

This work is dedicated to my beloved parents Hocine and Dalila, my lovely brothers Mohamed, Lyes and Karim who supported me along my studies and to all my friends.

Lydia Bentchackal

In memory of my father whom I missed deeply.

Lydia Benyoussef

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Abstract

The present dissertation deals with the themes of madness and panopticism in Milos Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) using Michel Foucault's ideas about madness as explained in *Madness and Civilization: the History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961) and panopticism as illustrated in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975). Regarding at this movie as a countercultural cinematic work that embodies a very remarkable period in the American history which is known basically for its socio-political unrests, this study analyzes the relationship between the 'patients' and the unjust dominant discourse inside the Oregon mental institution. It illustrates how this tyrannical relation equals to the relationship between Americans and their government during that period. The aim of this work is to demonstrate how conformity was considered as a principle to distinguish 'reason' from 'unreason' in the selected movie. It also reveals how strategies like power/knowledge, observation, surveillance and discipline are applied in the psychiatric hospital to create a panopticon atmosphere in order to control the 'patients' which transform them into docile bodies. In short, leaning on Foucault's perspectives about madness and panopticism, this study, in its three chapters, has critically scrutinized Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*.

Key Words:

Madness, panopticism, countercultural, dominant discourse, conformity, 'reason', 'unreason', power/knowledge, observation, surveillance, discipline, panopticon and control.

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I. General Introduction

During the 1960s and the mid-1970s, America has witnessed unprecedented socio-political tumults that altered its way of living and thinking. The most significant hallmarks during that period were the emergence of some countercultural movements such as the Hippie Movement, during which the new generation rebelled against the traditional lifestyle seeking freethinking. However, the US government rejected their claim, as their way of thinking challenged the official discourse. As a response, the authorities used prisons and psychiatric hospitals as ‘mechanisms’ of social control.

This socio-political turmoil has caught the attention of many writers and filmmakers who, as support for the countercultural movements, tried to uncover the reality of the American society at that time and question the reaction of the U.S government that lacked transparency. Ken Kesey’s *One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest* (1961) is viewed as one of the most prominent literary works that reflects these historical events by depicting the mental hospital as a miniature model of the American society.

Kesey’s novel *One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest* influenced the American playwright Dale Wasserman, who transformed it into a successful Broadway theater. Later, in 1975, the book was adapted into a screenplay with the same title directed by Milos Forman, which became a blockbuster. In forty-one years, this movie was the first to win five Oscars for best picture, best director ‘Milos Forman’ best actor ‘Jack Nicholson’, best actress ‘Louise Fletcher’, best screenplay ‘Lawrence Hauben and Bo Goldman’.

The focal point of this dissertation is to study the themes of madness and panopticism in Milos Forman’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* by relying on Foucault’s theorization of madness as explained in *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961) and panopticism as illustrated in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975). Foucault’s ideas about madness and panopticism are an inspiring

philosophical background to cinema which tries to reflect the real conditions of the ‘patients’ and the prisoners. Besides, cinema adapts these themes as a tool to question the domination of the authority over its citizens, as its aim is to achieve conformity through destroying the idea of individuality, *Escape from Alcatraz* (1979) by Don Siegel, *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) by Frank Darabont, *the Twelve Monkeys*(1995) by Terry Guiliam, *the Eagle Eye* (2008) by D.J. Caruso, *Fast and Furious Seven*(2015) by James Wan are some good examples that deal with these themes.

Our dissertation analyzes the themes of madness and panopticism in Forman’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1975) from a Foucauldian perspective. The present work tries to discover how society and the official discourse control the interpretation and meaning of madness based on its ideological interests and agendas. In addition, analyzing the mechanisms of power in the movie and how surveillance and panopticism are operating over the ‘patients’.

1. The Review of the Previous Literature

Throughout our reading of the different literature written about madness and panopticism, we have noticed that they have been studied and criticized through various perspectives. Scholars have differed about the meaning of madness throughout history, as some view it as a ‘mental illness’, whereas others do not. Different critical schools have tried to understand and theorize madness. The somatic, the psychic and psychoanalysis are some examples of these schools which agree with the explanations of the nature of madness. These schools say that madness is a real disease with basic properties. Despite the fact that they disagree about its properties, they agreed that psychiatry is the science of treating and preventing madness¹. However, there are some thinkers who deny this interpretation of madness as a disease and have doubted the legitimacy of psychiatry to cope with madness.

Thomas Szasz is one of the thinkers who question the notion of 'mental illness' and the function of psychiatry. In his book *the Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct* (1961), he disagrees with the psychologists who utilize the concept of 'mental illness' to refer to the problems in living. Contrary to the psychologists who consider the undesirable behaviours as diseases, Szasz thinks that 'mental illness' are mere deviations from arbitrary conventions. Just as the argument of the 'physical illness' as being a deviation from the functions and the structure of body, the 'mental illness' is regarded, indeed, as a deviation from moral, social and legal norms². First of all, Szasz criticizes the concept of 'mental illness' saying that the very existence of "the phrase 'The myth of Mental Illness' means that mental illness does not exist"³. He added that the concept of 'mental illness' has a dire consequence in society, as it justifies moral and legal deviance⁴. Instead of making a person responsible for his actions, they blame the 'mental illness' per se by trying to treat 'deviants' by giving them, for instance, sedatives. In this respect, Szasz argues that:

"The first fact is that there is no mental illness... Although mental illness might have been a useful concept in 19th century, today it is scientifically worthless and socially harmful."⁵

The theme of panopticism had received noticeable criticism from different standpoints. In *The Panopticon Writings* (1791), Jeremy Bentham introduced the panopticon as a model of a strict surveillance which is used in punitive institutions to observe the prisoners⁶. Julie Leth Jespersen (*et. al*) describes the structure design of the panopticon as the all seeing place, a type of prison that is also known as the Inspection House, whose architecture design enables an observer to watch all the prisoners without their knowledge. He argues that the panopticon drives on the belief of the omnipresence of the regular gaze of the supervisor that works to prevent inmates from doing evil and diminish the motivation to contemplate any wrong doing⁷. According to H. Bertens, this model of surveillance is also used to control the 'abnormal' individuals such as 'madmen'. In other words, the panopticon

started to become an omnipresent system, not only used in prisons but also in public spaces and mental institutions in order to reinforce power over the resident of these institutions⁸.

In 1965, the preservationist historian Shirley Robin Letwin denounced Bentham of overlooking the dangers of unbalanced power. Some works portrayed Bentham's panopticon as a mechanism of surveillance and apparatus of oppression and social control. According to A. D. Schrift, in his book *Discipline and Punish, in A Companion to Foucault* (2013), the panopticon leads to:

“panopticism, and the disciplinary machine leads to the disciplinary society and the production of the modern individual who, by internalizing the supervisory gaze of the other, takes all the disciplinary tasks of society upon itself and forces itself to conform to social norms without any external authority imposing those norms.”⁹

In *Persuasive Technology_Using Computers to Change_What we Think and Do*, B.J.Fog defines the surveillance technology as any computing technology that allows one party to observe the behaviour of the other to modify the behaviour in a certain way¹⁰. Indeed, surveillance suggests that the observation must be known by the person being observed.

The themes of madness and panopticism are detected in Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. Vincent Canby, in his article 'Jack Nicholson, the Free Spirit of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*', claims that Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* is a comedy movie that reflects the political tumults of the United States during the nineteen sixties. These political unrests are portrayed through McMurphy's confrontation with the dominant discourse of the Nurse Ratched. The former is represented as the leader of the 'patients' who rebelled against the regime seeking freedom, while the latter is depicted as tyrannical and oppressive. Furthermore, Vincent Canby states that Forman, through presenting the life inside the psychiatric institution, demonstrates that the 'patients' are people who differ from the prevailing belief of the American society and that only if transcending what is called 'reason'¹¹.

In addition to Vincent Canby's views, Daniel.J.Vitikus in his article in titled "*Madness mad Misogyny in One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*" stated that the movie discussed the abnormal consciousness in two forms, the first is Madness, the other one is hallucinatory drugs. The reason-unreason in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is represented as a construct that serves the hegemonic philosophy of the American capitalism during the 1950 and 1960's, a society which still felt the movement of the 'the birth of the asylum'. However, it located the imprisonment of madness under a new technology and methods to rehabilitate the patients using drugs and shock therapy. Indeed, according to Vitikus madness in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* "can be the experience of an excess of meaning 'the world is too much with them' ". That is to say, some patients of the combine are considered acutes, not really ill, but because of the hypersensitivity, or their realization of a profound shocking truth which affects the stability of their life and adjust within society, Chief Bromden is one if the patients who suffers from alienation and racism because he is native American¹².

