational mind is incapable of. Shakespeare in particular utilizes the figure of the fools to maximum effects. His fools, particularly in *King Lear* or *Twelfth Night*, deliver bewildering nonsense that curiously outwit logic and gave a glimpse to the darker truths than any discourse of reason is capable of. Madness, channeling through the figure of the fools, therefore functioned as a kind of counterculture that brought balance back to the world that was becoming increasingly dominated by logic and science.

However, after the Renaissance gave way to the age of reason, the fools curiously vanished from the stage, as the image of madness in literature was also

gradually and coincidentally reduced to that of a “madwoman in the attic”¹. This popular image in Victorian novels signifies an interesting paradigmatic shift in the way Western imagination conceived madness. This was the madness seen as a threat to culture and society and had to be silenced and locked away. From the wild and free image of the Maenads of the early Greeks to the wise Fools of the Renaissance who were located at the heart of the society, madness of the Victorian society is physically confined and its once-glorified discourse is reduced to only a haunting whisper, which seemed fit in the age that arguably best epitomized the Enlightenment’s idea of progress. Once again, this illustrates how literary representation helps reflect visual image of madness perceived by the society.

The figure of “madwomen in the attic” remained a prominent image of madness in Western culture for years until the mid-twentieth century, when the more powerful tropes of madness in previous ages return to public imagination in a new manifestation. While the fools have enjoyed considerable welcome on stage in the theatre of the absurd, it was rather the Maenads that made a truly successful return, especially in the twentieth century America, where madmen are freed, mingling with “normal” people, despite the overwhelming presence of psychiatry as an institution. In fiction as well as in reality, a number of psychopathic characters terrorizing the society with violence are exactly the reincarnated version of the Maenads, running wild in the concrete jungle. After being locked away and silenced for centuries, madness seems to have, once again, resumed its powerful state in the twentieth century.

3.2 Depiction of Madness in pre-Twentieth Century American Literature

History of madness in American literature arguably has had distinctive, though inseparable, tradition from its European counterpart. Although American writers prior to the twentieth century had not produced any major "mad" character whose legacy is

¹ The figure of “madwoman in the attic” is originally derived from the character of Bertha Rochester in Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* who came to define the stereotype of this literary trope in Victorian literature. This phrase later became a title to a well-known book by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar: *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, which helps reinforce the image of “the madwoman in the attic” as the ultimate minority who is silenced and excluded by the society and struggles to find their voice.

apparent in the history of Western literature like that of Ophelia or Don Quixote, in many ways it can be said that traits of madness had always been present in American literature, especially in the nineteenth century. While Transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson or Henry David Thoreau might be an outstanding intellectual and cultural movement in nineteenth century America, there was also the Dark Romanticism of Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville that constitutes another half of nineteenth century American literary output. Unlike the optimistic Transcendentalists, the Dark Romantic writers chose to venture forth into the darker realm not only of human psyche, but also of the universe.

The universe of the Dark Romantics is a far cry from a continuous progress towards the good as the Enlightenment scholars believe. They do not simply disregard madness as absence of civilization, but embrace it as a fundamental reality of human existence. To them, madness represents the negative side of the universal dichotomy that exists and must not be ignored. Therefore, the Dark Romantics are keen on depicting obsession, abnormality and extremity in humans - all the traits that negate the Enlightenment concept of man as a rational being. Hardly any character in Poe's, Hawthorne's and Melville's works can qualify as "normal". They are not morally balanced individual leading life with senses and moderation, but grotesque creatures distorted by unruly emotions such as guilt, rage or mania. Melville's Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick* is one of the more obvious examples. A character of epic proportion, Captain Ahab is so notoriously driven by a single-minded obsession to kill a whale that his chief mate Starbuck remarks as bordering on madness: "Vengeance on a dumb beast that simply smote thee from the blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous". Likewise, the souls of Arthur Dimmesdale and Roger Chillingworth in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* are also bent out of shape by guilt, shame and thirst for revenge. It is not merely the portrayal of absolute evil in these characters as much as a reminder that humans are not always rational but can still be driven by excessive passions that lead them to catastrophe.

But perhaps it is Edgar Allen Poe who most notably places madness within American literary tradition, especially for the genre of popular horror fiction in the following century. In many of his short stories, madness becomes an important ingredient for Poe evoking Gothic tales of death and decay of human spirits.

However, a major difference between Poe and two previous writers should also be noted. While Melville and Hawthorne seem to be more in line with the classical thinkers who were aware of the destructive possibility within human nature and portray madness as a cautionary tale to the readers, Poe on the other hand was probably one of the first writers to romanticize and glamorize it. With Poe, not only have the grotesque and freaks become regular tropes in American literature, especially for Southern writers such as William Faulkner or Flannery O'Connor in the following century, but madness has also come to gain the aspect of glamour in public imagination.

Besides the three major male writers in the nineteenth century, the American reading public has also been familiar with the voice of a social oddity often mistaken for the mad in the figure of Emily Dickinson. Although Dickinson has never been directly associated with mental illness, her life and works share a lot of paradigmatic similarities with the mad in a Foucauldian sense. Despite having never been confined to an asylum, Dickinson's life has become to public imagination the myth of an eccentric, mysterious and socially secluded female who, like the insane, occupies space outside the dominant culture. Her controversial life goes hand in hand with her unconventional poetry. With its nonconformist style and unconventional outlook, her poetry, most of which was discovered published posthumously, can be compared to the discourse of the mad that has been long silenced. Therefore, it can be argued that Dickinson's position as a poet resembles the position of madness itself in the society, providing the voice of a marginalized outsider who observes and often mocks the dominant society and civilization. The fact that over the years Emily Dickinson has become a canonical statue in American literature shows that, unlike the Modern Europe, American majority has always embraced the image and the voice of someone traditionally regarded as socially odd, at least from a literary perspective.

However, despite all the familiarity, there is still a sense of exoticism in a way American majority perceived madness seen in the works of the Dark Romantics and Emily Dickinson, and the subject did not become truly commonplace in American culture until the twentieth century, when madness became an undeniable phenomenon in both socio-cultural and discursive aspects. This raises yet the same crucial question, what is it about contemporary society – whether it is economic, political or

linguistic practice – that triggers people to be so fixated on madness? In the age already flooded with psychiatric conjectures and social theories on madness, why the writers still feel the need to insert madmen into their works? Is the outbreak of literary psychopaths meant only as a mere reflection of the social reality, or is it meant as the newest trope, a commentary on contemporary culture? Do writers see these madmen as inevitable products of a mad society?

4. Madness in Selected Twentieth Century American Novels

Although this thesis is foremost about madness, it does not deal directly with mental illness in individuals, but more concerned with madness as a social epidemic and its literary portrayal as reflection of socio-cultural and discursive conditions over the twentieth century. The answers to above key questions therefore cannot be found in autobiographical novels about insanity like Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* or Joanne Greenberg's *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*. Instead, this thesis chooses to study the depiction of madness in three representational twentieth century American novels: William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1928), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) and Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962).

In Chapter II, this thesis will look at how, set in the transitional period between the antebellum era and the industrialized twentieth century in American history, Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* reflects the changing definition of madness from classical to modern interpretation. It would focus on different narrative voices in the novel and their stylistic differences to illustrate how the concept of *logos* – Greek word for language game through which one articulate his worldview – plays a crucial part in defining knowledge and madness. In studying the different narratives of the Compson brothers, this thesis is meant to show how the disjointed logos of Benjy and Quentin once deemed as “mad” gives way to the rational but nevertheless self-referential narrative of Jason, which came to characterize the mad world in the twentieth century a novel like *Catch-22* set out to criticize.

Then, this thesis would examine the circular logic of the modern world that forms the basis and point of criticism for Heller's *Catch-22*. In the novel, Heller points out that the discourses of twentieth century politics and economy are both

derived from a system of logic that, despite its structural perfection, is ridiculously absurd. The real portrayal of madness in the novel is therefore that of the world so convinced of the perfection of its own logic. The chapter also emphasizes the thin line between madness and civilization that can be easily reversed through manipulation of discourse and logic. Trapped in the logical loop of this mad world, the only weapon ordinary individuals have left is the absolute antithesis of reason, that is, madness. Only through extremely bizarre and nonsensical acts to the point of insanity like those of Yossarian's and Orr's that an individual can finally break free from *Catch-22*. This paves the way for the latter half of the twentieth century, where madness is no longer a curse, but a salvation for an ordinary man in the absurd world.

Finally this thesis would discuss how Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* has become one of the most-cited novels that openly critique the use and exploit of psychiatry in social context. Throughout the novel, Kesey makes it no secret that to him, psychiatry and its therapeutic treatment are actually nothing but a political device that aims to rob personal freedom only to satisfy certain ideology. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* therefore portrays mental institution as the worst form of social control over the mad, as it does not only physically confine or silence mental patients, but, worse, it also seeks to convert all internal souls to fit the ideology of the dominant society. Since psychotherapy claims itself as a humanitarian act, insanity in the most violent form becomes the only way an ordinary man can escape the paternalism of the dominant culture. The ending of this novel leads to the conclusion of this thesis, which would discuss the recent phenomenon that insanity and violence not only have come to inhabit in the public fantasy, but also have become an important aspect of counterculture in the latter half of the century.

CHAPTER II

WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY* AND THE HERMENEUTICS OF MADNESS

1. Introduction

In the first chapter, this thesis established its basic ideas that madness is a phenomenon whose historical significance in Western civilization goes way back beyond its recent label as “mental illness”. Despite the monopoly of psychiatry on the way we conceive madness at the present, the general understanding of the symptom has been changing throughout Western history is evident in its literary and medical writings. Often the way each society talks – or avoids talking – about madness reveals more about the codes of conduct and power structure of each social context than any absolute truth about madness itself. Literature, in particular, offers portrayals of madness that can sometimes work either as reflection of the cultural assumptions at the time or as its critique. This is especially true of twentieth century America, whose ironies and paradoxes of the era might not be adequately explained through reason, but better illuminated by the increasingly powerful voice of madness in literary texts. Arguably, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* thus seems to be the most logical choice to begin this thesis.

As the first of the three selected novels to be published (1929), Faulkner's work holds a chronological significance in both its socio-cultural and philosophical aspects. Historically, it can be said that *The Sound and the Fury*, like much other southern literature, is a meditation on the all-encompassing changes that swept over the world at the turn of the century, especially in southern America where the impact was one of the most drastic. These changes brought about the end of an era and the triumphant dawn of a new one. Through the tragedy of the Compson family, the backdrop of *The Sound and the Fury* is that of a crucial transitional period in American history, when the genteel orthodoxies of the nineteenth century were on the verge of final destruction, giving way to the rise of the technologically advanced, politically prosperous yet culturally vulgar twentieth century – or the modern world as we know it. This resulted in a wholesale clash between two opposing values and

ideologies, leaving a profound psychological effect on individuals. While the historical background is not the main focus of this study, its significance in molding and conditioning the symptoms of madness over the last hundred years must not be ignored. Through these changes, we can see how the face of madness developed throughout the twentieth century.

Apart from its chronological significance in history, Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* is also a crucial thematic introduction to the study of madness in twentieth century fiction, because it sets new groundwork that challenges any impetuous interpretation of the concept. This groundwork is instantly established by the novel's most obvious feature – its title. It does not take much effort for any reader to realize that the title of Faulkner's novel is a direct allusion to the famous monologue towards the end of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing.

It might seem to most casual readers that Faulkner's allusion to Shakespeare may be nothing more than a clever gimmick. However, as one goes through the deployment of innovative narratives in the novel, it can be increasingly seen that under this seemingly superficial allusion lies profound philosophical framework related to our understanding of madness. In general, the most commonly understood definition of madness is a deviation from external reality. In the ever-growing categories of “mental disorder”, a person who loses sense of reality – who, to put it most simply, mistakes “A” for “C” – still remains the first to be recognized as “mad”. However, before any postmodern thinkers of our time, Shakespeare called into question in this monologue the indispensable role of language in human epistemology, and, more importantly, its validity as a gateway to external reality.

By comparing human existence to “a tale”, Shakespeare suggests that, after all, our experience and knowledge may be nothing more than a discursive practice.

On the one hand, it can be said that Western thinkers have always been aware of the essential role of language in human epistemology. The ancient Greeks coined the term *logos*¹ to describe a system of discourse in which a community shares its worldview and on which it builds its civilization (Thither 13). However, in this soliloquy, Shakespeare goes beyond his predecessors by not only putting a special emphasis on the text that forms the body of human experience but also undermining it. If human experience is merely a narrative, it is a narrative that yields no meaning or substance. It is not just “a tale”, but “a tale told by an idiot”. All the senses of meaning, reason, and order that constitute Western civilization are based not on objective systems in the natural world but are illusory inventions of the human mind. In short, this soliloquy poses very interesting questions: What if the *logos*, which most of us have instinctively and unquestionably accepted as a means to articulate our reality, is and has always been merely an illusion of reason and sanity, and therefore cannot be held to judge the validity of any other narrative? This observation establishes the hermeneutics of madness – positing madness as a relational state whose reality depends on interpretation. From this, William Faulkner challenges the reader to examine their traditional conception of truth and normality through the narratives of three different dysfunctional characters.

While a casual outward observation might already be sufficient to tell us that Faulkner’s universe is always brimming with dysfunctional individuals particularly in *The Sound and the Fury*, it is only by venturing into the minds of these characters that one can fully grasp how dysfunctional they are. By making these distorted characters telling their stories in their own voices, Faulkner forces his reader to re-examine their own perception of reality that would otherwise have gone unquestioned. *The Sound and the Fury* is composed of four accounts of the Compson family tragedy. Three of the accounts are told to us by the Compson brother - Benjy, Quentin and Jason - who all qualify as “mad” in a different way, while the last is a limited omniscient account

¹ The term *logos* has been defined and used in many different aspects. The most well-known version can be found in Christian theology, where it is defined as “the Word of God”. *Logos* is also used in the psychological theories of Carl Jung, where it is defined as the principle of reason and judgment as opposed to emotions. Although there has been many definitions of the term, they all share paradigmatic definition as a system of words or language whose validity and legitimacy is accepted and unquestioned by a culture. In this thesis, the term *logos* is adopted from Allen Thither’s specific definition that *logos* is a linguistic/discursive system commonly practiced by a culture.

from the perspective of Dilsey, the family's loyal servant who is a detached observer, which functions as a sort of meta-narrative to measure the credibility of the first three narratives.

2. A Tale Told by An Idiot: Benjy the Holy Fool

At first, it might seem a curious decision for Faulkner to choose the retarded man-child Benjy to open his novel but by the end, we can see that this decision is not only appropriate but also well devised. With Benjy's narrative – arguably a literal representation of "a tale told by an idiot", Faulkner directly challenges the reader out of their comfort zone to experience a discourse outside our common *logos*. Even though the general reader at the time the novel was published was familiar with the stream-of-consciousness technique utilized by James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, one major difference between Benjy and these other stream-of-consciousness narrators must be pointed out. While the reader may have difficulties dealing with Mrs. Dalloway's or Bloom's narratives that jump back and forth in time, Benjy's narrative possess no sense of time at all. In other words, the precedent use of stream of consciousness by either Joyce or Woolf is still mainly confined to narrators who still share the same *logos* – with the same concept of time, order and causality – as the readers, while Benjy clearly does not. This lack was well described by Faulkner himself in 1955, "To that idiot, time was not a continuation, it was an instant, there was no yesterday and no tomorrow, it all is this moment, it all is (now) to him. He cannot distinguish between what was last year and what will be tomorrow, he doesn't know whether he dreamed it, or saw it" (qt. in Kartiganer, 25).

The above quotation by Faulkner further suggests that it is not only a concept of time and causality that Benjy lacks, but also a concept of selfhood and consciousness that defines human and his relationship with the society. Without reason and conscience, Benjy is a figure of animality, occupying only an empirical world of sounds and images that "signify nothing". The absence of crucial human concepts in Benjy's mind subsequently casts him outside the common *logos* and deprives him of all means of communication with the larger social world. Benjy can thus be viewed as a classic representation of madness in Western civilization and his jumbled narrative is arguably a deliberate attempt to imitate what Foucault would

have called the shunned “mad discourses”¹, the discourse whose reality and structure of meanings greatly differs from the hegemony. It does not matter that, by today's psychiatric classification, Benjy would be considered mentally handicapped rather than mentally ill, as he is simply categorized as one in the novel's microcosm. Throughout the novel, Benjy is constantly referred to as "looney". "He cant tell what you saying. He deaf and dumb," says Luster, a black teenager appointed as Benjy's caretaker, "Born looney" (49)

The very fact that Benjy was “born looney” – that he is mentally *handicapped* rather than mentally *ill* – implies that there is simply no cure for his condition. This reinforces his status in the novel as an ultimate classical manifestation of ontological madness that cannot be understood, rationalized or cured. Existing entirely outside logos and civilization, Benjy is an emblem of the Unreason that has to be silenced, so that the supreme logos, with its unwavering faith in human reason, can maintain its integrity. Throughout the novel, he is perceived as a disgrace to the prestigious Compson family who needs to be kept domesticated, the same way civilization has tried to keep its mad members within confinement. Despite this, Benjy attempts to communicate, to make his voice *heard* by others, as is evident in his sudden but constant cries, moans and bellowing. But he is persistently ignored and rendered silent. The daily life of the Compsons for thirty three years, characterized by Benjy's interruptive crying and the other characters' attempt to "hush" him, reminds us of Foucault's theory of discontinuity in history². When Benjy was young, his mother constantly ordered his then caretaker T.P. : " 'Cant you play with him and keep him quiet' " (51). Likewise, on April 7th 1928, the day his narration takes place, Benjy's howling and bellowing is still kept muffled:

¹ Foucault explains in his *Madness and Civilization* that “discourse is both the silent language by which the mind speaks to itself in the truth proper to it, and the visible articulation in the movements of the body” (100). This echoes an important view in the contemporary academic scene that sees language as a foundation of human's psychological and epistemological mechanism. It also explains why Foucault contends that even madness has to articulate itself through madness.

² One of Foucault's most essential ideas in all his writings is the demythologization of history as a linear, chronological objective account of events. To Foucault, history is a narrative of power that seeks to silence any dissenting perspectives of the actual historical events

“Shut up that moaning,” Luster said. “I cant make them come if they aint coming, can I. If you don’t hush up, mammy aint going to have no birthday for you. If you don’t hush, you know what I going to do.”
(4)

When Benjy does not stop making noise, he is threatened with confinement in a public asylum: " 'You know what they going to do with you when Miss Cahline die. They going to send you to Jackson, where you *belong*. Mr Jason said so. Where you can hold the bars all day long with the rest of the looneys and slobber ... That's what they'll do to you at Jackson when you starts bellering' " (54, emphasis mine). The word 'belong' is emphasized here to show how the society concludes that a person "belongs" in confinement if he/she does not fit into the shared logos. To apply Foucault's theory, Benjy therefore epitomizes the figure of the madman in history that the hegemony culture has tried to exclude, confine and silence.

It therefore does not come as a surprise that Caddy remains the object of affection, even many years after she has left the family. While other members of the family see Benjy’s cries as nothing but disturbance, only Caddy understands that this is Benjy’s need to communicate. This is most evident in their interaction earlier in the novel, where Caddy seems to be the only person who shows Benjy tenderness and lack of discrimination: “ ‘Did you come to meet Caddy,’ she said, rubbing my hands. ‘What is it. What are you try to tell Caddy’ ”(6). With just one sentence, Caddy’s affection and her understanding of Benjy’s need to communicate is clearly illustrated. Only Caddy knows that there is a “message” behind Benjy’s bellowing, even though he does not share the same logos with her, and, instead of ignoring it like other characters, she tries to understand and to interpret what he is trying to communicate. Caddy’s compassion and understanding of Benjy are resuscitated in the perfume incident, where Benjy cries after Caddy first put on a perfume, because he “couldn’t smell trees anymore”:

Benjy, Caddy said, Benjy. She put her arms around me again, but I went away. “What is it, Benjy.” she said. “Is it this hat.” She took her hat off and came again, and I went away.

“Benjy” she said. “What is it, Benjy. What has Caddy done.”

...

“What is it, Benjy.” Caddy said. “Tell Caddy. She’ll do it. Try”

...

“Why, Benjy. What is it.” she said. “You mustn’t cry. Caddy’s not going away. See here.” she said. She took up the bottle and took the stopper out and held it to my nose. “Sweet. Smell. Good.”

I went away and I didn’t hush, and she held the bottle in her hand, looking at me.

“Oh.” she said. She put the bottle down and came and put her arms around me. “So that was it. And you were trying to tell Caddy and you couldn’t tell her. You wanted to, but you couldn’t, could you. Of course Caddy wont. Of course Caddy wont. Just wait till I dress.”

Caddy dressed and took up the bottle again and we went down to the kitchen.

“Dilsey.” Caddy said. “Benjy’s got a present for you.” She stooped down and put the bottle in my hand. “Hold it out to Dilsey now.” Caddy held my hand out and Dilsey took the bottle.

“Well I’ll declare.” Dilsey said. “If my baby aint give Dilsey a bottle of perfume. Just look here, Roskus.”

Caddy smelled like trees. “We don’t like perfume ourselves.” Caddy said.

She smelled like trees. (41-43)

The significance of this scene is that Caddy not only tries to decipher his “language” about what is going wrong, but she also finally manages to identify the cause and answers his wordless request by giving away the perfume to Dilsey. With Caddy’s all-encompassing love, the idiot’s bellowing is no longer a one-way communication, but the one understood and completed with the desired response.

Even Caddy’s habit of putting her arms around Benjy is connotative. While other characters clearly perceive Benjy as a hindrance, a second-classed human, Caddy *includes* and embraces him in her world. This is again illustrated most vividly in the following scene:

Caddy took me to Mother's chair and Mother took my face in her hands and then she held me against her.

"My poor baby." she said. She let me go. "You and Versh take good care of him, honey."

"Yessum." Caddy said. We went out. Caddy said,

"You needn't go, Versh. I'll keep him for a while."

"All right." Versh said. "I aint going out in that cold for no fun." He went on and we stopped in the hall and Caddy knelt and put her arms around me and her cold bright face against mine. She smelled like trees.

"You're not a poor baby. Are you. Are you. You've got your Caddy. Haven't you got your Caddy." (8-9)

In this scene, Benjy's mother – Mrs. Compson – clearly exhibits her condescending attitude towards her youngest son. A representative of the hegemonic ideology, Mrs. Compson feels that the mentally handicapped Benjy is something to be pitied. Caddy, on the other hand, corrects her mother when she is alone with Benjy that he is not "a poor baby". To Caddy, Benjy is as complete a person as anyone else. Caddy's acceptance gives Benjy space and relevancy – if not power – *within* the family. In a way, the domestic situation of the Compson family echoes the changing position of madness in Western civilization this thesis discussed in the first chapter. The medieval and the Renaissance eras accepted the reality of madness, and allowed it a space *within* the culture, while the modern era was simply tried to undermine and exclude it. It is therefore no surprise that, after Caddy – the only person who embraces the reality of Benjy's condition – leaves the family, Benjy loses all his privileges and his attempts to communicate are no longer heard or answered. His pasture, the symbol of his legitimate right and relevancy to the family, is sold to finance Quentin's education at Harvard. Robbed of a voice and legitimacy, Benjy's ultimate marginalization as a "madman" is further symbolized concretely by his castration. Since he is identified as "looney", he is no longer supposed to possess any sign that belongs to the superior culture. His castration is an implicative symbol of how civilization renders a madman powerless, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Nevertheless, while Benjy's presence in the family is nothing but physical, and he has no role contributing to their "history", the readers are forced to accept the idiot's "mad" discourse as a relevant account of the Compson tragedy. "Relevancy" is a keyword here, because what Faulkner succeeds in doing, by beginning the novel with this idiot, is to bring Benjy and his language back *within* the realm of culture. For the readers, Benjy's presence and language is indispensable to our knowledge of the Compson family. The fiercest irony about the Benjy section is that, while he is labeled as a "looney" and his experience is disregarded as meaningless in the novel, it increasingly dawns on the readers that Benjy is the most objective, unaffected narrator in the story, and they can trust his perception more than they ever can with the narratives of his brothers - Quentin and Jason. Since Benjy's intelligence is very limited, his narrative is free of any judgments, assumptions, alterations or manipulations that would color the reader's opinion of the characters. This level of objectivity would have been impossible in "normal" narrators, as a Faulkner scholar Donald Kartiganer points out:

The Benjy section represents extreme objectivity, a condition impossible to the ordinary mind ... Benjy, of all the narrators, cannot lie ... Being an idiot, Benjy is perception prior to consciousness" (). He does not perceive reality but is at one with it; he does not need to create life but rather possess it with a striking immediacy... Benjy's monologue, then, does not constitute an interpretation at all; what he tells us is life, not text. Emerging as if from the vantage point of eternal stasis, where each moment and the only moment lived (whether for the first or fiftieth time) is the original moment and the only moment, unaffected by any of the other... (Kartiganer 24-26)

In other words, even though his narrative is difficult to follow, because it does not conform to the chronological structure of the common logos, Benjy functions as a transparent recorder of raw factual images, untainted by bias and opinions that filter

normal minds. For the readers, he is an invaluable gateway to the objective reality about the Compson family that other more psychological narratives fail to achieve. Faulkner's accomplishment here is commendable, because it precisely restores the power-knowledge that Foucault argues has been robbed from madness since the dawn of modernity. In his *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault asserts that madness, especially in idiocy, provides a path to knowledge and truth beyond the grasp of rationality:

...madness fascinates because it is knowledge ... This knowledge, so inaccessible, so formidable, the Fool, in his innocent idiocy, already possesses. While the man of reason and wisdom perceives only fragmentary and all the more unnerving images of it, the Fool bears it *intact as an unbroken sphere*: that crystal ball which for all others is empty is in *his* eyes filled with the density of an invisible knowledge. (21-22, emphasis mine)

This excerpt by Foucault precisely sums up the significance of Benjy in the novel. He is the Holy Fool, whose knowledge of the truth and objective reality is so complete and so eternally present without the restriction of time. His mental capacity may be limited, but his perception is rendered *intact* by fickle consciousness and rationality. The “crystal ball”, to use Foucault's word here, represents that transcendental insight to life beyond the realm of language and all its imperfect web of meanings for the rational and only accessible to a Fool like Benjy. As Kartiganer puts it, what Benjy perceives and tells the reader is life itself, not text.

