

Sample essay on wk11

[Business](#), [Management](#)



- At the end of the first chapter, Chief Bromden states, “ It’s gonna burn me . . . finally telling about all this, about the hospital, and her and the guys—and about McMurphy. . . . It’s still hard for me to have a clear mind thinking on it. But it’s the truth even if it didn’t happen” (13). What does this mean? Is Bromden a reliable narrator? Can you as a reader trust that his perceptions and his version of the story are accurate? Why or why not? Use an example from the book to support your response.

Chief Bromden is not a reliable narrator, and early on this is apparent. He is delusional in his take on reality. In the first scene he describes to readers, it is about him assuming that whenever he turns his back on the cleaning staff, that they surely are committing sex acts behind his back, “ They’re mopping when I come out the dorm, all three of them sulky and hating everything, the time of day, the place they’re at here, the people they got to work around” (Kesey, 7). He tells the reader things that do not seem to pass such as, “ She’s going to tear the black bastards limb from limb, she’s so furious.” But just because a narrator is unreliable, does not mean that he needs to be completely mistrusted. As long as the reader recognizes that the narrator has mental health problems, he or she will begin to know where his paranoia begins and where his accurate perception of the situation in the psychiatric hospital ends. While some of his perceptions and descriptions of Nurse Ratched are over the top, he is still an evil individual. The reader will tend to be more sympathetic to Bromden than the administration of the hospital even though Bromden’s mental health is not entirely stable.

Bromden wants to relate truths that pertain to the general situation and suffering of inmates in the Oregon mental hospital. He admits, “ It’s still hard

for me to have a clear mind” (Kesey, 13). In his closing statement of the first chapter, he is essentially begging the reader to overlook his own shabby mental state, ignore any inconsistencies, and see beyond this to get a grasp of the difficult ordeals that Bromden and the other patients of the hospital have had to endure.

- How did McMurphy wind up in the psychiatric hospital? Is he malingering (faking an illness) or is he a true psychopath? Is there anything about the way he acts that suggests to you that he resembles a sociopath or a psychopath? How does he treat the other men in the ward? Do you find him likeable as a character? Why or why not? Use an example from the text to support your response.

McMurphy wound up in the mental hospital because he was diagnosed with the psychological condition of psychopathy and did not refute this because he thought that he was escaping justice and getting off easy for his crimes since he had been a sentence to hard labor in prison, but due to his psychological diagnosis was sent to the hospital. He saw this as a free pass, since he imagined it to be much easier than the work farm. He tells the narrator upon entering the center, “ My name is McMurphy, buddies, R. P. McMurphy, and I’m a gambling fool” (Kesey, 11).

Clinical psychopaths are unable to experience the human emotion of empathy. It is clear from McMurphy’s interaction with the other patients in the hospital that this is not the case for him. He is sympathetic to their plight, and challenges the administration of the hospital in order for them to be treated with human dignity. Unlike the staff members of the hospital who treat the patients like freaks, McMurphy treats the patients like human

beings, and is playful and jovial with them, “ Hello buddy’ what’s that you’re playn’? Pinochle? Jesus, no wonder you don’t care nothin’ about showing your hand.” (Kesey, 12). Because the staff is mistreating the patients, his concern for them, his openness with them, and his treatment of them make McMurphy a likable character—certainly more likable than the staff of the hospital.

- “ We are victims of a matriarchy here, my friend,” Harding explains to McMurphy (59). What does this mean? How important are gender politics to life on the ward? Why is Nurse Ratched such an important character? Why doesn’t McMurphy get along with her? Use an example from the text to support your response.

Nurse Ratched has centralized all power of the hospital to herself. She controls the other staff members and patients with an iron fist. Everyone fears her, and this is the way that she wants it to be. She is an important character because she represents how power given to evil people can be used to destroy weaker people’s lives. Nurse Ratched destroys the wills of the other patients and commands with fear and demands respect. McMurphy does not get along with her because he is sympathetic to the patients, he is not insane, and so it is more difficult for her to manipulate him. He also believes his stay in the hospital to be temporary and his release assured. Because of this, he does not show her the respect that she demands, and this causes a mutual contempt to build between them.

Though she is a woman, she rules like a masochistic dictator. Her femininity seems out of place amongst her masculine totalitarianism and usurping of power, “ A mistake was made somehow in manufacturing, putting those big,

womanly breasts on what would of otherwise been a perfect work, and you can see how bitter she is about it” (Kesey, 8). When McMurphy says, ““ We are victims of a matriarchy here, my friend,” he means that they are victims of the system of uncompromised power that Nurse Ratched has set in place for all of the patients.

- During this first part of this novel, McMurphy uses the group sessions to attempt to alter life on the ward. Explain what happens when he wants the music turned down. Explain what happens when he wants to watch the World Series. Who is winning this battle in your opinion: Ratched or McMurphy? Use an example from the text to support your response.

Nurse Ratched authority has gone so long unchallenged in the hospital that the patients forget there is a difference between what she says and reality. McMurphy brings rationality to the hospital that Nurse Ratched has vacated from the premises. The patients act like citizens living under a totalitarian regime that forget they have the option to defy her. They know from past experience that as bad as it is under her, if they make trouble, she will only make things worse for them. Harding warns McMurphy of the risks saying, “ It’s still a risk, my friend. She always has the capacity to make things worse for us. A baseball game isn’t worth the risk” (Kesey, 70). But unfortunately, McMurphy still understands the hospital from his rational perspective, and not the delusional reality under which Nurse Ratched operates. He rebukes Harding, saying, “ Who the hell says so? Jesus, I haven’t missed a World Series in years. Even when I was in the cooler one September they let us bring in a TV and watch the Series, they’d of had a riot on their hands if they hadn’t” (Kesey, 70).

McMurphy wins the temporary battle of undermining the authority of Nurse Ratched, but in terms of the long-term war, Nurse Ratched knows that with patience, she will take out her revenge on McMurphy. So while it seems that McMurphy has gained the upper hand, he has only succeeded in further sealing his fate, which the reader learns as the plot continues and thickens in the novel.