2. Issues and Working Hypothesis

From the above review of literature one can understand that madness and panopticism have attracted the attention of different scholars and critics. Therefore, in order to reinforce these previous studies, we would shed light on another important dimension, which is the analysis of madness and panopticism in Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) from a Foucauldian perspectives.

The current study endeavours to advance a critical analysis of the way Forman presents the themes of madness and panopticism in his movie using Foucault's critical ideas as explained in his books *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961) and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison* (1975). Our major interest is to demonstrate that madness is not a mental illness, but rather depends on the society in

which it exists. Second, we attempt to study panopticism in the movie and its real function in modern digital society to control individual's life with technological materials, wherein governments, corporations, and other powerful institutions are able to collect information of any given community.

We supposed that The themes of madness and panopticism are detected in Forman's movie. These themes can be studied in relation to the dialectic of Power-Knowledge, Resistance and Docile Body to explain the domination of the oppressor(Nurse Ratched) over the oppressed (the 'patients'). We try, therefore, to study the discourse of 'mental illness' in the Oregon State asylum, or what Foucault call a heterotypic place and how the 'patients' are controlled, neutralized and disciplined into 'docile bodies' through a set of panoptic strategies.

3. Methodological Outline

This dissertation is organized following the IMRAD method. Beginning with general introduction that introduces the reader to the subject of the study. It includes a Review of Literature that reviews the previous works on the topic and explains the theoretical framework upon which the study is based. It also contains the Issue and Working Hypothesis. The Methods and Material section provides a short summary of Madness and Panopticism as developed by Michel Foucault. This section also includes a short biography of Milos Forman as well as a brief synopsis of the movie. The Results section presents the main findings of the study.

The Discussion part in its two sections, deals with the interpretation of madness and panopticism in Forman's movie. The first section deals with the socio-political context of the United States during the sixties and the seventies, when the movie was released. In this chapter, we shall explain the important events that happened in the United States during the

sixties and early seventies by defining some concepts like Counterculture and Hippie movement.

The second section divided into two chapters. The first chapter deals with the presentation of the theory of Madness. We shall explain the cinematic representation of madness particularly in Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. As the second chapter is concerned, it will be an attempt to analyse the theory of Panopticism in relation to Forman's movie. We tried to explain Foucault's idea of panopticism and made it omnipresent in institution that aimed to observe and control. The dissertation ends with a General Conclusion that summarizes the main findings and conclusions that have been reached throughout the study, and offers some suggestions for further research on the topic.

Endnotes

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⁸Bertens Hans. *Literary Theory the Basics*. (London, Routledge, Taylor &Francis Group,1995).

⁹Schrift, A. D.eds, *Discipline and Punish, in A Companion to Foucault* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, UK. doi: 10.1002/9781118324905, 2013)ch5.

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¹¹Vincent Canby, *Jack Nicholson, the Free Spirit of 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest'* (The New York Times, November 28, 1975).

¹²J. Vitkus Daniel, *Madness and Misogyny in Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Department of English and Comparative Literature, American University in Cairo and American University in Cairo Press, 1994), 64, retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/521766>. Accessed on November 02, 2021.

II. Methods and Materials

1. Methods

This section of our research paper shed light on the theoretical approaches that will be applied in our discussion. For the sake of relevance, we intend to undertake our piece of research under the theoretical guidelines of Michel Foucault theorization about madness and panopticism as explained in *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961) and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison* (1975). Our choice stems from the fact that our issue is to analyse the sixties and the seventies in the U.S history as well as the official discourse that tried to make individuals docile bodies as reflected in Forman's movie.

In *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961), Foucault analyses the evolution of the meaning of madness in western society from the end of the middle ages through modern times. Foucault tries to prove that madness is not a 'mental illness' but rather a social construction. Said differently, the meaning of madness is changeable and related to the societal interpretation of individual deeds¹. In this respect, James Miller summarizes Foucault's literary work as: "madness was an 'invention,' a product of social relations and notion independent biological reality"².

In this book, Foucault explains the changes in the meaning of madness. The first stage starts in the late of the middle Ages, when madness began to appear to coincide with the end of leprosy. Therefore, European physicians considered madness as a contagion similar to leprosy. While the second stage was during the Classical Age, where madness came to be viewed as the reverse of reason. During this stage, the 'insane' was isolated and confined in institutions with the rest of the deviants of the society, what Foucault calls 'Great Confinement'. The Modern Era is considered as the last stage, when they come to the conclusion that madness is a 'mental illness'³.

Indeed, Foucault criticizes modernity as it aims to silence the ‘madman’, and psychoanalysis as it functions only as a language imposed upon madness and not an autonomous science of the mind. That is to say, modernity seeks to limit the dialogue between ‘madness’ and ‘reason’, and without this dialogue the voice of madness cannot be heard. As Foucault argues that:

“In the serene world of mental illness, modern man no longer communicates with the madman: on one hand, the man of reason delegates the physician to madness, thereby authorizing a relation only through the abstract universality of disease; on the other, the man of madness communicates with society only by the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order, physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the group, the requirements of conforming”⁴.

In addition to the theme of madness illustrate in *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault introduces panopticism which was elaborated first by Jeremy Bentham. Foucault used it as a symbol of disciplinary power in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*(1975).

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*, Foucault starts from his idea of power as something exerted by the government or those who have power. In this book, Foucault traces the emergence of the disciplinary power back to the massive changes that occurred in western penal systems during the modern age, the appearance of new means of punishment, imprisonment instead of execution, heralded a technology of power that act through the soul to subject and train the body, this technique of power is discipline. Indeed, Foucault argues that social institutions oppress power on the body and soul of their subjects through the gaze⁵.

‘Disciplinary power’ as we are going to explain in the discussion section, has three elements: ‘historical observation’, ‘normalizing judgment and examination’, ‘observation and the gaze’, which are key instruments of power⁶.

1. Power

Foucault believes that it is wrong to view Power as something that the institutions have against individuals and groups. He tries to give another analysis rather than the apparent repression of the weak by the powerful in every day interactions between people and organization. In the first volume of *History of Sexuality* (1978), Foucault's concern is less with the oppressive aspect of power, but more with the resistance of the oppressed.

Foucault demonstrates that power is characterized by the three following elements: 1-power as a relation rather than a possession, 2- the omnipresence of resistance to the status quo, 3- power as productive rather than repressive⁰⁷. As result, power aims at the production of docile bodies through specific strategies. One of them is that of the correct training of individuals, which implies the use of the following instruments:

a)**Hierarchical Observation:** is the ability for an operator to see the actions of the individuals, while the individuals could not see the supervisor. This function mostly in prisons, hospitals, schools, asylums. The architectural structure of these institutions reduces the number of guardians and facilitates surveillance of those within them. In fact, the design of these institutions is presented by the notion of the panopticon that we will be discussed in the following section in relation to the movie.

b)**Normalizing Judgements:** refer to an ongoing evaluation and correction of behaviour through 'double system' of 'gratification-punishment'.

c)**The Examination:** combines hierarchical observation and normalizing judgements, it is a 'normalizing gaze'. Through this instrument individuals are used to be classified, assessed, and disciplined.

The central idea of power to Foucault is to show that the modern institutions work in the same way as prisons and asylums depending on enclosure and visual (panoptic)

observation in order to function correctly. Usually, power is seen as the capacity of an operator to force his power over the frail or the capacity to drive them to do things they do not wish to do; meaning that power is understood as a possession, something owned by those in power. In contrast, Foucault examines power more as a strategy than a possession since

“Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of chain...power is employed and exercised through a netlike organization...individuals are the vehicles of power not its points of application”⁰⁸.

