

One flew over the Cuckoo's nest, by Ken Kesey, is about patients and doctors in a mental institution. The author talks a lot about what goes on in this institute. The main points in this book deal with control, be it the character of McMurphy who is unable to handle control, or Nurse Ratched the head nurse on the ward whose job requires her to be in control. The world of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest is dark; it is a place where control leads to destruction, but the novel shows through the character of The Chief that there is still hope if the people who are being controlled have the power to resist.

Nurse Ratched is a mean woman whose job revolves around control. She depends on people who are less fortunate than her to make a living. Her need to control others is an unfortunate trait that she has because it makes people unable to think for themselves and it also leads to destruction. One example of this is when Nurse Ratched caught one of the patients (Billy Bibbit) with a woman. The nurse feeling the need to control Billy threatened to tell his mother. Billy begged Nurse Ratched not to tell her but when his requests were refused Billy slashed his neck with a broken bottle and killed himself. Billy's life was destroyed because of Nurse Ratched's need to control others.

Another place that we see the dark world is when we examine the relationship between Nurse Ratched and R.P. McMurphy. McMurphy is a happy and rebellious man. He is not used to being controlled, so when he gets into the institution he refuses to be controlled by Nurse Ratched, "I can get the best of that woman- before the week is up-without her getting the best of me". Nurse Ratched constantly feels the need to control McMurphy. Ever since the moment that McMurphy walks into the institute Nurse Ratched tells him what to do, when to sit in the circle, when to eat, when to take his medicine, and so on. At first McMurphy tries not to listen to Nurse Ratched because he doesn't want anyone to feel stronger than him, "A man go around lettin' a woman whup him down till he can't laugh no more and he loses the biggest edge he's got on his side. First thing you know he'll begin to think she's tougher than he is". Near the end of the novel when Billy Bibbit commits suicide, because of Nurse Ratched, McMurphy strangles her while attempting to kill her. At that point the nurse realizes that there is no way to control McMurphy, so McMurphy is then given a lobotomy and is no longer able to function as a normal human being. McMurphy's freedom to live was taken away, he was left as a lifeless human being because of Nurse Ratched's inability to control him.

Throughout the novel we see people being controlled, lives being destroyed, and people being brainwashed. We also see one character who is able to resist, to hide from, and totally ignore the Nurses, Doctors, and the others trying to control him. His name is Mr. Bromden but goes by the name of Big Chief. Chief pretends that he is deaf and dumb so that he doesn't have to answer to the authority figures on the ward. In his mind he has an idea that there is fog all around him, and whenever he is told what to do or where to go he hides behind the fog. The fog is the chief's escape "you can slip back in it and feel safe". When McMurphy comes into the ward Chief starts to worry, he is afraid because McMurphy is making things tougher on the patients because of his fights with Nurse Ratched "That's what McMurphy can't understand, us wanting to be safe. He keeps trying to drag us out of the fog, out in the open where we'd be easy to get at". At the end of the novel when McMurphy is given a lobotomy, Chief realizes that he is not so safe. Chief escapes from the institution and runs away to Canada. Chief is a figure of hope in the novel he shows us that there is still a way out for those who are being controlled.

The novel One Flew Over the Cuckoo's nest shows us darkness, and it shows us a world where control leads to destruction. It shows us lives destroyed, people who are so obsessed with control that they do not think of others even if their job requires them to do so. However, it shows us hope. Hope for those who are being controlled, hope for those who just can't take the harsh strict rules that are imposed upon them. The world of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's nest is like a dark grey cloud, a dark grey cloud with a silver lining.

