

# Theme

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Theme - I feel like a theme could be like the desire for control. When McMurphy comes into the ward the first thing he does is belittle people in his own sense of the way by playing on their emotions. He makes people feel uncomfortable and then wants to know who the "bull goose loony" is, as in who the craziest person there is, because he wants to overshadow that person. \* Another is how institutions run the risk of being oppressive and corrupt. Randall Patrick McMurphy McMurphy is charismatic, sexual, and boisterous to the extreme--a "gambling fool" who looks out primarily for his own self-interest and matches wits with Nurse Ratched in the book's primary conflict. He also seems to care deeply about his fellow inmates, often putting justice and their well-being over his own desires to escape the institution--which inevitably costs him his sanity. McMurphy represents freedom and self-determination versus societal repression--a battle McMurphy ultimately loses in order to pave the way for the rest of the patients to see the light. In many ways, he becomes a sacrificial lamb for the sake of enlightenment and awakening, both within the novel and for readers. McMurphy's character is remembered as a martyr who inspires real-world social change. "Which one of you nuts has got any guts? Chief Bromden Chief is the narrator of the story and for most of the book, he's just an observer. He watches how McMurphy interacts with the men, what McMurphy is trying to do, and how the staff reacts. Because Chief pretends to be deaf and unable to speak, people talk freely around him, allowing him to learn their secrets. Although he appears powerless, he actually has a lot of power because of all the knowledge he's gained through observation and listening in on conversations. Chief has a theory about the way the world works: it's all a

great big machine (called the Combine) and everybody is just part of this machine. The parts that are broken are sent to this hospital to be "fixed" again — to be wired back into this machine. He doesn't want to be part of it. He resists it and part of the resistance is pretending to be deaf and speechless. " I creep along the wall quiet as dust in my canvas shoes, but they got special sensitive equipment detects my fear and they all look up, all three at once, eyes glittering out of the black faces," Nurse Ratched Nurse Ratched desires order, and she wants complete power, so she manipulates her patients and the staff to do fulfill her desires. As the head nurse and as a woman with many connections both inside and outside of the hospital, she is able to maneuver things so that most situations fit her expectations. If she needs to, she uses the force of her hatred to get things done. Though she smiles a lot and talks sweetly, she's definitely not a kind or charming woman. She is, however, a woman with strong will and a fanaticism for control. She pursues power with intensity and is very successful at getting people to do what she wants. Although Nurse Ratched is an antagonist of the worst kind in this book, even Chief knows that she's simply the human face of the Combine — machine that Chief imagines is society. In other words, according to Chief, the system is larger than Nurse Ratched; she is only part of the system. She happens to be the patients' direct link to the mechanical system, but she is not the system itself. This puts Nurse Ratched and her power into perspective. However, even with her little amount of power, she is destructive. In the short timeframe of the book, she destroys three men — two commit suicide and one is lobotomized. She gets what she wants and feels no guilt about how it's accomplished. " Your hand is staining my

window" Billy Bibbit Billy is a shy man whose special demon is fear. Because his mother and Nurse Ratched are friends, and because Billy is a momma's boy, the Big Nurse has a special power over him. Billy wants to please everybody, but he also wants to be his own man. These two opposing forces render him helpless until McMurphy comes along. McMurphy encourages Billy's interest in the opposite sex and arranges for Candy to come visit Billy. But when Nurse Ratched confronts Billy, she's able to bring him right back to the place of shame and fear that he's always occupied. He is so ashamed, in fact, that he commits suicide. His suicide serves as the event that propels McMurphy's final confrontation with Nurse Ratched. " P-p-p-please d-d-don't tell my m-m-m-mother. Martini Another hospital patient. Martini lives in a world of delusional hallucinations, but McMurphy includes him in the board and card games with other patients. [the inmates are playing cards and betting with cigarettes] [rips a cigarette in half]" I bet a nickel. "