2. Discipline

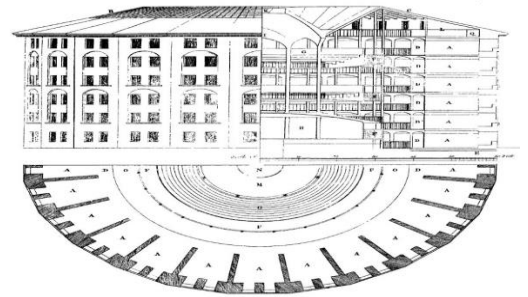
The concept of discipline is very important for the analysis of Forman’s *One Flew Over TheCuckoo’s Nest*. The powerful uses discipline and surveillance as strategies to observe ‘the patients’ behaviours to prevent them of breaking their rules or ‘schedules’. Discipline is a mechanism of power which regulates the individual’s behaviour in the social body. Foucault argues that discipline is a set of strategies, procedures, behaviours that pervade the individual’s general thinking and behaviour. Discipline, to Foucault, is:

“an art of rank, a technique for the transformation of arrangements, it individualizes bodies by location that does not give them a fixed position but distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations”⁰⁹.

Foucault emphasizes that power is not discipline, but rather a way in which it can be exercised. According to Bállan, Discipline is achieved through four ways:1- the art of distributions meaning that for instance patient in psychiatric institutions are confined in special room,2- the control of activities, i.e discipline controls the activity of the body according to daily schedule ,3- the organization of geneses, introduces exercises to maximize individuals efficiency ,4- the composition of faces, is done through what Foucault calls ‘tactics’,¹⁰ the strategies used by Nurse Ratched to observe ‘the patients’.

Disciplinary power is clearly exemplified by Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon as an institutional building, hospital, school, public houses for poor people but the most use of it is that of prison. Institution model panopticon began to spread in the society.

The central idea of the ‘panopticon’ can be described as a circular building with the cells of the prisoners located in the circumference and separated by an empty space. The tower of the inspector is located in the center. The side of each cell facing outwards would be occupied by a large window and the inner one by a thin iron grating in order to make the whole room perfectly visible from the tower, which means the inmates feel mechanically being watched. This feeling is achieved in the panopticon through two inter light elements:



- The inspector should be central he/she should have the central position in prison.
- ‘Seeing without being seen’, i.e the inspector should be able to watch the inmates but not being seen by them¹¹.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault uses Bentham’s plan for the panopticon which he considers as a paradigmatic example for the organization of power in modern society. He introduces power, the control of the body and the control of space into an integrated technology of discipline. That is to say, the notion of the discipline as a method to exert power on the subject’s body. He argues that:

These methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body ,which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility ,might be called discipline¹².

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shows a deep examination of the relationship between the physical body of the individual and what he calls ‘power-knowledge’ meaning that the dominant discourse uses knowledge as a way of controlling people. Moreover, Foucault’s theorization of panopticism suggests that the panopticon and mechanisms of power

continues to spread not only in prisons but also into other institutions in society and become ubiquitous and dangerous.

To sum up, In *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (1975), Foucault traces the evolution of modern power structures such as current prison systems, and considers their effects on human freedom and identity. Indeed, Panopticism is often used to understand how individuals internalize-power and the effect on both social relations and the possibility of resistance.

2.Material

The material that we use in our investigation of madness and panopticism is Forman's film version (1975) of Ken Kesey's novel (1962) entitled *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*.

2.1.The Biography of Milos Forman

Milos Forman is a Czech American film director, screen writer, actor and professor. He is one of the most important and famous figures who challenged Hollywood with his successful works. He won twice the Academy Award for best director, the first for the film *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), and the second for *Amadeus* (1984)¹³.

Milos Forman was born in February 18, 1932 in Caslav, Czechoslovakia, and died in April 13, 2018 in Danbury, Connecticut, US. Both his parents died in concentration camps during the Second World War. Then, he was brought up by his aunt Anna and his uncle Boleslav in Nachod. Later, 'Mr.Hluchy', the family of the director of the local gas company in Caslav had taken him¹⁴. After the war, Forman was educated at boarding school for war orphans in Podebrady. He studied screenwriting at the Prague film school FAMU, from 1950 to 1955, and graduating in 1956. He worked as an assistant director on the Veteran Martin Fric's *Leave It to Me* (1955), also he participated on Alfred Rodok's *Old Man Motor Car* (1956), and he succeed with his original screenplay for Ivo Radok's *Puppies* (1957). At

the late 1960s, he left Czechoslovakia and moved to the United States as a rebellious young filmmaker. At the beginning of his career in the United States, he had been little welcomed, but only few years later he achieved a huge critical and commercial success with *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* film, an adaptation of Ken Kesey's novel, which won five Academy Awards¹⁵.

In fact, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, novel, was first sent to Forman as a potential project while he was in Czechoslovakia by Kirk Douglas, but he did not receive it. After a while, the same suggestion was brought up to Forman but this time by Michael Douglas and the producer Saul Zaentz. The film has been interpreted by many as literary about mental health, but there is no doubt that Forman expressed it with a Czech sense as he said: "To me it was not just literature but real life, the life I lived in Czechoslovakia from my birth in 1932 until 1968" he added to that "The Communist Party was my Nurse Ratched, telling me what I could and could not do"¹⁶.

Forman directed many other successful movies except *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* and *Amadeus* such as: *Hair* (1975), *Ragtime* (1981), *The People vs. Larry Flynt* (1996), *Man on the Moon* (1999)¹⁷.

2.2. Synopsis of Milos Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*

Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* tells the story of the rebellious McMurphy, a new 'patient' at Oregon state mental institution who feigned madness to escape prison sentence for raping a fifteen years old underage girl. He figured that life would be easier than the prison farm, but it took only a couple of hours Nurse Ratched's ward for McMurphy to realize his mistake. At the psychiatric institution, he finds that the mental ward is dominated by the head nurse Ratched, a cold, cruel and dictator who uses her authority to control her 'patients'. The oppressive and the strict rules of the nurse Ratched and her cruel practices of militaristic scheduling led McMurphy to rebel against the hospital staff.

Moreover, he inspired other 'patients' to follow his way by encouraging them to realize their individualities and find self confidence. Consequently, the nurse Ratched ordered McMurphy to be electrocuted, causing McMurphy's end. However, despite the loss of his life, McMurphy eventually succeeded in liberating Chief Bromden and gaining his sense of being¹⁸.

Endnotes

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⁵Foucault Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*, Alan Sheridan, trans.(New York : Vintage Books, 1995).

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¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Milos Forman: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and Amadeus director dies* (BBC news, April 14, 2018), retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-43767278>. Accessed on August 11, 2020.

¹⁷Michael Barson, *Milos Forman: Czech-born director*, retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Milos-Forman>. Accessed on August 11, 2020.

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III. Results

Through our analysis of Forman's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), we came to the conclusion that the film tackles some critical themes namely madness and panopticism. The findings of the current study are reached from the analysis of the selected movie using the teachings of two theoretical frameworks of Michel Foucault *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in The Age of Reason* (1961), and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*(1975).

In the first section of our dissertation, we have concluded that the film is an embodiment and a reflection of the historical and philosophical events of the United States during the 1960s and the early 1970s. These periods were marked by the deterioration of the socio-political conditions of the country. The intriguing aspect of these periods was the emergence of the Countercultural movements, as the Hippie Movement. It is worth pointing out that Forman represents the abovementioned historical events through the character of McMurphy who epitomizes, as advocated during this era, resistance and freedom, unlike the Nurse Ratched who symbolizes the American government. Due to the adaptation process, we can find out that there are some changes between Forman's movie and Kesey's novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, some scenes are completely omitted from the movie. These modifications, however, are not the result of chance, but to serve certain messages that Forman wants to convey. One of these messages, indeed, is to make the story more relevant to the mid seventies in America. It is important to mention that *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* is a depiction of Forman's life in Czechoslovakia from his birth in 1932 until 1968, according to him the nurse Ratched was the communist party, telling him what to do and what not to do.

In the second section, in its two chapters, the first chapter has discussed the theme of madness in Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* through a Foucauldian

perspective. With regard to the meaning of madness, we have deduced that it depends on the society in which it exists, meaning that the dominant discourse of a society determines what madness is. Thus, madness has been represented from different perspectives, as cinema depicts the different interpretations of madness in a certain society at a specific period of time. As we have noticed in Forman's movie, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, McMurphy is considered as a 'madman' and an alien due to his behaviour and ideas. That is to say, the American society during the 1960s and the early 1970s lacked the acceptance of McMurphy's attitude and rejected his belief because it opposed the American traditional established norms and values.

