

Essay about one flew
over the cuckoo's
nest free essay



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Ken Kesey the author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, a 1960 publication tells a literal masterpiece story of the on goings in a mental clinic. The author's genius in delivering this piece is complimented by the fact that he had an array of experiences in dealing with mental patients. The novel is set in a mental ward in an Oregon asylum.

The 1962 publication was also adapted in the 1975 movie titled *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* which was directed by a renowned producer and director Milos Foreman. The film won an incredible number of 5 Academy Awards while the book was listed in the *Times Magazine* among the 100 Best English-Language Novels from 1923 to 2005. This novel is a story set in an Oregon asylum and the events that take place before the narrator escapes from the institution. The narrator of this story Chief Bromden had stayed in this institution for a considerable amount of time. The reason why he is in this institution is his paranoia in believing in what he referred to as "The Combine" which he describes to be controlling people and this is evident as he suffers from this delusions in the first chapters of his narration. He claimed that "It worked on him for years" and he says that his size was big enough for him "to fight it for a while" (Kesey, 118). In narrating the story Chief Bromden recollects his experiences in the ward together with his fellow mates and in particular depicts the conflict between the rebellious Randle McMurphy and Miss Ratched who was a nurse in this institution. Randle McMurphy a manipulative, rebellious and calculative convict had been found guilty of gambling and battery and thus finds it as an easier path to fake insanity so as to serve his sentence in an easy way.

Through the eyes of Chief Bromden we learn of the wards secrets and confrontations between Randle and he nurse. Nurse Ratched who is the head nurse in this institution rules with an iron fist and military precision. Her power supremacy is not only evident with regard to the patients but also geared towards her subordinates. An example of the fear and respect she exhibits is vivid when in one discussion McMurphy asks one of the black boys “ Does Old Lady Ratched know you boys watch TV most of your shift?” he goes further to inquire from them “ What do you reckon she’d do if she found out about that” (Kesey, 185). After a threat by Nurse Ratched to Billy which makes him commit suicide, McMurphy in retaliation attacks Nurse Ratched where he attempts to strangle her after ripping off her dress. In response she lobotomizes him and returns him in a vegetable state back to the ward. This confrontation strips Ratched off her powers and she then decides to suffocate McMurphy. The dramatic twists of events in this novel prompted the motion picture world to bring it to life through a movie with the same title as the book.

However, one of the shortcomings in producing a movie out of a book is that the resultant product will be somehow different. Some of the aspects that may be lost include the mood, literal setting, flow of the plot and such. In this movie for example transition is lost and character representation takes a remarkable shift from the book’s perspective. A good example of how the character aspect of the movie has shifted is the character of Ratched in the movie. In the book she is perceived to be the manipulative, calculative nurse who demands authority from the patients and the staff as well. However, her

all powerful images in the book are lost in the movie especially during the meetings where she did not exercise her power prowess to the maximum.