



Contemporaneity of Language and Literature in the Robotized Millennium

Vol: 2(1), 2020

REST Publisher

ISBN No: 978-81-936097-3-6

Website: <http://restpublisher.com/book-series/cllrm/>

Madness and Misogyny in Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*

Mrs. M. Nathiya

Department of English and other Foreign Languages, SRM Institute of Science and Technology
Ramapuram Campus, Chennai-600089.

nathiyam2@srmist.edu.in

Abstract

In the introduction to his research, the author of this article explains about American Literature and the Author Ken Kesey then the author portrays how the Concept of Madness and Misogyny interlinked with this novel. This novel is well received because it represents a text of anti-culture that contradicts the stifling pattern of conservative American society during the fifties and early sixties of this century. The novel presents a different view of American society through the point of view of the personality of the "leader" that employs the language of hallucinations and dreams. This view is completely different from That which is codified by the language of rationality or insane. The leader utters a "crazy" truth. Skepticism about the dominant authorities and their social systems. The leader's description of the conspiracy that the authorities plotted to mechanize the people is a metaphor for the inhumanity of that dominant ideology that overthrows any attempt to break out of the prevailing stereotypes. Against women 0 In the personality of MacMerphy, the writer creates a hero who uses his male power to sexually assault the nurse who represents, within the text, female power over males 0 The McMorphy reaction to the system i.e. its "natural" revolution What is abnormal or possible, a kind of innate violence against that authority, no type of protest or strategy for change.

Keywords: Madness, Insane, Dominant Culture, Abnormal

American [literature](#) is shaped by the history of the country that produced it. For almost a century and a half, America is merely a group of colonies scattered along [eastern seaboard](#) of the North American continent—colonies from which a few hardy souls tentatively ventured westward. After a successful rebellion against the motherland, America became the United States, a nation. By the end of the 19th century this nation extended southward to the [Gulf of Mexico](#), northward to the 49th parallel and westward to the Pacific. By the end of the 19th century, too, it has taken its place among the powers of the world. Kenneth Elton Kesey is born September 17, 1935, in La Junta, Colorado. He is raised by his dairy farmer parents in rugged Springfield, Oregon, where he grew to be a star wrestler and football player. He is an American novelist, essayist and cultural figure. He is raised in a religious household where he developed a great appreciation for Christian fables and a Christian ethical system. He most often is characterized as the literary figure that bridged the Beat movement of the 1950s with the 1960s counter culture. This reputation springs from his literary themes of rebellion against societal imposed repression, which links him with the Beats and his personal experiences as a volunteer in the United States government's experiments with psychotropic and hallucinogenic drugs. These latter experiences, coupled with his penchant for communal living and rock music, ensure his status as preeminent spokesperson for the 1960s counter culture. While at Stanford, he participated in government – funded experiments involving chemicals at the psychology department to earn extra money. This experience fundamentally altered Kesey, personally and professionally. This formed the basis for Chief Bromden in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, his writing project at Stanford. At this time, Kesey lived at Perry Lane, a bohemian community in Palo Alto, where he become notorious for throwing parties in which certain chemicals mysteriously found their way into the punch.

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest is a novel set in an [Oregon psychiatric hospital](#), the narrative serves as a study of the institutional processes and the human mind as well as a critique of [behaviorism](#) and a celebration of humanistic principles. Bromden, the narrator and McMurphy, the protagonist, both tend to describe the suffering of the mental patients as a matter of emasculation or castration at the hands of Nurse Ratched and the hospital supervisor, who is also a woman. The fear of women is one of the novel's most central features. Throughout the novel, the sane actions of men contrast with the insane actions of the institution. When McMurphy and the patients stage a protest against Nurse Ratched for not letting them watch the World Series, a sensible request for which McMurphy generates a sensible solution, she loses control and as Bromden notes, looks as crazy as they do. Moreover, Kesey encourages the reader to consider the value of alternative states of perception, which some people also might consider crazy. For instance, Bromden's hallucinations about hidden machinery may seem crazy, but in actuality they reveal his insight into the hospital's insidious power over the patients. In addition, when the patients go on the fishing excursion they discover that mental illness can have an aspect of power in that they can intimidate the station attendants with their insanity. Harding gives Hitler as an example in discussing Ratched, suggesting that she, like Hitler, is a psychopath who has discovered how to use her insanity to her advantage.

After the men leave the hospital for a boating expedition and a taste of freedom, nurse Ratched forces a group shower and cleansing of the men's private parts since they consorted with a prostitute even though McMurphy is the only one who sleeps with her. George is deathly afraid of dirt and soap, protests. To protect him, McMurphy starts a fight with one of the orderlies and Chief jumps into protect McMurphy. Both McMurphy and Chief end up on the disturbed ward, although they did win the fistfight.

Madness is common to the human experience. They often complain that people are situation are deriving them mad or crazy or wild. The insanity of daily existence and of absurd situations can devastate tender psyches. They also have obsessions and compulsions deviating from the normal Psychology and literature both try to explain unusual behavior and the term madness seems to be a particularly useful tool in discussing certainly characters. Strange, abnormal and deviant actions of literature characters offer an indispensable resource for investigating personality. Misogyny is hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women or girls. Misogyny can be manifested in numerous ways, including social exclusion, sex discrimination, hostility, androcentrism, patriarchy, male privilege, belittling of women, violence against women, and sexual objectification. Misogyny can occasionally be found within sacred texts of religions and mythologies, and various influential Western philosophers and thinkers have been described as misogynistic. An important moment in the Chief's regeneration is when he regains his awareness of time as a natural cycle. Instead of internalized hallucinations or the artificial time of the ward, he describes a perception of external reality outside, in the smell of the autumn air:

It is fall coming, I kept thinking, fall coming; just like that was the strangest thing ever happened. Fall. Right outside here it was spring a while back, then it was summer and now it is fall – that's sure a curious idea. (OFCN 141). The Chief then looks out the dormitory window and sees a young mongrel dog running in the moonlight. The dog runs off in pursuit of a flock of migrating geese. This rebirth of awareness is a return to natural vision and it is a direct product of McMurphy's presence. The system is big and the text implies that it is only a matter of time until individual rebels are brought to heel. Thus the novel deals with their madness and misogyny in Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The author has portrayed problem of madness and misogyny of this novel. The novel revolves around the character such as nurse Ratched who suffered and faced masculine identity. The great value of the novel is that it provides a picture of a universal fact of human life. Oppression of the weak by the strong is a constant reality. In the end, the two chief opponents, Big Nurse and McMurphy, do not provide the only two choices available to readers. Instead, the model is the Chief, for he gains his free life again and lives to tell the tale. In a discussion of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* worthy of McMurphy himself, she acknowledges this and in a conclusion remarkable for its complete lack of irony suggests that Kesey is warning them that some recent developments in American society may serve to weaken masculine individuality, assertiveness and spirit. It is only in the twentieth century that women in large numbers have become financially independent. Competing with men in the world of commerce has made them necessarily more aggressive and competitive. In addition the male have lost the role of sole provider; he has lost a large part of his traditional image.

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