The sharp discrepancy of the purity and accuracy of Benjy's narrative and his ostracized position as a “looney” in the story evokes a crucial question about the way we interpret madness. Typically, we associate the madman as a person whose perception and knowledge of the world is skewed from the reality. But as the readers see through it here, while Benjy might not be able to articulate a coherent order of his experience, the crucial point is that at least he does not distort the reality. To the

readers, who have a privileged insight into his perception, Benjy is the Holy Fool who presents us with an alternative path to higher knowledge about the reality of the Compson family. To the Compson family themselves, he is simply an idiot irrelevant to their history. Even though Benjy possesses perhaps the sharpest and most acute senses in the novel, as he is the first one who can "smell" his sister Caddy's loss of virginity, other characters still exclude him and disregard his different experience simply because he lacks a functioning method of communication within the accepted discourse. This brings us back to the concept of logos and the way Western culture has interpreted madness. The definition of madness in our culture, in fact, springs from the way a society agrees to define what should be regarded as reality, within the boundary of common logos, rather than the reality itself. In other words, madness is a question of epistemological relation rather than metaphysical absolutism, as Foucault articulates: "Madness deals not so much with truth and the world, as with man and whatever truth about himself he is able to perceive" (Foucault 27). However, *The Sound and the Fury* uses Benjy as a vivid case demonstrating that our culture's claim of "reality" as a measure of madness is deeply flawed. There is no question that Benjy is born incapable of rationality, and he cannot function in the social world. Yet Faulkner's novel here shows that, while we often casually judge people like Benjy as lunatic, it does not necessarily mean that their knowledge of the world departs from the actual reality. On the contrary, in the following sections narrated by the other two Compson brothers – Quentin and Jason, the novel prompts us to question and interpret the definition of madness that resides *within* our logos.

3. To Be or Not to Be: Quentin the Neurotic

From Benjy's liberation from time and interpretation comes Quentin, the eldest Compson brother who, in contrast, is enslaved by time and interpretation. His narrative is not less jumbled than Benjy's but is even more complicated and bewildering due to his constant phantasm and abstract tendencies. Again, Faulkner's choice to follow Benjy's section with Quentin's is carefully thought out, because Quentin here functions as an antithetical foil to his retarded youngest brother. Unlike Benjy, Quentin can easily pass as 'sane' in other people's eyes, because he at least shares the same logos as they do, such as the concept of time, causality and mortality.

However, with the privilege of omniscient insight into Quentin's increasingly delirious discourse the reader can see the deterioration of his inner psyche. Another crucial difference between Benjy and Quentin is that, while Benjy is simply incapable of grasping his fragmented experience, unable to distinguish between the past and the present, Quentin is sane enough to realize that his intrusive recollections of past events are merely his memories, and yet he cannot escape from this psychological mess because he is constantly pervaded by present circumstances, past experience and his own fantasies that often overwhelm his subjectivity. In other words, while Benjy simply has no memories because all is *now* to him, Quentin is all about memories, always lost in recollection, the interpretation of the past and incapable of focusing his mind on the here and the now. But above all, the most dramatic difference between Benjy and Quentin is their level of consciousness. Being an idiot, Benjy exists prior to consciousness, void of any understanding of language and its meanings. Quentin's essential problem, on the other hand, seems to be his "excess of consciousness and conscience" (Bleikasten, 272). He is *too* self-conscious, *too* aware of the logos that determines his universe, and *too* anxious to interpret and resolve its often ironic implications. Whereas Benjy does not know what time is, Quentin's awareness of time goes so far as his sitting down and listening to the tick of a watch on purpose: "... then I was in time again, hearing the watch...It was propped against the collar box and I lay listening to it. Hearing it, that is. I don't suppose anybody ever deliberately listens to a watch or a clock" (76).

Clearly, this watch listening scene exhibits Quentin's extraordinarily heightened level of consciousness. He was born with rationality and profound sensibilities, and definitely shares the same logos as the readers. Yet to many readers and critics, Quentin stands in the novel as the paragon of mental illness - a man whose sensibility gradually descends into neurosis, delirium, and finally, suicide. Quentin certainly was not born mad, but goes mad as he is heading towards his demise. One is then prompted to ask the question: what criteria do we the readers use to interpret whether or not the phenomena we confront in Quentin's psyche are the manifestation of insanity? Certainly, Quentin's narrative reveals that his mind does not work in a

linear, orderly fashion, but is often intruded into by memories, fragmentary thoughts, and feelings. However, chronological disorder is definitely not an adequate criterion of madness, since it can also be a rather natural condition even for a healthy mind as many other writers like Joyce or Woolf have shown before in their uses of stream-of-consciousness method. This brings us back to the issue of hermeneutics - how we interpret the phenomenon of madness as a relation indistinguishable from the context. In Quentin's case, the symptom and definition of his madness are no longer the total absence of consciousness or reason we find in Benjy but rather the emotional turbulence that gradually takes over the stability of his psyche. Arguably, Quentin's narrative is a classic example of delirious discourse and is most evident in linguistic breakdown and the preoccupation with the Unreal.

First of all, the dissolution of linguistic structure, especially towards the end of Quentin's narrative, seems to be a parallel demonstration of his increasingly disturbed state of mind. If we observe the way Quentin describes external events on the day his narration takes place - June 2nd 1910, it can be seen that his language is not only concrete and matter-of-fact but also grammatically coherent and concise - almost Benjy-like in its simplicity. Each sentence is short and syntactically uncomplicated to the point of being mechanical and the events themselves are told with clarity and considerable objectivity. Stephen M. Ross, another Faulkner scholar, also shares this observation: "When Quentin has complete control over his words, he talks as an objective narrator does: he moves the action along chronologically, speaking in brief, lucid sentences; he fills in the background of people we meet, such as Gerald Bland or the Deacon; and he carefully identifies speakers when he quotes them - this last sign of control is especially important since so many of Quentin's memories are of spoken words... Whenever he begins to lose control, whenever his talking moves away from public articulation towards private thought, his storytelling becomes distorted in form" (Ross, 105). This linguistic control provides a dramatic contrast with the language of Quentin's intrusive inner thoughts, where Faulkner seems to deliberately abandon all apparent rules of grammar, spelling and punctuation. As a result, Quentin's inner thoughts are a series of rambling words, phrases, and sentenced

clashing together with no indication of where one thought ends and another begins. It is this linguistic breakdown in Quentin's narrative that indicates, more so than the chronological maze, his deteriorating psyche. On the outside, Quentin can go about his usual daily business in an almost mechanical way, which is reflected through an equally mechanical language with which he describes external events. In sharp contrast, his internal self is engulfed by a flood of abstract thoughts, memories and phantasm so that he cannot grasp any sense of order anymore. When he is heading for suicide towards the end of his narrative, Quentin's worsening inability to even form a self-contained sentence in his thought processes becomes a glaring reflection of the growing fragmentation and ultimate disintegration of his mental state.

Another sign of madness in the Quentin section seems to be his frantic preoccupation with the Unreal. According to Foucault, the presence of the Unreal is an essential criterion for a delirious discourse. As an idiot, Benjy can only wander in the realm of Unreason, because he is simply incapable of conceiving the Unreal. Quentin, on the other hand, takes refuge from reality in the web of unreal fantasies and illusions he creates. He is obsessed with his futile attempts to substitute actual reality with an invented one. This is shown most evidently in Quentin's desperate effort to distort the reality of Caddy's promiscuity – and subsequent premarital pregnancy with Dalton Ames – by fabricating the tale of incest between them. Quentin is unable to come to terms with the facts that he has lost his innocent little sister to the disenchanted world of sexuality; that she has been with many men while he himself is still a virgin. Tortured by this, Quentin fantasizes a tale of incest which will send him and Caddy to an imaginary hell, where they can be alone together: "Because if it were just to hell; if that were all of it. Finished. Nobody else there but her and me. If we could just have done something so dreadful that they would have fled hell except us. *I have committed incest I said Father it was I it was not Dalton Ames*" (79). Apparently, this purgatory "clean wall" is Quentin's wish for the be-all and end-all where he will no longer lose Caddy to any other man: "*the two of us more than dead. Then you will have only me then only me then the two of us amid the pointing and the horror beyond the clean flame*" (116).

Nevertheless, some can still argue that a miserable person can seek spiritual consolation in fantasy and imagination without being necessarily *mad*. One can be obsessed with the Unreal, but still is capable of separating it from the reality, which case can hardly be called madness. On the other hand, we mostly agree that it is madness if one insists that the Unreal is true. By the same token, if Quentin's invented story about incest remains only his personal solace from the crude reality, he might have come across more as a tortured soul than an "ill" one. His relentless attempts to impose the reality of this fantasy on others, however, becomes an alarming indicator of his declining rationality. The scene where he confronts Caddy in the ranch and frantically tries to get her concede to his incestuous fable is particularly revealing:

We did how can you not know it if youll just wait Ill tell you how it was it was a crime we did a terrible crime it cannot be hid you think it can but wait Poor Quentin youve never done that have you and Ill tell you know it was Ill tell Father then itll have to be because you love Father then well have to go away amid the pointing and the horror the clean flame Ill make you say we did Im stronger than you Ill make you know we did you thought it was them but it was me listen I fooled you all the time it was me you thought I was in the house where that damn honeysuckle trying not to think the swing the cedars the secret surges the breathing locked drinking the wild breath the yes Yes Yes yes (148-149).

In this scene, Quentin's tumultuous inner conflicts come into light not just to us the readers, but also to his sister Caddy. It is one thing if Quentin, unable to handle the shock from Caddy's sexuality, imagines a distorted version of the truth as his own psychological consolation. However, in this scene, he persuades and threatens Caddy into taking the role of an accomplice, as though this will actually make his fantasy become *truth* if she concedes. However, the fatal irony is that, as Quentin is feverishly

insisting on the made-up incest story, it inadvertently exposes the painful reality of his own impotence to both Caddy and us the readers. That reality is the fact that he himself is still a virgin, and that Caddy's world of sexuality is far beyond his grasp. This prompts Caddy to repeatedly remark: "poor Quentin" as she can see through his agony. Quentin's anguish over his utter ignorance of sex and his persistent denial of the truth is repeated again in this following excerpt:

poor Quentin
 ...
 youve never done that have you
 what done what
 that what I have what I did
 yes yes lots of times with lots of girls
 then I was crying her hand touched me again and I was crying
 against her damp blouse...

(151)

This conversation between Quentin and Caddy again is an example of his inability to accept the real as it is. Panicked that she knows of his sexual inexperience, Quentin instinctively makes up a lie that he has done it "lots of times with lots of girls", only to later expose his own vulnerability and fear to her by dissolving into tears. His tears should be noted, as they reveal a degree of self-awareness that ironically co-exists with self-deception in Quentin's inner psyche. This adds a complexity to our interpretation of his madness that will be discussed later on.

In spite of his failed attempt to get Caddy take part in his fantasy, Quentin still idiosyncratically insists on holding on to the Unreal, and consequently widening his alienation from the reality as well as the social world. In spite of contrary evidence, he continues stubbornly to affirm the validity of his imagined story of incest, repeatedly confessing it to his father, only to have the truth – what actually happened and not what *he* wishes it to be – thrown back into his face.

... you could not be in earnest and i you dont believe i am serious and he i think you are too serious to give me any cause for alarm you wouldn't have felt driven to the expedient of telling me you had committed incest otherwise and i i wasnt lying i wasnt lying and he you wanted sublimate a piece of natural human folly into a horror and then exorcise it with truth and i it was to isolate her out of the loud world so that it would have to flee us of necessity and then the sound of it would be as though it had ever been and he did you try to make her do it and i i was afraid to i was afraid she might and then it wouldnt have been any good but if I could tell you we did it would have been so ... (176-177)

Again, this excerpt is an example of Quentin's delirious discourse at its best. Although he is born with rationality, all reason seems temporarily to desert Quentin at this very moment, leaving him with only a feverish mind clinging desperately to what it wants to believe is real. While Benjy is simply born with a handicapped conscience, Quentin exemplifies that humans are not only beings of reason, but also of complex emotions, which can greatly trouble one's sanity. Unable emotionally to handle the pain from the external reality, Quentin retreats more and more into his invented version of reality, believing that it can become *real* if it is asserted constantly enough. "If I could tell you we did it would have been so" – this statement echoes what he remarks earlier about the three young boys in Cambridge hoping to catch a fish: "their voices insistent and contradictory and impatient, making of unreality a possibility, then a probability, then an incontrovertible fact, as people will when their desires become words" (117).

If Benjy can be considered a being of pure, uncorrupted perception, then Quentin is arguably a being of emotions. Therefore, the symptom of Quentin's frenzy naturally prompted many readers and critics to diagnose that the "disease" of his mind stems from his destructive passion, centering on his incestuous obsession with Caddy.

This uncontrolled passion thrusts him into melancholy and consequent psychological breakdown. As previously discussed in the first chapter, since the early Greeks passion has been identified as one of the primary causes of madness, one that leads to the loss of spiritual equilibrium and plunges a self into a state of total disorder. However, to dismiss Quentin's madness exclusively as a product of his incestuous passion is too simplistic, for Quentin's psychological turmoil is also bred and intensified by much more complicated and profound conditions. While it is obvious that Caddy's loss of virginity is a catalyst that triggers the collapse of order in Quentin's universe, it does not lay the foundations of his destruction. In his overwhelming obsession with Caddy, Quentin's mental disturbance is mainly a result from what we can call epistemological failure. Unlike his idiot brother whose knowledge of the world is direct and immediate, prior to civilization, Quentin's experience, like any other an inherently "normal" person, is constructed around language, whose system of meanings is shaped and justified by the cultural context. However, as he grows up, Quentin comes to learn that there is no such thing as a single "universal" language that supplies adequate and indisputable knowledge and meanings to his existence in the world. On the other hand, there are many discourses that offer varying, and most of the times contradictory, paradigm of knowledge, meanings and ideologies. It is this conflict of meaning system that tears Quentin's subjective integrity apart.

While Benjy simply does not need any kind of human values or ideals, Quentin is caught between the discourses of family honor, gentlemanly virtue and female virginity that establish the idealized traditions of the Old South, and the cynical and disenchanting discourse of modern existence delivered by his father Mr. Compson. Throughout his section, Quentin is incessantly haunted by what "Father said": "In the South you are ashamed of being a virgin. Boys. Men. They lie about it. Because it means less to women, Father said. He said it was men invented virginity not women" (78). It can be seen that all that Mr. Compson ever teaches Quentin is blatantly antithetical to all the Old South discourses that define the values and meanings of Quentin's universe. His cynical world view is strikingly close to (post)modern scholars who deconstructs the credibility of established narratives such as that of the Old Southern codes of conduct, but it is also responsible for throwing

Quentin's inner cosmos into complete chaos. The degree of Quentin's obsession with what "Father said" equals or probably even exceeds his obsession with Caddy's sexuality. While Quentin is clearly emotionally bothered by Caddy's acts, she does not seem to have the same influence on Quentin's mental framework as his father does. Quentin chants the phrase "Father said" frequently throughout his section the same way as a religious fanatic cites the Bible. In his article "The 'Loud World' of Quentin Compson", Stephen M. Ross also makes another interesting observation that Mr. Compson always "appears in his son's memory as only a voice, never being described in any other way, by an action, a gesture or by physical appearance" (ibid 111). This observation is significant, because it points to Mr. Compson's fundamental role in his son's epistemology. In Quentin's long narrative full of memories, his father's presence is never anything more than as an agent of discourse, which explains why he always appears in Quentin's thoughts only as a "voice" rather than a full-blooded father figure. Although it can be interpreted that Mr. Compson's discourse is meant to prepare Quentin for the crude reality of the modern world, its effect is more damaging to Quentin's fragile psyche than soothing. Confused by his father's cynicism, Quentin increasingly feels that his Old South values are no longer relevant to the context in which he lives, yet he is still imprisoned by them. He is still made to attend Harvard just because "*Harvard is such a fine sound ... a fine dead sound*" (174) or because "[it] *has been your mothers dream since you were born and no compson has ever disappointed a lady*" (178).

This "intertextual collage of all narrations" (Thiher 78) therefore becomes the realm of madness in which Quentin is lost. He, like Don Quixote before him, mistakes the text, a human invention, for the world. However, each discourse and each narration defines its own version of reality that does not correspond to one another and Quentin, having a penchant for taking words too seriously, no longer knows which order represents the real. When these discourses are overlapped, their values clash and this finally results in the collapse of the whole system of meanings. Quentin sets his life to play the language game by the rules of Southern ideals, but the framework of rationality, in which these rules once made sense, has changed or is rapidly changing. He is, in short, a victim of transition, where the rules of both eras intersect and undermine each other. As a result, Quentin is left stranded in the no

man's land of contradictory worldviews, neither of which represents an absolute "reality" he can hold on to. This quest for the absolute truth is concretely symbolized by the scene where Quentin muses about the clocks in the shop windows:

There was about a dozen watches in the window, a dozen different hours and each with the same assertive and contradictory assurance that mine had, without any hands at all. Contradicting one another. I could hear mine, ticking away inside my pocket, even though nobody could see it, even though it could tell nothing if anyone could". (85)

The symbolic implication of this scene is noteworthy and crucial to the understanding of Quentin's tormented soul. Clocks are man-made mechanisms designed to represent the actual time in nature in a form that is accessible to human mind, just like discourse or any discursive practices that are simply a human means to articulate external reality. However, as Quentin looks at the clocks in the shop window, he realizes that each clock operates and asserts its own idiosyncratic measure that does not correspond to any other, and, worse, none of them adequately represent time as the clock "high up in the sun" does (83). This provides a vivid symbolic parallel to the contradictory systems of discourses Quentin finds himself trapped in. Each language game – a *logos*, like the clock without hands, invisibly functions in its own self-justified, self-referential mechanism unrelated to the external reality. Curious and desperate to grasp the actual "time", Quentin asks the store clerk if any clock on the wall is correct. The clerk misunderstands that Quentin is asking the time as it is to humans, but Quentin insists that he does not want to know what time it is. He just wants to know if any of the clocks is *correct*. As expected, the clerk tells him that none of the clocks is correct, which Quentin already knows it can never be.

Like the clocks, Quentin discovers, much to his anguish, all the discourses he has ever learned which are supposed to provide him with meaning and truth, are in fact no more than "sound and fury" that "signify nothing". In desperation, Quentin is driven to destroy his own watch, the one inherited from his grandfather – a metaphor for the discourse passed on to him from previous generations, in order to break away from the system. However, the watch continues to tick, which symbolizes Quentin's

existential dilemma and his impotence. Even knowing the futility of human effort to capture reality through machines of words, he can still not destroy nor escape from it. He cannot experience time directly the way his idiot brother does and must always rely on human epistemological tools such as clocks or language. It is a system that runs autonomously, preceding all his experience and his attempt to interfere is totally pointless. Unlike Benjy who simply exists outside all logos, Quentin is born a social being, and the clock of discourses still keeps running and determining his existence in the world: "Quentin cannot escape either his memories of the past or his involvement in the present" (Vickery 37). This dead-end existence, where each framework of rationality contradicts and undermines another, gradually forces Quentin into the tormenting turmoil of his inner psyche and, finally, his destruction. Realizing that there is no way he can break away from the system, just the way he cannot stop his watch from ticking, he chooses to escape his turbulent subjectivity altogether by suicide. In a world where he is rendered impotent, it is only by putting an end to his life that Quentin can break loose from his involvement in the logos he finds increasingly confusing and meaningless – the only act of which he is fully in control. Although, to others, this final act might seem like the clearest manifestation of Quentin's unfathomable insanity, as lamented by his mother - "What reason did Quentin have? Under God's heaven what reason did he have?" (299), it is ironically the sanest and most effective action Quentin can perform to put an end to the overwhelming madness which has been tormenting him.

While Benjy is the idiot in Macbeth's soliloquy, Quentin has been dubbed by many Faulkner scholars as a Hamlet figure. This comparison is illuminating, because through their similarities we can come to see how Quentin, like Hamlet before him, comes to represent what Allen Thiher calls "the modern paradox of the rational madman" (ibid 184) Evidently, Quentin's intelligent and introspective nature, which leads to his delay in action, instantly invokes the image of the equally philosophical Hamlet. His already intricate consciousness is also haunted and further afflicted by the "ghost" of his father much as Hamlet. Moreover, Quentin, like Hamlet, also bears an incestuous desire that triggers his inner rage and uncontrolled passion. Alienated from the insensitive world they are in, the similarity between Quentin's and Hamlet's melancholy is glaringly obvious. They are figures of impotence, hindered by too many thoughts and too many frustrated emotions and unable to act effectively on their

wills. However, the most important similarity between them in regard to their “madness” is that, both Quentin and Hamlet understand and are able to interpret, to their agony, their own situations. There are times in *The Sound and the Fury*, that Quentin loses control and acts out of rage, as when he rashly launches into a fight with Dalton Ames and a fellow Harvard student Gerald Bland, or when he frantically threatens Caddy with committing double suicide, just like when Hamlet loses his sense and impulsively kills Polonius. However, these two characters retain a considerable degree of self-awareness throughout, and their fits of rage, perceived by others as madness, are rather the result of temporary losing control and being unable to suppress their burning passion. When Quentin breaks down into tears after lying to his sister that he has had sex “many times with many girls”, his tears are a confession of the truth, both to Caddy and to the readers, and a sign of Quentin’s functioning rationality veiled behind his blind assertion on the Unreal. Like Hamlet, Quentin’s contemplative nature prevents him from totally losing touch with reality, always maintaining self-awareness even when their spirits are deteriorating. Hamlet and Quentin are undoubtedly neurotic, and their chaotic mental state is far from what we normally regard as a healthy mind. However, both characters’ ability to doubt themselves and to analyze their own failing psyche is ultimately an indication of a rationality that complicates our definition of madness. With Quentin’s narrative, Faulkner once again propagates Shakespeare’s idea that madness is not a fixed pathological entity but a relationship that must be situated in discursive context. This brings us to the last Compson brother, Jason, whose symptoms of madness are the most obscure and deceptive and yet the most relevant to the twentieth century context.

4. “You Talkin’ to Me?” : Jason the Psychotic

From Benjy the idiot and Quentin the neurotic, we arrive at Jason, whom Faulkner called “the first sane Compson since before Culloden” in the Appendix to *The Sound and the Fury* (qtd. in Kartiganer, 31). This view has been adopted by the majority of readers and critics, and has become the most common interpretation of Jason’s character since the book was published. Most definitely, after the labyrinthine narratives of Benjy and Quentin, Jason’s section is the easiest for readers to follow and understand. Thus he is never the first Compson to be considered as “insane” (that honor belongs to Quentin, whom Faulkner himself called “an educated half-madman”

(Cowan, 22). Judging solely from his narration in the third section, even though the reader can easily identify his hatred, prejudice and selfishness, Jason seems to bear no distinctive sign of insanity. He is not abstract, dwelling half of his life in fantasy and recollection of the past like Quentin. Also, unlike the retarded Benjy, Jason is clearly aware of basic human concepts and able to function normally in daily life. His narrative follows every rule of our accepted logos – it is very straightforward, logical and focuses mainly on the present. He is also an independent man with a lucid sense of practicality and subjectivity, not trapped within conflicts and idealism like Quentin: "Besides, like I say I guess I dont need any man's help to get along I can stand on my own feet like I always have" (206). This leads the reader to conclude that Jason, if anything, is merely a brutal egomaniac, an ignorant sadomasochist who likes to victimize others as well as playing the victim of the world himself but not an outright madman alienated from the social world as his two brothers.

However, Jason's façade of cold, cynical rationality is highly deceptive, for he is, in fact, the most deluded, the most perverse of all the Compson brothers. This point is persuasively argued by Donald M. Kartiganer, as quoted here:

...one wonders how anyone, especially Faulkner, could have considered Jason sane or rational. Surely Jason is as removed from what we generally consider sanity as any character in *The Sound and the Fury*. He is in fact far less aware of what is actually real than his brother Quentin...A psychotic, some wit once said, is a man who honestly believes that two plus two equals five; a neurotic knows very well that two plus two equals four – but it bothers him. Let this be our hint as to the difference between Jason and Quentin, for Quentin deliberately composes an incest fable in order to deal with a reality he cannot face. That it *is* a fable is something he himself insists on. Jason, however, confuses the real and the illusory, and is quite unaware of the way he arranges his own punishment. (31-32)

This excerpt from Kartiganer's interpretation of Jason's character is highly illuminating, for it points out exactly why Jason is, in a twisted way, the most insane character in *The Sound and the Fury*. As discussed earlier, Quentin's madness lies in

the way he cannot accept reality and seeks a refuge from it in the Unreal. Yet he, like Hamlet, is not totally without introspection. In fact, such self-examination is the source of Quentin's anguish, for it always frustrates his efforts to deceive himself, preventing him from surrendering blissfully to the fantasy. Jason, on the other hand, does not possess the same level of philosophical or psychological insight as Quentin, and, as a result, he simply indulges in his own subjective and distorted view of reality without any second thought. However, since Jason is the only Compson brother who is capable of creating the appearance of ordinary social life, such as holding a job and supporting his family, he can pass as a normal, sane person both in his world and in the eyes of most readers.

Interestingly, it is this promptness on the readers' part, both casual and academic, to categorize Jason as a "sane" antagonist that effectively and convincingly exposes some major preconceptions that warps the way madness has been perceived and defined in history in the way that Foucault extensively argues in his *Madness and Civilization*. Firstly, it can be positively argued that the notion of work plays an important role for most people to quickly assume that Jason is normal and subsequently ignore his underlying madness. Of all the Compson brothers, only Jason has full-time employment and produces income. Many criticisms of the book may have correctly pointed out that Jason's job as a humble store clerk symbolically signifies the decline of the once prestigious Compson family, whose previous patriarchs had been a war general and a state governor. However, no matter how humble his job is, it contributes to Jason's deceptively "normal" façade that masks the highly disturbed and deluded psyche that lies beneath. In the novel, Jason himself also cites his employment as a major distinction that puts him above the other more traditionally "mad" members of the household: " 'I never had time to be. I never had time to go to Harvard or drink myself into the ground. I had to *work*' " (181, emphasis mine). In this quotation, Jason uses work particularly to set him apart from what he basically considers "crazy family" (233) and thereby justifies his legitimacy and supremacy. As long as he is still engaged in a productive activity, Jason conforms to the ideal of social order and is considered relevant and not a part of the excluded mad population. This contradiction reveals the intricate role civil intervention has always played in defining madness, exactly as Foucault points out that madness is not so

much about man's fundamental relationship to truth as about his relation to the social context he lives in¹.