In the second chapter of the second section, we have concluded that the mental institution used different strategies of surveillance relying on the panoptic model, in order to predict the future behaviour of the 'patients' and make them avoid any wrong doing against authority. For instance, Nurse Ratched uses knowledge and power in order to exercise power over the patients in the name of discipline. Said differently, the authorities use the mechanisms of 'disciplinary power' to reinforce their dominance and make individuals conformist. Indeed, we deduced that the main issue of the old panopticon is still appropriate in the digital society. Surveillance becomes ubiquitous and dangerous at the same time through the use of technological companies for example Google, Apple that authorize to one individual to have a look on other's individual information, their future projects and even their way of thinking.

IV. Discussion

Section One: Historical and Philosophical Backgrounds of the United States during the Sixties (60s) and the Early Seventies (70s)

Introduction

The present section strives to provide insights of the American history during the sixties (60s) and the early seventies (70s). It scrutinizes the most important events that occurred during these periods, and tries to define two related concepts which are Counterculture and the Hippie movement.

Chapter One: The Nineteen Sixties and the Nineteen Seventies in the U.S.A

History and any given artistic or literary works are interrelated to each other, as most of them are embodiments of historical events for a specific period of time. Many writers and filmmakers use their works as a means of contributing and expressing various socio-political issues. History provides us with additional information, details, ideas and points of view about the subject matter.

Milos Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) is one of the most artistic works that had been influenced by the events of the sixties and the seventies in America. During this period, the United States of America witnessed a series of special events which changed the American thinking, values, and norms. Through our research we try to explain the key points that characterized this period.

1. American History During the 1960s and 1970s

The nineteen sixties (60s) in the United States was a decade that remains the most consequential and controversial of the twentieth century. Indeed, the sixties had seen an emergence of new movements and assumptions that changed the socio-cultural life of the United States which is known as Counterculture.

The nineteen sixties began with the election of the first president born in the twentieth century John F. Kennedy. The young president represented a spirit of hope for many Americans, and inspired a generation to find common purpose through challenge and opportunity. On November 22nd, 1963 President John F. Kennedy was shot in Dallas, Texas. The killing of the popular young president was a shock and sorrow for many especially for the young people which led them to rebel against the country's regime¹. Indeed, the sixties was a decade, as Forman's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* depicts, of the political, social, and cultural turmoil in the United States.

The good economic atmosphere of the United States during the sixties allowed it to engage in several wars and spend huge budget on it such as: Cuba, Japan and Vietnam. The latter conflict played an important role in American history. It did not just expose the limits of the United States military power and destroy the consensus over the post Second World War foreign policy, but it was also one of the most important factors that led to political and cultural tumult as the emergence of the 'Hippies', who rebelled against the customs and traditions of the country, seeking intellectual liberation².

During the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movements was also at its climax. The Student Movement, the Women's Movement, The American Indian Movement, The Gay and Lesbian Movements, all aimed at ending social segregation. Indeed, the protests during this period were on every level of the United States: Foreign policy, racial issues, political activism and cultural patterns. The latter were the most prominent, especially among young people who looking for: peace, absolute freedom and open mind attitude³. What we can understand is that the American way of life of the sixties was what the Counterculture wanted to change.

If the sixties can be considered as an optimistic period in the United States, the seventies would be considered as pessimistic one. To many Americans, The seventies was the 'Looser decade'⁴; not only for the fading of some cultural movements like the Hippies and

other cultural protestations like women movement, but also for the economic malaise that the country suffered from. Economic crisis that combined between the continuing declines of America's manufacturing base and the oil shock of 1973 and 1979. Thus, the seventies was a terrible period for both the American economy and culture⁵.

It is clear that the sixties and seventies were full of social and political turmoil in the United States, as it was considered a period of disappointment for Americans. The concept of Counterculture is probably the best example which expresses this disappointment.

a) Counterculture

Because the film we are studying belongs to Counterculture, explaining this concept is very important to understand the film. According to J.MiltonYinger, Counterculture is 'set of norms and values of group that sharply contradict the dominant norms and values of society which that group is apart'⁶. These groups tend to oppose the values and norms of behaviour of the mainstream culture norms in society by creating new ones. They have their own belief, problems with cultural integration and they have their own material culture. A classical example of a Counterculture is the youth Counterculture in the United States during the sixties and early seventies which is known as a 'Hippie movement'.

b) The Hippie Movement

Throughout history the world has seen some generations that have made an impact more than all of its predecessors. The Hippies are one of them that made a change in the world particularly in the United States during the sixties and early seventies. The Hippies are strangely clothed young people with long hair and unshaved beards. They feel that their parents' believes were not enough to help them deal with the social and racial difficulties of 1960s. Drug use was common among the Hippies, but LSD and Marijuana were the most consumed. They listen to singers like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez; who used music to give voice to the movement⁷.

The Hippies of the early sixties was influenced by the Beat generation. The latter was a group of young poets and writers in the 1950s like Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. They were generally considered to be the precursors of the Hippies after the Second World War; the Beat generation became one of the most important forces that challenged traditional social values and norms through praising their vision of life based on absolute freedom⁸.

Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* (1956) and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) are the best known instances that influenced the beat generation and the Hippie movement. Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* was described as 'the voice of generation' and 'the poem that changed America'⁹. It rebelled against the American social norms of that time and motivated the great social change. The publication of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* marks a turning point in the history of beat literature which also criticized the American way of life of that period¹⁰.

Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) is considered as one of the best cinematic works which reflects the socio-political unrests of the American society in the sixties (60s) and the early seventies (70s). Said differently, it is a countercultural movie which discusses the issue of popular attacks against the dominant discourse. Forman depicts the historical events of these periods through the character of McMurphy and the Nurse Ratched. The former is represented as a symbol of Countercultural movements, who dared to express openly his rejection of the dominant discourse, while the latter who contradict McMurphy, is portrayed as the head of 'the combine'. Indeed, McMurphy and the Hippies share the same beliefs that the U.S government does not want to spread and this is the reason why McMurphy is considered insane in the asylum¹¹. As we see in the film the Nurse Ratched seeks to convert the 'patients' into machines through stripping them of their individualities, and this is what the U.S government is doing against any person with Countercultural ideas. In fact, this film depicts a symbolic fight between unlimited free thinking and the blind conformity.

Conclusion

This section is an account of some historical and philosophical backgrounds in the United States during the sixties and the seventies, the period in which Milos Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* was released. The first chapter of this section showed how the period of the sixties and early seventies was full of political, social, and cultural instability, since a group of population naming themselves the Hippies manifested against the system. Indeed, many other movements were appeared at that period and all aimed at changing the traditional way of life of American society.

Endnotes

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Section Two: ‘Reason’-‘Unreason’ and panopticism in Forman’s *One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest*

Introduction

The present section deals with and the portrayal of ‘madness’ and ‘panopticism’ in Milos Forman’s movie. In the first chapter, we analyse how ‘reason’ and ‘unreason’ is represented in Forman’s *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* from a foucauldian perspective. Our aim is to demonstrate that madness is interpreted and defined according to some ideological agendas. The second chapter of this section strives to analyse the dialectic power/knowledge in Forman’s movie and the way to resist against this capitalisation.

I.1. chapter One: the Representation of Madness in the movie

Foucault has explained in his book *Madness and Civilization* that the discourses that defined ‘reason’ against ‘unreason’ showed how the construction of madness served different socio-political functions¹. Foucault’s study of madness assumes that madness is a social construct not a natural fixed thing. It depends on the society where it exists, this entails that psychology is a tool of power used to control human behaviour. The aforementioned study denies historical narratives of madness in order to show the extent of society’s abuse of the ‘mentally ill’². As we have already suggested,

Indeed, Forman’s movie deals with the relationship between ‘patients’ and the psychiatric staff and tries to uncover the reality of the mental institution. Several cases of the ‘mentally ill’ have been presented. Forman explains the theme of madness in relation to the ‘mentally ill’ and the validity of what it really means to be a ‘madman’, which leads to wonder about the line that separates the ‘reason’ from ‘unreason’. In the film, as we have mentioned, there is a clear battle between ‘reason’ and ‘unreason’. The former is depicted by the administrative staff mainly the Nurse Ratched, whereas the latter is represented by the protagonist McMurphy and the rest of the ‘patients’. At first glance, we find that this

distinction seems to be logical. The ordinary viewers would deal with this film in relatively a superficial way depending on their feelings and non critical understandings. Put differently, the said message entails that a madman is a mental patient; dangerous to society and must be confined in a mental institution under the supervision of psychiatrists to rehabilitate him.

