

Critique reaction of one of the movies in relation to psychology



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

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PSY1010 of Psychology Movie Assignment The film "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" is very relevant for a of psychology to watch because it deals with the concept of mental illness and the way that mental institutions can affect patients and medical staff alike. The main character is a quirky and rebellious man called McMurphy who is delivered into a mental hospital. He is obviously a flawed character, and displays some signs of mania but at the same time he understands the oppression that institutionalization brings to some of the weaker patients. The conflict that the film shows is simplified into a battle between the patients and the doctors. The characters were very well acted, and they were convincing in the way that they personified particular conditions. The tendency of some patients to become violent caused the medical staff to overmedicate and resort to rather primitive electro shock therapies. The film appears to be set in the 1960s and so the technology and the regime are outdated compared to modern mental hospitals. There is some character development in the film. McMurphy starts off laughing and joking, and making the patients sit up and take notice of what is going on around them. He starts off as a rebel figure, and then becomes a hero as he encourages others to resist the regime of doctors and medication. In the end he becomes a victim of the system, and his rebellious spirit is crushed, thus making him a kind of martyr. There was perhaps some justification for his attitude, because some of the staff were cruel. The character of Nurse Ratched for example, is almost pure evil, showing anger and a lack of empathy with the patients. Given this kind of treatment it

appears logical that they should revolt. Looking at this film from the point of view of Freud, there is an obvious Oedipus complex going on in McMurphy's fear and loathing of Nurse Ratched. This comes about from the young child's conflicted feelings of desire for the mother, and fear of her at the same time. (Ciccarelli, 2006, chapter 10). McCarthy taunts her about sexual things and assaults her physically so that her clothes are torn and her body is exposed to public view. There is a contrasting of male types of power, such as the machine like inflexibility of the mental hospital, and female power, such as the mother figures who produce ineffective and frightened sons, and the vindictive nurse who uses institutional power to suppress her male patients. McMurphy takes on the role of gang leader, or alpha male, which encourages the other men to follow him and learn how to express their masculinity through rebellion. The film is complex in terms of the emotions it arouses, because the audience is torn between sympathy for the patients on the one hand, and the realization that they are all there because of serious mental illness. This aspect is glossed over in order to make the film dramatic, but in the end none of the problems are actually resolved. The patients are still unable to manage independent life, and the regime still dehumanizes them and seems not able to cure them. The oppression of the regime is exaggerated, but the anguish of the patients is something that provokes reflection in modern students of psychology. References Ciccarelli, Sandra K. and Meyer Psychology. New York: Pearson Education, 2006. Forman, Milos. (dir.) One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Based on the novel by Ken Kesey and starring Jack Nicholson. United Artists, 1975.