Apart from the more obvious political and economic ideology, there is also another more profound yet pervasive preconception that allows Jason to escape the label of madness his brothers so often face. As discussed in previous sections, Benjy's and Quentin's dysfunctional minds quickly become the objects of keen scrutiny primarily because their narratives, which reflect their states of mind, do not follow the linguistic structure the dominant culture is familiar with. On the other hand, Jason's insanity, in this case, is neatly wrapped within an everyday language that seemingly makes sense within its own parameter. Once again, this failure to recognize Jason's insanity reveals the fundamental weakness and paradox in the general conception of madness. Western civilization's logocentricism allows one to easily overlook a sign of madness in a discourse that conforms to the logical or linguistic structure of the common logos and to quickly judge the one that does not. Jason's narrative speaks to the readers in the same language we use, one that is easily understood. He therefore manages to get away without attracting the same stigma that is imposed on his other two brothers.

Indeed, many critics continue to argue that Jason does not qualify as a madman, basically because he can still think in linear, logical thoughts, can still communicate and never loses contact with the social world. However, such arguments are more a matter of interpretation that has less to do with madness itself than our culture's familiar notion of "normality". We are once again confronted with the issue of hermeneutics and the slippery criteria used to interpret the phenomenon of madness. In Jason's case, the manifestation of his insanity seems to be not as much about his relevancy to the social world as his relevancy to truths, which cannot be adequately judged solely from his account of the story. Taken at face value, everything Jason says seems direct and straightforward, not half as confused and confusing as the narratives of his brothers. However, it slowly becomes clear that his

¹ In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault also explains extensively in the chapter "The Great Confinement" that ever since the Classical Age, Western societies have had measures for locking away not only the insane, but also the debauched and the idle – "people without profession" (45). It is with the rise of this new economic order that unemployment and idleness have assumed the same position as the mad was outside the realm of culture.

narrative is, in fact, saturated with his presumptions about the world and people around him, and is almost completely devoid of any objective reflection. While Jason has always been a mean, cold-hearted sadist, as is evident in his cutting up Benjy's paper dolls when they were children, the turning point that significantly marks his slow descent into twisted notion of reality comes when Jason loses the job at the bank previously promised to him by Caddy's fiancé. "I believed folks when they said they'd do things. I've learned better since" (206). Despite not pronouncing anything explicitly, this quotation specifically refers to the promised job that was stolen from Jason years before. Proclaiming that he has learned 'better' since, Jason denounces the credibility of any discourse he previously knew and starts to develop a strong sense of idiosyncratic self-righteousness.

The glaring evidence of this is Jason's constant use of the phrase "like I say" to precede any logic he claims as self-evident truth. This is obvious from the first sentence of his narrative: "Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say" (180), or as he later repeatedly proclaims: "Like I say, you cant do anything with a woman like that" (232). This "like I say" or "what I say" mantra particularly highlights the stark contrast between him and his brother Quentin, who is, on the contrary, haunted by "what father said". As previously discussed, Quentin's anguish and suffering stem from his realization of the contradictory discourses that determine his existence, and his own inability to find a language that can adequately represents an external reality to hold on to. Jason, on the other hand, deliberately abandons other discourses and become hardly aware or convinced of any other possible realities except his own askew version.

Worse still, not only does Jason unknowingly indulge in sardonic language through which he articulates the order of his own reality, he also rejoices in demanding that the external world conform to this twisted, bigoted discourse. From the moment he is betrayed, Jason comes to fashion himself as the moral authority, the champion of universal order, as he blatantly proclaims: " 'I know I'm right' " (192). As well as his retelling of his family's story, the Jason section is filled with a tireless series of lectures on what he holds as an inviolable creed: "Because like I say blood is blood and you cant get around it" (243), "Like I say, if he had to sell something to send Quentin to Harvard we'd all been a dam sign better off if he'd sold that

sideboard" (197). All these are only a few examples to show how, after being deprived of that promised job, Jason establishes his own set of logic that he holds as incorruptible truth, a truth that he expects the world to subscribe to and not vice versa: "That's the only way to manage [women]. ... If you cant think of any other way to surprise them, give them a bust in the jaw" (193). Kartiganer's hint cited earlier can be used to illustrate this fundamental difference between the three brothers. Benjy simply *sees* that two plus two equals four. Quentin painfully *knows* that two plus two equals four. It is only Jason who wholeheartedly and proudly *believes* it equals five, and, through his persistently sententious monologue, also seeks to convert the whole world to his delusions. It is this sense of utter conviction against all odds that makes Jason anything but sane. However, while Jason's curiously absurd line of thinking can be glimpsed throughout his own narrative, his twisted mind does not come to full light until it is juxtaposed directly with the more objective, semi-omniscient view of the fourth narrative. It takes an alternative voice from an impartial outsider like Dilsey to illuminate and confirm to us that Jason, despite his mask of sanity and normality, is ultimately a maniac whose "attitude was that of one who goes through the motions of listening in order to deceive himself as to what he already hears" (280). This quotation perfectly sums up the nature of Jason's madness, that which differentiates him from his neurotic brother Quentin. Through the narrative of the fourth section, it can be seen that Jason is, in fact, moved by turbulent passion that blind his rationality and self-introspection in an even more severe way than Quentin. Quentin goes through "the motions of listening" – whether it is to the discourse of the Old South, or that of his father - to discover the painful truth of his own impotence, and therefore deliberately invents the fantasy of incest to avoid suffering. On the other hand, Jason is hardly aware of even the realities most relevant to him – that he is as ineffectual as any of his brothers. Instead, his "motions of listening" is only a deceptive act to nurture his inherent hypothesis about himself and the world – the hypothesis that he is a capable, effective businessman who has been wronged "by a bitch of a girl" (307).

His coherent set of beliefs that we encounter a section earlier is thus nothing but a façade or a self-deceptive mechanism derived from one blind fixation, that is, the job he lost years before: "Of his niece he did not think at all, nor of the arbitrary valuation of the money. Neither of them had had entity or individuality for him for

ten years; together they merely symbolised the job in the bank of which he had been deprived before he ever got it" (306). This particular paragraph is perhaps the clearest sign of Jason's twisted mind. He fabricates his logical system not from any valid empirical reality, but from one single obsession at the deep core of his psyche. Throughout the story, Jason validates his vicious treatment of Miss Quentin, Caddy's illegitimate daughter, with the premise that "once a bitch always a bitch", and invents whatever logic needed to accommodate contradictory evidence. When the insightful Sheriff comments on this mistake " 'You drove that girl into running off, Jason' ", he is dismissed by the stubborn Jason: " 'How I conduct my family is no business of yours' " (304). His whole system of thinking is spun out from the core belief that he has been wronged by his sister, and therefore he is always right.

Such perfect coherence of Jason's closed belief system reflects the striking proximity between reason and madness described by Foucault: "The marvelous logic of the mad which seems to mock that of the logicians because it resembles it so exactly ... because at the secret heart of madness, at the core of so many errors, so many absurdities, so many words and gestures without consequence, we discover, finally, the hidden perfection of language" (Foucault 95). Foucault's remark here sheds light on an often-overlooked aspect of madness; that its intrinsic nature is not simply a state of total chaos without any method, but actually bears a similar structure to the discourse of reason. This explains exactly why we cannot deduce Jason's sanity based solely on his straightforward and consistent narrative. It is only when situated in the larger context that his delusion comes to light. Such discrepancy between the logic and order in Jason's language and his incongruity with the truths echoes the paradox of rationality described by Allen Thiher: "no scientific paradigm need ever give up its core beliefs, for a believer in a theory can always adjust his theory, on the periphery, to accommodate discordant facts" (89). Through the character of Jason, Faulkner effectively calls attention to the dubiety of logic as an adequate criterion of sanity. As much as it can be used to pave the way to higher truths, logic can also be manipulated to vindicate and give meaning to a premise not grounded in reality, but instead birthed and fueled by blind rage and passion that typically characterize madness. Interestingly, such "madness in reason" or "reason in madness" is not found in either Benjy's or Quentin's narratives before. This testifies to the slippery aspect of madness whose reality eludes absolute definition. Madness is not simply confined to

Unreason or the Unreal because there can be madness hidden under the neatly calculated wrap of reason, as well as the convincing mechanism of reason under pure mania, as exhibited in the case of Jason. However, it should be pointed out once again that evidence of Jason's madness will not be confirmed to readers without the fourth section told through the point of view of Dilsey, whose narrative functions as an alternative discourse that directly evokes the questions and doubts about the validity and legitimacy of the previous narratives by Compson brothers.

5. A Marginalized Voice: Dilsey the Silent Observer

So far, it can be seen that Faulkner's choices of narrators and narrative sequence is strategic. Starting with Benjy, Faulkner intends to throw his readers into the unfamiliar world of a retarded person who does not share the same language with the mainstream culture. Nevertheless, as this thesis has discussed, it is rather the Benjy section that seems to be ultimately the most objective, compared to the narratives of his other two brothers. Jason, on the other hand, is the one most perverted from reality, despite his mask of reason and rationality. It is not until the fourth section that readers finally hear the comprehensive voice of what happens to the Compson family. Interestingly, the narrator of this fourth section is not, as many readers expect, Caddy, who has been the catalyst of major events throughout the novel. Instead, the fourth section is told in a third-person narrative through the point of view of the loyal family servant, Dilsey.

At first, it again seems like a curious decision for Faulkner to choose to end the novel with a seemingly minor character who stays in the background for most of the early parts of the novel. However, Dilsey's position in the novel is vital to her role as the last narrator. Most readers and critics have reached a consensus that Faulkner uses the wise, perceptive and compassionate Dilsey to provide a sharp contrast with the self-absorbed and ineffectual Compsons. Her will and strength is what maintains the Compson household in order despite the negligence and weakness of its family members. While readers can glimpse the decline of the once glorious Compson family in previous sections, it is from the Dilsey section that readers come to full realization of the depth of their downfall. It draws back from the private world of the ineffectual Compson men and tells the story from the broad, panoramic view of an

insightful observer like Dilsey. While the first three narratives are the chaotic stream of consciousness full of “sound and fury” that reflect the Compson brothers’ confused and obsessive inner psyche, this fourth section is told with lucid clarity through a comprehensive, semi-omniscient voice in a conventional mode of storytelling with Dilsey serving as its moral lens.

This positions Dilsey as a moral milestone for readers to measure other characters in the novel. Without her section, Jason’s madness would not have come to full light. However, the Dilsey section is not simply a foil to other narratives. In the subject of madness and civilization, it can be said that the Dilsey section can also be read as a kind of alternative discourse that, like Benjy’s narrative, has been marginalized in Western culture. Being a black female servant, Dilsey shares the same position as madmen in the society. While she might not receive exactly the same treatment as the mad from the society, she represents the minority that has been robbed of the voice and legitimacy by a mainstream culture dominated by whites, particularly that of the Old South. While the other Compson brothers, even the retarded Benjy, are allowed to tell the story in their own voices, the fourth section is the only chapter not to have a first-person narrator. This absence of a speaking subject is significant. First of all, it posits Dilsey as a detached observer who views, or at least attempts to view, the situations surrounding the Compson family with a sense of impartiality, while other Compson brothers are trapped within their own interior monologues. However, more significantly, it shows the Compson brothers as members of the dominant race who are privileged to dictate the dominant historical discourses. Dilsey, on the other hand, has always had an undeniable presence in the Compson family, yet she is marginalized into an insignificant figure in the background, not as a dictating subject. Even though the last chapter focuses mainly on her, readers can mostly experience her perspective, but rarely her individual voice. The parts where she actually voices her thoughts are sparse even in her section, and her view on the Compson tragedy is mostly defined by one well-quoted sentence: “I seed de beginning, en now I sees de endin” (297). However, the wisdom and insight readers find in her section provides a sharp contrast to the confusion and perversion found in the first three chapters. This is the reason why the Dilsey section is vital to the subject of madness discussed in this thesis. Set right after the Jason section, Dilsey’s view represents not only an alternative discourse on the reality of the

Compson family, but also a counter-narrative that directly undermines Jason's credibility both as a narrator and as a member of the dominant culture. Her perceptive yet objective account of the story instantly evokes the readers to question the legitimacy of other narratives, especially that of Jason – the head of the Compson household.

As a member of the oppressed race in the Old South culture, Dilsey's sense, wisdom and the abundant abilities for compassion and human contact seem to be a direct criticism of the dominant culture as epitomized by the Compson family. Her narrative can be read as a minority discourse that highlights the flaws, inefficiency, and, ultimately, madness of the dominant culture. While Benjy might represent a Holy Fool whose knowledge of the world transcends those of his society, his inability to communicate with the outside world renders him an illegitimate member of his culture by default. No matter how sensitive and intelligent Quentin is, his obsession and incapability to cope with the changing condition of the world also emphasizes the aspects of the Old South culture dominated by the whites that is growing irrelevant in the modern world. However, Jason seems to be the one Dilsey's discourse stands most opposed to. As head of the Compson family and the only brother accepted by society, Jason's narrative stands for the discourse of the dominant culture that is socially accepted mostly with no questions. However, when paralleled with the third-person semi-omniscient narrative of Dilsey, it can be seen that his discourse is self-referential and fueled not by rationality but by rage and single-minded fixation. Stylistically, the third-person, semi-omniscient narrative of Dilsey also implies an attempt to grasp objective reality impartially, to embrace the world as it is, without over imposing one's own subjectivity and personal biases. This stands in sharp contrast to the self-absorbed worldview of the Compson brothers. Faulkner's decision to use interior monologues in the brothers is significant, for it emphasizes the circular and self-contained nature of their discourses, especially that of Jason. In the framework of madness and civilization, it can be argued that the discourse of Western civilization, as particularly dictated by the dominant figure of Jason Compson, is not only biased but also inherently *mad*. As mentioned in the previous section, Jason's narrative designates its own reality, justifies its own cause and is willing to twist and pervert any contradicting evidence to support its core beliefs. Yet the fact that Jason is still the head of the family and an accepted citizen reveals the underlying power

structure in the society that automatically legitimize a member of the dominant culture despite his liabilities. The Dilsey section is therefore particularly significant as it functions as a minor narrative that undermines and questions the legitimacy of the dominant discourse as epitomized by Jason, and its justification to cultural supremacy. Interestingly, what Faulkner does here with the Dilsey section is similar to the effort of postmodern thinkers in recent decades. In using the figure of a black female servant like Dilsey to expose the flaws of the dominant discourse, Faulkner embraces the differing voice of the minorities in society as an alternative path to reality and uses it to question the legitimacy of the cultural orthodoxy of the Old South. It is noteworthy that, while most minority discourses of the contemporary postmodern sentiment generally attack the injustice and tyranny of the hegemony, the question the Dilsey section imposes on Jason's legitimacy does not point simply to his bias and cruelty, but rather to his perversion and delusion. The section does not portray Jason as a cold, calculating villain who consciously oppresses others just for his own gain. Instead, it shows Jason as an irrational man unaware of his own obsession and driven by rage and passion. His façade of rationality is nothing but a self-delusion. This, at last, exposes the manifestation of madness that is not ostracized or silenced like in the cases of Benjy or Quentin, but the possible madness that lies under the acceptable face of culture.

Once again, Faulkner shows that madness is a hermeneutical condition that must be situated and requires interpretation. Through the three different narratives of the Compson brothers, Faulkner efficiently shows how differently humans use language to articulate and give shape to their various modes of experience – both physical and psychological. Madness is simply a relationship by which the validity of an experience is judged. Benjy's experience is disregarded as nonsensical noise because it exists outside the logos shared by the social world. Quentin's insanity is due to his loss of mental and emotional equilibrium as he fails to find a consistent language that can provide cohesive meanings to his experience. Jason's madness, on the other hand, only comes to light when stood against the sensible and comprehensive perspective of Dilsey, whose narrative functions as a minor discourse that provides both an alternative to reality and skepticism towards the dominant culture. Speaking in their own voices, the Compson brothers personify three different faces of madness known in Western civilization and their epistemological

significance also greatly differs. Benjy is the Holy Fool who provides us with the higher path to unbroken knowledge, who has, as Foucault argues, been robbed of voice by the Age of the Reason. Quentin is a Hamlet figure, a rational man whose agony overwhelms his intelligence. While his narrative is mostly a reflection of his turbulent mind, it still gives us a glimpse of reality about the transition, and clash, of discourses that determine values in the outside world. Surprisingly, it is Jason who speaks in the most easily understood voice that makes the least contribution to our knowledge. From his narrative, all knowledge we gain about the Compson family is skewed and distorted, only knowledge about Jason's mindset is lucid. Jason is therefore clearly the most complete embodiment of madness in this story, as Kartiganer puts it: "He is confusion incarnate, guilty of all he seems to hate, hating his own image in others, the least sane and the most perversely imaginative of all the Compsons" (32). His madness is, unlike Benjy's, no passage to truth, but simply an endless cycle in itself.

Nevertheless, the fatal irony that foreshadows the explosive prevalence of madness in the twentieth century, is that, while Jason represents the bleakest, brashest and most complacent face of madness, he is also the only Compson brother accepted as a part of culture. Not only is he regarded as "normal", he is also the most powerful member of the Compson family, its mover and shaker who initiates courses of action in the story with his own logic. The oversight of Jason's madness, on both the characters' and the readers' part, shows us that the ideology of modernity – with its utter faith in reason, progress and economic productivity - has eclipsed all other criteria in the definition of madness in Western civilization. No matter how distorted and deluded one is from the actual truths, as long as he is involved in economic activity and plays by the social rules, he can comfortably elude the stigmata of madness. Even more, not only is he generally accepted as "sane", he can still manipulate his idiosyncratic logic to gain more power in the world. Ultimately, this self-justified discourse of Jason – whose reality and validity is all self-referential – becomes symptomatic of the twentieth century madness made apparent in Joseph Heller's novel, *Catch-22*.

CHAPTER III

JOSEPH HELLER'S *CATCH-22* AND THE LUNATIC LANGUAGE OF ABSOLUTE POWER

1. Introduction

1.1 General Overview and *Catch-22* in American History

In the first chapter, this thesis explored the indispensable role of language or logos in determining the way each culture conceives and interprets madness as is evident in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. Apart from this, it also pointed out how logic, the foundation from which Western logos has always drawn its legitimacy, does not necessarily entail sanity. Instead, logic can find its most flawless manifestation in the language of the maddest as well as the sanest. This irony is exhibited most clearly in the figure of Jason, the Compson brother whose straightforward logic has prompted many readers to proclaim him sane and overlook his idiosyncratic distance from reality. While Benjy and Quentin seem to be the relics of a bygone era, Jason seems, particularly in retrospect, to be Faulkner's grim prophesy of the twentieth century and all its absurdities. As the twentieth century has marched on, humans have found themselves in a world that increasingly resembles Jason Compson, a world whose obsession masked by self-referential justification is vividly depicted in Joseph Heller's anti-war novel *Catch-22*.

Out of all three selected texts, it could be argued that *Catch-22* is the most relevant novel of contemporary culture. Most certainly, it is *Catch-22* that has left the most lasting impact on public consciousness, bridging the gulf from highbrow literature to popular culture. The evidence is the fact that the novel has introduced a phrase to the English language that, as Owen Booth writes, "would go on to have a life of its own" (Booth), integrating smoothly into the daily vocabulary of even those who have never read the novel. This is perhaps because no other word and no other novel has been able to capture the insane irony of modern existence so concisely and so precisely. While *Catch-22* can comfortably stand on its own as a universal piece of literature that offers a well-realized study of human nature, it is also impossible to

ignore or disregard the book's ties to its historical context. Like *The Sound and the Fury*, *Catch-22* also has a chronological significance in American history. While Faulkner's post-WWII *The Sound and the Fury* is a portrayal of the transitional period of American South, *Catch-22* can be read as a contemplative study of the mayhem in the mid-twentieth century America. Published in 1961, the novel arrived in the wake of the unimaginable atrocities of the Second World War and the paranoia of the McCarthy era, just a few years before the Vietnam War broke out. Although the novel's backdrop is largely the Second World War, where Heller himself had first-hand experience, the world he depicts proves relevant to the contemporary context on a much larger scope, as pointed out by David Seed:

Again and again in interviews (Heller) has insisted that the true subject of *Catch-22* was contemporary and that it was only obliquely about the last World War: 'I regard this essentially as a peacetime book. What distresses me very much is that the ethic often dictacted by a wartime emergency has a certain justification, but when this thing is carried *over* into areas of peace; where the same demands are made upon the individual in the cause of national interest ... this wartime emergency ideology transplanted to peacetime, leads not only to absurd situations, but to very tragic situation' (Seed 59)

The book's conception in such a historical milestone makes *Catch-22* an essentially American novel that observes and studies the grim atmosphere of the nation's politics, society and culture at the time. Apart from the oblique depiction of the Second World War itself, the book also heavily exhibits the lingering mood of McCarthyism, whether it be its paranoia or method of circular reasoning and uncannily captures the general fanatical mindset that inevitably led to America's involvement in the fateful Vietnam War. Despite receiving mixed response upon its initial publication, *Catch-22* eventually became an essential text in the anti-Vietnam War protest movement in late 1960s. The book's accurate insight to the senselessness of contemporary America personally spoke to a new generation who felt trapped in a war they did not understand. A familiar bumper sticker, "Yossarian Lives", became the glaring evidence of the book's cult status in contemporary American pop culture.

Interestingly, the novel itself contains no mentally ill characters by psychiatric standards. Yet, by all accounts *Catch-22* is unanimously regarded as an indictment of the twentieth century madness. In 1961 in “the Logic of Survival in a Lunatic World”, one of the first reviews of the book, Robert Brustein writes that “it seems obvious that an inordinate number of Joseph Heller’s characters are, by all conventional standards, mad. It is a triumph of Mr. Heller’s skill that he is so quickly able to persuade us 1) that the most lunatic are the most logical, and 2) that it is our conventional standards which lack any logical consistency” (Brustein 27). This common notion about the book and its characters implies that, despite the growing influence of psychiatry in the cultural perception of madness, the general awareness of the term had not been entirely restricted to the clinical sense, but still maintained its moral/social connotation. However, the alarming aspect of the phenomenon depicted in *Catch-22* is that madness is no longer limited to a small number of excluded individuals but is a common condition almost all the characters share. This paradigmatic shift is why *Catch-22* is a crucial work to an understanding of madness as symptomatic of twentieth century American culture. Since madness extensively plagues the whole society, it prompts us to contemplate the fickle relationship between normality and madness. Most importantly, it also urges a re-evaluation of our criteria in defining madness that has escaped its once excluded space and entered the commonplace.

1.2 The Origin of the Term Catch-22

First of all, the key term “Catch-22” itself must be briefly explained. To put it most simply, Catch-22 is a chicken-and-egg dilemma in which one is a victim regardless of the choice one makes. Early in the novel, the original Catch-22 is a rule of Yossarian’s Air Force that is first explained to him by Doc Daneeka in Chapter V:

There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one’s own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and could be grounded. All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and had to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy

to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn't have to; but if he didn't want to he was sane and had to. (62-63)

This excerpt summarizes and explains the hypothetical situation that formulates the prototype of Catch-22 which sets all other events in the novel in motion. Basically, everything that happens in the novel's microcosm stems from the fact that the soldiers are legally and practically trapped by this specific Catch-22 to risk their lives serving their country in the midst of war with no chance of escape. The concept of Catch-22 is fascinating to many generations of readers because, despite its blatant absurdity, it is also logically indisputable. On closer inspection, it is worth noticing that the premise of this Catch-22 is actually derived from a shared and accepted perception of how the rational mind works in the face of danger, as specified boldly in the first sentence of the excerpt. However, Catch-22 is a clause (or one can say, a language game) that imposes a double bind of mutually exclusive prepositions to this basic premise, making any logical challenge impossible.

Because Catch-22 is structured on a loophole in logical reasoning, there is no way an ordinary man can use traditional logic to undermine it. The deadly irony of this self-defeating language game is that it is logically undefeatable. Its wicked brilliance is so ingenious that even a cynical man like Yossarian still cannot hide his admiration: "Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a *respectful* whistle. ... 'That's some catch, that Catch-22' ... 'It's the best there is' " (63, emphasis mine). In spite of its simple logic on the surface, the genius of Catch-22's simplicity is that it renders the complicated issues of free will or individual autonomy completely irrelevant. Under the Catch-22 law, it no longer matters whether a man has free will or not, because even though he has it, whatever choice he makes still traps him within the same exploitative situation. Catch-22 therefore comes to stand for the ultimate kind of oppressive discourse that Heller has set out to criticize. Although the term Catch-22 primarily originates from the military rule Doc Daneeka explains to Yossarian here, it is not limited exclusively to this case. Later on, Catch-22 is cited again in chapter 6 by ex.P.F.C Wintergreen who asserts that even though Yossarian has completed forty missions as specified by

the rule of his Twenty-Seventh Air Force Headquarters, *Catch-22* also states that he has to obey every order of his commanding officer, even if that means flying more missions than originally specified by the standard rule. As the novel progresses, it becomes a phrase for any kind of law or mindset that employs self-referential, circular logic to justify its cause, as described by Brustein “*Catch-22* is the unwritten loophole in every written law which empowers the authorities to revoke your rights whenever it suits their cruel whims; it is, in short, the principle of absolute evil in a malevolent, mechanical, and incompetent world.” (Brustein 22).

Like Brustein, many other commentators have agreed that *Catch-22* is an anti-establishment social satire that aims to criticize those in power who utilize the discourse of *Catch-22* to entrap and exploit an ordinary man, pushing him to a dead-end corner of existence. However, it is also obvious and noteworthy that Heller does not quite portray these antagonistic authorities, whether it is the war overlords or the capitalist mogul like Milo Minderbinder, as inherently *bad* rather than *mad*. Leon F. Seltzer accurately points out that “(the book’s) absurdity is a product not of immorality but of what might be called ‘moral insanity’: a curiously innocent perversion of reason so total as to blind the actor from any meaningful recognition of the moral components of his (or anybody else’s) behavior” (Seltzer 76). This remark is illuminating, since it can be seen that, despite the frightening consequences of their callous decisions, almost all of the novel’s antagonists naively, assertively and consistently believe in their cause. Although they are never hesitant in manipulating logic to justify their unjust actions whenever the occasions demand, it is not quite done out of corruption or deliberate malevolence but out of innocent conviction in their moral righteousness, no matter how perverted that may be. This is why *Catch-22* is essentially a moral book that portrays the madness, not the immorality, of the modern world, and the struggle of an ordinary man to maintain his sanity and rational insight in a world that is losing it, as put by Heller himself in one of his early interviews: “People can’t distinguish between rational and irrational behavior, between the moral and the immoral.... It’s insane....” (Newsweek qtd. in Seltzer 82-83).