From Foucault's perspective, this distinction regarding 'patients' symbolizes the 'unreason' and the medical staff symbolize 'reason' is very problematic and should take a quite different meaning. According to Foucault, understanding the 'unreason', through the use of 'reason', is a difficult process³. Thus, a careful analysis of the movie is more than important.

2.Oregan State Hospital as a Miniature of the U.S.A

Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) was shot in Eastern Oregon State Hospital in Pendleton, opened in 1913. In 1965, it began providing services to growing disabled patients and psychopaths, as in the case of the selected movie. In 1985, the hospital was divided into two institutions: Oregon Centre provides care and treatment for people who are mentally ill, and Oregon Training Centre provides curative care for the mentally retarded people⁴.

Indeed, Forman portrays the mental institution in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* in a negative way. He considers it as a place that is harmful for the 'madman'. Said differently, it is a place which attempts to manipulate and control. The psychiatric institution is depicted as a maze of doors, locks, and cage where 'patients' are tied, so they cannot escape regulation and constant confinement. Even the music that is heard in the movie is used as a means of controlling 'patients'. The mental institution is represented as a small world of regulation, routine and discipline ruled by the Nurse Ratched, the head nurse. She made life unbearable for both 'patients' and staff members, as she could blackmail, bully, and punish anyone who disobeys her. In fact, through presenting the psychiatric institution as a corrupt

one, Forman criticizes the US government because it is the responsible for controlling individuals and their freedoms. That is to say, first, it supports the continuity of the mental institution system, second, focuses on the psychiatric institution as a corrective facility.

3. power and sanity in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*

As we have already mentioned, the division of 'sanity' (medical staff) and the 'insanity' ('patients') is very problematic and needs to be reviewed. Indeed, if we go beyond the apparent division, and scrutinize the attitude and the behaviour of both the Nurse Ratched and the 'patient', we will notice that there is a defect that must be reconsidered.

As the events evolve in the film, we discover that the nurse Ratched, the symbol of power in the movie, has complete control over the 'patients', even in the smallest matters. She imposes her authority on the 'patients' and tries to suppress them by breaking their self esteem and making them bodies without souls. In several scenes, one can see how the nurse Ratched mistreats her 'patients'. Her attitude towards Billy Bibbit is the best example of her cruelty and coldness. In the scene in which she discovers Billy with Candy on the bed after the Booze party, she threatens him to tell his mother, knowing that Billy's fear of his mother is the reason of his presence in the mental psychiatry. Although he begs her not to inform his mother, she insists to do so. Suicide seems to be the sole solution. After Billy's suicide, the nurse Ratched leads the men down the corridor and says in a calm voice: 'Now calm down. The best thing we can do is going on with our daily routine'⁵. While the others, including the nurse Pilbow, and the 'patients' react with horror to Billy's bloody corpse. One can notice the difference between the 'normal' reaction of the 'patients' and the 'abnormal' reaction of the nurse Ratched, as she still insists on her routine program despite the horrific incident that occurred.

The nurse Ratched promises McMurphy to let him and the other 'patients' to follow the Baseball world series on television only if he collects the majority of their votes,

but she does not keep her promise even though he obtains the votes, what led to chaos among the ‘patients’. Indeed, from the analysis we can understand that the main reason for patient’s instability and the trauma is the Nurse Ratched.

If the nurse Ratched symbolizes ‘reason’ and ‘sanity’, her mistreating for her ‘patients’ proves her ‘unreason’ and ‘insanity’, unlike the ‘patients’ who resist to gain their freedom, and reject the institutional system that was imposed on them. To conclude, the Nurse Ratched is the one who represents the ‘insanity’, while the ‘patients’ represent the ‘sanity’.

4.Nurse Ratched’s Conformity vs Patient’s Individuality

Through this film, Forman explains how American society views ‘reason’ and ‘unreason’ during the 1960s and 1970s. During this period, there were some ideas and values rejected by society, such as homosexuality or free thinking in general, and anyone who believes in these ideas is rejected by the society and sometimes considered as a ‘madman’, what is called the ‘othered madness’, as it is the case with some ‘patients’ in the film such as Dale Harding and the protagonist McMurphy.

Indeed, the ‘patients’ are the victims of American society that demands socio-cultural conformity and rejects difference during that period⁶. As Dale Harding explains in the film how his homosexuality, his difference, led to his imprisonment in the mental institution. His fear that society will not accept him, makes him prefer to stay in the psychiatric institution rather than disclosing his homosexuality. The same thing with the rest of the ‘patients’ who are considered as ‘madmen’ because of their difference.

In fact, conformity as a basis for the distinction between ‘sanity’ and ‘insanity’ has been criticized by many writers. Emily Dickonson in *Much Madness is Divinest sense* first published in 1890 criticizes the society of her time for attributing madness to spiritual persons

who deviate from socio-cultural conformity and its way of treating them. The same criticism came from Michel Foucault through *Madness and Civilization*, which illustrates how modernity works to classify individuals into binary categories ‘reasonable’ and ‘unreasonable’ based on conformity, in the sense that conformity symbolizes ‘reason’ and difference symbolizes ‘unreason’. ‘Assent Emily Dickinson argues, and you are sane – Demur – you’re straightway dangerous’⁷. The same idea echoes by Douglas Kellner, explaining: ‘while culture once cultivated individuality, it was now promoting conformity, and was a crucial part of ‘the totally administered society’ that was producing the end of the individual’⁸. Kellner criticizes modernity, which acts to abolish individuality, and its attempt to produce unified social entities is a wrong thing, because ‘reason’ is in cultivation of individuality⁹.

Through *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, Forman explains the meaning of conformity as the lack of individuality through two characters: Nurse Ratched as an institutional ward head and McMurphy as institutional inmate. These two characters play social roles that are in contrast with their true selves. The former takes on the character of the difficult and serious nurse. She controls the ward with an iron fist by forcing herself to submit to the regulation of the mental institution, where she hides her femininity behind a patronizing face. While the latter, assumes the role of the madman who is subject to pressure from the rest of the ‘patients’. Both of them are ignoring their individuality, and this is what proves to be madness. Through this film, Forman tries to demonstrate that ‘reason’ lies in discovering the inner self, where he proves it through the character Chief Bromden¹⁰.

Indeed, through the character Chief Bromden Forman tries to prove how ‘reason’ is connected to individuality. Forman explains that transcending social classifications of madness means creating individual voices. The schizophrenic Chief Bromden pretends to be a deaf and dumb for self protection, but with the help of McMurphy, he realizes his individuality and breaks

away from Nurse Ratched's oppression and pressure by gaining a new sense of being¹¹. In the final scene, Chief Bromden escapes from the mental institution and rushes towards free nature after strangling McMurphy with a pillow. In fact, Chief Bromden does not want to escape and leave his friend McMurphy like a semi dead in the mental institution. Therefore, he thinks of freeing himself and also McMurphy's soul from submission and defeat, as he tells him: 'you come with me'¹². Through this escape, Forman attempts to describe the failure of the American psychological system to deal with such situations. In the end, the Chief chooses nature instead of confronting society, which confirms his defeat by the regime.

Conclusion

To conclude, the meaning of madness differs from one society to another and from one period to another. Every society defines it according to its norms and believes to serve its own interests. Therefore, cinema embodies madness in distinct ways, based on previous interpretations of madness. For example, Forman's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* depicts the American society's interpretation of 'reason' and 'unreason' during the 1960s and 1970s relying on the principle of conformity.

Endnotes:

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⁵Forman Milos, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (United Artist, USA, 1975), (01:56:36).

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Section Two: Panopticism and resistance in Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* .

Introduction

This section provides the analysis of Forman's movie *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* using Michel Foucault's dialectic of power/knowledge, and his theorization about panopticism. Indeed, it also reveals the way some character and people try to resist against the exploitation and capitalization.

I.1. Power/Knowledge in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*

In Forman's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Power and Knowledge are two concepts that imply one another for the same process. In fact, there is no power relation without knowledge. Foucault views power as 'not a commodity, a position, a prize, or a plot, but rather as the operation of the political technologies through the social body'¹. The central issue of *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* comes from Foucault's views of therapeutic motive where he considers the internal asylum as a way of forcing the internal soul to fit someone's standpoints of the external environment. Indeed, from the beginning of the movie, the relevance of Power and Knowledge. McMurphy is the main character sent from prison to the mental institution to be studied and analyzed by the psychiatrists whether he is really mad or not. The following shots provide some examples of the dialectic of power and knowledge.

