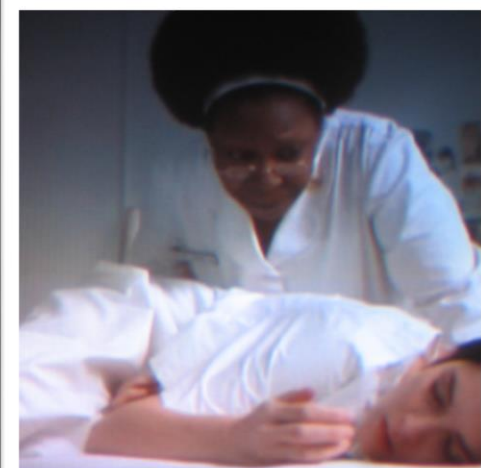# Reel Nursing Care

Mental Health Nursing Care in Film

Cheryl Pollard PN, RN, MN, PhD (Nurs)

What is it like to receive psychiatric treatment?

What is it lit to be a psychiatric mental health nurse?

"Each day, scores of images of nurses and nursing speed past readers and viewers, leaving only a diffuse awareness of their impact. These fleeting images rarely elicit prolonged contemplation or critical analysis."

Kalisch & Kalisch 1987 p. Ix

Setting the Scene

- The story begins …
- Research design
  - Methods
  - Sample
- Findings
- Challenges
- The story continues …
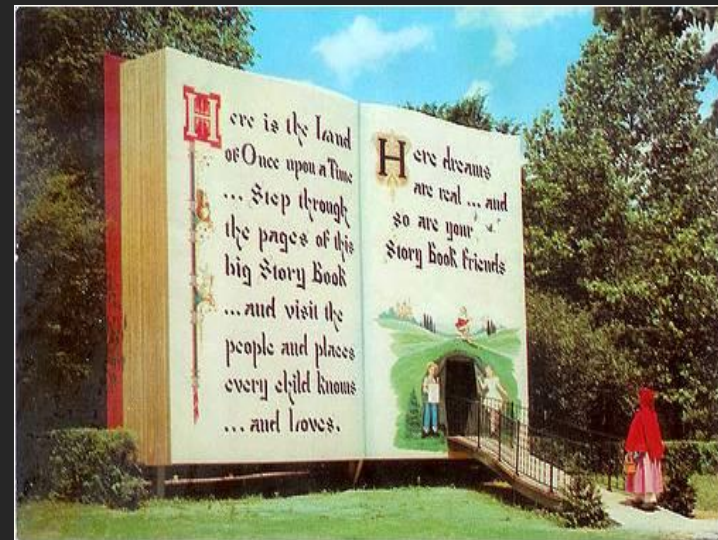
Reading of film is much like the reading of history, it is not a passive act, but an active process of judgement.

Allen & Gomery, 1985

Previous Thinking about Images

Psychiatric Nurses in Cinema

Prominence in the Plot

Personality Characteristics

Primary Values

Professional Competence

The Depiction of Relationships

- Relationship central tenet of nursing theories
- Interpersonal process
- Relationship "between" is essential for the development of therapeutic interactions

The question ....

How does cinema portray the relationship between mental health/psychiatric nurses and persons with mental illness?
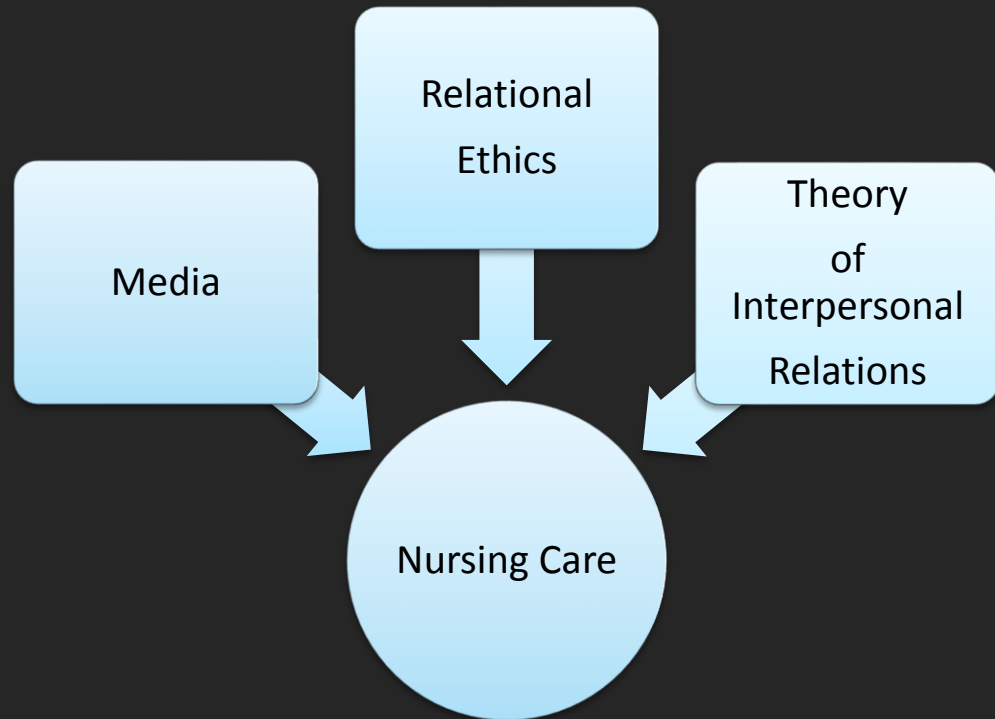
Reality exists outside language, but is constantly mediated by and through language: and what we know and say has to be produced in and through discourse.

Hall 1999

Theoretical Assumptions

- Tolerant of ambiguity and pluralism
- Multidimensional
- Requires embodied self
- Requires a discourse or dialogue

Relational Ethics

Media

Theory of Interpersonal Relations

Nursing Care

Research Design

Types of Visual Inquiry	Sites of Meaning for the Visual Image	Investigation of Meaning

• Compositional Interpretation
• Content Analysis
• Semiology
• Psychoanalysis
• Discourse Analysis
• Mixed Method
	• Construction of the image
	  • How was if made?
	    • Painting, drawing, photograph, film
	• The image itself
	  • What kind of image is it?
	    • Black and white or colour
	• Meaning of the image
	  • How is the image interpreted?
		• Research has typically used psychoanalytic, feminist, or sociological perspectives
		• Essential to have a worldview to deconstruct the images
		• Plan is to use a relational ethic framework in this research project

Research Design

- Film Selection
  - Films
    - Located in public domain
    - Examples:
      - *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
      - *High Anxiety*
      - *Snake Pit*
      - *Girl, Interrupted*
      - *Harvey*
      - *Caretakers*
      - *The Cobweb*

Research Design

- Data Analysis
  - Longitudinal/Developmental viewing
    - Narrate general plot
    - Determine significance of psychiatric nurse to plot
    - Character development
    - Map relational ethic tenets

Relational Ethic Framework

Central Tenets

Mutual Respect

Engagement

Embodied Knowledge

Interdependent Environment

Uncertainty

14

Findings:
Relationships and Embedded Themes

- *The Relationships*
  - *Mutual Respect*
  - *Engagement*
  - *Embodied Knowledge*
  - *Interdependent Environment*
  - *Uncertainty*

- *Embedded Themes*
  - *Otherness*
  - *Power & Control*

Findings:
The Role of the Nurse
(Peplau)

Stranger

Resource Person

Teacher

Leader

Surrogate

Counsellor

Mediator

Administrator

Recorder

Observer

Researcher

Challenges

WARNING

CHALLENGES AHEAD

- Literature was about the depiction of the nurses characteristics
- Integrating the data analysis
- Managing all the data
  - Determine significance of psychiatric nurse to plot
  - Character development
  - Map relational ethic tenets
- Writing – description of the films – past present tense
- Potentially look at the changes in the relationships over time
  - Images were static
- Film selection
  - Limitation – English speaking films
  - Persona is subtitled and used voice overs
- The meaning of the image
  - No privileged access to TRUTH

Future Research

- Look at how other healthcare providers relationships are depicted in comparison to nurses. (Physicians, aides, OTs)

- Investigate the movies with a psychiatric theme that do not have nurses present – how are they different – why are there no nurses?

- Further investigate why the depictions of nursing care did not change over time.
    - Potentially linked to the static depiction of mental illness

Future Research

- Expand audience
  - Participatory action research – action to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness/mental health care

- Move further into literary depictions

Ideas have power.

Words and images have consequences.

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Contact Information

Dr. Cheryl Pollard
Grant MacEwan University
City Centre Campus
9-507a Robbins Health Centre
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 4S2

Email: pollardc4@macewan.ca