It is this moral chaos that Heller sees as the inherent madness of modern America, and, to certain extent, the entire world in general. If the fundamental notion

of madness is a negation of civilization, a hindrance in human progress as proclaimed by the Enlightenment thinkers in the previous centuries, then this state of universal moral disorder depicted by Heller is probably an embodiment of madness in its purest metaphysical form. In *Catch-22*, the notion of madness is therefore far removed from a mere psychiatric or medicinal label, but restored to its moral/philosophical origins. The tragic irony is that such moral and spiritual disintegration stands in stark contrast to the technological advancement and economic prosperity of the twentieth century America.

The novel's most important culprit is therefore not any character in particular, but rather the system that comes increasingly to operate in a circular logic structure he generally calls Catch-22, which is, as Heller brilliantly illustrates in his work, the root of insanity that permeates all aspects of modern society and its mindset. As the novel is filled with endless series of insane incidents and characters, nearly every sentence in *Catch-22* can be explored for the theme of madness in the modern world. But above all, the symptom of their madness can be found mostly in the language they use to justify their actions, which will be explored in the following sections.

2. Catch-22 in Practice : Language of the Will to Absolute Power

2.1 Lunatic Warlords and Catch-22 Politics: "Feathers in a Cap and Black Eyes"

At the beginning of the book, Heller declares: "Men went mad and were rewarded with medals. All over the world, boys on every side of the bomb line were laying down their lives for what they had been told was their country, and no one seemed to mind, least of all the boys who were laying down their young lives" (25). As many criticisms have pointed out, this pronounces the book's basic assumption is that in this age, all men are equally mad, with no exception, even those in control. In the commentary "Under the Mad Gods", Julian Mitchell compares *Catch-22* to "a surrealist *Iliad*, with a lunatic High Command instead of the gods, and a coward for a hero" (Mitchell 32). This comparison to a mythological epic is thought-provoking in the way it evokes the image of ordinary mortals struggling to fulfill their assigned missions, yet their ultimate fates being helplessly dependant on the mercy of the almighty gods. Unfortunately, the gods in the novel, in spite of their omnipotent

power over the individuals, are not divine or supernatural provident, but are a tyrannical system operated and sustained by a small group of appointed equally mad mortals. While most of Yossarian's colleagues are undoubtedly twisted, whether it is Hungry Joe, a former photographer for *Life* magazine who is obsessed with taking pictures of naked women and has continuous nightmares unless he is scheduled to fly more dangerous missions, or Havermeyer who takes sadistic relish in shooting field mice every other night, one of the novel's most painful comedy is that the warlords who are in command of these soldiers and have decisive influence on their lives are no less perverted. This "equality in madness" is one of many ironies in the novel that exposes the inadequacy and irrationality of military bureaucracy.

Although the manifestation of madness in the administrative body is plentiful in the book, it is important that we first distinguish the difference between individual madness found in each commanding officer's character and behavior, and collective madness that underlines the bureaucratic mindset. It is through *both* types of madness that Heller effectively illustrates the alarming picture of moral anarchy prevalent in *Catch-22*. Although they do function together as a collective symbol of the bureaucratic system, each of Heller's warlords is also portrayed with considerable individuality and each one's unique perverted personality reasserts the absurdity of the world that grants such people positions of power. Throughout the novel, all high-ranking officers are portrayed either as incompetent idiots or raving lunatics who, like many of their subordinates, exhibit countless irrational or even downright ridiculous personal behaviors, inclinations and obsessions, which in a parallel universe of moral order, should have rendered them unfit to rule. One notable example is Lieutenant Scheisskopf, whose fanatical obsession with military parades has been the cause of his meteoric rise in the army. An R.O.T.C. graduate who is "glad that war had broken out, since it gave him an opportunity to wear an officer's uniform every day" (93), the degree of Lieutenant Scheisskopf's intense passion in military parades is one of the novel's targets of highly comic satire:

Lieutenant Scheisskopf longed desperately to win parades and sat up half the night working on it while his wife waited amorously for him in bed thumbing through Krafft-Ebing to her favorite passages. He read books on marching. He manipulated boxes of

chocolate soldiers until they melted in his hands and then maneuvered in ranks of twelve a set of plastic cowboys he had bought from a mail-order house under an assumed name and kept locked away from everyone's eyes during the day. Leonardo's exercises in anatomy proved indispensable. One evening he felt the need for a live model and directed his wife to march around the room. (96)

Here, the Lieutenant's fixation on parade is portrayed as sheer absurdity that it borders on madness. Lieutenant Scheisskopf's parade mania seems even to make him oblivious to the fact that they are actually at war at the moment. This can be seen in his constant dismissal of his sexually insatiable wife: "Don't you know there's a parade going on?", in contrast to the more appropriate and expected remark, "don't you know there's a war going on?". This proves far more than a trivial error in vocabulary selection, as it is intended to expose Scheisskopf's confused ordering of the real. He is unable to prioritize reality above his own ridiculous obsession, a major criterion of madness – albeit not in the medical sense.

Furthermore, the object of Scheisskopf's fanaticism is also connotative. Unlike many other characters in the novel, Scheisskopf never cites any American ideologies as his principle. Instead, his only "religion" is the military parade, which Yossarian, the protagonist and yardstick of sanity in the novel, sees as an utterly ludicrous torture that the soldiers are made to participate for no practical purpose than personal entertainment (or, in Scheisskopf's case, an egofest) of the commanders:

The men fell out for the parades early each Sunday afternoon and groped their way into ranks of twelve outside the barracks. Groaning with hangovers, they limped in step to their station on the main paradeground, where they stood motionless in the heat for an hour or two with the men from the sixty or seventy other cadet squadrons until enough of them had collapsed to call it a day. On the edge of the field stood a row of ambulances and teams of trained stretcher bearers with walkie-talkies. On the roofs of the ambulances were spotters with binoculars. ... As soon as enough

unconscious men had been collected in the ambulances, the medical officer signaled the bandmaster to strike up the band and end the parade. ...

Each of the parading squadrons was graded as it marched past the reviewing stand ... The best squadron in each wing won a yellow pennant on a pole that was utterly worthless. The best squadron on the base won a red pennant on a longer pole that was worth even less ... To Yossarian, the idea of pennants as prizes was absurd. ... Like Olympic medals and tennis trophies, all they signified was that the owner had done something of no benefit to anyone more capably than everyone else.

The parades themselves seemed equally absurd. Yossarian hated a parade. Parades were so martial. He hated hearing them, hated seeing them, hated being tied up in traffic by them. He hated being made to take part in them. (94-95)

This whole episode vividly highlights the preposterous concept of military parades. They are a physical torment for the soldiers, causing many to collapse each Sunday afternoon. This fact is obvious to everyone, as seen from the stationed medical aid that is considerably more well-planned and efficient than any other departments in the novel that deal with real war. All of such competent arrangement is, alas, not in the service of any higher cause than something as ludicrous and meaningless as Sunday parades and their “grading”, which has become such a familiar tradition that, although “no one but Lieutenant Scheisskopf really gave a damn about” (99), no one but Yossarian seems to notice its futility and absurdity either.

The military parade itself is therefore to Heller another example of insanity he finds accepted and practiced in our culture, a point deliberately made patent by the portrayal of Scheisskopf and his fetish. With the parade as his personal religion, Scheisskopf treats it as both art and science in a deadly serious manner:

Lieutenant Scheisskopf had discovered in his extreme research that the hands of marchers, instead of swinging freely, as was then the popular fashion, ought never to be moved more than three inches

from the center of the thigh, which meant, in effect that they were scarcely to be swung at all.

Lieutenant Scheisskopf's preparations were elaborate and clandestine. All the cadets in his squadron were sworn to secrecy and rehearsed in the dead of the night on the auxiliary paradeground. They marched in darkness that was pitch and bumped into each other blindly, but they did not panic, and they were learning to march without swinging their hands. (97)

Ironically enough, it is this grotesque fixation on a purposeless activity that brings about Scheisskopf's initial promotion and subsequent rise in ranking. After excessive secret training, Lieutenant Scheisskopf unveils his "discovery" to the audience's awe, which not only makes him First Lieutenant Scheisskopf "on the spot", but also "began his rapid rise through the ranks" and earns him the curious reputation of "military genius" (99). Here, Heller points out that it is not only Scheisskopf who is mad but so are his colleagues. While his colleagues might not be as personally obsessed with parades as he is, they also confuse the order of the real, mistaking theatrical illusion of military duty, i.e. the parades, for real duty in war. However, in one of the book's most ironic final twists, Scheisskopf is eventually promoted, through random luck and the inadvertent intervention of his superiors, to the rank of lieutenant general in charge of Special Services, which, by the end of the novel, is superior to all other generals: "They put Scheisskopf in charge of *everything!*" (494, emphasis mine). His first order as a general is ridiculous but predictable enough: "Do you know what he wants? He wants us to march! He wants *everybody* to march!" (494). This final triumph of General Scheisskopf and his wish to transform the whole army into his very own chocolate soldiers marks the most radical sign of madness in the novel's microcosm.

While there is no doubt that Scheisskopf is a mad man in uniform with a parade fetish, the insanity of his character is still rather harmless. His perverted fascination for parades is mostly a comical satire that highlights the absurdity of the military for the most part rather than its more grim and sinister side. Although it is certainly disturbing and imposes unnecessary ordeal on the soldiers at times, arguably Scheisskopf's obsession bears relatively mild consequences for the fate of the soldiers

and poses no real threat to their lives. This brings us to Colonel Cathcart, whose shocking stupidity and maniacal demeanors are often the object of the book's funniest as well as deadliest satire. Although the insane aspects of Colonel Cathcart's mindset and behavior are undeniably very funny, it is also apparent to the readers that his manic inclination does lead to the destruction of his men. Of all the high-ranking officers, Colonel Cathcart's directives arguably have the most direct and decisive effect on the soldiers' lives, as he is the commanding officer who sanctions a number of the missions. From an early description of this character, Heller makes it indisputable that Colonel Cathcart is essentially a madman:

He was a valorous opportunist who pounced hoggishly upon every opportunity Colonel Korn discovered for him and trembled in damp despair immediately afterwards at the possible consequences he might suffer. He collected rumors greedily and treasured gossip. ... He was on the alert constantly for every signal, shrewdly sensitive to relationships and situations that did not exist. ... Colonel Cathcart lived by his wits in an unstable, arithmetical world of black eyes and feathers in his cap, of overwhelming imaginary triumphs and catastrophic imaginary defeats. (241)

From the very first sentence, Colonel Cathcart's incompetence becomes clear to readers. First of all, his lack of necessary intelligence renders him eternally dependent on the assistance of an "indispensable ally" – Lieutenant Colonel Korn. But worse than mere idiocy, Colonel Cathcart is also insane. If the inability to distinguish between fantasy and reality is the most basic criterion of insanity, any school would agree from this excerpt that Colonel Cathcart is undoubtedly a psychotic who lives in a self-conjured world of unreal victories and defeats that do not exist. He is so consumed by paranoia that he torments himself each day with the thoughts that "(e)verybody was persecuting him" (241), or that "nobody loved him" (271). Though this plays largely in his mind at first, it eventually affects his relationships with others and they begin to actually dislike him. Colonel Cathcart's paranoia worsens over the course of the book so that, in Chapter III, he begins to hallucinate about multiplying specters of Yossarian and mistake it as "inscrutable cosmic climax" (267).

Not only is his whole universe constructed upon illusions of the Unreal, Colonel Cathcart is also marked by his emotional instability. He lacks the functional rationality to keep his temperament in equilibrium. Instead, he is constantly swayed by violent rages of passion: “He oscillated hourly between anguish and exhilaration, multiplying fantastically the grandeur of his victories and exaggerating tragically the seriousness of his defeats” (241). In Chapter III, Cathcart’s paranoia about Yossarian leads him almost to a nervous breakdown:

Suddenly his arm began to shake, and he was unable to write anymore. He rose to his feet in terror, feeling sticky and fat, and rushed to the open window to gulp in fresh air. His gaze fell on the skeet-range, and he reeled away with a sharp cry of distress, his wild and feverish eyes scanning the walls of his office frantically as though they were swarming with Yossarians. ... suddenly Colonel Cathcart had absolutely no conception of how strongly he stood with anyone and began banging on his buzzer with his fist for Colonel Korn to come running into his office and assure him that everybody loved him, that Yossarian was a figment of his imagination... (271-274)

This violent shift of emotional state not only emphasizes the insanity of Colonel Cathcart alone but also exposes the madness of the civilization that, while entertaining the ideal of a rational leader, paradoxically place a psychotic in such high position, responsible for the fate of other human beings.

It might already seem like an absurd joke that a lunatic idiot like Cathcart is put in such a decisive position, but the joke takes a cruel twist as Colonel Cathcart only exercises his power “in the service of himself” (240). At the bottom of his maniac character is Colonel Cathcart’s desperate aspiration to become a general. He so desperately lusts after power that “he was willing to try anything, even religion”. One of his pathetic attempts to make himself a general is to continuously raise the minimal number of missions his subordinates have to fly with no regard whatsoever to the human lives that would be lost. More likely, it can be argued that Colonel

Cathcart has lost touch with reality and that he mistakes the number of the missions to be the only reality that concerns him and forgets that there are men dying every time he raises this number:

Maybe sixty missions were too many for the men to fly, Colonel Cathcart reasoned, if Yossarian objected to flying them, but he then remembered that forcing his men to fly more missions than everyone else was the most tangible achievement he had going for him. ... Certainly none of the generals seemed to object to what he was doing, although as far as he could detect they weren't particularly impressed either, which made him suspect that perhaps sixty combat missions were not nearly enough and that he ought to increase the number at once to seventy, eighty, a hundred, or even two hundred, three hundred, or six thousand!

Although Cathcart does exhibit a glimpse of rationality in this excerpt, he quickly reverts to his idiosyncratic version of reality, and true to his megalomaniac character, Colonel Cathcart knows no limit. While Colonel Cathcart is essentially far too dimwitted and too insane to be considered a malignant villain who deliberately engineers the destruction of others, Heller makes it clear that he is not any the less dangerous. Consumed by a mixture of delusion and futile ambition, Colonel Cathcart is the perfect embodiment of insanity who can drive the whole world into unfathomable peril. The fatal irony of the whole thing is that, of all the lives Colonel Cathcart readily volunteers, it is all in vain, for he "did not have a chance in hell of becoming a general" because ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen always "distorted, destroyed and rejected or misdirected any correspondence by, for or about Colonel Cathcart that might do him credit" (274).

Colonel Cathcart's "valiant campaign" to become a general by raising missions continuously is one of many examples that demonstrates why there is war in the first place. All the chaos in the book, all the lost lives and all the brutality exercised on another human beings result from the actions of a few mad individuals who frantically seek to satisfy their irrational obsession or further their own advancement in the ruthless pursuit of power, even at the expense of others. This

drastically contradicts with the Enlightenment notion of human rationality that will bring about civilization, universal progress and the liberation of mankind, although these are the very ideals that those few in power often proclaim as their *raison d'être*. At times, such overzealous dedication to one's personal goals makes the readers almost forget, probably with Heller's intention, which war precisely is actually going on in the book. Most notably, the word "enemy" is ubiquitously cited not so much to refer to the Germans as to refer to fellow officers who pose a threat on one's own advancement in the military. This can be seen from General Peckem, a "suave and very precise general" whose only occupation in life is to scheme against his archrival General Dreedle. In his own words, Peckem declares: "Dreedle's on our side, and Dreedle *is* the enemy" (409). The same attitude is repeated by Colonel Cathcart: "another colonel in the area meant another rival, another enemy, another person who hated him" (416). These two excerpts perfectly capture the "me" attitude of most bureaucratic officers who often confuse national with personal affairs.

Ironically, lunatics like Scheisskopf or Colonel Cathcart will never be locked up or silenced because they perfectly fit in such an insane era. Cathcart can keep raising the number of missions and his men still have to fly them without making much noise. In a world run by the law of Catch-22, morality has lost its meaning and maniacs like Colonel Cathcart " 'have a right to do anything we can't stop them from doing' " (514). Undoubtedly, Heller's argument is that these twisted bureaucrats get away with their crime against humanity because of Catch-22 and its logical structure that allows them to justify their actions, in Brustein's words, "whenever it suits their cruel whims". At one level, Catch-22 stands as a tool of power, a discourse of political doublespeak utilized by the bureaucrats to disguise or distort the true meanings of their intentions in the exploits of others. Colonel Cathcart and his indispensable ally Colonel Korn form a pair of doublespeak masters. Together, they employ the circular logic of Catch-22 to accommodate their agendas on countless occasions. Apart from the original law of Catch-22 explained above, the pair is also responsible for another rule of Catch-22 nature: "the only people permitted to ask questions were those who never did" (49). In this bureaucratic context, Catch-22 finally becomes a self-sustained, self-referential, self-justified law that, to Yossarian's chagrin, always right.

Another manifestation of Catch-22 logic can also be found in Colonel Cathcart's bipolar worldview of 'black eyes' and 'feathers in the cap'. Although depicted largely in the novel as a comic detail to highlight the degree of Colonel Cathcart's derangement, it is also alarming that his farcical worldview resonates, albeit in a much more grim and humorless way, among his bureaucratic counterparts in the real world. In the final confrontation between Yossarian and the two colonels, Colonel Cathcart's world of 'black eyes' and 'feathers in the cap' is paraphrased in a Catch-22 fashion that is disturbingly similar to the rhetoric of political speeches in the more recent American context:

'Won't you fight for your country?' Colonel Korn demanded, emulating Colonel Cathcart's harsh, self-righteous tone. 'Won't you give up your life for Colonel Cathcart and me?'

Yossarian tensed with alert astonishment when he heard Colonel Korn's concluding words. 'What's that?' he exclaimed. 'What have you and Colonel Cathcart got to do with my country? You're not the same.'

'How can you separate us?' Colonel Korn inquired with ironical tranquility.

'That's right,' Colonel Cathcart cried emphatically. 'You're either for us or against us. There's no two ways about it.'

'I'm afraid he's got you,' added Colonel Korn. 'You're either for us or against your country. It's as simple as that.'

'Oh, no, Colonel. I don't buy that.'

Colonel Korn was unruffled. 'Neither do I, frankly, but everyone else will. So there you are.' (534)

Here is another strike of the Catch-22 discourse. On one hand, Colonel Korn's smooth exchange between "your country" and "Colonel Cathcart and me" can be read as a deliberate political doublespeak that cites patriotism to confuse the subject from the real benefactor of the situation, which in this case are none other than Colonel Cathcart and Colonel Korn. On the other hand, this "You're either for us or against us" mindset can also be read as a variation of Catch-22 logic. While seemingly giving the subject two choices, its actual implication enforces that one can only either comply

and assimilate into part of the system, despite against one's will, or defy and differ at the risk of obliteration *by* the system. This again is the logical/linguistic structure of *Catch-22* that creates an illusion of choice, yet at the same time restricts men within its own circular system and therefore renders true freedom obsolete.

However, at another level, there is a hint which implies that *Catch-22* is more than a mere language game of politics, but has obtained a life of its own in the fashion of a Frankenstein's monster. Although the machinery of *Catch-22* might be invented somewhere in time by certain men of power to justify their institutions, the novel shows that, by the mid-twentieth century, *Catch-22* itself had become a kind of institution, an infrastructure that shapes the worldview and the mindset of the people within the system. Evidence of this can be found in Heller's paradoxical portrayal of the warlords. The high-ranking officers might use *Catch-22* logic to enslave their men, as discussed above, yet they are in turn enslaved by the influence of *Catch-22*. In spite of resorting to doublespeak on impulse, Colonel Cathcart is hardly aware of his own contradictions and remains strangely and innocently convinced of the righteousness and the integrity of his reasoning. This is because the Colonel's thought process and his worldview, as shown in his neat and dichotomous categorization of the world into 'feather in a cap' and 'black eyes', are essentially constructed on the circular model of *Catch-22*, and therefore warp his perception and ability to reason in any other fashion. To put it more simply, *Catch-22* is not just the rhetoric of his speech; it is the way of his thinking. Here, Heller underlines the ultimate danger in the way a language game like *Catch-22* ascends from a mere political maneuver to an all-encompassing epistemological paradigm that determines one's perception/knowledge. Once the logic/linguistic blueprint of *Catch-22* is internalized, it dramatically distorts one's perspective, conscience and reasoning into a self-referential cycle that is sustained within itself, by itself and for itself. This is the collective madness that is deep-seated, deceptive but damaging nevertheless, for its symptoms are not always ostensibly exhibited like irrational behavior or obsessions. Instead, it is rooted firmly in the worldview, in the perspective, or in the methodology of reasoning. Sadly, such madness becomes a common condition, as *Catch-22* is pervasively internalized by almost all the characters besides Colonel Cathcart. Yet, it can be argued that none naively, fervently and consistently believes in the principles of *Catch-22* more than

Milo Minderbinder, the mess officer who over the course of the novel becomes the epitome of modern capitalism that takes over the world.

2.2 Milo Minderbinder and Catch-22 Economics: “Everybody Has a Share”

As mentioned previously, Heller’s concern in writing this novel is not so much about the world’s conditions during war as about how the same Catch-22 mindset he sees as madness is carried on to peacetime. Although the microcosm of the novel is focused mainly on warfare and all its absurdities, the language game of Catch-22 on the other hand extends its control beyond the military to the global level. This self-referential logic becomes a new principle that governs the world, including its economy. One character that excellently illustrates this is Milo Minderbinder, the cunning mess hall officer who is one of the most memorable and fascinating characters in the novel. Leon F. Seltzer brings to our notice that: “Heller has described the book as fundamentally not about the Second World War but ‘the contemporary regimented business society’ – and Milo is undoubtedly the most striking and significant representative of that society” (Seltzer 77). It is not far-fetched to argue that Heller sees that, in actuality, it is Milo who exerts more influence over and threatens the current condition of the world more so than any of the bureaucrats. Although the warlords are portrayed with considerable individuality, arguably they function together as a supporting cast who represent bureaucratic insanity. Milo, on the other hand, emerges solitarily as important a character as the protagonist Yossarian, and is given extended role as his name is lent to entitle three chapters, more than any other characters in the book. Given the enormous amount of power he wields by the end of the book, it is arguably Milo, of all characters, who most prominently epitomizes the concept of Catch-22 and the type of madness in the modern world that Heller sets out to portray and critique.

The most fascinating thing about Milo is that, while there is no doubt that he is one of the major targets of the book’s criticism, he is also portrayed in a curiously positive light so that not only Yossarian but also the reader cannot help being fond of him. This in many ways contributes to the ambivalent perception of his character, and complicates any oversimplified analysis of him as the pure epitome of greed, immorality and corruption. It is therefore tremendously important to understand the

discrepancy between Milo's strict moral principles and the monstrous consequences of his actions. Throughout the novel, it can be seen that Milo rigidly follows many noble principles that characterize American ideals of self-made entrepreneurship put forward centuries before by Benjamin Franklin. Early in the book, Milo is described as an earnest, idealistic young fellow with a "simple, sincere face that was incapable of subtlety of guile, an honest, frank face with disunited large eyes... the face of a man of *hardened integrity* who could no more *consciously* violate the moral principles on which his virtue rested than he could transform himself into a despicable toad" (85-86, emphasis mine). Apart from this sincerity, Milo is also portrayed as a wide-eyed mess officer with an admirable work ethics who takes his job seriously. He is industrious, hardworking, resourceful, eager to improve and determined to achieve his goal for what seemingly is the benefit of others, as he confides to Yossarian: "what I hope to do is give the men in this squadron the best meals in the whole world. That's really something to shoot at isn't it? If a mess officer aims at anything less, it seems to me, he has no right being mess officer. Don't you agree?" (85). His ultimate dream is to one day form a syndicate "so that I can give you men the good food you deserve" (88).

The crucial irony of the book is that Milo proves to be every bit the stellar disciple of Franklin's teachings as he successfully achieves his goal without ever forsaking a set of moral principles he holds on to, yet at the same time he and his business conduct are also the perfect embodiment of Catch-22 economics and all its moral insanity that Heller severely criticizes. It is noteworthy that the syndicate Milo strives to create undeniably provides the best of food from all over the world, and, true to Yossarian's initial perception of him, Milo's "hardened integrity" is so real and sincere enough that he never violates the moral principles which he holds in highest regards. There are many principles that Milo faithfully follows, and he is often found objecting strongly to the violation of those principles: "Milo had rigid scruples that would not even allow him to borrow a package of pitted dates from the mess hall that day of McWatt's stolen bedsheet, for the food at the mess hall was all still the property of the government" (87). In fact, the sincerity of Milo's faith in his principles is never in doubt in the novel. It is rather the consistency of his judgment regarding these principles that Heller shows is problematic and absurd. This self-contradiction is shown throughout the book, but it is first illustrated in the scene where Milo tries to

explain to Yossarian his perplexing business approach with the can of pitted dates and McWatt's stolen bedsheet:

‘Why didn’t you just hit him over the head and take the bedsheet away from him?’ Yossarian asked.

Pressing his lips together with dignity, Milo shook his head. ‘That would have been most unjust,’ he scolded firmly. ‘Force is wrong, and two wrongs never made a right. It was much better my way. When I held the dates out to him and reached for the bedsheet, he probably thought I was offering to trade.’

‘What were you doing?’

‘Actually, I *was* offering to trade, but since he doesn’t understand English, I can always deny it.’

‘Suppose he gets angry and wants the dates?’

‘Why, we’ll just hit him over the head and take them away from him,’ Milo answered without hesitation. He looked from Yossarian to McWatt and back again. ‘I really can’t see what everyone is complaining about. We’re all much better off than before. Everybody is happy but this thief, and there’s no sense worrying about him, since he doesn’t even speak our language and deserves whatever he gets. Don’t you understand?’ (88-89)

In this small scene, the absurdity of Milo’s thinking becomes clear for the first time in the novel. While Milo thinks it is “most unjust” to use force, he sees no problem in misrepresenting a business deal, in this case to an Italian thief who does not know English language. He is utterly convinced of the legitimacy of his approach and fails to see its contradictions as any sensible man would. The discrepancy depicted in this scene represents the paradoxical pattern of Milo’s psychodynamics that is repeated throughout the book, prompting the question not of his sincerity, but of the incongruous absurdity of his moral assumptions. Another glaring example is Milo’s numerous deals with the Germans, costing the life of an officer in Yossarian’s tent, because Milo has to respect the sanctity of the contract and “protect (the Germans’) rights as shareholders” (325). Another example is when Milo makes a mistake of buying the entire Egyptian cotton consignment. He firmly accepts this disastrous

mistake because “a contract was a contract and had to be honored” (327), yet he has no qualms about feeding inedible cotton to the men in his mess hall, nor about trying to bribe the government to buy his entire crop. Predictably, Milo, with his rigid business ethics, is initially against the notion of bribery and rebukes Yossarian for suggesting the idea. Yet he reasons afterwards that " 'Bribery is against the law, and you know it. But it's not against the law to make profit, is it? So it can't be against the law for me to bribe someone in order to make profit, can it?' " (337). These are only few examples of Milo's shockingly contradictory moral stances that exemplify the type of insanity that Heller sets out to criticize with this novel.