Shot one: McMurphy's knowledge (00:08:28)

McMurphy is brought to see Dr Spivey who has already received his personal records:

Dr. Spivey: Randall Patrick McMurphy.
38 years old.

What can you tell me about...why you've been sent over here?

McMurphy: Well. I don't know.

What's it say there?

Mind if I smoke?

Dr. Spivey: No, go right ahead



Well, it says several things here.
 It said you've been belligerent.
 It said you've been belligerent.
 You've been resentful in attitude
 towards work, in general. That you're lazy.
 McMurphy: Chewing gum in class.
 Dr. Spivey: The real reason you've been sent here is because they wanted you to be evaluated.
 To determine whether or not you're mentally ill.
 This is the real reason.
 You've got at least five arrests for assault. What can you tell me about that?
 You're going to be here for a period, for us to evaluate you.²

From the above dialogue, we can notice that the authorities are already conscious about all the personnel information of their 'patients'. Dr Spivey is already aware about McMurphy's illegal action that he did during his imprisonment where he wants to confirm whether McMurphy is really mad or not.

Shot Two: Nurse Ratched strategy of Knowledge (00:14:05)

The movie shows that Nurse Ratched is well informed about their patients through the therapeutic session. She asks questions about their personal problems, and how could the other 'patients' react in any given subject. Thus, she uses this knowledge to control them. The knowledge that the



Nurse Ratched receives from the therapeutic session guides her to classify some of the 'patients' into categories, which are presented in the American society as minorities. Homosexual form one example of these minorities.

a) Homosexuality in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*

Through the acknowledge that Nurse Ratched receives from each 'patient', she exercises power over them. Most of the inmates were afraid of their homosexuality mainly, Billy Bibbit and Dale Harding.

Shot Three: Homosexuality of Billy Bibbit (from 01:44:34 to 01:50:46)

Billy Bibbit, a thirty one years old stammer, is driving the life of ‘a bashful rabbit’ and has never been able to have any kind of fulfilling relationship because of his ruling mother. His stammering seems to be an impact of the matriarchal abuse he suffered from. McMurphy sneaks prostitution into the



ward to revive the emasculated Billy Bibbit. McMurphy’s plan appears to be effective, but when the Nurse Ratched comes to know about it, she considers it to be a challenge to her regime. She exploited the matriarchal trap on him by embarrassing him through her words saying:

“Oh, Billy Billy ... I’m so ashamed for you ... poor boy, poor little boy ... What worries me, Billy... is how your poor mother is going to take this ... She’s very sensitive. Especially concerning her son. She always spoke so proud of you”³.

Bibbit was very proud of what he did. Yet after hearing Ratched’s words, he could not sustain the fact that his mother will be informed of what he did, so he committed suicide.

b) Dale Harding as the Counter Production of Power

Dale Harding, an uneducated ‘patient’ and an effeminate man, is psychologically castrated by his wife and the Nurse Ratched. He has voluntarily committed himself to the hospital. Harding is oppressed by his wife that appears to serve as the spoken’s person who always reminds Harding of his differences and his effeminate ways. As it is clearly shown in the movie, Harding explains his position to be as the acute patients in the asylum, declaring that:

“I’m not just talking about my wife, I’m talking about my life, I cannot seem to get that through to you. I’m not just talking about one person, I’m talking about everybody, I’m talking about forms, I’m talking about content, I’m talking about interrelationships, I’m talking about god, the devil, hell, heaven”⁴.

Harding is not embarrassed of being homosexual but the society makes him feel so. The sacrifices made by McMurphy gather up courage to fight the other world (outside the institution), so Harding's values overcome his shame of being homosexual and decide to stand against dissatisfaction of society which keeps him intimidated over what he is.

c) Chief Bromden's Father as a Victim of Matriarchy

As a consequence of the racist climate he lived in, Chief Bromden, it is important to mention, takes the name of his Caucasian mother 'Mary Louise Bromden' not that of his Indian father Tee Ah Millatoana or the 'Chief Broom'. Chief Bromden's father seems to be like Harding, oppressed and effeminized. His name, the symbol of his identity, is not going to be perpetuated. The Indian culture, symbolized here by Chief Bromden's father, seems to be invaded and assimilated. Chief is critically aware of this situation as he declares that his father was:

'full chief...he was real big when I was a kid, my mother got twice his size...he fought (the combine) a long time till my mother made him too little to fight any more and he gave up'⁵.

2. Racism in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*

In the movie, Forman shows a clear existence of racism, which is mainly noticed with the division of the job in the asylum. The whites, as Nurse Ratched at the top, followed by 'black boys', then the 'patients' as Chief Bromden.

Nurse Ratched and Dr Spivey are dominating characters in the mental institution. They exercise power over the aides or 'the black boys' who are below them. The men are stigmatized because of their race. They are scolded by her and given a low pay grade, for a displeasing work. Within the movie, it is common that the 'black boys' do often punish 'the patients'. In several scenes we saw them turning around the 'patients' not for protection but to hurt them physically and psychologically for whatever they do. Their acts are neither noticed nor punished but by the Nurse Ratched, on the contrary, encouraged. She chooses those men

according to their skin, in order to exercise their power over 'the patients' especially with Chief Bromden, most of the time they call him 'the deaf mute' or 'illiterate'. Their hatred of 'the patients' stems from their rough childhood. They also behave as irresponsible and unable to carry out simple job, the aides had a poor rough childhood. Below them, is chief Bromden who cleans up what the aides won't do⁶.

Bromden, a half Native American Indian, diagnosed as an incurable paranoid-schizophrenic, pretends to be a deaf and mute in order to protect himself from the forces of the asylum. He is pushed to do what the aides do not want such as washing bathrooms and changing catheter bag. Indeed, Bromden represents the American Indians as imprisoned at the mercy of the white people. Bromden's father was constrained to hand over his land to white individuals. It is something sacred for the Indians, and giving up the land is giving up their freedom. This segregation is already seen in society, one of the concrete example of this, can be seen when Rosa Parks, a middle-age black lady, denied to denote up her sit on the bus in 1955. Today Rosa Park is seen as an awfully respectful woman in the world. Time have changed and advanced with better cultural understanding.

3. Violence in Forman's movie

All along the therapeutic sessions, Nurse Ratched tries to dominate Cheswick after claiming for his cigarettes. McMurphy resorts to the window of the Nurse station and breaks the glass and grabs cigarettes giving them to Mr. Cheswick. Ratched's aim from these sessions is to predict the patient's future behavior in order to keep the asylum under control. However, McMurphy's act of violence demonstrates to Nurse Ratched that she has no control over him, and her menace to him is meaningless. Another scene that shows violence in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* is the suicide of Cheswick and Billy Bibbit in the mental clinic. While McMurphy feels very sad about the suicide and very angry over nurse Ratched, McMurphy assaults her trying to kill her. This situation creates a moment of depression and

hatred. Thus all the knowledge that Ratched collected from ‘the patients’ during her therapies. She fails to control the ward.

II. Disciplinary Power in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest*

Discipline and disciplinary power are clearly demonstrated in Milos Forman’s *One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest*. In the mental ward, the objective of power in the asylum is ‘to train’ ‘the patients’. The Big Nurse and the authorities of the asylum use certain strategies to reach their objectives that can be explained as the following.

a) Time-table: one of the procedures valuable to discipline is to conduct a comprehensive time control which covers the daily routine of ‘the patients’. Discipline uses this strategy to ‘establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycles of repetition and make the exercise of power automatic’⁷. The asylum contains a strict time-table schedules for the complete time from ‘the lights flash on the ward’ till ‘the night medication, after which the patients go to the dormitory to sleep’⁸. ‘The patients’ are permitted to have their meal and physical exercises at a particular time and place. Indeed, it is the Nurse Ratched who chooses when and where they ought to be done and what kind of music they ought to listen to and any changes of the schedule may interrupt the exercising of power. The best illustration of the point is seen with McMurphy, when he proposes to Nurse Ratched to make a slight change to watch ‘world series baseball in television’ ‘a little change never hurt, huh? a little variety?’⁹, she ironically though, answers ‘some men on the ward take a long, a long time to get used to the schedule. Change it now and they might find it very disturbing’¹⁰. Then she suggests a vote and ‘let the majority rule’¹¹, the Nurse seems to be aware of her powerful position and the majority of the patients are scarred from her, they can not make any decision by their own, and that was the case, only three votes supports McMurphy which astonishes him ‘what is this crap? What is the matter with you guys? Come on! Be good Americans’¹².

