**Overview:**

Constructing a modern-day “Holy Fool” with regard to the Eastern Orthodox Church practice of “Foolishness for Christ”, where intentional buffoonery was used to provoke enlightenment.

Around the 4th century, Saint Isidora said, “Whosoever of you believes that he is wise by the measure of this world, may he become a fool, so as to become truly wise.”. An undying devotion to the monastery life but not wanting to be idolized for her work caused Isidora’s peers to outcast her, even resulting in abuse and beatings from about 400 other women living and working at the monastery. Moving onward to the 6th century, Abba Simeon threw nuts at women in church and would thrash around on public grounds whenever a full moon would arise. He too received insults, abuse, and beatings for many foolish acts. Coming to light after his death was the fact he acted in the name of the lord in ways as to not be praised or acknowledged. Simeon the Holy Fool was deemed the patron saint of holy fools by his acts of kindness, his ability to bring citizens to repentance, and reportedly strange and powerful miracles. Both Saints simulated madness and provoking outrage to outline issues and mask their good nature. Through their acts of silliness and social discourse “Holy Fools” show what is wrong in the world and give people a free look within, allowing them to review one's actions and feel remorse over wrongdoings. Jump to the 14th century and this practice is being massively adopted across Muscovite Russia by Orthodox ascetics.

Flash forward to the 21st century and where have our Holy Fools gone? We must look no further than Hollywood to find these very talented, very select people who practice this belief. Of such people come the likes of Sacha Baron Cohen, Rowan Atkinson, and in a more religious but less masked way is the great Russell Brand. All of Cohen’s characters have been able to push the boundary of what is socially acceptable, some even stepping over the line, but always with the means to illuminate poor virtues. From his most recognizable pseudo-persona, Borat, comes many moments where he is ridiculed and insulted just for being an immigrant, let alone the unfamiliar culture he wears on his sleeve. The Americans he interacts with instantly feel superior in every way, allowing their true nature to bleed through. Just by being near another person Borat enables their inner ‘demons’ to act out, something otherwise held back by social pressure. This is the very thing that gives life to pseudo-realism and just another channel that informative comedy thrives in. Likewise, Rowan Atkinson’s brilliant Mr. Bean character reinforced child-like wonder and a changed perspective of everyday mundane life. Where Borat highlights the negative virtues, Mr. Bean reinforces the positive ones. Both peoples’ personas emulate traits that can be used as a sort of cross-reference for someone’s values and beliefs.

In brief, Holy Fools embody a lifestyle that provokes speculation and deep consideration of inner views. The Fool is there to create the environment for true intentions to take place, whether it is done secretly, or indirectly through their behaviour. By going against the ‘norm’ they are acting as a servant of good doing.