In spite of the contradictions in his reasoning, it must be noted that, from Milo's viewpoint, it is perfectly logical and legitimate. This sense of conviction in the righteousness of his causes is precisely why Milo should be considered not morally corrupt, but rather morally insane. The way Heller makes a tremendous effort to portray Milo as consistently earnest and innocent, in spite of the criminal nature of his actions, shows that he sees Milo as much as a product of his culture as one of its perpetrators. If Milo arrives at such appalling conclusions, it is only because his basic conscience is conditioned so by the cultural context he lives in. It does not take the reader long to recognize that Milo is ultimately a caricature of not only the American businessman, but also of liberal capitalism and modern economics. The discourse of his country's capitalistic ideals is so deeply instilled in his outlook that it has become his inviolable creeds. Milo is no doubt a serious and devout advocate of his nation's household ideals. Even his syndicate's planes are decorated with “such laudable ideals as Courage, Might, Justice, Truth, Liberty, Love, Honor and Patriotism” (321). Also throughout the novel, he can also be seen impulsively chanting familiar slogans. One of the most outstanding examples is the ubiquitous “what's good for the syndicate is good for the country” (296), which is a deliberate parody of Charles E. Wilson's famous statement about General Motors: “what's good for General Motors is good for the country”. Increasingly the readers can see that one of Milo's moral paradoxes is that he advocates the words of instilled moral ideology so literally that he abandons any commonsensical notion of right and wrong. Seltzer accurately points this out in his criticism “Milo's ‘Culpable Innocence’: Absurdity as Moral Insanity in *Catch-22*”:

...his acts are always within the bounds of the law, and he actually perceive legal loopholes as benign sanctions to encourage creative business ventures... It is obvious that his “rigid scruples” compel him to obey strictly the letter of the law but permit him utterly to disregard the law’s spirit.

This remark is illuminating because it precisely illustrates why Milo emblemizes the type of moral insanity Heller sets out to criticize. Milo might take the text of the law seriously, but he also takes it that any action *not* specified as wrong in that text is right, even though that might contradict the conscience of any sane person. This misinterpreted idealism leads to Milo’s Catch-22 mentality that always allows him to use circular logic to justify his actions. Consequently, Milo’s reasoning is always blatantly logical on the surface, yet simultaneously implies deep moral dubiety. This can be seen in another scene where Milo tries to come up with reasons why the government should purchase the entire crop of his Egyptian cotton:

‘The government has no business in business, and I would be the last person in the world to ever try to involve the government in a business of mine. But the business of government *is* business,’ he remembered alertly, and continued with elation. ‘Calvin Coolidge said that, and Calvin Coolidge was a President, so it must be true...’ (337).

This statement shows not only the Catch-22 logic of Milo’s thinking but also the influence of the society he lives in. Essentially Milo derives justification for his conduct from both circular reasoning and the self-serving sentiment sanctioned by his American president. From his point of view, he simply and rightfully follows the honorable American ideals encouraged by the forefathers. Even though Milo is in no way mentally ill, his blind fixation on the literal meaning of the text also leads to a severe moral disability that, in all sanity, cannot be recognized in any other way but mad.

Unfortunately, the moral disability we find in Milo is, in fact, pathological of his culture. It is no coincidence that the smooth interchange between Milo’s syndicate

and his country in the “what’s good for the syndicate is good for the country” slogan is uncannily similar to Colonel Korn’s remark to Yossarian discussed earlier. This confusion is not conceived out of malice, but of the perverted worldview that has been pervasively perpetuated in his cultural context. At the heart of Milo’s creed is the unquestioned belief in the nationalistic ideal of individual freedom, which somehow results in a perverted and ungrounded yet naive assumption that *fair* trade is equivalent to *free* trade, and that government exists solely for the advancement of private enterprise. Milo himself often unashamedly pronounces this capitalistic spirit: “In a democracy, the government is people... We’re the people, aren’t we? So we might just as well keep the money and eliminate the middleman. Frankly, I’d like to see the government get out of war altogether and leave the whole field to private industry” (329-330). Again, it can be seen that the fallacy of Milo’s thinking is that he interprets the text too literally, which results in his distorted notion of democracy. The idea of democracy as a regime to promote the good of all people is mistaken to be a regime to promote the greed of all people. This contradictory sentiment of liberal capitalism is echoed again close to the end of the novel, where Milo’s black market enterprise has become immensely powerful:

Milo had been earning many distinctions for himself. He had flown fearless into danger and criticism by selling petroleum and ball bearings to Germany at good price in order to make a good profit and help maintain a balance of power between the contending forces. His nerve under fire was graceful and infinite. With a devotion to purpose above and beyond the line of duty, he had then raised the price of food in his mess halls so high that all officers and enlisted men had to turn over all their pay to him in order to eat. Their alternatives – there was an alternative, of course, since Milo detested coercion and was a vocal champion of freedom of choice – was to starve. When he encountered a wave of enemy resistance to this attack, he stuck to his position without regard for his safety or reputation and gallantly invoked the law of supply and demand. And when someone somewhere said no, Milo gave ground grudgingly, valiantly defending, even

in retreat, the historic right of free men to pay as much as they had to for the things they needed in order to survive. (466)

This paragraph is significant because it is an exact representation of Milo's capitalistic dogma and all its contradictions. First of all, Milo's motto "what's good for the syndicate is good for the country" is re-enacted as he fails to see that all the actions which he claims have been done in the name of the country are in fact self-serving and, worse, taking part in extending the war. His solid faith in laissez-faire economics also compels him to justify increasing prices beyond the reasonable and humane point. Yet, ultimately, the most outrageous contradiction of all in this excerpt is how Milo honestly conceives of himself as "a vocal champion of freedom of choice", yet at the same time literally entrap his fellow countrymen in a state of Catch-22 where they effectively have only one choice of buying overpriced food or starving to death. Again, Milo misinterprets the notion of choice. Idealistically, freedom of choice should emancipate people from limitation, yet Milo's warped version of freedom ironically imposes a Catch-22 offer that no one can refuse. They *must* assimilate and become a part of his system, otherwise they will be excluded and cut out from all other resources.

This perverted interpretation of old ideologies found in Milo is tragically symptomatic of twentieth century American culture, as again eloquently put by Seltzer:

That through the course of American history the ideal of freedom should have become so corrupted as to be popularly construed to mean the right to do anything and everything not strictly prohibited by law is perhaps the deepest tragedy of the book.
(82)

This twisted idea of freedom Seltzer suggests here underlines what Heller sees as the fundamental paradox that has brought about moral insanity he finds in modern America. Milo is ultimately a mouthpiece of American business ideals, and the fact that he is portrayed as such a simple and naïve person, whom Heller refers to as a character of "mental and moral simplicity" (Seltzer 85), makes him even more a

dangerous vehicle of his culture's moral insanity, as he lacks Yossarian's complexity of conscience that will otherwise allow him to see the inherent moral conflict that is widely practiced in his world. This fatal irony of Milo's character is probably best summed up by Wayne Charles Miller:

Milo is not an insidious and conniving power-hungry fascist. In fact, it is testament to Heller's genius that he could create a figure simultaneously so innocent and so destructive as his representative of American business values and perhaps capitalism itself. Milo is frightening precisely because he is such a perfect product of the culture. Industrious, competent, pleasant, engaging, sexually moral or perhaps sexless, he is destined for success. In fact, Milo is the kind of son that most American parents wish their boys to be. (Miller qtd. in Seltzer, 85).

The fact that Milo is such an ideal exemplar of American entrepreneurial values, yet at the same time unknowingly poses serious threats to the peace, happiness and wellbeing of others proves once again that it is his culture, if anything, that instill him with such a perverted ideology that ultimately warps his moral growth. Milo can always cite Catch-22 logic and find easy justification in anything he is compelled to do, because he believes it is never wrong for him to make money, an assumption that is not only unquestioned, but also born of and well bred by his culture. This moral deformity of Milo's character, at last, can find its most concrete manifestation in his physique. Heller writes that Milo has "disunited eyes, which never looked at the same thing at the same time." This results in Milo being able to "see more things than most people, but he could see none of them too distinctly" (86). Undoubtedly, Heller's description of Milo's physical attributes here has a figurative connotation. While Milo is a business genius who can always see opportunities before anyone, he totally lacks both the insight to distinguish between serving his country and exploiting it and the vision to prioritize his obligations to humanity before his human greed. This same situation can explain Milo's deviant conception of his syndicate, which finally turns into an amoral institution that takes no moral responsibility whatsoever. Milo might have originally conceived his enterprise as a humanitarian institution where "everybody has a share", affirming the Enlightenment ideal of universal progress for

the good of mankind, but he ironically ends up running a one-man operation that ultimately exists for no one else's benefit but his own.

The logic of Milo's syndicate here is parallel to the paradoxical rationale of the Enlightenment project that has given birth to the era of modernity we live in today. There is no question that the principle that Milo advocates can be traced back to Adam Smith's doctrine of laissez-faire economics back in the age of reason, which rationalized that the self-interest of individuals brings contribution and wealth to the nation. Yet the twentieth century can also be argued as the turning point where the discourse of the Enlightenment, on which the idea of the American Dream and the doctrine of capitalism are founded, finally evolves from "the quest for human emancipation into a system of universal oppression in the name of human liberation" (Harvey 13). Though conceived with the best of intentions, this claim to universal progress is overtly naïve and self-deceptive, as can be in Milo's business strategy. While Milo seems to be an agent of commerce who brings money and economic activity to everywhere he goes, his version of economy is in fact only circular and self-serving. This can be seen most clearly when Milo tries to explain to Yossarian how he conducts his black market business. He shifts the products from place to place in order to build up the price and extend the profit margin, as in his Scotch business: "I move the Scotch here from Malta to make more room for the profit when I sell it back to me for somebody else" (299). It can be seen here that Milo's transaction is circular: he sells the Scotch to Sicily in order to sell it back to himself. His syndicate therefore reflects nothing but the Catch-22 of modern capitalistic economy, where all transactions are essentially the relocation of money within its own system. The notion of forward development and promise of wealth are only illusory, for all the surplus only goes back to the system's ever-expanding self, which does not really benefit anyone but Milo. His "everybody has a share" motto is actually tantamount to nobody has a share, and Milo is shown to be the sole controller of his enterprise, as best signified by the name of the syndicate itself – "M & M Enterprise" which stands for Milo & Minderbinder: "the & was inserted, Milo revealed candidly, to nullify any impression that the syndicate was a one-man operation" (322). When a major from Minnesota confronts Milo demanding the share that Milo claims everybody owns, Milo responds by "writing the words 'A Share' on the nearest scrap of paper and handing it away with a virtuous disdain" (466). These two examples only serve to

illustrate that the idea of universal ownership is only a myth, a meaningless word that signifies nothing and bears no consequences, like the scrap of paper with the words “A Share” on it. Everybody at the end falls prey to Milo’s monopolization of economic power, and he remains blissfully oblivious about the Catch-22 existence he puts his fellow mankind in.

Nevertheless, the ultimate tragedy of the book and the terminal indicator of twentieth century madness is that Milo’s insane economics and his Catch-22 self-justification is not only widely accepted, but also sustained by his very victims, that the majority of people put themselves voluntarily into the position of Catch-22 Milo helps perpetuate. Even though the idea of “everybody has a share” is nothing but a myth, everybody still self-deceptively craves membership of his syndicate because they fear being left out. Every powerless individual frantically yearns for a slice – or an illusion – of power from an institution bigger and more powerful than themselves, even at the cost of individual conscience. The modern world has gone morally mad, because the masses are willing to relinquish their rights and abandon their moral stances to be a part of the hegemonic culture that Heller called “mobs with clubs” (525). It is no surprise then that at the end, Colonel Cathcart or even Milo’s rival ex.P.F.C. Wintergreen are willing to forsake any of their personal feelings towards Milo to become part of his M & M enterprise. Yet Milo is not solely responsible for the condition of his culture. Everybody is guilty of being a perpetrator in the system that at the same time victimizes them and belittle their existence. This is a testament to Foucault’s theory that power moulds everyone, not only its victims, involved in its exercise. The fact that Milo emerges as the most powerful figure in the novel is only because his insane mindset fits perfectly in this insane age. At long last, he is the quintessential embodiment of the full-fledged absurdity and moral insanity in a world where economics and material wealth have replaced religion and spiritual salvation, a state of affairs best and most articulately summarized by Seltzer:

It is no wonder that Milo, the great entrepreneur, becomes something of a world idol in the novel. Stimulating business around the globe, a veritable high priest of commerce, he becomes almost everybody’s hero and is showered with adoration and political titles. ... Exemplifying in caricature form

the monetary drives of most of the populace, Milo is driven by the same socially divisive but culturally endorsed quest for wealth and power. He is therefore not identifiable in the novelistic context either as amoral or immoral. For his morality, rooted firmly in the laws of modern economics, does not really run counter to that of his culture. The crucial point is that Milo is moral according to the absurd, morally insane, standards which prevail; but viewed from any traditional set of ethical norms he is corrupt – exactly as corrupt as the culture whose unofficial but universally practiced ethic he embodies ... If Milo's country allow such outrageous misbehavior to go unpunished ... it is because Milo's acts are in essential conformity with his country's institutional framework. Its gross insensitivity to the lives of its average citizens is an outcome of its wildly discriminatory power structure. (86-87)

3. Catch-22 Dissected: The Anatomy of A Logical Loophole

Since *Catch-22* is first and foremost a social commentary on contemporary America, it is tempting to disregard the work's more abstract theoretical framework regarding madness. In the previous section, the manifestation and exercise of Catch-22 in political, cultural, socio-economic context were thoroughly discussed. It is thus important to dig deeper in the theoretical and philosophical groundwork of the phenomenon Heller famously calls Catch-22, and how it contributes to the symptoms of madness that plagues a culture far deeper than the temporary social level. If anything, the novel's most guilty culprit is arguably not any character in particular, but rather language and Western logocentricism that comes to increasingly and single-mindedly depend on the methodology of logic. This view is echoed by a Heller scholar, Gary W. Davis, whose analysis of the novel is summarized in David Seed's *The Fiction of Joseph Heller: Against the Grain*:

[Davis] concludes that the novel 'expose the meaninglessness of our conventional understanding of discourse and its processes', seeing it as a critique of language which engrosses the characters

themselves: ‘abandoned to a labyrinth of words and appearances, they are elements of a discourse which, referring only to itself, neither comprehends nor controls some “world” beyond’. Davis usefully identifies the fate of language as one of the main themes in the novel, showing that it becomes more and more self-referential. In that sense he sees *Catch-22* as a metafictional world, comparable to the fiction of Nabokov, Borges and Barth. (Seed 53)

This remark of Heller’s criticism of language is crucial to the theme of madness discussed in this thesis. In short, it can be argued that one of Heller’s missions in *Catch-22* is similar to postmodernist writers in his attempt to undermine the credibility and exclusive claim to truths of prevailing discourses in Western culture. One thing must be clear: Heller’s work is far from theoretical. However, his concept of *Catch-22*, which most of the readers apparently respond and adopt to define their own experience to entrapment in the outside world, is already an overt testament to the fundamental flaws and inherent madness in language that the social world has so carelessly used and abused.

First of all, many critics have pointed out that *Catch-22* itself has many elements and methods that are a combination of Absurdist plays and literary nonsense. Caroline Gordon and Jeanne Richardson both agree that *Catch-22* employs the same technique as another paragon of literary nonsense, *Alice in Wonderland*, in the way it consciously plays with the conventions of language and logic to highlight the absurdity of human existence that in every way runs contrary to the way things should be (Seed 56). Similarly, the main characters of both works find themselves in a world dominated by confounding and ludicrous principles that contradict basic common sense. Likewise, *Catch-22* also shares similar views with Absurdist plays in the way they both see language as void of substantial meaning and human existence as trapped in repetitive, cyclical and futile condition. Yossarian finds himself trapped amidst the war and his army whose rationale is bewildering and incomprehensible to him and his combat duty is not any different from a Sisyphean task, doomed to repeat itself in a never-ending circle. With these combined elements, Heller’s novel can be read as performing the same role as the medieval Fool in contemporary culture. Its use of irony, humor, double-talk, unreason and discontinuity resembles the language

of fools in the Shakespearean tradition who serve to expose the limitation of reason and the dark side of civilization. If civilization is intellectually expressed by its prevailing discourses, then Heller's novel sets out to the question the legitimacy of those discourses, undermining them as perpetuated myths with little relation to the absolute truth as they claim. This is illustrated most extensively in the conversation between young idealistic officer Natley and the old Italian man at his whore's apartment. In this whole scene, Natley's optimism and strong beliefs in the dominant discourses of Western civilization, are severely mocked by the seemingly illogical remarks of the old man:

The old man watched him with victorious merriment, sitting in his musty blue armchair like some satanic and hedonistic deity on a throne ... He laughed quietly, his sunken, shrew eyes sparkling perceptively with a cynical and wanton enjoyment. ... Natley reacted on sight with bristling enmity to this wicked, depraved and unpatriotic old man who was old enough to remind him of his father and who made disparaging jokes about America.

'America,' he said, 'will lose the war. And Italy will win it.'

'America is the strongest and most prosperous nation on earth,' Natley informed him with lofty fervor and dignity. 'And the American fighting man is second to none.'

'Exactly,' agreed the old man pleasantly, with a hint of taunting amusement. 'Italy, on the other hand, is one of the least prosperous nations on earth. And the Italian fighting man is probably second to all. And that's exactly why my country is doing so well in this war while your country is doing so poorly.'

Natley guffawed with surprise, then blushed apologetically for his impoliteness. 'I'm sorry I laughed at you,' he said sincerely, and he continued in a tone of respectful condescension. 'But Italy was occupied by the Germans and is now being occupied by us. You don't call that doing very well, do you?'

'But of course I do,' exclaimed the old man cheerfully. 'The Germans are being driven out, and we are still here. In a few

years you will be gone, too, and we will still be here. You see, Italy is really a very poor and weak country, and that's what makes us so strong. Italian soldiers are not dying anymore. But American and German soldiers are. I call that doing extremely well. Yes, I am quite certain that Italy will survive this war and still be in existence long after your own country has been destroyed.'

Nately could scarcely believe his ears. He had never heard such shocking blasphemies before, and he wondered with instinctive logic why G-men did not appear to lock the traitorous old man up. 'America is not going to be destroyed!' he shouted passionately.

'Never?' prodded the old man softly.

'Well... ' Nately faltered.

The old man laughed indulgently, holding in check a deeper, more explosive delight. His goading remained gentle. 'Rome was destroyed, Greece was destroyed, Persia was destroyed, Spain was destroyed. All great countries are destroyed. Why not yours? How much longer do you really think your own country will last? Forever? Keep in mind that the earth itself is destined to be destroyed by the sun in twenty-five million years or so.'

Nately squirmed uncomfortably. 'Well, forever is a long time, I guess.'

'A million years?' persisted the jeering old man with keen, sadistic zest. 'A half million? The frog is almost five hundred million years old. Could you really say with much certainty that America, with all its strength and prosperity, with its fighting man that is second to none, and with its standard of living that is the highest in the world, will last as long as...the frog?'

...

This sordid, vulturous, diabolical old man reminded Nately of his father because the two were nothing at all alike. Nately's father was a courtly white-haired gentleman who dressed impeccably; this old man was an uncouth bum. Nately's father was

a sober, philosophical and responsible man; this old man was fickle and licentious. Nately's father was discreet and cultured; this old man was a boor. Nately's father believed in honor and knew the answer to everything; this old man believed in nothing and had only questions.

...

'I don't believe anything you tell me,' Nately replied, with a bashful mitigating smile. 'The only thing I do believe is that America is going to win the war.'

'You put so much stock in *winning* wars,' the grubby iniquitous old man scoffed. 'The real trick lies in *losing* wars, in knowing which wars can be *lost*. Italy has been losing wars for centuries, and just see how splendidly we've done nonetheless. ... Victory gave us such insane delusions of grandeur that we helped start a world war we hadn't a chance of winning. But now that we are losing again, everything has taken a turn for the better, and we will certainly come out on top again if we succeed in being defeated.'

Nately gaped at him in undisguised befuddlement. 'Now I really don't understand what you're saying. You talk like a madman.'

'But I live like a sane one. I was a fascist when Mussolini was on top, and I am an anti-fascist now that he has been deposed. I was fanatically pro-German when the Germans were here to protect us against the Americans, and now that the Americans are here to protect us against the Germans I am fanatically pro-American...'

'But,' Nately cried in disbelief, 'you're a turncoat! A time-server! A shameful, unscrupulous opportunist!'

'I am a hundred and seven years old,' the old man reminded him suavely.

'Don't you have any principles?'

'Of course not.'

'No morality?'

‘Oh, I am a very moral man,’ the villainous old man assured him with satiric seriousness... (308-312)

This exchange between Nately and the old man is quoted in length because it is a significant scene which best demonstrates Heller’s intention of questioning and deconstructing the metanarratives prevailing in his culture. In this scene, it is obvious that Nately and his old father represent the discourse of civilization, while the old man is their exact foil, the negation of reason and order. Nately’s father, in particular, seems to be an exemplar of an Enlightenment man who “knew the answer to everything”. However, Nately’s affirmation in the supremacy of civilization is severely taunted by the old man, who undermines the progress of human civilization, Western in particular, by comparing it to the animalistic evolution of the frog. While Nately mechanically preaches the discourse of patriotism, which he has long been educated to accept as the unquestionable truth, he is outwitted by the absurd and seemingly illogical argument of the old man. The old man stands at the opposite extreme of moral spectrum from Nately, yet his argument that he is a very moral man despite having no principles challenges Nately’s concept of morality to the very core. Is it possible that someone can be moral without any principles? As Heller seems to demonstrate here, an individual sense of morality does not necessarily co-exist with any particular discourse or school of thoughts which often designate certain inviolable principles. The moral of the old man is, when all is said and done, a conscience whose judgment of right and wrong is not fixed or subscribed to the rules of any discourse in particular, but shifts as facts change. It is not necessarily noble, but it is sane, and the old man’s claim of “living like a sane one” is simply the declaration of an “amoral creed of survival” (Seed 36). Ultimately, this pagan old man, who shares similar moral and intellectual position to Yossarian and the novel itself, can be read as the classic trope of the Fool in Medieval and Renaissance literature whose narrative function is to disrupt the validity and to question the limitation of reason that dominates the social world. Interestingly, if read closely, it is in fact Nately who continuously resorts to the rationale of his ingrained ideology for credibility, citing mechanically empty words about American supremacy yet unable to offer any tangible support to his argument. On the contrary, it is ironically the old man who constantly and rationally supports his arguments with convincing reasons. Such

reversal of roles between civilization and madness is once again *Catch-22*'s another perception of the modern world.

Certainly, like Shakespeare or Faulkner, Heller understands the significance of language or logos in the way men perceive the world and construct their culture. Also, like his predecessors, Heller recognizes language's limitation and inadequacy both as a means of effective communication and as an epistemological tool of knowledge. All human experience is articulated through language that is, in Shakespeare's words, only a tale full of sound and fury that will eventually be silenced with the inevitable reality of death. However, what Heller sees as an alarming symptom of madness in the modern world is that language and logic are no longer acknowledged as a tool of knowledge, a reflection of reality. On the contrary, it has developed an autonomous status and structure, designating its own reality that is progressively divorced from the objective reality it is supposed to represent. Heller sees that the contemporary world has gone insane as it has come to accept this "reality" designated by language as the norm while rejecting common sense and the obvious objective reality in front of it. This point is powerfully illustrated by the "death" of Doc Daneeka. Doc Daneeka's name appears in McWatt's suicidal flight. Since he does not come down on a parachute, he is assumed killed in the crash and therefore officially pronounced dead, even though it is obvious that Doc Daneeka was not on that flight and still walking around the headquarter. "You're dead, sir," said Gus and Wen, Doc Daneeka's enlisted assistants, despite the blatant fact that Doc Daneeka is standing in front of them, alive. The way Heller describes the squadron's reaction to Doc Daneeka's "death" is noteworthy as he emphasizes how the War Department consciously rejects obvious physical reality as "error" and steadfastly verifies his "death" with written accounts:

He found himself ostracized in the squadron by men who cursed his memory foully for having supplied Colonel Cathcart with provocation to raise the number of combat missions. Records attesting to his death were pullulating like insect eggs and verifying each other beyond all contention. ... Colonel Korn sent word through Major Danby that he would have Doc Daneeka cremated on the spot if he ever showed up at Group

Headquarters. ... Not even the chaplain could bring Doc Daneeka back to life under the circumstances. (435)

Davis cites this incident as one of the most outrageous examples of how even the notion as objective as “death” is transformed by language: “This is one of the cases where a character’s name (i.e. a written or bureaucratized version of that character) determines his or her existence” (Seed 53). Doc Daneeka’s death becomes acknowledged by everyone in the squadron and all the authorities, even by his wife Mrs. Daneeka, who is astonished that “so many separate organizations were willing to do so much to bury Doc Daneeka” (435), leaving the surgeon in a state of limbo, trying to prove his existence in vain. Demolished by and from logos, Doc Daneeka’s “death” signifies the ultimate marginalization – eradication from the social world, which collectively discards the common sense of physical reality in favor of the official language or “the administrative accounts of the truth” (Seed 54).