The disciplinary rulers produce within the time-table a few particular hours for the 'patients' to work within the mental institutions, as, for instance, to coordinate in cleaning the ward. In any penitentiary institutions, it is done not for its financial benefit or to assist the inmates to learn specific ability, but to solidify and perpetuate control and power relations. When 'the patients' accept to work without any resistance, they repeat the activity several times which leads to the mechanical docility of 'the patients'.

b) Composition of Space: the design of 'the combine' is divided into two departments. One is saved for the psychiatric board the nurse station, and the other one serves for 'the patients' who are forbidden to enter to the nurse station. According to the menace 'the patient' represent and their chance to be treated, it is worth pointing out, 'the patients' are divided into two categories in the asylum, namely the actives and chronics. The former are the patients living without constraints, while the patients of the second category are living under the pressure of observation. It is important to mention that it is 'the patients' docility and conformity of the institution that would decide how they would be treated.

c) Physical and Psychological Punishment: during the ancient time, the body was the main intention of punishment. Disciplinary punishment eliminates this idea and forces it on the brain and the soul. Within the asylum this sort of discipline is called medicine. 'The patients' are not allowed to do something without the permission of Nurse Ratched, while they have to accept her decisions even if they do not want. Whenever 'the patients' do not respond to her rules, they get punished by the therapy shock. This is clearly seen with McMurphy when he refuses to take his medicine and Nurse Ratched suggesting that if he doesn't will to take drugs easily, he will take it in the harsh way. Out of fear of the Big Nurse, McMurphy feigns taking the medicine. Fear helps the authorities to exercise power over 'the patients' and makes them more respectful and docile to the oppressor.

Disciplinary power, therefore, is clearly illustrated in Forman's *one Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* through its characters. Nurse Ratched uses diverse strategies to exercise power over 'the patients', that helps her keep the mental ward under control, and to punish anyone who resists her rules.

III. Panopticism in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*

Michel Foucault uses Jeremy Bentham's plan of the panopticon, as a paradigmatic example of disciplinary technology. The central idea of the panopticon is 'to watch without being seen' meaning that the observer can see all and check upon the activities of the prisoners who are, however, to be unable to see him. The observers, in addition, are themselves under observation, they have to control their behavior, as Foucault explains

'Those who occupy the central position in the Panopticon are themselves thoroughly enmeshed in localization and ordering of their behavior. They observe, but in the process of so doing, they are also fixed, regulated, and subject to administrative control'¹³.

In the movie, the aides or 'the black boys' are frequently turning around the 'patients' and observing the patients, to make sure they don't attempt transgressing the rules or to do something against the rules. According to Foucault, 'although surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top'¹⁴. In other words, surveillance can be reversed, it is clear that the patients are the only elements of the disciplinary system who are under surveillance. The patients who appear to be the only and the real objects of surveillance can observe the aides, who seem to be the real spectators, because they are elements of docility-utility. The following shots provide some example of panopticism in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*.

The asylum uses a panoptic model to observe the 'patients'. The structure of the building resembles to the panoptic design. Some patients are locked up in cells, not allowed to walk in the ward with the other 'patients' who committed themselves voluntarily to the 'combine', and Nurse Ratched keeps her eyes on the floor from the nurse station behind a

glass window. For instance, when she addresses Sefelt and Fridirickson ‘it’s been brought to my attention that you two have made some arrangement with your medication- you are letting Bruce have your medication’¹⁵, she wants to show her invisible omnipresence, in order to prevent them from breaking the rules.

Shot four: The Therapeutic Session (00: 14: 04) (00: 30: 20)

The Big Nurse organizes the therapeutic session, in a panoptic circle. The ‘patients’ sit in a crescent around her. She sits within the ideal physical position in which she can work out the panoptic vision. The structure of semi-circle allows the one with the center to see the rest of the group at one time and guarantees that their gaze is



coordinated towards her. ‘The patients’ are strongly discouraged from talking with one another they can not talk until they raise their hand and have her permission. Ratched’s mechanism as the middle of communication, handing-off and analyzing what is said or done is strategic. When anarchy occurs, Ratched has the control to call the aides and reinforce order.

Shot Five: The Electroshock Session (from 01:21:49 to 01:23:30)

Nurse Ratched has the power to distribute discipline, clarifying how her gaze motivates fear, and that results to incorrect conducts. While she observes something that is inappropriate, she can apply an ElectroConvulsive Therapy (ECT) to ‘the patients’. As a punishment to the rebellion of



McMurphy, Bromden, and Cheswick, Nurse Ratched orders the nurses to give them an electroshock. During the seventies, however, the medical authorities have no clear evidence that ECT is efficient.

Shot Six: Direct Observation of Nurse Ratched (00:23:13 to 00:24:12)

Panopticism is also seen when McMurphy and Chief Bromden are playing basketball outside. It is their entertainment time and Ratched is not one of the medical attendants relegated to control them outside. However, Ratched proceeds to surveil them from a window. The danger of Nurse



Ratched's gaze follows precisely Bentham's architectural design since 'the inmates must never know whether they are being locked at any one moment: but he must be sure that he may always be so'¹⁶. It is the constant possibility of being watched at anytime that permits the panoptic gaze to enter into the psychology of its inmates.

Panopticism is supposed to function notwithstanding of whom the operator is exactly like Billy's mother who is never physically displayed. Billy seems to be developed up in a panoptic family under consistent fear of his mother. With the arrival of McMurphy, however, he realizes that he is not free from his mother's gaze. Billy's mother is like Nurse Ratched, and because he does not resist to the surveillance and the controlling system, he commits suicide. Some 'patients', on the contrary, prefer to use different strategies in order to get the controlling system down.

IV. Strategies of Resistance in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*

Foucault states that 'where there is power, there is resistance'¹⁷. In *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, Nurse Ratched uses different strategies to exercise power over the patient for disciplining them. However, with the coming of McMurphy to the mental institution, many things have changed and the patient find different ways to resist against the conformist Nurse Ratched. Chief Bromden and McMurphy are some important characters who personified resistance.

a) Chief Bromden as an Initiation Hero in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*

Chief Bromden's strategy of resistance takes the shape of reverse-surveillance. He feigns to be deaf and mute initially as self protection. But later on, he realized that he can spy on everybody because 'they think [he's] deaf and dumb. Everybody [thinks] so. Is He cagey enough to fool them that much'¹⁸. Indeed, he can spy on the authorities and he remains inert. 'The combine' is not able to control him. Because, the authorities accept that he is deaf mute, they do not care when talking openly in front him. Chief Bromden's use of reverse-surveillance helps him to learn almost everything about his enemy. McMurphy influences Chief Bromden, thus he helps him to escape from his separation (being deaf and mutes along his residence in the ward) into a complete transformation in which he starts talking and gives his opinion, for instance voting for McMurphy. Chief regularly compares McMurphy to his father, he considers him as an 'enormous thing'. He can stand up to Ratched's control not because he is 'something extraordinary' but because 'he is what he is'¹⁹. To Chief, McMurphy is a sacrificial scapegoat who must die so that the others live.

b) McMurphy as a Sacrificial Scapegoat

McMurphy's techniques of resistance are to provide an optional talk. His background indicates that he encompasses a history of being an anti-authoritarian. Apparently, violating the societal laws is his favorite work. Beginning with raping a girl, then disrespecting the rules of the psychiatric institution by rebelling against working. McMurphy's resistance against the unfair power relation in the asylum is illustrated through some examples.

In order to escape from the work farm, McMurphy pretends being mad. Similarly to Shakespeare's Hamlet who feigns madness to escape from the punishment of his uncle, which may be a way to resist against the power of the oppressor²⁰. McMurphy's laugh

suggests that he does not have the behavioral restrictions that people inside the ward have. Everyone inside the asylum, patients and the staff alike, is stunned by his chuckle.

McMurphy's handshakes are a critical image of a unique talk. After presenting himself, he shakes with everybody on the ward. His invitingness contrasts with the rules that are issued by the authorities, nurses and aides. The Chief's depiction of McMurphy here is nearly a saint-like, and his hand is like that of a savior or a god, who can spare them from their enduring. McMurphy mocks the rules of the dominant discourse through his laugh. As Daniel.J.Wood explains that even if power is exercised by the Big Nurse, McMurphy arrives to make end to her smile and helps the other patients to stand against her rulers that made them happy.

“If power is the theme of the novel and laughter the currency in which it is dealt, then McMurphy leaves Nurse Ratched utterly bankrupt: though she removes him from her ward, he removes the perpetual smiles from her face and allows the other inmates to wear one on theirs instead”²¹.

A lot of scenes can illustrate the satirical thrust of McMurphy at Nurse Ratched, in the sense that McMurphy refuses to take his medication at night because his belief that the treatment is not appropriate for him. He reclaims several times about the choice of the music, television program and his proposition to make a slight change on it.

Another scene that may illustrate his resistance to the mental ward is seen when McMurphy tries to make the 'patients' aware of what's going on inside the asylum and rebels against the rules saying; 'God Almighty, she's got you guys comin 'or goin'. 'What do you think she is some kind of a champ or something'²². His attempt to free the 'patients' from their burden is a challenge to the asylum. To taunt the therapist in common, he questions the patients' state of mind saying:

McMurphy: What do you think you are, for Christ's sake, crazy or something? Well, you're not! You're no crazier than the average asshole out walking around on the streets and that's it
Nurse: those are very challenging observations you made. Randale”²³.

V. McMurphy and Chief Bromden as Heralders of Resistance in Modern Digital Society

Government and Nurse Ratched use panopticism and technological materials in order to observe their targets (citizens and patients). Indeed, they use CCTV cameras and even some TEC companies. For instance, facebook, instagram, and tiktok allowing themselves by themselves to observe their personnel data as a way of control. In Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, some 'patients' find different ways in order to resist the massive and conformist Nurse Ratched and her rules. In addition, even citizens in digital society, who are living under the oppression of government, find out the way to resistance.

Resistance can be depicted through different actions and examples. Among these examples, one can mention Edward Snowden; a previous worker in the Central Insights Organization (CIA) and National Security Organization (NSA). He disclosed a conspiracy against the personal right of the American individuals. In other words, it was uncovered to the public the presence of Prism program which gave NSA agents access on citizen's data that are detained by internet and technological companies such as Apple, Google and Facebook. However, these companies denied giving this information to the US Government. On Jun 5, 2013, Edward Snowden leaked a sensitive number of documents and demonstrates it to the public with the help of 'the Guardian'²⁴.

Jullian Assenge is another example of resistance in modern digital society. An activist hacker set up whistle-blowing site 'wikiLeaks' in 2006 which released thousands of classified documents, military records...etc. On 2007, U.S helicopter in Iraq gunning down innocent people. Indeed, WikiLeaks has revealed medical information, details of social security and credit card numbers. Their acts have changed the world's opinion and diluted the panoptic model of surveillance and made people aware about the gaze that is omnipresent but invisible to them. Indeed, the hacker who leaks government's information or any secret data,

and make people aware of any given situation. Through the analysis of the movie, it seems that the rebellion and the sacrifices of McMurphy and Chief Bromden's escape from the mental institution inspired some people like Snowden, Assange there upon they became aware of Foucault and Zuboff theorization of panopticism and its real function in society. Although, the aforementioned people found several ways to resist against the oppressor/the dominant discourse and make people aware of the danger of surveillance strategies, but this does not mean it alters the fact that the big brother is still watching.

Shot seven: Chief Bromden as the American Adem (2:05:48)

The ultimate scene of the motion picture finishing with the Chief Bromden's escape and surge towards free nature after having choked



McMurphy. This escape suggests that the American psychiatric system of the sixties and the seventies, fails to discover a remedy to such appalling circumstance. The

truth that Chief returns to nature Instead of confronting society infers his last defeat by the mental institution. Hence his escape is not a free choice but the choice of society.

Conclusion

In this section, we have tried to emphasize the significance of Michel Foucault's concepts of the Dialectic Power/Knowledge, Discipline and Panopticism to achieve this study about madness and panopticism in Forman's movie *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (1975). We have tried to offer a concise account of the major ideas that Foucault advances in relation to power relation in mental institution. Foucault's theorization of the concept of Power and the theme of panopticism help us to understand the patient's sufferings and the dominant discourse inside the psychiatric hospital as well as the patient's resistance to the corrupt system.

Endnotes

¹L. Drefus Hubert, and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Sussex : The Harvester Press, 1982), 185.

²Forman Milos, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest*film. (USA: United Artist, 1975).

³Kesey Ken, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest* (London: Penguin Group, 2002)271.

⁴Forman Milos, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest* (USA: United Artist1975).

⁵Kesey Ken, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest* (London: Penguin Group, 2002)188.

⁶<https://www.123helpme.com/essay/Racism-in-Ken-Keseys-One-Flew-Over-16340>

⁷Foucault Michel, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Alan Sheridan, trans. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995)149.

⁸Kesey Ken,*One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest* (London: Penguin Group, 2002)31.

⁹Forman Milos, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest*film. (USA: United Artist, 1975).

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³L. Drefus Hubert, and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Sussex: the Harvester Press, 1982)189.

¹⁴Foucault Michel, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Alan Sheridan, trans. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995)176.

¹⁵Forman Milos, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest*film. (USA: United Artist, 1975).

- ¹⁶Bentham Jeremy, Bozovic, M, *The Panopticon Writings*(London: New York, verso 1991).
- ¹⁷ Foucault Michel,. *History of sexuality*, volume1: An Introduction, Robert Hurly, Trans. (New York: Pantheon books,1978)93.
- ¹⁸Kesey Ken,*One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest* (London: Penguin Group, 2002)3.
- ¹⁹Ibid:150.
- ²⁰Shakespeare William, ed., *The Tragedy of Hamlet: Prince of Denmark* (NewYork: Washington Square Press, 1992).
- ²¹Wood Daniel.J.,*Treatment of The Theme of Power in Ken Kesey's One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest*.
- ²²Kesey Ken, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest* (London: Penguin Group, 2002).
- ²³Forman Milos, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo 's Nest* film. (USA: United Artist, 1975).
- ²⁴Ratcliffe, R. "*Snowden: Balance of Power Has Shifted as People Defy Government Surveillance*." The Guardian, (2015).

General Conclusion

This dissertation has attempted to examine the themes of madness and panopticism in Milos Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) by appropriating two theoretical frameworks: Foucault's theorization of the theme of madness in *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961) and panopticism in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975).

This research has revealed that Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* is a countercultural movie that reflects the socio-political upheavals of the United States during the sixties (60s) and the early seventies (70s). Through the analysis of the discourse of the mental ward, we have found out that Forman critically reflects the established American way of thinking at that time, which required conformity by rejecting difference. As a result of this thinking, some 'patients' in the movie like McMurphy, Dale Harding and Billy Bibbit are confined in the mental institution. From this standpoint, Forman tries to explain that even though 'reason' or 'unreason' are attributed to a person, this does not mean that he is 'sane' or 'insane', since it is the dominant discourse which determines what madness is. That is to say, the theme of madness is changeable and it is related to societal interpretations of individual actions. Moreover, Forman tried to uncover the reality of the psychiatric institutions and the US government at the same time, as they utilize panopticism, a model of surveillance, as a means of controlling people. This model allows the American authorities to predict the future behaviour of its citizens. Therefore, if panopticism was strictly used as an architectural model within prisons, its use in modern society has been proliferated to include all domains and institutions.

Through our analysis, we found out that Forman strives to encourage people to break social restrictions through realizing one's individuality. Moreover, at the end of the film, the director strongly suggests that freedom is achieved only when a person discovers his

individuality, mainly through the character of 'Chief Bromden'. Forman, it seems, has succeeded in embodying the image of the American society of the sixties (60s) and the seventies (70s) through presenting some American major themes namely: counterculture, resistance, violence, racism, minorities and homosexuality.

Lastly, we have concluded that the period of sixties (60s) and the early seventies (70s) was a turning point in the United States that changed its socio-political norms. Our study opens other possibilities for further studies for students who want to deepen their research on Forman's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* relying on Foucault's theory of sexuality in *The History of Sexuality*. Another suggestion can be to compare between Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and the George Orwell's *1984* in relation to Foucault's Disciplinary Power.

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