Arguably, the system of official language Heller sees as increasingly problematical and irrational can be compared to Jean Baudrillard’s idea of the simulacrum¹. As evident in the case of Doc Daneeka, the official language shared by the common world has become a simulacrum in its last stage of evolution. The word “death” might originally be conceived to correspond with the reality of dying. But Doc Daneeka’s “death” is purely a technical result of corresponding signs in the simulacrum that is totally divorced from the reality. Increasingly, Heller sees that the language of logic officially accepted by the social world has become an idiosyncratic system that is self-sustained and self-referential in its circularity. This is quintessentially the syntactic structure of *Catch-22* that forms the bull’s-eye of Heller’s target. It is a structure of circular logic that is doomed to repeat itself over and over, void of referent and origins. Even the number “22” itself denotes a mirroring copy that repeats itself so exactly that the sense of origin is lost in the

¹ The simulacrum in Baudrillard’s theory means a copy or a reproduction of the *real* whose evolution is famously explained in these progressive steps: “(1) It is the reflection of a basic reality. (2) It masks and perverts a basic reality. (3) It masks the absence of a basic reality. (4) It bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum” (Baudrillard 6). In short, Baudrillard proposes that, in its last stage of evolution, the simulacrum becomes an autonomous system of signs whose sense of meanings is self-sustained and self-referential, bearing no relation whatsoever to basic reality. This theory is illuminating in the understanding of Heller’s view of language in *Catch-22*.

reproduction. Milo's interpretation of "freedom" can be read as following this pattern, for the word "freedom" has been reproduced in language so that it has become perverted and, finally, lost its original meaning. Milo worships the letter of the law that has been reproduced, both in written and oral form, over and over through times, but the spirit of the law, to which the letter originally refers, has been lost in reproduction. This system of simulacrum in official language is uncannily similar to the linguistic structure of the mad suggested by Foucault which was discussed in the previous chapter. To add insult to injury, this language game is believed by the social world with utter vindication to be true. As demonstrated in the "death" of Doc Daneeka, Heller shows that this is indeed a mad world where everybody can always find ludicrous but undefeatable reasons to validate their belief that two and two equals five - against all good sense.

Unfortunately, the all-justifying language of *Catch-22* has replaced rationality and common sense, becoming a new logos with the common world articulating its concept of "truth" and precipitating its social practices. A physical embodiment of the absurd circularity of the catch can be found in the character of the soldier in white. "(E)ncased from head to toe in plaster and gauze" (16), the soldier in white is connected to two jars with identical and unidentified liquid. One jar is feeding to him through his elbow, the other contains liquid that drains from a zinc catheter, and "(w)hen the jar on the floor was full, the jar feeding his elbow was empty, and the two were simply switched quickly so that the stuff could drip back into him" (17). The symbolism of the character is apparent, as remarked by Seed: "the soldier in white is caught in a circular process which somehow makes him so irrelevant that the suggestion of 'eliminating the middle man' and simply linking the jars together is not at all a facetious irrelevance" (Seed 57). The soldier in white himself is seen as a passive, interchangeable entity that, when the first one dies, the second one arrives in exactly the same fashion – all bandaged and gauzed. The identity of the man beneath the bandage is irrelevant and inconsequential, while the cyclical procedure itself becomes a ritual that remains in the same pattern from the first to the second soldier, and is the only thing that preoccupies the attention of the nurses. All everybody has ever seen of any of the soldier in white is "a frayed black hole over his mouth" (17). This image is indisputably overtly symbolic. This cyclical process is undoubtedly an emblem of *Catch-22* that is continuously reversed in a loop, with the slim rubber

hoses connecting to the soldier's body as its claim on relation to reality. However, as can be seen here, the whole ritual is so repetitively ludicrous and irrational that it is obvious to everyone how irrelevant the soldier himself is in the process. It is merely a futile ritual that the nurses follow mechanically, yet their stubborn refusal to the suggestion to "remove the middleman" shows one thing: as long as some self-deceptive appearance of the connection to reality is maintained, no matter how increasingly irrelevant it has become, that ritual can still find a justification for its practice. Most certainly, the black hole over the soldier's mouth – the only part that people see of him – signifies not only the appalling limitation of human knowledge, but also the void of meaning. At first, when Yossarian and Dunbar exchange suggestions to Nurse Cramer that the first soldier in white might be dead inside, or maybe there is no one there at all and the bandages are just "a joke", their suggestions shock the nurse who calls them both crazy. However, when the second soldier in white returns, Dunbar loses his grip. He tries to peer into the black hole, and cries out in terror that there is no one inside, that "They've stolen him away! ... He's hollow inside like a chocolate soldier" (462). Upon this discovery, Dunbar causes chaos in the ward and, as a result, gets "disappeared" by the authorities. Significantly, Dunbar's questioning of the content and meaning beneath the bandages that the Catch-22 process claims to represent and his "discovery" of its utter emptiness directly disrupt the legitimacy of Catch-22, which has become a new logos. As a result, his minority voice is permanently silenced as the authorities impose a measure on him for causing chaos within its autonomous system. By "disappearing" him, the authorities and their Catch-22 language might either physically kill Dunbar, or, like Doc Daneeka, legally kill him off from their logos, thus obliterating his existence from the social world.

Through the "death" of Doc Daneeka and the soldier in white, Heller shows the power of language in shaping even a basic reality, and how the language itself has assumed its own structure, an act of circular ritual, that is totally divorced from its origin and reality. Like the hollow shell of bandages, words are just the shell of sounds and letters that, when taken out of the initial context, are arbitrarily defined by the language game that bears little or no resemblance to its origins. This point is best illustrated by the comic use of the name of two literary figures "T.S. Eliot" and "Washington Irving". "T.S. Eliot" is first cited out of context by ex.P.F.C.

Wintergreen in response to Colonel Cargill, and consequently interpreted throughout the army as some serious “cryptic message” (51). The same situation is repeated with “Washington Irving”, first utilized as a joke by Yossarian on the letters he censors, and soon adopted by Major Major, who finds out that the official documents signed “Washington Irving” never come back to him. As is obvious to all the readers, the use of Washington Irving’s name is so blatantly irrelevant that it can be interpreted in no other way but comically and fictionally, for he is a historical figure who no longer exists except in name. Yet towards the end of the novel, the chaplain is brutally investigated and persecuted as he is suspected of being “Washington Irving”. Most certainly, these two examples illustrate the ignorance, idiocy and absurdity of bureaucratic mindset and practice. However, at a deeper level, these two are another perfect example of how language has become its own simulacrum. Both “T.S. Eliot” and “Washington Irving” are the specific names that refer directly to two prominent American writers. In other words, they are words that represent the existence of these writers. However, these two names are distorted and dissociated from their original contexts and enter the language game of *Catch-22*. Then, they go through a process of reproduction, as seen from the transmission of “T.S. Elliot” throughout the army, and the way Major Major adopts the signature “Washington Irving” from Yossarian to sign numerous official documents. By the end of the novel, both “T.S. Elliot” and “Washington Irving” have become empty shells of letters and sounds that bear no relation whatsoever to the two writers they were originally specified with.

Although “T.S. Eliot” and “Washington Irving” originate from reality, Heller shows that through the repetitive cycle of language, their connection to reality is lost and they become as fictional and unreal as any word purely conceived from the Imagination. This is Heller’s way of saying that any dominant language game, any ideology and any discourse with its systematic “rationality” will become, at one point in time, a fiction that sustains its certainty and claim to truths only by the unquestioned assumption the social world collectively share. This view is illustrated by the character of the chaplain, a religious and commonsensical man who finally develops doubt over the words of the Bible which he once regarded as absolute truth: “So many things were testing his faith. There was the Bible, of course, but the Bible was a book, and so were *Bleak House*, *Treasure Island*, *Ethan Frome*, and *The Last of the Mohicans*” (362). Here, Heller outrageously challenges the legitimacy of one of

the most influential metanarratives of Western culture. By calling the Bible “a book” like *Treasure Island*, Heller deliberately dismisses the legitimacy of the Bible as another fiction concocted by “people too ignorant to understand the mechanics of rainfall” that can in no way answer “the riddles of creation” (362).

This becomes the final definition of the concept Catch-22, which initially represents “a double bind of mutually exclusive prepositions which trap its victims whichever way they turn” (Seed 58) and is eventually revealed as a cycle of language whose existence and legitimacy is sustained purely by the assumption of the social world. Unquestionably, the novel's hero Yossarian will finally arrive at this painful realization that Catch-22 is nothing but an invention of language sanctioned by the men in power to justify their actions, which, in turn, can never be verified:

Catch-22 did not exist, he was positive of that, but it made no difference. What did matter was that everyone thought it existed, and that was much worse, for there was no object or text to ridicule or refute, to accuse, criticize, attack, amend, hate, revile, spit at, rip to shreds, trample upon or burn up. (516)

This crucial paragraph arrives in the scene of apocalyptic chaos where Rome is bombed and lies in ruins. This setting is significant, for it shows how the totalitarian arrogance implicit in the certainty of reason does not lead the world into prosperity and universal progress as it claims, but ironically plunges the world into a state of total anarchy where men are driven not by rationality and individual conscience, but by animalistic impulses of greed and the mechanical “ruthless sense of rights and dedication” (515) preprogrammed by the Catch-22 language. At last, human civilization has come to negate itself, returning mankind to the state of animality. Evidently, this is one of the key paragraphs in the book, and a definitive verdict of insanity at the macrocosmic level. As Foucault would have agreed, Catch-22 represents nothing but the Unreal premise that the mad world is so faithfully and passionately convinced that it exists. It is a simulacrum of reason, sustained by its own circularity and endorsed by public belief, which replaces the traditional notion of rationality based on common sense. The fact that Catch-22 doesn't exist makes the

climactic revelation of the only “truth” according to Heller all the more poignant and tragic. While almost the entire novel is filled with word play and confounding logic that, as discussed, signifies very little reality, only the repeated image of Snowden keeps expanding until the secret is fully revealed at the end of Chapter IV1. Unlike the “death” of Doc Daneeka and all other conversations in a novel full of wordplay and equivocal reasoning, Snowden’s death is cinematically and candidly described with the raw visual image of the physical horror of his scattered guts – an inevitable truth of human existence beyond any reasoning. It is Snowden who delivers the strongest and most straightforward message in the novel: “Men was matter, that was Snowden’s secret. ... The spirit gone, man is garbage. That was Snowden’s secret. Ripeness was all” (554). Interestingly, this gruesome image of death and chaos that lies underneath the surface of life and order usually occupies the same space as madness outside culture – the negative end of the metaphysical spectrum that human civilization tries to defeat and obliterate in their ruthless quest for progress and eternal truth. However, as can be seen in *Catch-22*, the image of Snowden’s death ironically becomes a reality yardstick that highlights the madness of civilization and its reasons. Here, the reversal is complete. Civilization has gone berserk, and madness is the only oasis left in the desert of insane civilization.

4. Rediscovering Rationality and Salvation: To Counter Madness with Madness

The same criterion of madness must be once again recalled to mind: a madman is one who truly believes two and two equals five. From all the previous discussion, it can be fairly said that Heller’s *Catch-22* is a comment on the insanity, not the hypocrisy, of the twentieth century. Both Milo and Colonel Cathcart do believe fervently in the perfection of their own logic. There is perhaps nothing more insane than a madman who is blind towards his own madness, which is exactly the case for the universe of *Catch-22* where hardly anyone realizes what a mad world they live in: “The only thing going on was a war, and no one seemed to notice but Yossarian and Dunbar. And when Yossarian tried to remind people, they drew away from him and thought he was crazy” (25). Apparently, people who have internalized the mindset of *Catch-22* feel more threatened by “crazy bastard” (144) like Yossarian than by death, as seen from the new officers in Yossarian’s tent: “They were afraid of

Yossarian, but they were not the least bit afraid of Colonel Cathcart's seventy mission" (440).

One is tempted to ask what then is left for a sane individual to do in a world that has gone insane. There are certainly some who lose their minds to the system such as Havermeyer, a lead bombardier who never misses and never "[take] evasive action going in to the target and thereby increase[s] the danger of all the men..." (42). Living in the senselessly cruel world, Havermeyer becomes a sadistic maniac who gains pleasure from the ritual of shooting field mice at night (44). Apart from Havermeyer who has plainly gone mad with the system, there are also some people who still hold on to romantic ideals and traditional values such as Lieutenant Natel, a young man from a wealthy upper-class family who proudly (and stubbornly) transmits American gospels of freedom, prosperity and democracy he has learned from his father. But Heller shows that chivalry has no place in this new world and nor does what we traditionally hold as virtue. Natel cannot find a valid answer to counter the absurd logic (at least to him) of the old Italian man he comes across, neither can he survive the war. The only way an ordinary man can survive, or even escape, this labyrinth of the Catch-22 world is, the novel seems to suggest, to counter insanity with insanity.

In order to get through the insane bureaucracy, normal, sane individuals who love life like Yossarian or Dunbar have to resort to what would be traditionally regarded as insane behaviors. Dunbar decides to prolong his life span by "cultivating boredom" (16), which means all day long "lying motionlessly on his back again with his eyes staring up at the ceiling like a doll's" (16). Likewise, Yossarian's act of defiance that yields the most effective impact on the men of his squadron is not his reasoning (because whenever he talks reason to them, they think he is insane), but his refusal to wear uniform. In a normal world, anyone who roams around naked would definitely be arrested and locked up on the grounds of obscenity. In the novel, Yossarian's decision to go naked may also be beyond everyone's comprehension and thus be deemed as insane, yet it is precisely this incomprehensibility that effectively threatens the stability of the system, as Milo remarks that Yossarian might " 'start a trend' " (338). His unexplainable absurdity also becomes "a brand-new menacing problem" (266) for the crazy Colonel Cathcart, who views Yossarian as a multiplying

virus in his squadron: "A moment ago there had been no Yossarians in his life, now they were multiplying like hobgoblins" (267). Yossarian's naked act not only serves to unsettle the bureaucracy but also, in an uncanny way, becomes a bizarre source of spirituality for the chaplain, who is probably the most pious man left in this twisted world. The chaplain admits that, if it had not been for "the naked man in the tree" (362), he would probably have given up faith in God and surrendered to that confounding logic of modern world.

However, the character that most exemplifies clear sanity under the mask of seemingly insane acts is Orr. Orr bewilders everyone with a series of wildly inexplicable habits, such as stuffing crab apples in his cheeks, or having a prostitute hit him hard on the head with her shoes. Whenever asked *why* he does such things, Orr gives such perplexing answers that even Yossarian gives up the attempt to understand him: "Yossarian found it pretty hard to understand him then, and ... decided not to utter another word. It would be futile. He knew Orr, and he knew there was not a chance in hell of finding out from him then why he had wanted big cheeks" (36). But, finally, when everything is unfolded, he is revealed to be the sanest and most intelligent character of all. who successfully rows his way to Sweden and breaks away from the vicious circle. Every one of his ridiculous habits is in fact cleverly and deliberately designed for this escape scheme. It takes this man with a "look of stupid innocence that nobody would ever suspect of any cleverness" (566) to slap this Catch-22 world in the face and finally illuminate to Yossarian a way out of this quagmire. Even though Yossarian is warned as he is about to leave by Major Danby that he has lost his sense, the novel implies that in the modern world whose madness stems from the very perfection of reason, an ordinary man can never triumph through sense. Therefore, the only weapon they have left is the absolute antithesis of reason, that is, madness. Only through extremely unreasonable and bizarre acts to the point of insanity like those of Yossarian's and Orr's can an individual finally thrive beyond Catch-22. This explains why individual madness, in the latter half of the century, has become the means to salvation against cultural insanity, as witnessed in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

CHAPTER IV

KEN KESEY'S *ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST* AND MADNESS AS A CONTEMPORARY COUNTERCULTURE

1. Overview: The Historical Context and a Comparison with *Catch-22*

Whenever the issue of madness and its relationship to the society is brought up, Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* usually emerges as the prototype of literary texts on the subject. Among the three selected texts, only *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* seems to deal directly with madness and the role of psychiatry. In many ways, it can be argued that *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a foil for *Catch-22*'s, both of which are indispensable to the understanding of madness in contemporary culture. The two novels are dramatically different in scope. *Catch-22* depicts a world where no character is insane by any psychiatric standards, yet, as discussed in the previous chapter, they are all perceptibly mad. Ironically, these morally mad characters are free to roam around the face of the earth. They are equipped with state-of-the-art aircraft to fly from places to places, transmitting their insane logic and becoming the powerful movers and shakers of the world. On the other hand, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* chooses its setting in the closed space of a mental ward in remote Oregon, where the majority of the characters carry the label of "mental patients". They are weak, powerless and confined, yet most are arguably sane and free of the same blind faith in the unreal and self-referential premise that characterizes the characters in *Catch-22*.

Like *Catch-22*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is often regarded as one of the quintessential novels of the American Sixties. It was published in 1962, one year after Heller's. Most certainly, both novels share many characteristics and values that mark them as the unmistakable offsprings of their time. Firstly, both can be read as social commentaries whose subject deals with the existential dilemma of modern man trapped by confounding and heartless circumstances and his struggle to escape. From this perspective, both novels share the same cultural and socio-political ideology that celebrates the individual will and spirit over the order and stability of so-called democratic society. As a result, *Catch-22* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* are

often seen as examples of anti-establishment literature, both questioning the legitimacy of the dominant culture and attacking its mistreatment of individuals. Most certainly, the general theme of a free spirit rebelling against tyrannical authority is a common archetype in Western literature. From Prometheus in ancient Greek mythology and John Milton's portrayal of Satan to the Romantic writers and the avant-garde artists, Western civilization has long embraced varying versions of the unorthodox rebel at odds with the governing rules of his time.

This quintessentially romantic concept considerably faded in the face of the brutal realities of the first half of the twentieth century, but during the turbulent decade of the Sixties, it was fully resurrected and became a widespread cultural phenomenon in both politics and arts. It is therefore not a mere random coincidence that both *Catch-22* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* simultaneously depict not only the plight of the modern individual, but also the fight to break away from a demeaning existence. Yet, despite sharing a similar ideology, *Catch-22* initially received a lukewarm response from both critics and readers before it came to gain full recognition and praise during the Vietnam War. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, on the other hand, was an immediate success and landed as a cultural phenomenon upon its release and later spawned theatrical and cinematic adaptations. In retrospect, *Catch-22* seems to have better stood the test of time, giving birth to a new concept in English language that remains relevant and irreplaceable in contemporary culture. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, in contrast, seems somewhat dated since its heyday in the Sixties. Though sharing the same basic beliefs, the different fates of *Catch-22* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* indicate some major differences between the two novels. A reflection of the post-McCarthy era in the guise of World War II settings, *Catch-22*'s tone and black humor might seem at first too sardonic and cynical for the prevailing romantic sentiment of the 1960s flower children, but slowly it came to be viewed as a precise depiction of the increasingly insane realities. Conversely, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* spoke more directly to its generation, especially in terms of social concern, aesthetics and, most importantly, the perception of what is traditionally regarded as madness. The focus and power of Kesey's masterpiece can thus never be fully understood if separated from its context. Its message, attitude and sensibilities are primarily and distinctively related to the socio-political, cultural and intellectual trends emerging specifically in the Sixties era.

One of the first terms commonly used to describe the connection between *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and the cultural phenomenon of the Sixties is “psychedelic”. It is a well-documented piece of trivia that Kesey participated in a government-supported experiment on psychedelic drugs, which became the source of the inspiration for his celebrated novel. Even when he describes the illustration sketches he used for his novel, Kesey singles out the experience: “Psychedelic sixties. God knows that whatever that means it certainly meant for more than drugs: though drugs still work as a pretty good handle to the phenomena... This was, after all, the sixties” (vii-viii). Kesey’s specific remark about the connection to his time and the use of psychedelic drugs is significant, as it reflects a changing perception of how the mind works. The youth of the sixties, like their Romantic forefathers, saw the cold logic and rationality of their parents in the Fifties as a limitation to the higher truth. They sought to expand the mind not only by mere imagination but also by drug-induced hallucination – a condition traditionally attributed to madness. This view of the quest for truth is best epitomized by Chief Bromden’s famous sentence: “But it’s the truth even if it didn’t happen” (8). From this short sentence at the very beginning of the novel, Kesey establishes the whole novel as the equivalent of a psychedelic experience. Influenced by the impact of the novel and its author’s real-life story, LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs became a spiritual vehicle that was at first limited to a small circle of intellectuals and artists, but fast found its way into the mainstream of American popular culture. Psychedelia became not only a phenomenon but a culture, in which Kesey himself was one of the leading prophets. The democratization of the drugs brought about the prominent role of emerging youth culture in pushing the general perception of madness beyond the traditional definition. Any inherently sane person can experience, through the use of mind-expanding drugs, the schizophrenic hallucination that normally belongs to the madman’s privileged realm. Whether LSD produces an insight to truth or mere psychosis is not as important as the fact that it opens the door to endless psychological possibilities that normally would be censored as fits of madness by the rational faculty. The increasing numbers of people who experienced this temporarily altered state of mind inevitably shifted the framework of reality and brought about the questioning and reinterpretation of the slippery phenomenon of madness.

Apart from its association with psychedelic culture, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is also often regarded as part of the literary canon of the Hippie movement. Although psychedelic experience was one important aspect of the Hippie scene, the movement itself stretched much further than the use of hallucinogenic drugs to sociopolitical, intellectual and spiritual reformation. Its traces in the novel are abundant, from its hostile attitude towards social conventions and authority – collectively called “the Combine” in the novel, and most obviously in its mythic portrayal of its hero – Randall P. McMurphy. While *Catch-22* does exhibit some of the same elements, it is the narrative undertone of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* that makes it a more typical Hippie narrative than Heller's work. As discussed in the previous chapter, Heller may criticize the institutions as incompetent and essentially insane, yet he also portrays the system's perpetrators, such as Milo and Colonel Cathcart, as comic figures who are for the most part blissfully unaware of their crimes. They are seen rather as products of the warped system than ill-willed and sadistic villains, and Yossarian's desperate attempt to escape from them is not because of romantic sense of freedom but for his mere survival. On the other hand, the Big Nurse in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is portrayed outright as a menacing villain who stands for the cruelty and tyranny of the heartless system that utilizes the excuse of social order to imprison the spirit and individuality, while McMurphy, an ex-conman whose indulgence in what is normally regarded as decadence like gambling, alcohol and sex, is portrayed as a libertine savior who brings the wind of change into the ward's politics. The overwhelming sense of romanticism in the portrayal of McMurphy's character coincides with the Hippie philosophy that favors personal freedom, defiance of conventions and establishments, and acceptance of behaviors deviant from the social norms. As such, Kesey and his wildly popular novel were both the products of the era, as well as influential precursors of the 1960s cultural scenes. The youth of the time found themselves in perfect resonance with McMurphy's liberal thinking and rebellious streak. In spite of many character flaws that would have traditionally render him more as an antihero, McMurphy was instead received by the readers of his time as a noble champion of the emerging counterculture, whose values stood opposed to those of established convention.

These are the traits that immediately identify *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and its author Kesey as authentic figures of the 1960s and the rise of a counterculture. Because of the novel's straightforward attack on the tyranny of dominant culture and the well-known anecdote about its author's involvement in popularizing psychoactive drugs, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* has often received the criticism that it too is a simple-minded piece of propaganda with a one-dimensional, clear-cut morality. Like the counterculture movement, the novel has been misunderstood as another simplistic and manipulative parable of social control and personal freedom that endorses the Hippie era's unrealistic utopian political outlook and alleged penchant for excess, overindulgence and lack of social responsibility. Many critics have also argued quite rightly that the novel does not give an accurate portrait of mental patients or a profound contemplation on the reality of their disturbed psyche, suspecting that Kesey only uses them to advance his own anti-establishment agenda. While these accusations are not totally ungrounded, it should be noted that Kesey is writing a novel, not an encyclopedia for the American Psychiatric Association. His intention in writing the novel itself is not to investigate the practice of psychiatric treatment in scientific terms, but to question the underlying mindset that brought about the pervasive notion of the mad as being afflicted by some disease that can be "fixed" in the first place. Despite its many obvious shortcomings, Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* emerges as a highly influential text that altered the way the American public view psychiatric institutions. The novel is also responsible for discrediting the lobotomy, highly popular in the states where an estimated 40,000 persons underwent the procedure, forcing it from out of public favor to near extinction. Kesey's novel and the counterculture it helped precipitate might arguably be laden with the cultish ideologies of its tempestuous times, but they undeniably contributed to many significant, though some unapparent, social, cultural and intellectual changes in American history in the latter half of the twentieth century. They undoubtedly created a new liberated stance for society, evoking the rights of and acceptance for formerly marginalized groups of the society, from women and gays to blacks and other ethnic minorities. Conventions and knowledge of the past are now not mindlessly inherited without question, and many behaviors and experience differing from the social norms are no longer condemned as deviant or corrupt, but are considered as an alternative. This paradigmic shift of cultural and social order, due to the role of counterculture in the sixties, arguably affects the general perception of

what had been defined by the medical model as madness. Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is therefore another indispensable text in the study of how the changing perception of madness reflects the shift of social structure, and an important link that helps explain how madness arose from a muffled voice in the early part of the century and resumed its power in the public imagination of today.

2. Madness and Its Relationship with the Society in the Age of Psychiatry

2.1 Psychiatry in the Light of Sociology: The Echo of Michel Foucault and Thomas Szasz

“As readers of Kesey's novel,” writes Robert E. Rosenwein, “we are accustomed to thinking of insanity as a form of sickness, as a form of ‘mental illness’ which should be dealt with in the medical model, with diagnosis, treatment, and cure. We see it as quite natural that the mentally ill should be isolated in places called ‘hospitals’ where they can be taken care of. ... Moreover, we are conditioned by the medical model to focus on the individual and to view his insanity as a personal problem, one which needs to be solved or cured” (Rosenwein 41). The “medical model” as described by Rosenwein here has been monopolizing the way Western culture views madness from the late 19th century until even today's context, where the majority of people still see madness as a form of illness, and madmen present a major social problem and a threat. In the introduction to *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Robert Faggen echoes the same observation while adding that the 1950s was a period when psychiatry was at the height of its powers in the American imagination. Psychiatrists were seen as “knights of reason and order saving damsels from the proliferating dragons of the mind” (ix). Yet, the exclusive authority of psychiatry in defining madness was to be challenged at the dawn of the 1960s, when psychiatrists and their practices came to be seen as the dragons themselves. In this introduction, Faggen also mentions two intellectuals whose thoughts were to become enormously influential in the perception of madness in the last few decades – Thomas Szasz and Michel Foucault. Szasz's most influential work, *The Myth of Mental Illness*, was published in 1960, alleging that the idea of mental illness is simply a myth concocted by doctors for their own advancement, and psychiatry is nothing but a device of social control masquerading as pseudo-science. Foucault, on the other hand, published his

Folie et deraison: histoire de la folie a l'age classique in 1961, proposing the same position regarding the modern conception of madness as mental illness. These theories advanced by Szasz and Foucault have been thoroughly discussed in the previous chapters. Both *The Sound and the Fury* and *Catch-22* hint that madness is far from a physical reality, but a relative condition that must be situated within a context. Yet it is Kesey's novel that seems to be the most blatantly fictionalized (and somewhat simplified) version of Szasz's and Foucault's theories. It is not merely random coincidence that Szasz, Foucault and Kesey all published their influential works around the same time in history. These simultaneous dates of publication in the early 1960s indicate a major shift in the cultural and intellectual paradigm with regard to madness. During the decade, all kinds of social institutions, ideologies and discourses that dominate the mindset of a culture were called into question, including science and medicine. Although still a powerful establishment, psychiatry was viewed with increasing doubt for the way it defines madness. Choosing the mental ward in the State of Oregon as his backdrop, Kesey directly critiques psychiatric interpretation and the treatment of the mad.

In essence, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a social commentary, and Kesey does not delay in making his argument clear that "society is what decides who's sane and who isn't" (44). We might have already seen from Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* how Benjy Compson is unfairly excluded and silenced by society because he does not share its logos. Nevertheless, there is never an attempt to rationalize or convert him in the novel. He is left ignored or, at most, threatened with confinement when he makes too much noise. On the other hand, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* echoes what Foucault sees as a crucial change in the modern conception of madness, from an ontological negation of sense and reason to a form of illness, deviancy or deficiency which can be cured or corrected. A new field of study like psychiatry demystifies the complexity of the psyche and reduces humans to objects that can be "fixed", "adjusted" or "reconditioned". This prevailing attitude about madness, in modern time, is reflected by the narrator Chief Bromden as he attempts to describe and classify the patients in his ward:

One side of the room younger patients [are] known as Acutes because the doctors figure them still sick enough to

be fixed ... Across the room from the Acutes are the culls of the Combine's product, the Chronics. Not in the hospital, these, to get fixed, but just to keep them from walking around the streets, giving the product a bad name ... What the Chronics are - or most of us - are machines with flaws inside that can't be repaired ... (13-14)

Perceptibly, the key word in this quoted excerpt is 'fixed' or its synonym 'repaired'. The paradigmatic function of the asylum has changed from a house of confinement to a house of correction. Indeed, there are still some - like the Chronics - who are kept confined, but that is only because they are beyond repair. They are kept "out of sight, out of mind" so the majority in society can maintain its feeling of security and stability.

But there comes the question: what, then, set the standard for a person to be fixed? Here is where the heart of Kesey's social criticism lies. The concept of "normality" is as culturally constructed as the concept of madness, and what are usually regarded as "moral codes" and "normal social behaviors" are usually set by the dominant majority in society. Psychiatric practices are therefore merely a device of social tyranny masquerading as science to justify the public's already-decided definition of insanity and to maintain order in society, as the most articulate patient Harding comments, "I don't think you fully understand the public, my friend; in this country, when something is out of order, then the quickest way to get it fixed is the best way" (163). But if psychiatry is only a means of social control, it is not any different from laws or the constitution and is not worth speculating about. The reason why psychiatry has become such a widespread cultural phenomenon in spite of the existing legal system suggests that the different social machinations are at work. Bromden, too, recognizes this function of the mental institution as a tool for social control: "The ward is a factory for the Combine. It's for fixing up mistakes made in the neighborhoods and in the school and in the churches ... When a completed product goes back out into society, all fixed up good as new, *better* than new sometimes" (36). The "order" that psychiatry and its practice seeks to establish seems to extend beyond the basic moral rules to ideological uniformity, be it political, economic, cultural or even sexual. This explains Bromden's use of the word "factory" to call the mental

ward, as it connotes how the general society no longer sees its individual member as a human being, but as a product or commodity that needs to pass certain quality standard. The dominant culture somehow seems to feel that merely laws is no longer adequate to enforce its fixed idea of the ideal society. What is needed now is homogeneity and psychotherapy comes in here not just to make things right but also to make things *alike*.

The word 'order' therefore hints at a curious undertone that is often equated with mindless uniformity, and the success of psychiatric treatment is measured by its success in transforming a patient into another sheep in the herd. Something that is “out of order”, as Harding says, does not even have to be a criminal act or behavior, but just any disruption of social uniformity. This is clear in the scene where Bromden tells the readers about how some patients are sent over to the Disturbed section of the ward for “an installation”:

Sometimes a guy goes over for an installation, leaves the ward mean and mad and snapping at the whole world and comes back a few weeks later with black-and-blue eyes like he'd been in a fist fight, and he's the sweetest, nicest, best-behaved thing you ever saw. He'll maybe even go home in a month or two, a hat pulled low over the face of a sleepwalker wandering round in a simple, happy dream. A success, they say, but I say he's just another robot for the Combine and might be better off as a failure... (16)

This paragraph is laden with negative criticism of social institutions. It can be seen that a man who has his fate decided and is sent off to the Disturbed does not have to have done anything in particular that violates the laws of the society. Instead, if he is merely angry and discontented at the condition of the world and how it operates, he is seen as a threat that needs to be fixed. But the product of the “fixing process” that is deemed a “success” is just a sleepwalker who might be “sweetest, nicest, best-behaved” at the cost of his autonomic mind. He is no longer a rational individual, but a “robot for the Combine” that mindlessly follow its pre-installed ideology. This can also be seen in another prime case, that of Maxwell Taber, one of the most rebellious

patients in the history of Nurse Ratched's ward. From a hell-raiser who demands to know what the medicine he is forced to take is (a demand which shows clear signs of his sanity), Taber is treated with several violent procedures and comes out a nice man who fits well in his "nice little neighborhood" and becomes "an inspirational figure to the youth of our fine community" (36). In this light, Kesey sees that psychiatric therapy is not a humanitarian treatment for the ill, but a vehicle for converting nonconformists into what Robert Faggen calls the "monolithic dream of success" (xvii).

Psychiatry also plays a more significant role as a powerful administrative tool for a democratic country like America. Unlike totalitarian countries, America is a nation proud of its democratic and liberal tradition where the enforcement of any tyrannical regime to keep its people conforming to one dominant ideology is not only unconstitutional but also unthinkable abhorrent. Yet there have been some major historical events in America's brief history – namely the Salem Witch Trials and the vehement campaign against alleged communists during the early 1950s, also known as McCarthyism (and some might say, the war against terrorism in the last few years) – that also hint at the nation's deep-seated fear and insecurity towards "the others" who do not conform to its accepted norms and ideology – its "American ways". This is one of the fundamental paradoxes of America, and also why psychiatry is its most powerful and effective administrative tool. As a newborn nation, America has been striving for its own identity distinct from its European roots. While being a democratic regime in politics has constantly been one of its essential characteristics, America has also tried to define itself in social, economic and cultural terms. From this has come the national ideology of the American Dream, which firmly asserts that anyone can succeed through the ethic of hard work regardless of their origin or class. However, as the nation blossomed to economic prosperity at the end of the Second World War, the general notion of the American Dream was transformed into the middlebrow ideology of the 1950s with the trademark image of a nuclear family in an idyllic suburban house with a white picket fence. Family values, communal spirit and professional advancement together form a distinctively post-war American ideology. The greatest irony which Kesey aims to point out here is that, in this self-proclaimed "land of the free", everyone is alleged to be legally free to seek his own version of happiness outside the image of this ideology but in reality, a hidden machinery is

sinisterly working, always ready to punish and ostracize anyone who does not subscribe to the majority's monotonous ideal of external environment. Since America is a democratic country, the only legitimate means of enforcing conformity on its citizens without violating the democratic constitution lauding the idea of freedom is to use something seemingly objective and indisputable such as facts and science. Psychiatry, with its origins and methodology rooted in medicine, is cited as a factual science that can legitimately solve what the majority regards as social problems.

The fact that America is a democratic country whose ideologies are all the best-sounding discourses, means there is no particular guilty party to place blame upon. Interestingly, this explains why Kesey shrewdly chooses the word "the Combine" to refer to all the external forces working to convert individuals into one single orthodoxy. Early in the novel, Bromden explains that he sees "the Combine" as a "huge organization that aims to adjust the Outside" (25). The Combine is not just the law, the constitution, the economic corporations or any establishment in particular. It is not even psychiatric institutions such as the one depicted in the novel. It is all the external forces, visible and invisible, *combined* together to adjust an individual to fit into the society's grand scheme. When Bromden first muses about the Combine's hidden machines, the reader is led to think that it might be simply an hallucination. Yet, it can be increasingly seen that Bromden's schizophrenic narrative is highly insightful in a symbolic sense. In the novel's ward, there are many machines working to convert the individual into a desirable product of society. The most extreme ones range from electroshock, which Bromden blatantly calls "filthy brain-murdering room that the black boys called the 'Shock Shop' " (15), to lobotomy. Through the eyes of Chief Bromden, Kesey makes it clear that he envisions these "medical" procedures as machines that might be technologically marvelous and effective, yet also ruthless and inhuman: "It's not a will-power thing anymore when they get to my temples. It's a ... *button*, pushed..." (7). Like Yossarian in *Catch-22*, all patients in the microcosm of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* are subjected to a trap that renders their free will irrelevant. Worse still, such brutal and tyrannical treatment is protected and legitimized under the discourse of science. While the electrotherapy and lobotomy represent the most brutal measures, a milder machine the Combine uses to work dissidents into conformity manifests itself in the form of "Therapeutic Community". At the time of the novel's publication, Therapeutic

Community was a widespread practice seen as a benign means of helping the misfits adjust to their society. Yet, as Kesey sees it, this is just another machine of ideological and spiritual control, as commented by the Chief:

I've heard of that theory of the Therapeutic Community enough times to repeat it forwards and backwards – how a guy has to learn to get along in a group before he'll be able to function in a normal society; how the group can help the guy by showing him where he's out of place; how society is what decides who's sane and who isn't, so you got to measure. ... He tells how the goal of the Therapeutic Community is a democratic ward, run completely by the patients and their votes, working toward making worth-while citizens to turn back Outside onto the street. ... Our intention, he usually ends by saying, is to make this as much like your own democratic, free neighborhoods as possible – a little world Inside that is a made-to-scale prototype of the big world Outside that you will one day be taking your place in again. (44)

This cited paragraph is significant for it shows how Kesey views this psychiatric practice as “a trick of coercion that pretended to help people by and for the democratic common good but served only the tyranny of the mediocre majority” (Faggen xi). The key word in this paragraph is “democratic”, which is cited as the prime objective for the practice, but is in fact nothing more than a hollow shell of word that bears no real meaning. Instead, it exposes the fundamental irony that lies under the rationale of psychiatry practiced in America. While lauding the idea of freedom, one is not really free to pursue one's own version of happiness if it differs from the dominant definition. Again, Maxwell Taber can be used as an example. At first a free spirit who questions the legitimacy of the authorities, he is made “a new man” who can adjust to his surroundings, “sliding across the land with *welded* grin, fitting into some nice little neighborhood...” (36, emphasis mine).. Above all, he is made to be “happy with it” and afterwards, becomes an agent for social ideology himself: “he adjusts them like he was adjusted. This is the way they spread it” (36). Here, Kesey makes his case clear that the “happiness” of Taber is artificially and

mechanically forced on to him, and psychiatric treatments are nothing but a dehumanizing lobotomy of individual spirit. Far from being therapeutic, the rationale of psychiatry is not to encourage men to think for themselves. Its products possess no moral inclination – whether good or evil, they obediently and amorally follow social convention. Its ultimate achievement is measured from the way it turns men into hollow transmitter of social ideology, not rational, independent individuals as claimed. This is another Catch-22 of modern American society. Anybody who strays from the majority's path to happiness is mad, or *should* consider themselves as one of the mad - both of which are equally the case for almost all the Acutes in Kesey's novel.

In the novel, the Acutes are in particular the most fascinating crowd in the ward. They might not be the most well-behaved group of people in the universe, but at least their sanity is indisputably intact. Some even approach an impressive level of intelligence like the college-educated Harding. Yet they are gathered together in this mental ward because presumably something is 'wrong' with them, a presumption that is either imposed on them or, more viciously, insinuated into them by the others. But Kesey points out that here the external judgment from the society seems now a minor case compared to the internalization of socially defined insanity among those who feel that they do not fit in. Almost all the Acutes are perfectly functioning human beings who are not judged, but are made to feel that they are somehow mad because they cannot conform to somebody else's idea of the rightful path. Someone like McMurphy who has committed some minor offence apparently does not have much choice but to be officially 'diagnosed' (a technical term that implies science's attempt to rationalize madness) as a psychopath: " 'He told me that "psychopath" means I fight and fuh - pardon me, ladies - means I am he put it *overzealous* in my sexual relation' " (42). What is noteworthy about McMurphy's diagnosis here is how 'psychopath' has become a household term to regard the new madman instead of another close-sounding term like 'psychotic'. While psychosis fairly objectively connotes a type of mental disorder, the term 'psychopath' directly connotes a relationship with the society, a brief definition of which is given by McMurphy as certain disturbing behavior regarded as threat to social stability. Rosenwein also echoes the same observation when he writes of McMurphy:

Part of McMurphy's threat to Big Nurse is his threat to an ideology which seeks to pin people down in narrow, rigidly defined roles and positions. McMurphy is a wanderer, a loner, an opportunist. One can imagine that superintendents in the early asylum would have perceived McMurphy as the perfect example of the problems for which the asylum were created. Today, of course, he is called "psychopathic." (45)

The "ideology" that Rosenwein points out here is a rigid social hierarchy that designates a role all individuals must comply with to play or as Harding puts it that they now live in the world where they are made into 'rabbits' and they have to be there in the ward because they cannot adjust themselves to the "rabbithood" assigned to them by the society.

This is another rationale for the asylum. Not only that a man has to learn to take social responsibility and be a part of the socioeconomic community, he also has to know or learn what his place is in the society. Interestingly, Harding's remark about "rabbithood" exposes another profound hypocrisy in American society. The American Dream's promise of freedom and equality in rising above one's station is nothing but a myth, because in reality, there is still a social hierarchy that cannot be violated for the sake of communal peace. It does not matter who you think you are, it is what the society thinks you are. One has to play by the rules and accept the role and the identity assigned to one, or else be ignored, ostracized and labeled as mad by society. This is most apparent in the case of Bromden and his father. Once a big and powerful man, Bromden realizes that it is the world that has started ignoring him, luring him into thinking that he might actually be deaf and dumb: "it wasn't me that started acting deaf: it was people that first started acting like I was too dumb to hear or see or say anything at all ... even as far back as grade school I can remember people saying that they didn't think I was listening, so they quite listening to the things I was saying" (179). Madness then becomes the sum of all fears for the Combine to work into the psyche of any individual who is big and will not give in like Bromden's father and McMurphy: "They don't bust you that way; they work on you ways you can't fight! They put things in! They *install* things. ... And if you *fight* they lock you someplace and make you stop" (189). To Kesey, this internalization of

fear and madness seems to be the most vicious - and most effective - controlling tool of all. It shows how civilization has come a long way from simply locking misfits inside an asylum and giving them animalistic treatments to install fear and paranoia inside them and make them submit themselves for “fixing”. This can be argued to be what Kesey sees as the post-war definition of brutality, because the weapon of psychiatry is not aimed at the body but at the internal soul altogether: “The Big Nurse recognizes this fear and knows how to put it to use” (17).

2.2 McMurphy and the Big Nurse: the Battle between Madness & Civilization

Although *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* can be considered a quintessential literature of the 1960s counterculture, it can also read as a simple parable. At its most basic, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a retelling of two ancient myths. Considering the extensive use of capital letters in the novel - the Big Nurse, the Combine, the Outside World - it would not be too far-fetched to infer that the novel can also be read as symbolic. If we consider Chief Bromden the narrator as the focal point, then this novel is a Bildungsroman - a tale of Everyman's spiritual journey with McMurphy and Nurse Ratched as the two major catalysts. But if one focuses on the two opposing forces that bring about the novel's central conflict, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is an allegory about its battle between two opposing forces. Many critics have proposed that the novel is similar to a morality play with the battle between good and evil, with Nurse Ratched as the vicious villain and McMurphy as a Christ-figure who sacrifices himself for others. While there are many overt references to Christ in the description of McMurphy, such as when he asks “Do I get a crown of thorns?” (244) before receiving electrotherapy, there are also many ambiguous areas that to conclude that this novel is about good versus evil is simplistic and inadequate. On one level, this can be also be read as a familiar archetypal story about a free-spirited individual rebelling against authority in the world he/she lives in. In this light, therefore McMurphy can be seen to be in the same league as Prometheus, Jesus and other rebellious characters who stood up against the tyranny of the authority. But perhaps the mythical figure McMurphy comes closest to resembling is not exactly Christ but more probably Milton's Satan, who daringly rebels against the tyranny of heaven. In addition, McMurphy's debauchery – his lust, his greed, his pride – epitomizes everything that run against old Christian values. On

the other hand, Nurse Ratched is presented as strict and disciplined, a model citizen who devotes her life to helping society. Yet it is also seen that she is a tyrannical ruler who is fixated on having unquestioned power over others. In this light, it is not too far-fetched to say that *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* essentially represents the battle between the free spirit and the tyrannical institution.

Yet, at another level, it can also be argued that Kesey's novel is about the dialectics between madness and civilization. The metaphysical contradictions between the two lead to a complex and delicate relationship which has long been, in a Foucauldian sense, a struggle of power throughout Western civilization. In this light, Nurse Ratched is not just a clear-cut villain who represents the fascism of the society in Kesey's time. Instead, she embodies, at the deepest level, the destructive and oppressive force behind the progress of civilization. In Kesey's portrayal, the fundamental contradictions of Nurse Ratched's characters are obvious and they all echo the same contradictions underneath the foundation of civilization pointed out by Foucault. Outwardly, the Big Nurse's physical appearance is neat, precise and delicate, yet some curious contradictions can also be spotted right away:

Her face is smooth, calculated and precision-made, like an expensive baby doll, skin like flesh-colored enamel, blend of white and cream and baby-blue eyes, small nose, pink little nostrils – everything working together except the color on the lips and fingernails, and the size of her bosom. A mistake was made somehow in manufacturing, putting those big, womanly breasts on what would of otherwise been a perfect work, and you can see how bitter she is about it. (6)

This quoted physical appearance of the Big Nurse is significant in the way it foreshadows her moral contradictions seen later on in the novel. From her smooth appearance, it can be seen that Nurse Ratched is the embodiment of order and discipline, and a contrast to McMurphy's unruly red hair and rugged face. Her polished appearance alone is a visual symbol of the ideals Western civilization has long been working to achieve: cleanliness, orderliness, efficiency, self-control and sophistication. Yet her otherwise "perfect" exterior is undermined by two major

distractions: the color of her lips and fingernails, and her hidden bosom. The color of her lips and fingernails, to start with, hints at something artificial and ominously inhuman in her smooth and peaceful appearance. Firstly, it is described as being a “funny orange” that resembles “the tip of a soldering iron. Color so hot or so cold if she touches you with it you can’t tell which” (4). This is one of the first few details that give the readers a glimpse of Nurse Ratched’s moral ambiguity. Despite her seemingly delicate guise, like her baby doll face and her enamel skin, the color of burning iron on her lips and fingernails implies her destructive and punishing power. It is also noteworthy that this funny orange is only seen on her lips and fingernails – two major body parts that symbolize her means of control and destruction. As seen later in the novel, Nurse Ratched predominantly uses her words to insinuate fear into the patients, while her fingernails indicate her hand in ordering the brutal handling of the patients. Yet the contradictory appearance between doll-like delicacy and inhuman brutality is further undermined by another noticeable feature: her giant bosom which she hides under her starched white uniform. This physical detail, as revealed later on in the novel, is far more than a grotesque caricature, for it represents Nurse Ratched’s natural origins and repressed sexuality. The fact that she is bitter about the size of her bosom and tries to hide any trace of womanhood, like the way Bromden comments that her bag contains only mechanical parts she uses for her duties instead of “compact or lipstick or woman stuff”, mirrors the way Western civilization has a long history of resentment towards sexuality and has made constant attempts to eradicate any trace of its natural, animalistic root.

Physical attributes are only the first glimpse into Nurse Ratched’s contradictory and mechanical nature. Increasingly, the readers can see that the Big Nurse composes herself and operates this way in a highly mechanical manner. Beyond her own appearance, Nurse Ratched also sets her life to bring about the world order. “The Big Nurse tends to get real put out if something beeps her outfit from running like a smooth, accurate, precision-made machine. ... And she don’t relax a hair till she gets the nuisance attended to – what she calls “adjusted to surroundings” (25). The keyword to Nurse Ratched is, of course, “adjust”, which is not limited only to herself and the patients she shows a condescending attitude towards but also to everything around her, including her professional peers, as Bromden remarks

What she dreams of there in the center of those wires is a world of precision efficiency and tidiness like a pocket watch with a glass back, a place where the schedule is unbreakable and all the patients who aren't Outside, obedient under her beam, are wheelchair Chronicles with catheter tubes run direct from every pantleg to the sewer under the floor. Year by year she accumulates her ideal staff: doctors, all ages and types, come and rise up in front of her with ideas of their own about the way a ward should be run, some with backbone enough to stand behind their ideas, and she fixes these doctors with dry-ice eyes day in day out, until they retreat with unnatural chills. (26)

What this cited excerpt suggests is that Nurse Ratched's maniacal impulse to control extends beyond her subordinates, including her patients, to everything in the world around her. It also reveals the tyrannical, intolerant and manipulative nature of her personality and principles, which run in contrast to her claim of public service. Her strict ward regime is often juxtaposed with the seemingly caring and well-intended words the Big Nurse often speak to her patients: " 'Please understand: We do not impose certain rules and restrictions on you without a great deal of thought about their therapeutic value. A good many of you are in here because you could not adjust to the rules of the society in the Outside World...I tell you this in hoping you will understand that it is *entirely for your own good* that we enforce discipline and order" (170).

This particular quotation is evidence of how she can be read as the embodiment of civilization, especially in the modern era whose mindset is heavily derived from the Enlightenment. The Big Nurse's logic spoken in her own words here mirrors the fundamental paradox under the discourse of the Enlightenment. She simply reasons that her rigid discipline and enforcement is necessary for the patients' ultimate well-being and freedom, in the same way as the Enlightenment project uses the logic of universal progress to dominate the Other and banish anything not in its plan – including madness. Here, the association between Nurse Ratched and the paradigm of modern Western civilization is clear. Her discourse, like the discourse of the Enlightenment, masks the logic of domination and oppression under the

impressive ideals of common good and moral progress. Though initially conceived with humanistic concern and utter optimism, Nurse Ratched perfectly epitomizes how post-Enlightenment civilization has been perverted from its original intention. Kesey's vision of Nurse Ratched as the embodiment of Western civilization seems to ring true particularly in the twentieth century. By the time Kesey wrote the novel, the world had seen how the cold, mechanical rationality and fanatical quest for world order, fueled by a deep-seated impulse to power, had led mankind first not only to unimaginable atrocities of the two World Wars, with its death camps and atomic bombs, but also to paranoia and fear during the Cold War and McCarthyism. Although her authority is on a much smaller scale, Nurse Ratched's power is similarly oppressive and destructive. Raymond M. Olderman insightfully compares Nurse Ratched's ward to T.S. Eliot's vision of the wasteland. This comparison is illuminating, especially viewed in the light of how civilization progresses. Set in the closed, claustrophobic space in Oregon, Nurse Ratched's ward represents the wasteland of the post-industrial age that lies at the heart of thriving, ever-modernizing civilization. It is occupied by wounded inmates perceived as the useless, defective products of society, and controlled by the ruthless machine of Nurse Ratched, who is determined to either repair the product and return it for social use or demolish it all together. This metaphor implicates the similar paradigm in the progress of civilization, as Marshall Berman shrewdly comments: "It appears that the very process of development, even as it transforms the wasteland into a thriving physical and social space, recreates the wasteland inside of the developer himself. This is how the tragedy of development works" (Berman qt. in Harvey, 16). Nurse Ratched might successfully produce many Dismissal cases who return to the society as a "functioning, adjusted component" appropriate to the society's ideal of development, but at the same time, she destroys their autonomy and spirit as well as further dehumanizing the "incurable" inmates in her ward. As she efficiently maintains her oppressive ideology, her wasteland empire of unfit individuals with wounded psyche expands.

Another important symbolism of Nurse Ratched's character that carries deep connotation to the progress of Western civilization is the color white. "White and starched stiff," Olderman writes, "(the Big Nurse) suggests Melville's plunge into the dreadful ambiguity and possible evil that could live in the heart of what is white"

(71). Of course, at the most obvious level, Kesey uses the color white to heighten the contradiction in the Nurse's character. In Western tradition, white has long been associated with the positive side of the metaphysical dichotomy – light, saintliness, purity and order. Yet, Kesey, following the footsteps of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, sees white as an unnatural, ambiguous and deceptive color that can cloud over something malevolent and terrifying. This is true of Nurse Ratched, as the whiteness of her appearance comes to increasingly represent not only her rigidity and hypocrisy, but also her chilling ruthlessness. However, considering the book's connection with American culture, it can be argued that the whiteness of the Nurse also stands for the White civilization, stemming from European ancestry and modeled on the Enlightenment rationale. The White civilization's increasing power shrinks and crushes the spirit of the wilderness of Native America, as represented in the novel by Chief Bromden – the “Vanishing American” (62). Nurse Ratched's mechanical character and her collection of synthetic materials – plastic, porcelain and steel – mirrors the progressively mechanized character of European culture that is contrasted with both the spirituality and mysticism of the Native Americans, and the bold individualism of the early pioneers. The fact that Nurse Ratched and her white, precise appearance overpower the six-foot-eight Bromden illustrates how America's native identity was obscured by the machine of White civilization. This is echoed by the fate of Bromden's father, a former leader of his tribe who gets outsized by his white wife and is robbed of his land, his power and ultimately his dignity by the white government. The geographical setting of the novel in Oregon is also significant in the way it marks the White civilization's ultimate triumph over the last of America's Western frontiers. It is also a poignant reflection how contemporary American society has killed the spirit that has distinguished them from their European ancestry in the first place. But most importantly, the supremacy of the color white in Nurse Ratched's character signifies what Jean Baudrillard calls “the extrapolation of the Good” – which is “the hegemony of the positive over any form of negativity”. This is also rooted back to the Enlightenment philosophy, which naively believes that the progress of the Good – which they believe is their own notion of civilization – will bring about the defeat of Evil. In the novel, it can also be seen that the Big Nurse tries to bleach anyone to fit her ideas of order, as can be seen in her three black staff whom she dresses in white, thus whitewashing their original identities with her ideology.

Of course, although Nurse Ratched's ruthless and despotic character symbolizes the repressive order of civilization and all her methods reveal the paradigm of destruction, Kesey also makes it clear that she is only a single person who is a part of a much bigger force.

They talk for a while about whether she's the root of all the trouble here or not, and Harding says she's the root most of it. Most of the other guys think so too, but McMurphy isn't so sure any more. He says he thought so at one time but now he don't know. He says he don't think getting her out of the way would really make much difference...

McMurphy doesn't know it, but he's onto what I realized a long time back, that it's not just the Big Nurse by herself, but it's the whole Combine, the nation-wide Combine that's the really big force, and the nurse is just a high-ranking official for them. (164)

This paragraph shows that the Big Nurse is just one individual that is part of a much larger system - that is, the progress of Western civilization on the whole. Although she personifies the destructive force behind civilization, getting rid of her does not mean a solution to the problems.

Standing opposed to the Big Nurse and the civilization she represents is Randall P. McMurphy – madness personified. McMurphy, like Yossarian in *Catch-22*, starts off as the sanest person in the novel. As he himself proclaims “As near as I can tell I'm no loony” (67). His “farm-grown insights” represent instinct and common sense over the cold and calculated logic that modern civilization has long come to heavily depend upon (Faggen xx). Yet, from the cultural aspect, McMurphy represents many incarnations of madness as defined throughout Western history. Firstly, his biography before his fateful arrival at Nurse Ratched's ward shows that McMurphy is, at the core, the animalistic instinct personified. He possesses an amazing survival instinct, seen first from his achievement in the army: “Distinguished Service Cross in Korea, for leading an escape from a Communist Prison Camp” (40), to his later arrangement of the fishing trip. But at the same time, this animal instinct

also prevents McMurphy from abiding by any rules and from committing himself to any social institution. After receiving honor for his distinguished service, McMurphy is discharged from the army for reason nonetheless than “insubordination”, then goes on a series of “street brawls and barroom fights”. At thirty-five years of age, he also has never married, which further proves McMurphy’s inability to settle down and bound to social conventions. Here, it can be seen that McMurphy is the untamed wildness that represents animality seen as the foundation of madness that early civilization feared and tried to suppress.

Not only does McMurphy’s fundamental nature, including his lust and his greed, epitomize the animality in men that Western civilization has long seen as a negation of culture, he also lives his life in a way that, to apply Foucault’s theory, is the reason why asylum exist in the first place. A free spirit and a wanderer, McMurphy trots the world and tramples upon society’s laws and conventions. In addition to his animalistic nature, his idleness and “whambam” lifestyle (59) suggest threats to social and economic order. His utter lack of control – whether of himself or of the world around him – makes him the exact foil to Nurse Ratched’s dominating impulse. Therefore, it is no wonder why his “repeated outbursts of passion” earn him the diagnosis of being a psychopath, someone who is seen as danger to the society. In short, McMurphy is the manifestation of Chaos that resides outside any culture and ideology. The apparent absence of ideology in McMurphy’s attitude to most people makes him, in Nurse Ratched’s words, “the disturbing force” that civilization has long struggled to tame and control. Ironically enough, if looked at closely, although McMurphy does not profess any ideology in particular, his attitude is rich with a democratic spirit that views all people as equal human beings, in contrast to the Big Nurse’s disguised autocracy. This reversal is only one of the novel’s many insightful looks at how perverted the modern world has become.

If McMurphy were only an animalistic troublemaker, he might not have been the powerful epitome of madness that he is in the novel. Notably, McMurphy is also the familiar trope of the Fool in the Medieval and Renaissance fashion – another face of madness in Western history. When he first enters the asylum and the reader’s consciousness, he introduces himself as “a gambling fool” (11). His humor and mockery of the high and mighty serves as a weapon to challenge and undermine the

otherwise omnipotent power of the Combine. His antics, such as when he feigns “mad” and fabricates a random story about his nightmare during the Therapeutic Community, is a deliberate snub to the practice and its rationale, together with the culture and the people who advocate it fervently like the Big Nurse, all of which McMurphy sees as taking themselves too seriously. While other patients have internalized the national credo of social roles and responsibilities as something “normal” and blame themselves when they fall out of these “norms”, McMurphy is the only person who shows suspicion of the validity of these “norms” right away and voices his objection towards the accepted mindset that pigeonholes people into narrow and definite categories: “Goddammit, I’m no wolf and you’re no rabbit” (60). His unpolished and straightforward comments, in contrast to Harding’s articulate and scholarly language, entail insights that most effectively highlight the ludicrousness and pathetic inadequacy of the system and the rule-ridden culture. In this light, it can be seen that McMurphy is not just a barbaric brawler that the Big Nurse makes him out to be. He does not just mindlessly break the rules, he also mocks and ridicules them with his wit and unconventional take on things.

Laughter is another important attribute of the Fool that McMurphy proudly exemplifies. The first thing Bromden notices about McMurphy is his “free and loud” laughter – “Even when he isn’t laughing, that laughing sound hovers around him...it’s in his eyes, in the way he smiles and swaggers, in the way he talks” (11). As noted by Bromden, it is the first laugh he has heard in years in the asylum. McMurphy’s laugh come like a breath of fresh air in the asylum that has long been governed by the Big Nurse’s dead air and fog. It represents the vigor of life that has been missing from this wasteland, as McMurphy notices right away: “You know, that’s the first thing that got me about this place, that there wasn’t anybody laughing. I haven’t heard a real laugh since I came through that door ... Man, when you lose your laugh you lose your *footing*” (63). This quotation here is significant, for McMurphy reopens the inmates’ eyes to a very important aspect about laughter. It does not represent only life and joy, but also free will and autonomy. Unlike the Big Nurse’s version of “happiness”, McMurphy sees happiness as the ability to laugh freely, and true to his role as the Fool, he attempts to teach the wasted inmates how to laugh. While the Big Nurse is determined to spread order and ideology, McMurphy is determined to spread laughter, as can be seen most obviously from the fishing trip:

“he knew you can’t really be strong until you can see a funny side to things. In fact, he worked so hard at pointing out the funny side of things” (205). The fishing trip ends in success for McMurphy, as he finally manages to “(swing) a laughter that rang out on the water in ever-widening circles, farther and farther” (215). Apparently, McMurphy realizes the Fool’s wisdom that laughter is a powerful weapon that brings back the balance of power to individuals in the increasingly rule-ridden world. During the trip, McMurphy laughs at everything, at all the ridiculousness and absurdity of life and human folly: “Because he knows you have to laugh at the things that hurt you just to keep yourself in balance, just to keep the world from running you plumb crazy. He knows there’s a painful side...but he won’t let the pain blot out the humor no more’n he’ll let the humor blot out the pain” (214). Such power of madness is also noticed by Chief Bromden, who observes: “I forget sometimes what laughter can do” (87). To Nurse Ratched, McMurphy’s spreading of laughter seems like an alarming epidemic of madness that threatens the social order and needs some administrative measure. However, there is no denying that McMurphy the Fool illustrates the wonderful insight and sanity that lies at the heart of what the majority brushes off and labels as madness.

Although McMurphy conveys the power of madness to reawaken passions and instincts in men that have been taken away by cold logic and robotic progress of culture, his victories over Nurse Ratched and the Combine are but short-lived. Lastly, McMurphy also represents the madness in modern times that is finally tamed, silenced and robbed of power by science. The premonitions of McMurphy’s ultimate fate are plentiful in the novel, but one worth discussing here is how his swaggering, larger-than-life personality is belittled by the Big Nurse: “He isn’t extraordinary. He is simply a man and no more, and is subject to all the fears and all the cowardice and all the timidity that any other man is subject to” (136-137). Although this seems like a small scene, it presents a crucial point in the story as it is when Nurse Ratched decides to keep McMurphy in her ward and work on him by her own methods. Her remark here is startling because not only does it reveal her condescending and demeaning attitude towards the people who are her patients, but it also echoes the very same attitude the scholars and scientists of the Enlightenment tradition exhibit towards madness. The Big Nurse regards her patients as passive objects that can be easily read and dealt with, the same way the Enlightenment sees madness only as illness – a

deformity – that can be cured. Her trivialization of McMurphy as “a simple man”, despite his charisma and the strange power he brings to the equation of politics in her ward, reflects the way madness is gradually robbed of its power and legitimacy as an alternative reality in Western culture. Like his character, McMurphy’s eventual tragedy is also symbolic. After his defiance and rebellions, he is finally subjected to the brutality of science in the form of lobotomy, and left in vegetative state for good, the same way madness is handicapped by the rise of reason and the scientific model. This makes *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* is not simply an optimistic piece of anti-establishment literature. The novel, ultimately, is not about McMurphy’s triumph, but his defeat. Kesey realizes this with a sense of resignation and poignancy: “(The Big Nurse)’s lost a little battle here today, but it’s a minor battle in a big war that she’s been winning and that she’ll go on winning. ... She’ll go on winning, just like the Combine, because she has all the power of the Combine behind her. She don’t lose on her losses, but she wins on ours. ... As soon as you let down your guard, as soon as you lose *once*, she’s won for good. And eventually we all got to lose. Nobody can help that” (100). Nevertheless, despite his defeat and eventual dehumanization, McMurphy leaves behind an heir who is to become the seed of the latest incarnation of madness in the postmodern culture – Chief Bromden.

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As Emily Dickinson says in the poem that opens this thesis, madness, like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder. Easily recognizable, yet frustratingly indefinable, madness has been one of the vaguest concepts that has fascinated the public imagination throughout history by the way in which it always eludes definite explanation. Demonic possession, human nature gone awry, the alternative voice of truths, social threat, mental illness – these are only a few of the most well-known faces of madness in Western civilization. Today, the common and most widely accepted concept of madness is largely monopolized by the medical and scientific discourse, which deems madness to be a form of mental disorder. Yet, even psychiatry still cannot provide a satisfying and adequate explanation of the phenomenon of madness, which seems to constantly mutate into new manifestations. On the one hand, some contend that psychiatry is still a legitimate science that, with its systematic diagnoses and procedures, will illuminate the obscurity of madness at last, like many other mysteries that had been successfully clarified by science. On the other hand, some suspects that psychiatry might be just another narrative reflecting a cultural and intellectual climate since the Enlightenment that has insisted on understanding and rationalizing any phenomenon it encounters according to scientific model, whereas earlier eras had tried to define madness mostly in either theological or humanistic terms. In this light, psychiatry is no more legitimate than the philosophy of Plato, Hippocratic medicine, or Christianity. Each version of theory is a looking glass that mirrors the prominent sociopolitical and cultural assumptions in each era that influence common perception, rather than an insight into the fundamental nature of the phenomenon itself.

In early civilizations, there was no clear distinction between art and science. Metaphysics and theology were conceived in the form of myths and legends. Men were still largely at mercy of unknown, natural forces that could sometimes be destructive and threatening. Madness was seen as a supernatural force that could only be understood in theological terms. However, as this superstitious and mythical worldview gave way to the naturalistic outlook of the later Greeks, madness also

started to be conceived of in a more naturalistic term. It was no longer divine punishment nor demonic possession, but a state of imbalance in the mind and the body. Plato contended that excessive passion and worldly appetites could result in madness, which could only be prevented by rational faculty, while the father of Western medicine Hippocrates saw it as a hormonal imbalance. Both thinkers influenced the way madness gradually came to be understood in more humanistic terms. The focus was shifted from an external force to internal conflicts, and men assumed the central position in inquiries into the symptoms. The humanistic view of madness persisted to the late Medieval and Renaissance period, where it was seen as a reminder of some darker truth about human nature, and man's existence and his culture. During this period, madness adopted one of its most well-known personae as the fool. The fool was seen as someone who deliberately deviated from the social norm, who refused to be restrained by the conventions of the majority and who possessed some knowledge of higher truths beyond logic and civilization. As civilization grew more sophisticated, the fool provided an alternative voice that served as a reminder of the ambiguity of human nature and the equivocal side of culture.

Yet the miraculous disappearance of the fool from almost all aspects of culture as the Renaissance gave way to the Age of Reason is notable. The Enlightenment thinkers believed that valid knowledge can only be achieved through and only through logic and scientific method. Madness, whether it was the inner conflicts in Hamlet's fashion or the outrageous humor of the fool, was generally seen as Unreason, and, therefore, a hindrance to the progress of civilization which was fueled by logic and science. This presents a major break in the history of madness. Foucault proposes this very influential theory in *Madness and Civilization*, where he contends that the Enlightenment was responsible for robbing madness of its original power, reducing it to merely a perverted form of reason and cast it outside culture. Madmen were confined, together with the unemployed, criminals and other misfits, so they would not interfere with the image of progress and prosperity for the majority. As Foucault argues, this "Great Confinement" reflected new reactions towards social and economic problems, a new work ethic and a new vision of an ideal society. Individuals had to work and had to contribute to the society's economic prosperity, or else face administrative measurements from the authorities. Madness was kept, for the

most part, “out of sight, out of mind” of the post-Enlightenment culture and its single-minded fixation on the idea of progress. It also started to be perceived as an illness, and, thus, psychiatry was born.

However, when rapid technological and scientific progress led Western civilization to the unprecedented level of horror in the two World Wars in the first half of the twentieth century, most people lost their beliefs in progress and in the idea that evolution advances in a single and unambiguous direction. While science still remained prominent in the investigation of knowledge, more and more thinkers now came to view what are alleged as “truths” by the scientific model as other discourses that are legitimized by the dominant culture, not as objective facts as understood during the height of Enlightenment thoughts. It was in this post-war period that the interest in madness resurfaced. Not as an illness to find cure or an object to study, but as a *speaking* subject that has been marginalized since the rise of reason.

These are the brief theoretical views towards madness throughout Western history. Literature, on the other hand, has always had a special relationship with madness. Unrestricted by the logical structure that is a prerequisite for theoretical texts, literature occupies the realm of imagination, fantasy and delirium, or in another word, the Unreal. Literature therefore shares with madness the ability to investigate some truths beyond the realm of reason and rationality. While the goal of theoretical writings is to rationalize madness in terms that the culture of the time can understand, literature can reproduce the experience of madness, imitating its exclusive discourse, or utilize it as a symbol to study the truths of human nature and his civilization. Therefore, literary presentations of madness are able to reflect not only the way each society and culture perceives madness but also the power structure in that context that identifies the phenomenon as madness in the first place. This thesis therefore sees the increasing presence of madness in twentieth century American literature as indicative of some paradigmatic shifts in socio-politics, culture and sensibilities in the contemporary American society.

In Chapter II, this thesis contemplates William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* to illustrate that madness is not a fixed concept with some kind of universal patterns and structure, but rather a relationship that must be situated. Faulkner’s novel

is narrated by three Compson brothers on vastly different psychological landscapes. Each of their discourses displays stylistic differences that defy one static interpretation. Through each Compson brother, it can be seen that the definition of what constitutes madness depends on largely on the criteria of each interpretation. In this chapter, the concept of logos is also introduced as an organized structure of language accepted and shared by the social world. Logos provides each culture with an epistemological medium to access and comprehend external reality and therefore is a fundamental criterion in how each culture defines what is and is not madness. The retarded Benjy represents the classical definition of madness because he exists completely outside the common logos. Retarded since birth, he perceives the world in a totally different paradigm and does not possess the concept of time, selfhood and consciousness prominent in the common logos. Unable to articulate his experience by the means of accepted logos, Benjy is perceived by his society as a “looney” whose voice and attempts to communicate is shrugged off as noise that signifies nothing. He is therefore an ultimate outsider to civilization and threatened with confinement in an asylum because he cannot participate in the social and economic activities. Yet, as the novel reveals, Benjy’s inability to articulate his experience in the common logos does not necessarily mean that he lacks all knowledge of external reality. Quite to the contrary, it is increasingly clear that Benjy, like the Holy Fool of Christian tradition, experiences external reality with an amazing level of objectivity that a “normal” rational man who is bound by logic and reason is unable to achieve. Despite his label as a “looney”, Benjy’s narrative represents the marginalized discourse that can provide the readers with an alternative path to the higher and more objective truths about the Compson family than any of his brothers.

Quentin, on the other hand, is often considered as a quintessential portrayal of madness in the novel, interpreted by his rambling and fragmented narrative. Unlike Benjy, Quentin is an intellectual and sensitive man equipped with rational faculty. In other words, Quentin is born quite “normal”. Yet his knowledge of the world is torn apart by two contradictory discourses between the idealistic values of the Old South values and disenchanting cynicism at modern existence in early twentieth century. Quentin’s realization that there is no adequate system of language on which he can rely forces him into depression and causes turmoil to his psyche. Haunted by this realization and aggravated by his incestuous passion towards his sister, Quentin loses

his psychological equilibrium and becomes, quite literally, so lost in fragments of language that the only escape he can find is suicide. Yet, as this thesis points out in Chapter II, while the fragmentation and delirium that overwhelm Quentin's discourse might be a vivid reflection of his psychological deterioration, Quentin himself remains self-conscious and aware of his own predicament. This is why many critics have considered Quentin Compson to a Hamlet figure. Even when he gradually descends into madness, Quentin never quite loses touch with reality and still maintains a remarkable level of self-awareness that allows him to interpret his own situations. This shows a curious sense of sanity that co-exists with the disturbance and chaos of the spirit, complicating the easy definition that madness is simply the absence of rationality and showing once again that madness is far from a fixed pathological entity, but a relation to must be interpreted.

From the first two Compson brothers, it can be seen that the concepts most associated with the interpretation of madness are foreignness and chaos. Both Benjy and Quentin are often seen as mad either because their experience is foreign and incomprehensible to the contemporary mind, or because their psyche loses balance and plunges into a state of disorder and despair. However, the second chapter of this thesis also points out one often overlooked aspect of madness: the perfection of its internal logic. Contrary to the common belief, madness is not quite a state of utter chaos, but, as Foucault observes, madness has a coherent structure that resembles the most perfect structure of logic and is maintained with utter and genuine conviction. Chapter II then illustrates this point in the character of Jason Compson, who is often misunderstood as the sanest person in the novel due to his easily comprehensible language. The logical and straightforward structure of Jason's narrative, together with the fact that he is the only brother who works and participates in social activities, lures the reader to conclude that he is sane, though mean and bigoted. Yet as the fourth and last narrative reveals, Jason is not any saner than his brothers. On the contrary, his sense of reality is the most perverted and distorted, and the logical appearance of his narrative is only a means of distorting reality to justify his own obsession. Jason's lack of self-awareness and conviction in his own logic makes him the embodiment of a psychotic, who truly believes that two and two equals five. Again, madness is shown as a hermeneutic relationship whose reality depends on interpretation. While it is often defined by concepts like foreignness or disorder, Jason

is a prime example that illustrates how even a concept mostly associated with sanity like “order” can also be a sign of madness.

Jason’s psychosis under the guise of logic provides the blueprint for the pervasive madness at socio-cultural level in the mid-twentieth century, as depicted in Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22*. The characters in *Catch-22* find themselves in a world that grows increasingly similar to Jason, a world whose fanatical obsession is masked under self-referential justification. The third chapter of this thesis focuses on how the novel *Catch-22* illustrates that logic and order, once the pinnacle of human rationality, can also be perverted and become madness itself. In the novel, all the characters are recognizably insane but the chapter specifically points out that their insanity is ironically rooted in a circular logic that Heller famously terms Catch-22. Here, the chapter focuses on how madness is disguised under the very structure of language itself, because the system of logic usually hides an unspecified loop that allows self-referential justification. Apart from Yossarian and Orr, the psychological landscape of most characters in *Catch-22* is occupied by the dominant discourses of modern American culture, such as democracy and capitalism, that are repeated and reproduced until the original meanings are either lost or perverted. As a result, these characters possess no moral conscience and rely solely on the self-referential logic of *Catch-22* to legitimize their actions. But, as Heller points out in the novel, *Catch-22* itself does not exist, and the fact that the society allows this self-referential logic to dictate its actions and trap individuals in an existential dilemma is a testament to the madness of the twentieth century American culture at large. In this chapter, it can also be seen that madness and extreme irrational acts become the only way the sane men like Orr and Yossarian can battle the undefeatable logic and escape the *Catch-22* universe.

Finally, the fourth chapter uses Ken Kesey’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* to study the relationship between mental illness and psychiatry as a system of administrative measures. While both *The Sound and the Fury* and *Catch-22* tackle the issue of madness with different perspectives and approaches, only *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* positions itself as a novel in the age of psychiatry. Chapter IV points out that, in many ways, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* can be read as a fictionalized version of Foucault’s theory about the relationship between madness and

civilization. Kesey paints the picture of the Big Nurse as the representative of the hegemony, called “The Combine” in the novel, who uses psychiatry to label and “adjust” any misfit who cannot conform to the dominant ideologies. In this story, the inmates are not really insane in the traditional sense, but they are the minorities that cannot bring themselves to fit into the grand schemes of the ideal society. Psychiatry is therefore viewed as an administrative tool to impose and install certain social rules and conventions of the majority to the dissidents. Men are no longer perceived as rational beings with moral independence but only as robotic messengers for dominant ideologies. Chapter IV also emphasizes that psychiatry is particularly prominent in contemporary America because, unlike other totalitarian countries, America’s democratic tradition is against the use of totalitarian political methods. Psychiatry therefore becomes a tool for the tyranny of American majority to impose its ideology on nonconformists without being unconstitutional, although the practice is against the democratic will in the first place. In this light, Kesey suggests that psychiatric treatments are nothing but lobotomy to the individual spirit, as epitomized in the figure of Randall P. McMurphy. Yet, the Combine’s system of absolute domination that seeks to “fix” and “adjust” anyone not fitting its ideals can also result in an internal fracture that can only break through the seemingly invincible power of the Combine by a combination between extreme irrationality and violence, as exhibited in the salvation of Chief Bromden the narrator. After long period of silence, madness finally regains its power in the form of revolt and the assertion of one’s identity against a civilization that is gearing towards total hegemony. But Chief’s means of escape to freedom also heavily implies a sense of violence that, together with madness, becomes an important aspect of counterculture in the latter half of the century.

From *The Sound and the Fury* to *Catch-22* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, we can see how the concept of madness and its position in the society has evolved rapidly within the span of a century. From a shameful condition to be silenced and a disease to be cured, madness seems to not only to have finally gained its voice but has also achieved a certain glamor in the society. Popular fiction has become the territory of roaming psychos and movies are dispersed with censorship-defying gore and violence. A book like *American Psycho* by Bret Easton Ellis at the dawn of the nineties has gained the cult status precisely because its protagonist

represents another face in the crowd who redeem his monotonous existence each night with sexual violence and murder. Insanity has become a realm of public fantasy; and these recent products of popular culture, often criticized for endorsing violence to youngsters, are in fact nothing but an answer to this darkest desire to break free from dull and mindless conformity. At last, madness has found its latest incarnation as a rage and revenge for individuals who feel belittled by their very own civilization. The world is being taken over by the mad, in fantasy at least. It is therefore uncannily prophetic when Harding announces " 'We've got a rosy future, gentlemen" (206).



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

References

- Baudrillard, Jean. "The Orders of Simulacra". *Simulations*. (Trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and Philip Beitchman). New York: Semiotext(e), 1983.
- Bleikasten, André. "Faulkner's Most Splendid Failure". *Critical Essays on William Faulkner: The Compson Family*. Ed. Arthur F. Kinney. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1982.
- Brustein, Robert. "The Logic of Survival in a Lunatic World". *Critical Essays on Joseph Heller*. Ed. James Nagel. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984.
- Burhans Jr., Clinton S. "Spindrift and the Sea: Structural Patterns and Unifying Elements in *Catch-22*". *Critical Essays on Joseph Heller*. Ed. James Nagel. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984.
- Cowan, Michael H. ed. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Sound and the Fury: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968.
- Davis, Gary W. "*Catch-22* and the Language of Discontinuity". *Critical Essays on Joseph Heller*. Ed. James Nagel. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984.
- Ellis, Brett Easton. *American Psycho*. New York: Perennial Classics, 1999.
- Faulkner, William. *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Vintage, 1990.
- Felman, Shoshana. *Writing and Madness*. Martha Noel Evans trans. Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 2003.
- Foucault, Michel. *Abnormal*. New York: Picador, 2003.
- Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization*. Richard Howard trans. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Gilman, Sander. *Seeing the Insane*. New York: Nebraska UP, 1996.
- Gilman, Sander. *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Heller, Joseph. *Catch-22*. London: Vintage, 1994.
- Jodelet, Denise. *Madness and Social Representations*. Tim Pownall trans. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.
- Kartiganer, Donald M. "*The Sound and the Fury* and the Dislocation of Form". *William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988.
- Kesey, Ken. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. London: Penguin, 2005.

- MacFarlane, Scott. *The Hippie Narrative: A Literary Perspective on the Counterculture*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company Inc., 2007.
- Margaroni, Maria. "Epistémè". *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*. Victor E. Taylor and Charles E. Winquist eds. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Mitchell, Julian. "Under Mad Gods". *Critical Essays on Joseph Heller*. Ed. James Nagel. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984.
- Olderman, Raymond M. "The Grail Knight Arrives: Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest". *A Casebook on Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Ed. George J. Searles. Albuquerque: New Mexico UP, 1992.
- Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*. New York: Perennial Classics, 1999.
- Porter, Roy. *Madness: A Brief History*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.
- Radden, Jennifer ed. *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.
- Rosenwein, Robert E. "A Place Apart: A Historical Context of Kesey's Asylum". *A Casebook on Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Ed. George J. Searles. Albuquerque: New Mexico UP, 1992.
- Ross, Stephen M. "The 'Loud World' of Quentin Compson". *William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury: A Critical Casebook*. Ed. André Bleikasten. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982.
- Sass, Louis Arnorsson. *Madness and Modernism : insanity in the light of modern art, literature, and thought*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994
- Sass, Louis Arnorsson. *The Paradoxes of Delusion: Wittgenstein, Schreber and the Schizophrenic Mind*. Palo Alto: Cornell UP, 1995.
- Seed, David. *The Fiction of Joseph Heller: Against the Grain*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Seltzer, Leon F. "Milo's 'Calpable Innocence': Absurdity as Moral Insanity in *Catch-22*". *Critical Essays on Joseph Heller*. Ed. James Nagel. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984.
- Sniderman, Stephen L. " 'It Was All Yossarian's Fault': Power and Responsibility in *Catch-22*". *Critical Essays on Joseph Heller*. Ed. James Nagel. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984.
- Still, Arthur., Velody, Irving. *Rewriting the history of madness: studies in Foucault's Histoire de la folie*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Thiher, Allen. *Revels in Madness: Insanity in Medicine and Literature*. Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 2004.

Vickery, Olga W. *The Novels of William Faulkner*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1961.

Yalom, Marilyn. *Maternity, Mortality, and the Literature of Madness*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1985.



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

VITA

Janejai Punnopatham was born in Bangkok on January 12, 1982. She received her primary education at Assumption Convent School. In 2003, she obtained her B.A. (1st Class Honors) in English from Chulalongkorn University. Since then, she has been a freelance columnist and translator for numerous publications in Thailand. Her interests include poetry, philosophy, art, music, travel, architecture, fashion and industrial design. In 2007, she established a new company focusing on furniture and object designs and has been taking the role of Creative Director since then.



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย