

The Image of Prison in Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*

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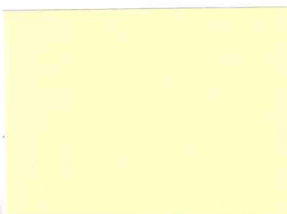
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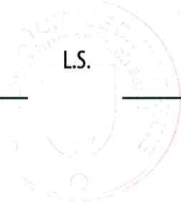
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce si klade za cíl zanalyzovat obraz vězení v románu Kena Keseyho *Vyhod'ne ho z kola ven* a rozebrat jej z pohledu společenského klimatu šedesátých let a klíčových událostí Americké historie související s románem. V práci jsou rozebrány společné rysy dvou institucí – psychiatrických léčeben a vězení a jejich společné prvky vyskytující se v tomto románu.

Klíčová slova: Obraz vězení, strukturální násilí, heterotopie, psychiatrické léčebny, vězení

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis aims to analyse the image of prison in Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* and discuss it from the point of view of the social climate of the 1960s and the key happenings in American history related to the novel. The thesis reflects on the common features of the two institutions – mental hospitals and prisons and their shared characteristics which appear in this novel.

Keywords: Image of prison, structural violence, heterotopia, psychiatric hospitals, prisons

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to analyse the whole story of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* as a reflection and mirror of the 1960s, in which the book was created by analysing the contrast between the motives and behaviours of individual characters and the actual situation that was going on in the whole society of the USA during the sixties. The thesis further aims to reveal the context and show how the metaphor of the image of prison is intertwined with the story itself as well as with the overall social situation in the 1960s in the U.S. It also intends to underline how important freedom, individualism, and equality of rights were to the people at that time, and to highlight how strongly these values were ignored not only in many psychiatric hospitals, but also when it comes to the police and the military environment and, last but not least, the prison environment. Patients became prisoners not only of their own minds but also of institutions that, instead of liberation and healing, did the very opposite. The aim of the thesis is also to explore the historical events that took place during the 1960s that are related to the novel *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest is one of the most honest works that illustrate the concept of psychology, mental illnesses, trauma, and authoritarianism in closed institutions ever written. It is a novel that aims to not only faithfully reflect the situation in mental asylums during the sixties in the U.S., but it is also a piece of work that reveals the overall social climate during the 1960s. Although the sixties are often associated by society with liberty and free-thinking, like any period, it is intertwined with darker themes that strongly influenced people's lives and shaped their behaviours.

Whether it is the Vietnam War, the Korean War, or the Cold War, all these events had a major impact on the development of society in America at the time, both economically and psychologically. These wars mentioned resulted in many people losing their lives, as well as many traumatized survivors who often suffered from post-traumatic disorders, depression, and other psychological problems. Ordinary people were equally affected psychologically by the Cold War propaganda. This war was no longer fought on the battlefield but in the very minds of people. The Cold War was not primarily about territory or natural resources. It was a clash of ideologies that aimed to conquer the minds of all people. This situation was undoubtedly very difficult for many people and certainly had a negative impact on their mental health.

Moreover, due to many other circumstances, many people ended up in psychiatric hospitals where, as a result of their issues, they were supposed to receive the treatment and help they needed. However, whether it was because these institutions were not developed enough at the time, and often used inhumane practices, or because of the indifference of some staff, the environment of many psychiatric hospitals resembled prisons rather than the facilities that were meant to heal, not ruin a person's psyche.

As mentioned in the previous lines, the 1960s are now a symbol of freedom for many. The fact remains, however, that this freedom was often not found where it was most needed, namely in the approach to individuals who at that time were hospitalised with mental disorders. Ken Kesey's book *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* deals with this issue in great depth. The system that is set up in the mental hospital by the authoritarian nurse, but also by the staff influenced by her, does not give the patients the chance to decide about their individual needs, or even to feel like full-fledged members of society. The situation in the hospital is a kind of faithful reflection of the totalitarian regime that American society was so against at the time.

The book's protagonist, who essentially paid with his life for his freethinking that disrupted the mental institution's system established by the nurse, is a great example of an individual being both physically and mentally ruined by authorities that were seemingly above him. The fate of the protagonist, and indeed the whole story, shows how fragile life is in a system where individual needs are completely handed over to its authorities. The story also implies that despite the good intentions of the main character to improve his and his fellow patient's life during their hospitalisation, his actions result in his gradual destruction.

1 KEN KESEY

Ken Kesey was born on September 17 in 1935 in La Junta, Colorado.¹ His father's name was Frederick A., while his mom's name was Geneva Kesey.² Born in 1935, he is "a child of the Great Depression."³

When he was younger, Kesey was also a successful wrestler, and football player, and was also interested in acting. However, after being awarded a scholarship to a graduate program at Stanford University, and he decided to pursue a career in writing.⁴

When *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* was published, Kesey was in his twenties, meaning that he was a young writer.⁵ The novel is, without doubt, one of the most valuable works dealing with the conditions of psychiatric hospitals in the 1960s. Interestingly, while writing the novel, Kesey was influenced by using Marijuana and hallucinogens, and as he himself admitted, he felt inspired to create his characters when he was under the influence.⁶ He was even a part of drug experiments at the Menlo Park Veterans Hospital.⁷ This is quite typical for the 1960s, as psychedelics were quite popular among certain groups of people, especially the hippies, and they were quite influential during this period of time.⁸

Ken Kesey was indeed an interesting persona. Three years after publishing *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, he was caught possessing marijuana and was arrested. After having been convicted, he himself experiences what it was like to be imprisoned when he was sent to the San Mateo County Jail and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Honor Camp, where he was ordered to stay for six months.⁹

¹ "Ken Kesey Biography," The Biography.com website, last modified August 5, 2020, <https://www.biography.com/writer/ken-kesey>.

² Scott F. Parker, ed., *Conversations with Ken Kesey* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 13, <https://1lib.cz/book/5602832/2af989>.

³ Rick Dogson, *It's All Kind of Magic: The Young Ken Kesey* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 3, <https://1lib.cz/book/2363232/6e921b>.

⁴ "Ken Kesey Biography," The Biography.com website, last modified August 5, 2020, <https://www.biography.com/writer/ken-kesey>.

⁵ Scott F. Parker, ed., *Conversations with Ken Kesey* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 13, <https://1lib.cz/book/5602832/2af989>.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ "Psychedelic 60s," Graphic Design History, last modified July 30, 2019, <https://visualartsdepartment.wordpress.com/psychedelic-60s/>.

⁹ Scott F. Parker, ed., *Conversations with Ken Kesey* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 14, <https://1lib.cz/book/5602832/2af989>.

Ken Kesey was married to Norma “Faye” Haxby.¹⁰ From the way he talked about their relationship, it is clear to see that he had always been a free-spirited man:

Whatever it is, it has got to be fun. I want to love Faye and my kids not because it’s a marvellous and moral thing to do but because it’s fun to love them.¹¹

Ken Kesey died on November 10 in 2001 due to complications during an operation during which a liver tumour was supposed to be removed.¹²

1.1 Ken Kesey’s Novels

One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest is not the only Ken Kesey’s book. Although his first novel was much more popular among the public, his other works were nevertheless a significant contribution to world literature.

In 1964, Kesey published a novel called *Sometimes a Great Notion*. This is a novel that, as Kesey himself admitted, was written while he was using LSD. Like *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, this novel explored the question of individuality and obedience.¹³

Kesey also published three books, which were supposed to be a sort of documentation of his experience with psychedelics in the 1960s when he was travelling with a group called the Merry Pranksters. The first of the three – *Garage Sale*, was published in 1973, the second one – *Demon Box*, was published in 1986, and the last one called *The Further Inquiry* was published in 1990. *Little Tricker the Squirrel Meets Big Double the Bear* is a book for children, which was published in 1988. *Caverns*, which is a mystery novel that Ken Kesey wrote with several graduate students of his, was published in 1990. In 1992, Kesey published a comedy book called *In Sailor Song*. 1994 was the year of the publishing of *Last Go Round*, which Kesey co-wrote with Ken Babbs.¹⁴

¹⁰ Scott F. Parker, ed., *Conversations with Ken Kesey* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 13, <https://ilib.cz/book/5602832/2af989>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹² *Ibid.*, 26.

¹³ “Ken Kesey Biography,” The Biography.com website, last modified August 5, 2020, <https://www.biography.com/writer/ken-kesey>.

¹⁴ “Ken Kesey,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified November 6, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ken-Kesey>.

1.2 Beat Movement

Ken Kesey is a part of the so-called Beat Generation, which is a movement that has its origins in the 1940s and 1950s. This movement consisted of artists – writers, who at that time did not take any interest in being subject to any conventions and lived rebellious lives, unlike the rest of the United States.¹⁵ The Beats lived freely, without any boundaries. They believed that a person should live according to their own beliefs, as they were advocating personal freedom. Interestingly, they drew their inspiration from music – especially jazz, and they extolled the values of Zen Buddhism.¹⁶ Most Beats lived in America’s big cities – New York City, Los Angeles, or San Francisco. Some of the best-known writers who are considered part of the movement include Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Michael McClure, and Diane Di Prima.¹⁷

The literary group was formed after the World War II, when, according to historian Stephen Petrus, the felt “disenchanted with what they viewed to be an excessively repressive, materialistic, and conformist society, who sought spiritual regeneration through sensual experiences.”¹⁸

When talking about the Beat Movement, it is crucial to mention the importance of freedom. As mentioned above, the Beats did not want to conform to anything conventional, and they needed to feel liberated both in real life, as well as from the creative aspect. This is exactly why Ken Kesey’s *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* was so significant as far as the sociological point of view is concerned, because it is dealing with the very question of freedom, or more precisely, the question of unfreedom. Unfreedom, which was all-surrounding in the ward of the psychiatric hospital as it is in the prison environments.

¹⁵ “An Introduction to the Beat Poets,” Poetry Foundation, accessed March 24, 2022, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/147552/an-introduction-to-the-beat-poets>.

¹⁶ “Beat movement,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified March 24, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Beat-movement>.

¹⁷ “An Introduction to the Beat Poets,” Poetry Foundation, accessed March 24, 2022, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/147552/an-introduction-to-the-beat-poets>.

¹⁸ “How the Beat Generation Became Beatniks,” JSTOR Daily, last modified May 5, 2019, <https://daily.jstor.org/how-the-beat-generation-became-beatniks/>.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter deals with the historical background and discusses the events and circumstances that shaped the then society and are related to Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest was published in the sixties, more specifically in 1962.¹⁹ The 1960s in America are generally characterized as a period of time in which many significant events took place. These events forever changed American society and influenced not only America but the whole world as well.

However, while outlining the historical background, it is crucial to mention the following concept called heterotopia.

2.1 Heterotopia

Heterotopia an essential term for the analysis of the novel *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, as it is especially relevant in the context of the novel.

The term was first used by philosopher Michel Foucault. The place of heterotopia exists in every culture and every society in the world, and in every cultural environment. Heterotopias are places of closed societies that are divided by walls from the rest of the world.²⁰

Michel Foucault describes two types of heterotopias. The first type of heterotopia can be found in primitive societies, and it is called crisis heterotopia, which is an environment of for example adolescents, pregnant women, elderly people, or boarding schools. Heterotopias are "privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis." The second type is defined as a heterotopia of deviation, which is a space of psychiatric hospitals, and prisons. Heterotopias can occur in military environments, police environments, museums, theatres, cemeteries, or practically anywhere – heterotopia is a

¹⁹ "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified March 16, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/One-Flew-Over-the-Cuckoo's-Nest-novel-by-Kesey>.

²⁰ Michel Foucault, and Jay Miskowicz, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 24, https://www.jstor.org/stable/464648?saml_data=eyJzYW1sVG9rZW4iOiI5ZWQwNDRhNy1jZTcxLTQwYTAtYTRkOS05ZjNkOTBhZTRmYmMiLCJlbWFpbCI6ImRfcGl0ZWtvdmFAAdXRiLmN6IiwiaW5zdGl0dXRpb25JZHMlOlsiMGMyNDZTctMDEyYy00ZDU0LWIxOWUtZThhOWJkYjllMTZiIl19&seq=3.

place that exists in our society but is surrounded by walls, having boundaries that separate the place from the rest of the world.²¹

In a closed space, one can observe different structures and behaviours that cannot be seen outside heterotopia. This is exactly the case in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The place of a ward in a psychiatric hospital where a person of authority, Nurse Ratched, is abusing her power and her actions are completely hidden from the outside of the establishment.

2.1.1 Heterotopia and the Novel

The psychiatric hospital in the novel is a prime example of a place of heterotopia of deviation. After entering the ward, McMurphy becomes isolated by the walls from the rest of the world, which he was not quite used to before. When the door behind him closes, he finds himself in a place of heterotopia where he tries to defeat Ratched by having the patients on his side. When McMurphy learns how the system in the ward works, he realizes that the mental problems the patients suffer from are not just a result of a real illness, but also of Ratched's repressive system which in combination with the environment of heterotopia in the ward led to the patients being disconnected from the reality and its social norms.²²

The role of the heterotopia in the novel is to create another real and perfect space, which is the complete opposite of what it is like in the real world.²³ Nurse Ratched herself often says that her ward is supposed to be a safe space that protects the patients from the horrors of the real world which, according to her belief, the patients are not prepared for. Her approach makes it almost impossible for the patients to be able to deal with difficult situations outside the ward. The type of heterotopia is not an illusion, but a sort of compensation for the real world that is imperfect and unorganised. It is a sort of microcosm that exists in society as a whole.²⁴

²¹ Michel Foucault, and Jay Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 23-25, https://www.jstor.org/stable/464648?saml_data=eyJzYW1sVG9rZW4iOiI5ZWQwNDRhNy1jZTcxLTQwYTAtYTRkOS05ZjNkOTBhZTRmYmMiLCJlbWFpbCI6ImRfcGl0ZWtvdmFAdXRiLmN6IiwiaW5zdGl0dXRpb25JZHMlOlsiMGMyNDZtMDEyYy00ZDU0LWlxOWUtZThhOWJkYjllMTZiIl19&seq=3.

²² Mariella Scerri, "Ken Kesey's 'One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest': The sardonic representation of power and authority in nurse Ratched," *Research and Humanities in Medical Education* 7, (2020): 64-74, <https://www.rhime.in/ojs/index.php/rhime/article/view/257>.

²³ Michel Foucault, and Jay Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 27, https://www.jstor.org/stable/464648?saml_data=eyJzYW1sVG9rZW4iOiI5ZWQwNDRhNy1jZTcxLTQwYTAtYTRkOS05ZjNkOTBhZTRmYmMiLCJlbWFpbCI6ImRfcGl0ZWtvdmFAdXRiLmN6IiwiaW5zdGl0dXRpb25JZHMlOlsiMGMyNDZtMDEyYy00ZDU0LWlxOWUtZThhOWJkYjllMTZiIl19&seq=3.

²⁴ Ibid.

2.2 Prisons in the 1960s

Before the 1960s and the civil rights movement, prisoners in the United States had not been treated accordingly, and they had been considered slaves. To illustrate the approach to prisoners in the past, it would be useful to look back to the year 1871 when a prisoner in Virginia was referred to as a “slave of the state” by the court. Therefore, what it meant for the prisoners is that not only did they lose their freedom, understandably, considering that they had been convicted criminals, but also their personal rights, which in itself was quite double-edged. On top of it all, the federal laws of the United States did not concern the rights of prisoners, as the prison administration was not under the control of the federal government.²⁵

The conditions in which the prisoners were forced to live were inhumane. They had often been put in small places, chained like “caged animals.” As far as prisoners with mental illnesses were concerned, they were kept together with the rest of the prisoners, which meant that no treatment was provided to them. Psychologically, it is certain that such an approach did not help because the isolation of these prisoners only led to a deterioration in their health, and it could not prepare them for real life in society.²⁶

The 1960s were marked by the emergence of the prisoners’ rights movement. The changes began in 1951 when prison riots started occurring in California and New Jersey. These riots were not the first to happen, but they were certainly the initiating factor for the changes to the prison system, as far as prisoners’ rights were concerned.²⁷ Even today, however, we can still observe mistreatment of some prison guards towards inmates in many prisons environments.

2.2.1 The Flow of Time

In prisons, there are two different times that flow at a different pace – there is the time that exists inside the prison, connected to the daily routines of the inmates, and then there is the time that exists outside of the prison. As the inmates are almost isolated from the outside

²⁵ “The Prisoners’ Rights Movement of the 1960s,” Ozy, last modified April 11, 2014, <https://www.ozy.com/true-and-stories/the-prisoners-rights-movement-of-the-1960s/30583/>.

²⁶ “History,” Center for Prison Reform, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://centerforprisonreform.org/history/>.

²⁷ “Social Movement Lessons from the US Prisoners’ Rights Movement,” Sentience Institute, Last modified July 21, 2020, <https://www.sentienceinstitute.org/prisoners-rights>.

world, they only have limited access to information from the outside world.²⁸ This is also related to heterotopia which was described previously.

This fact creates a sort of place where the prisoners are dependent on what they are told by the ones that are above them – the prison guards, for instance. Their regime is strictly controlled, from what and when they eat to what they do every single day.²⁹

This dynamic used to be the same in psychiatric hospitals. Isolating the patients in the psychiatric institutions was allegedly supposed to help them deal with their illnesses. As it can be seen in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, however, this was established purely so that the hospital staff could be more in control of the patients' lives. The more the daily routine was in the hands of Ratched and her aides, the harder it was for the patients to adapt and take their lives into their own hands.

There is one situation in the novel that proves this point. During the day in the ward, monotone music is played. When the patients ask Nurse Ratched to put on TV news instead, she refuses to do so and says that knowing about the events happening in the real world might upset them and make their healing process more difficult. This manipulation technique makes it even more obvious that Ratched does not care about her patients' well-being, but she does want to preserve her ways so that it is easy for her to control everyone in the ward and illustrate who is the one in charge. It disconnects the patients from the real world even more – the outside world becomes more distanced, and it is harder for the patients to stay present.

2.3 Psychiatric Hospitals

Following the previous subchapter concerning the prison situation, it is necessary to have a look at the history of psychiatric hospitals as well.

Before the emergence of psychiatric hospitals, which was approximately at the beginning of the 18th century, people usually took care of their mentally ill family members at home. Since the emergence of private and public hospitals, however, people started noticing that it is unsafe for some families to keep their mentally ill family members together with them, as they would often become too aggressive and dangerous to handle. They

²⁸ “What is the psychological impact of prison,” University of Liège, last modified December 20, 2013, https://www.reflexions.uliege.be/cms/c_355616/en/what-is-the-psychological-impact-of-prison.

²⁹ “What is the psychological impact of prison,” University of Liège, last modified December 20, 2013, https://www.reflexions.uliege.be/cms/c_355616/en/what-is-the-psychological-impact-of-prison.

thought that it would be a better idea to create a place where all of the patients could be together under the supervision of professionals who knew how to deal with such patients.³⁰

Considering the fact that *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* was published in the 1960s, such psychiatric establishments had not been around for so long, and therefore there were still some reservations to be dealt with.

Although the approach to treating mental illnesses has changed dramatically over the decades, there are still issues that need to be addressed and improved. The abuse of power and poor treatment is still present in many establishments even today.

2.3.1 Lobotomy

The concept of lobotomy is a highly controversial issue in 1960s psychology. This procedure will now be discussed in order to outline what the care of severely mentally ill individuals used to look like in the past, and to emphasize the procedure's relation to the novel.

Firstly, it is important to discuss the history of the medical procedure. The origins of the concept of lobotomy date back to the 1880s, when Swiss physician Gottlieb Burkhardt, decided to try to remove certain parts of the brain cortex of six patients suffering from schizophrenia. However, the procedure was fatal to two of the patients, as one of them died a few days after the operation was performed, and the other one then committed suicide. Interestingly, four of the remaining patients survived, being considered a successful operation, as their behaviour became a little bit more manageable. This procedure, however, cannot be defined as lobotomy as such, although it is indeed one of the markers that signified the beginning of the procedure itself.³¹

In the year 1935, lobotomy was successfully used for the first time by Antonio Caetano de Abreu Freire "Egas" Moniz, who was a Portuguese neurologist. He thought that those patients suffering from severe mental illnesses need to have the connecting fibres of neurons disconnected.³² After having been used for the first time, lobotomy was first performed in the United States in the year of 1936.³³

³⁰ "History of Psychiatric Hospitals," University of Pennsylvania, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.nursing.upenn.edu/nhnc/nurses-institutions-caring/history-of-psychiatric-hospitals/>.

³¹ "Lobotomy," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified February 12, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/science/lobotomy>.

³² "The strange and curious history of lobotomy," BBC News, last modified November 8, 2011, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-15629160>.

³³ Jenell Johnson, *American Lobotomy: A Rhetorical History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2017), 2, <https://1lib.cz/book/2728176/6e49ee>.

First, it is necessary to define what lobotomy is. Lobotomy, also known as prefrontal leukotomy, is a procedure that was used to cure incurable patients, those affected by schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or other serious mental disorders.³⁴ The core of the procedure lies in the disruption of certain connections in the brain. It was assumed that if a patient's brain fibres are to be disconnected, the bad behaviour disappears, and the patient is then cured.³⁵

During the time of the invention of the procedure, psychiatrists still did not know how to treat patients with mental illnesses successfully. Despite several cases of patients having gone through a lobotomy, and allegedly feeling better, as far as their mental state was concerned, the procedure is highly problematic. Far more negative effects are connected to lobotomy. Many patients, having gone under the procedure, supposedly "lost" their personalities, and started lacking empathy and basic human emotions. In the worst-case scenarios, they became emotionally numb and completely dependent on other people.³⁶

In the novel, Kesey explores the concept of lobotomy, as the book's protagonist – Randle McMurphy undergoes the procedure and, in its aftermath, ceases to be viable.

There is a strong connection to structural violence, which is yet to be explained in the following chapter. Nurse Ratched, making use of the tools she has as a person hierarchically above her patients, abuses her power to "tame" those who did not conform to her rules. That way, the "problematic" patients can be fully controlled by her, as they become dependent on other people's help, as they can no longer be considered functioning members of society. The Big Nurse manages to imprison the patients not only inside the ward but also in their bodies and minds.

2.4 The Wars

In order to set the context of the time in which the *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* was written and published, the following subchapters will be dealing with the most famous and significant wars that were impactful on the people in the 1960s. These wars had an impact on the state of American society not only in terms of its politics but also in terms of its social consciousness.

³⁴ "Lobotomy," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified February 12, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/science/lobotomy>.

³⁵ "Lobotomy: Definition, procedure and history," Live Science, last modified October 13, 2021, <https://www.livescience.com/42199-lobotomy-definition.html>.

³⁶ Ibid.

The first war that will be discussed from the point of view of the social climate is the Cold War. This is the war that resonated with American society the longest and became one of the stimuli for the territorial conflicts in which the United States fought.

2.4.1 The Cold War

The Cold War was a period of time that forever shaped American society, as well as the rest of the world. It was a period riddled with manipulation and propaganda, as it was a clash between the socialist and capitalist views of the world.³⁷

The Cold War period falls between 1945 and 1989, and the consequences of the Cold War can still be felt today.³⁸ The Cold War (and the “authoritarian legitimacy” that was fought against) had an impact on some of the regimes that are established in certain countries even today, for example, China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Malaysia.³⁹

This conflict arose after World War II between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was a battle of power and a war that affected society both politically and economically. George Orwell, who was the first one to use the term Cold War, described the war as a conflict between global leaders “each possessed of a weapon by which millions of people can be wiped out in a few seconds.”⁴⁰

Both the nations aimed at becoming world leaders. Some historians believe that the United States won the war by having enough money to fund the war, however, it is not possible to say who the real winner was. Still, it can be said that the whole world won, as the threats of nuclear weapons did not become a reality.⁴¹

It was a conflict not only between the world leaders who were against each other but also a conflict of mind among ordinary people. When an individual is constantly under the pressure of propaganda, it is certainly difficult to trust one’s own instincts. The pressure of propaganda and manipulation creates a conflict inside a person’s mind, and it is, therefore, like being the prisoner of one’s own mind. People were pitted against each other, which created an unhealthy environment as well.

³⁷ Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Hachette, 2017), 10, <https://1lib.cz/book/3361835/8a1493>.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁰ “Cold War,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified March 1, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cold-War>.

⁴¹ “Who Won the Cold War,” How Stuff Works, last modified March 7, 2022, <https://history.howstuffworks.com/history-vs-myth/who-won-cold-war.htm>.

2.4.2 The War in Korea

A territorial conflict that arose from the ongoing Cold War – the Korean War – dates to 1950. This conflict between the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea lasted three years and resulted in over two million people losing their lives on both sides.⁴² The United States together with its allies aimed at defending South Korea against Communism.⁴³

The United States together with the United Nations took the side of South Korea when communist North Korea with the help of the Soviet Union decided to invade the South.⁴⁴ Another player entered the game – the People’s Republic of China decided to help North Korea alongside the Russians.⁴⁵

Three years later, an armistice was signed by the parties included – the United States, the People’s Republic of China, North Korea, and South Korea.⁴⁶

Despite the many victims of the war, the US soldiers who returned from the war were proud to have been allowed to fight for their country and to have defended the South Koreans and their democracy.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, another war was yet to come.

2.4.3 The Vietnam War

One of the most significant wars of the 1960s is undoubtedly the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam War is a conflict that lasted between 1954 and 1975. As far as the participants are concerned, it was a war between the United States and Vietnam.⁴⁸

⁴² “Korean War,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified June 18, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Korean-War>.

⁴³ “The Korean War,” Khan Academy, accessed April 5, 2022, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/postwarera/1950s-america/a/the-korean-war>.

⁴⁴ “Armistice ends Korean War hostilities,” History, last modified July 26, 2021, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/armistice-ends-the-korean-war>.

⁴⁵ “Korean War,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified June 18, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Korean-War>.

⁴⁶ “Armistice ends Korean War hostilities,” History, last modified July 26, 2021, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/armistice-ends-the-korean-war>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “Vietnam War,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified March 13, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War>.

The Americans entered the conflict at the invitation of South Vietnam. More importantly, the United States became involved in this war because of the Soviet Union's support of communist North Vietnam.⁴⁹

The Americans assumed that the outcome of the war in Vietnam would be similar to (or preferably better than) the war in Korea. However, by the beginning of the war, they had already suffered massive casualties that shocked the general public back in the United States.⁵⁰ The military even began recruiting non-soldiers from the general population.⁵¹

This war became one of the most controversial events, triggering an enormous public debate across the United States. It did not take too long before the US society started forming opinions and creating movements, one of which will be described in the following subchapter.

2.4.4 The Hippie Movement

Describing the 1960s without mentioning this movement could not be considered complete. This movement emerged as a direct response to the war in Vietnam and was characterized by hatred towards the war, and disapproval of the US soldiers participating in the war in Vietnam. The members of the hippie movement were a part of a larger whole, the so-called Antiwar Movement, which used to be “the most important antiwar movement in American history.”⁵²

According to some sources, the movement consisted of mostly younger members, but they were not the only ones, as the age distribution of members varied.⁵³ Having said that, youth is often connected to the essence of having strong opinions. In this case, the strong opinions concerned the conflict in Vietnam and the overall mindset and conventions of the general public.

⁴⁹ “Vietnam War,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified March 13, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ John D. Stuckey, and Joseph H. Pistorius, “Mobilization for the Vietnam War: A Political and Military Catastrophe,” *Journal of the US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 15, no. 1 (1985): 26, <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol15/iss1/27/>.

⁵² Melvin Small and William D. Hoover, eds., *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), Preface, https://books.google.cz/books?id=V2piQWIp9zQC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Give+Peace+a+Chance:+Exploring+the+Vietnam+Antiwar+Movement&hl=cs&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Give%20Peace%20a%20Chance%3A%20Exploring%20the%20Vietnam%20Antiwar%20Movement&f=false.

⁵³ Frank S Williams, “Alienation of Youth as Reflected in the Hippie Movement,” *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry* 9, no. 2 (April 1970): 251, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0002713809618355>.

Interestingly enough, the name of the hippie movement is derived from the term “hip,” which is a term that refers to the members of the Beat Movement.⁵⁴

The members of the hippie movement were all united by their shared values. Those included love, tolerance, resentment towards violence, appeal to Buddhism or Hinduism, fondness for drugs and opiates and, most importantly, freedom.⁵⁵ As a matter of fact, freedom is what the hippies had in common with the rest of American society, as it is one of the most important pillars upon which the entire American society is built.

Hippies broke down the boundaries of racism, they did not care what cultural background a person came from, and they accepted people whose mental health was not in good condition. They themselves also formed a "society within a society."

Although many see the hippies as those who protested against the Vietnam War, their approach was rather passive – they did not want to change American society, but rather to completely distance themselves from it, looking for the peace inside themselves, often while using opiates and psychedelics. Ken Kesey criticized their approach (although he himself had nothing against using drugs) when he declared at an anti-war rally at the University of California at Berkeley in 1965 that it is impossible to stop the war by just "marching."⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the movement was an important part of that era and undoubtedly influenced many people and their views on the conflict.

2.4.5 A Different Approach

Regarding the Vietnam War, two approaches have emerged in the United States. The first, which was against the war, was already discussed in the previous subchapter. But there was also a second stream consisting of the people who supported the war. The war supporters were mostly conservative, and they were referred to as the “Silent Majority” that was mostly consisted of white working-class people. The term was first used by Richard Nixon in the 1960s.⁵⁷ Needless to say, a kind of a social block was formed, which led to more disparity in society. This situation was one of the reasons why there was pervasive pressure in society at that time.

⁵⁴ “Hippie,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified July 30, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hippie>.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ “Five myths about hippies,” The Washington Post, last modified July 7, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-hippies/2017/07/07/776a1530-5a9a-11e7-9fc6-c7ef4bc58d13_story.html.

⁵⁷ “The violence at the root of the silent majority,” The Washington Post, last modified July 31, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/07/31/violence-root-silent-majority/>.

The division of society into those who were pro-war and those who were against it led to the emergence of social bubbles who shared similar views on the situation. The creation of such groups, however, did not just result in a collective of like-minded individuals, but in many cases, it came with people with extreme views, which then made the chasm between the social bubbles even wider.

This mindset led to the “locking” of the individual in their own mind, in their own truth. Thus, one often found oneself trapped in a spiral of one’s own beliefs. The homogeneous environments that arose within these "closed" groups led to separation due to the different opinions. However, the world is not black and white but is made up of many shades of grey.

2.5 The Consequences of the Vietnam War and the Connection to the Novel

The effects of the wars, especially the Vietnam War, were indeed very impactful. It is necessary to have a look at the impact it had on the whole US society, especially the soldiers that came back from the war and the soldiers’ families.

The war left scars on the whole American society, particularly on the soldiers, who fought in Vietnam.⁵⁸ Many of those who returned from Vietnam were forced to deal with serious mental health issues due to the traumatic events they witnessed – losing fellow soldiers, killing civilians, or losing parts of their bodies as a result of serious injuries, which led to not only many health complications but also irreversible trauma.⁵⁹ In fact, according to a survey conducted in 1990, over thirty percent of the returning soldiers suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, resulting in nightmares, horrifying memories, feeling guilty, and severely depressed.⁶⁰ This, therefore, led to separation from society as mental illness did not use to be accepted by society – people did not know how to treat such individuals. These people were then put into mental institutions to be able to recover, which was often not the case. It was not only the soldiers who were traumatized, the people who lost their family

⁵⁸ “Memory and Form: An Analysis of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial,” Boston University, accessed April 6, 2022, <https://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal/past-issues/issue-4/corbin/>.

⁵⁹ Anamika Sahu, Rajesh Sagar, Siddharth Sarkar, and Sushma Sagar, “Psychological effects of amputation: A review of studies from India,” *Industrial Psychiatry Journal* 25, no. 1 (2016): 4-10, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5248418/>.

⁶⁰ “Mental casualties of Vietnam War persist,” *The Harvard Gazette*, last modified August 17, 2006, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2006/08/mental-casualties-of-vietnam-war-persist/>.

members due to the war found themselves in difficult situations, feeling hopeless, and grieving over the deaths of their loved ones.⁶¹

The soldiers coming back from the war had a hard time adjusting to normal life – their trauma made many of them try to cope with the situation on their own, for example, by using drugs, which they had become addicted to during the war.⁶² Many veterans were often arrested for criminal offences (due to their poor mental health, they were often violent towards people and could not function well in society), and they were imprisoned.⁶³

Whether they were put in prisons or psychiatric hospitals, the result was practically the same. In these institutions, people were supposed to be helped to return to normal life, but in order to do this, the people needed thorough care, which they were often not getting. The fact that they were separated from the rest of the world made them more isolated. The inability to cope with the consequences of the war (the injuries and the emotional damage mentioned) led many to lose the will to live, which further contributed to a disintegration of personality and complete surrender – almost as if they had been symbolically lobotomized.

This process can also be observed in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* – the complete neglect of the patients' problems, and even adding up to their misery. Some patients in the novel are veterans as well, McMurphy included, meaning that their characters were too inspired by the post-war situation. McMurphy in particular was an example of a person who was a bit aggressive and dealt with conflicts through the use of violence. He also had a very positive relationship with alcohol.

⁶¹ E. James Lieberman, "American Families and the Vietnam War," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 33, no. 4 (November 1971): 709, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/349445>.

⁶² "Lessons learned – and lost – from a Vietnam-era study of addiction," Stat, last modified July 19, 2021, <https://www.statnews.com/2021/07/19/lessons-learned-and-lost-vietnam-era-addiction-study/>.

⁶³ Andrea K. Finlay, "A scoping review of military veterans involved in the criminal justice system and their health and healthcare," *Health and Justice* 7, no. 6 (April 2019): 1-18, <https://healthandjusticejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40352-019-0086-9>.

3 A SYSTEM AGAINST AN INDIVIDUAL

As stated above, Ken Kesey used to work as support staff in a psychiatric ward which inspired him to write *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, where he explored the effects of being an individual in a system that abuses its power.⁶⁴

This phenomenon is a complex issue. Throughout the whole history, a strong concept of power imbalance is apparent. This concept is known as structural violence, and it will be outlined in the following subchapter.

3.1 The Structural Violence

The term structural violence is defined by the power imbalance and is different from personal violence by missing the obvious entity that this violence emerges from. Structural violence is typically present in closed societies and institutions with hierarchical structures. However, according to Johan Galtung, structural violence is in no way less damaging than personal violence.⁶⁵

When talking about structural violence, Johan Galtung is an important name to be mentioned. He defined the term as social injustice, an indirect type of almost invisible violence that emerges from closed societies.⁶⁶ Johan Galtung, Norwegian “father of peace studies,” has dedicated his whole life to studying the theory of peace and violence, publishing over 150 books and over 1500 essays, papers, and articles on the subject of peace, human rights, religion, social science, or inoffensive defence.⁶⁷

The core of structural violence lies in a person of power or an institution as such threatening an individual who is a member of the closed society. Structural violence does not root in physical violence, but it is more psychological – this violence does not affect a person’s body, but it affects a person’s soul. This non-physical violence can occur in the form of lying, threatening a person, brainwashing or indoctrinating them in certain beliefs. Another thing worth mentioning is the concept of rewards and punishments – if a person is behaving according to the rules of a certain institution, they are rewarded, if not, they are

⁶⁴ Ken Kesey Biography,” The Biography.com website, last modified August 5, 2020, <https://www.biography.com/writer/ken-kesey>.

⁶⁵ Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167-191, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/422690?seq=1>.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Johan Galtung,” Galtung-Institut, accessed April 16, 2022, <https://www.galtung-institut.de/en/home/johan-galtung/>.

punished. As Galtung explains, such actions force the individual to behave as the institution requires, which “may prevent them from realizing their potentialities” and therefore, manipulates them into doing what they are told.⁶⁸ In *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, the patients are praised for when they behave as requested by the nurse, but they are punished for doing the opposite.

3.1.1 Structural Violence – the Military, the Police

The term structural violence is not only connected to the environment of psychiatric hospitals – this phenomenon can also be observed in the military environment and among police officers.

Structural violence in the military is very often linked to racism. Many black soldiers fought in the US military, and before 1948 and Harry Truman’s order to end the discrimination towards different races in the army, the commanders wanted to preserve the segregation system concerning the black soldiers (however, the segregation system in the military in the US ended in 1954). The approach to black soldiers inside the military completely shifted after the Korean War and the war in Vietnam – according to some media at that time, the US military was perceived as “the most completely integrated segment of American society.” However, it did not stay like this for long – a new wave of racism emerged among lower-echelon commanders – because of their position, they abused their authority, and they got away with such behaviour.⁶⁹

The abuse was not exclusive to black soldiers; to some extent, structural violence often affected all the soldiers. Bullying by officers resulted in the loss of individual rights – they were taking out their anger on the subordinate soldiers (for the "benefit" of the institution – the army). This is an example of an abuse of power – an individual is deprived of personal space, subjected to the military regime, and the individual rights have no weight. Again, a similar pattern can be found in the institutions of prisons and mental hospitals – this whole machinery leads to the individual being marginalised and the community being elevated – this brings us back to the issue that resonated with society at the time – the individuality versus the community, as was the case in the US-USSR dispute.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 169-170, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/422690?seq=1>.

⁶⁹ Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., “Black Americans and the Military,” *Reviews in American History* 3, no. 1 (March 1975): 31-36, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2700982?origin=crossref&seq=1>.

⁷⁰ M. D. Field, “Information and Authority: The Structure of Military Organization,” *American Sociological Review* 24, no. 1 (February 1959): 15-22, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2089578?seq=2>.

Structural violence also concerned the police forces. Let us look directly at examples of police violence in the 1960s, such as the initially calm and peaceful hippie protest on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. Here a group of hippie teenagers were protesting a 10 p.m. curfew and the general mistreatment by police officers. The protest also attracted several famous people such as Jack Nicholson, who played the role of McMurphy in the film adaptation of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The initially peaceful protest turned into a rather violent encounter. Although, in this case, it was the group of teenagers who "struck the first blow", the whole incident was triggered by the long-standing dissatisfaction with the police force, which the hippie group felt had not acted with fairness and had behaved violently towards people.⁷¹

The police often acted against their will (for instance, in the case of some of the dispersals of the hippie demonstrations) because of orders coming from the higher echelons of the police structure. However, even within this structure, there were individuals who directly abused their position – they behaved violently, organised aggressive interventions, and systematically harassed the black population, as described, for example, by Martin Luther King.⁷²

3.2 The Structural Violence of Nurse Ratched

When analysing the novel, it is safe to say that it is Nurse Ratched who is the face of the structural violence. Her position in the hospital allows her to harm, although not directly herself. She uses the tools that she is given by the system. Her being in the position of power makes it easy for her to decide for her patients. If there is something or someone that does not fit into her complex system in the ward, she simply eliminates that person by using the tools that are available to her.

The structural violence of Nurse Ratched comes in many shapes and forms. As was mentioned, structural violence is often invisible, hiding behind the competencies and powers of authorities.

A female nurse is nothing unusual. Society has a general perception of female nurses associated with a caring, helpful nature. Being a female nurse herself, Ratched is therefore

⁷¹ "Anarchy on Sunset Strip: 50 years on from the hippie riots," *The Guardian*, last modified November 11, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/11/sunset-strip-riot-hippie-los-angeles>.

⁷² "Martin Luther King Knew That Fighting Racism Meant Fighting Police Brutality," *The Atlantic*, last modified September 15, 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/09/martin-luther-king-police-brutality/619090/>.

somehow expected to be helpful, and sweet, and the patients are supposed to feel at ease with her, as there are certain stereotypes when it comes to women being nurses – they are perceived almost as “angels”. In the novel, however, it is the complete opposite. During the 1950s and the 1960s, it was men who were often portrayed as the sort of violent authority, whereas women used to be more innocent and very feminine. That is again an unexpected change, as in *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, it is the other way round. Ratched is the quiet villain, demonstrating a strong female authority and representing patriarchy in a certain way – even though the patients are afraid of her, they still somehow find comfort in her persona, as she represents someone they can lean on when they do not have the courage to lean on themselves.⁷³

As far as Nurse Ratched’s authority is concerned, it is progressively expanding. Before gaining the privilege, she did not have any say in the patients’ plan for treatment, diagnosing the patients or assessing their behaviour. Once she, however, possesses the power, she also gains confidence, which makes her even more authoritative, as people around her (especially the psychiatric hospital administration) trust her and her good judgement.⁷⁴

Throughout the novel, it can be observed that although she is powerful in terms of what she can do with her powers and tools given to her by the hospital system, her authority is being constantly undermined by McMurphy.⁷⁵ He keeps provoking her, not sometimes realizing that she has all the tools to never let him out of the institution. It is apparent that once he realizes, he tries to control his insolent behaviour, but Ratched seems to find some sort of pleasure in situations when McMurphy stops controlling himself, as she knows that it might get her closer to destroying him. This concludes for example when McMurphy gets into a fight with one of the black aides, when both Cheswick and Billy Bibbit die, or when the patients get caught after having a party in the ward. Whenever she deals with such situations, despite being upset at first, she always tries to stay as calm as possible, hiding her frustration behind her light smile. She is passive-aggressive most of the time, although it gets harder for her to stay in character whenever McMurphy does something deliberately to upset her.⁷⁶

⁷³ Mariella Scerri, “Ken Kesey’s ‘One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest’: The sardonic representation of power and authority in nurse Ratched,” *Research and Humanities in Medical Education*, Vol. 7, (2020), 64-74, <https://www.rhime.in/ojs/index.php/rhime/article/view/257/299>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 1-281.

Throughout the whole story, Ratched is portrayed as a very distant character, almost inhumane. She does not let anyone see her true self, whether it is by always wearing her perfect fitted uniform, or by never showing her real emotions. She is the symbol of the cruelty of an institution that does not care about an individual's needs. Her being so reserved is actually very similar to how a person feels in institutions where the system is strict and impersonal.⁷⁷

3.2.1 The Combine

Nurse Ratched is a component of the so-called "Combine," which Bromden often mentions. This Combine is a kind of symbolic representation of the evil that has been with Bromden since he was a child. Bromden even describes Nurse Ratched and her black aides as being instruments of the Combine when he refers to the black aides as "bastards who work for the Combine."⁷⁸

Bromden proceeds to describe the Combine and Nurse Ratched and her practices as follows:

Under her rule the ward Inside is almost completely adjusted to surroundings. But the thing is she can't be on the ward all the time. She's got to spend some time Outside. So she works with an eye to adjusting the Outside world too. Working alongside others like her who I call the "Combine," which is a huge organization that aims to adjust the Outside as well as she has the Inside, has made her a real veteran at adjusting things. She was the Big Nurse in the old place when I came in from the Outside so long back, and she'd been dedicating herself to adjustment for God knows how long.⁷⁹

This excerpt summarizes what is already mentioned in the previous lines - the system (the Combine) against the individual that Nurse Ratched depicts is all-encompassing and all-powerful, no matter if it is in the closed ward or in other communities outside of it.

⁷⁷ Mariella Scerri, "Ken Kesey's 'One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest': The sardonic representation of power and authority in nurse Ratched," *Research and Humanities in Medical Education*, 7, (2020), 64-74, <https://www.rhime.in/ojs/index.php/rhime/article/view/257/299>.

⁷⁸ Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 6.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

4 INSIDE THE CUCKOO'S NEST

To live in unfreedom under pressure is one of the most unbearable things that can happen to a person. Moreover, if an authority aims at taking freedom away from a person, the most efficient way to do so is to strip such a person from their own individuality.

This phenomenon is one of the strongest themes of the book *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The story itself is a reflection of what can happen to an individual if controlled by an “evil authority”.

4.1 The Storyline Summary

This novel begins with the arrival of a new patient in the ward of a psychiatric hospital, who completely changes the dynamics in the establishment. Once a hospital full of well-behaved patients, it turns into a place where individuals slowly start to realize that the implemented rules might not be there for their own sake. The whole environment strongly resembles a prison, where everyone is obliged to follow an established regime, engage in certain activities and devote their entire day to something they are assigned to do.

Randle Patrick McMurphy, who is the new patient coming to Nurse Ratched's ward, is indeed a breeze of fresh air to the establishment. The reserved and obeying patients see a completely new perspective of things and situations. The daily therapy sessions, where the patients were once all used to telling every detail on everyone and agreeing with everything the Big Nurse had to say, turned into silent mind battles between her and McMurphy.

After all the situations when, for example, McMurphy demands a change in the daily routine so he can watch a baseball game with the other patients, or when McMurphy convinces the head doctor to let the patients go fishing together, or when a secret party is organized on their ward, the whole story ends tragically for McMurphy. The Big Nurse finally wins as she gets McMurphy lobotomized, and therefore silences his loud voice forever.⁸⁰

Although McMurphy fails to escape, many of the other patients succeed in regaining the freedom they did not have in the psychiatric hospital. The story ends with Chief Bromden managing to escape from the “prison” and finally finding his freedom and peace.

⁸⁰ Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 1-281.

4.2 The Characters

Without moving any further, the following subchapters introduce the individual characters, as the novel is full of individuals that are an integral part of the whole story.

4.2.1 Chief Bromden

The first character to be introduced is Chief Bromden, a Chronic, who guides the reader throughout the book, providing his point of view on the whole story. The fact that Ken Kesey chose a Native American to be the narrator is an important note to be taken, as this allows the readers to be able to perceive the novel “through indigenous eyes” and see what freedom means to him as an indigenous person.⁸¹

Throughout a significant portion of the story, Bromden pretends to be deaf and dumb. As he believes, this can make his life in the mental institution easier and more bearable. This act may be considered a sort of coping mechanism – according to Bromden himself, if one is deaf, the words and actions of others cannot affect them, as they block everything that is aimed at being hurtful. On top of it all, no one makes any effort to approach Bromden and project their issues onto him. On top of it all, the staff of the psychiatric ward are not vigilant in front of him, therefore, he hears them say things that none of the other patients have any idea about.

The story, however, reveals why he decided to pretend his disability in the first place. As a younger man, Bromden found himself in a situation, where while talking to two officers, who wanted to buy his father’s land, they acted as if he had not said a thing. Almost as if they did not hear him, as if he was already dumb. In conclusion, people did not listen to him long before he started pretending to be dumb.⁸²

4.2.2 Randle Patrick McMurphy

Moving on to the most essential character, the book’s protagonist – Randle Patrick McMurphy. McMurphy is a wild unchained man. His coming to the psychiatric hospital means a total shift in the system. From the moment Nurse Ratched meets him, he is a thorn in her side.

⁸¹ Kimberly R. Connor, “Reading from the Heart Out: Chief Bromden through Indigenous Eyes,” *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 37, no. 1 (2011): 233, <https://repository.usfca.edu/pna/6/>.

⁸² Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 179-184.

On the other hand, all his positive qualities aside, McMurphy is also brash, smug, short-tempered, and aggressive. Since he got into the hospital by trickery, it must be noted that he is not afraid to engage in various minor or more serious frauds, even when his fellow patients are involved.

Overall, McMurphy is an important figure that the other patients in the ward look up to and take him as someone who is willing to defend them. As the story progresses, some of the patients begin to question his motives, but it is eventually proven that he cares about the patients, nevertheless. He provides them with a way of escaping the “prison” in which they find themselves, both from a physical and a mental point of view.

4.2.3 The “Big Nurse” Ratched

An important note to be taken is that the character of Nurse Ratched is based on a true story. While working in the psychiatric institution in Oregon, he met a nurse, who then became an inspiration for creating the Big Nurse. He admitted, however, that the character was taken to an extreme, and that in reality, she was not as cruel and barbaric as Nurse Ratched in the novel.⁸³

The Big Nurse is the symbol of female authority.⁸⁴ She is the “leader” of the whole ward, and even the doctor himself, who is supposed to be in charge of the ward, is somehow letting her have her way, even though his position is higher in terms of the hierarchy.

She “takes quiet pleasure in torturing her patients through a combination of medicinal control and psychological manipulation,” which means that the intentions of hers are purely selfish.⁸⁵ She always keeps a straight face, even when things are not going according to her plan, not wanting anyone to see her real reactions and feelings. However, in certain situations, Ratched is almost unable to keep her temper, especially when McMurphy outsmarts her or when most of the patients get on his side.

⁸³ “Ratched,” Reviewed: A Confused, Caricaturish Origin Story for the “Cuckoo’s Nest” Villainess,” The New Yorker, last modified September 19, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/on-television/ratched-reviewed-a-confused-caricaturish-origin-story-for-the-cuckoos-nest-villainess>.

⁸⁴ Harold Bloom, ed., *Ken Kesey’s One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (New York: Infobase, 2007), 1, <https://lib.cz/book/851477/615515>.

⁸⁵ “Ratched,” Reviewed: A Confused, Caricaturish Origin Story for the “Cuckoo’s Nest” Villainess,” The New Yorker, last modified September 19, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/on-television/ratched-reviewed-a-confused-caricaturish-origin-story-for-the-cuckoos-nest-villainess>.

4.2.4 The Rest of the Characters

The rest of the characters are an essential part of the story, and their convincing portrayal by Kesey is what makes the novel so believable and popular with the public.

First, it is necessary to mention that the system in the entire psychiatric ward would not be possible to maintain without the help of Nurse Ratched's "black aides" – Washington, Williams, Geever and Warren. They are quite literally her right arm. She does not have to talk to them in order to express what she wants, yet they somehow know exactly what she wants them to do. Spending so much time with her in the ward has taught them exactly how they should deal with certain problematic situations when the patients are involved.

Next, the analysis of the other patients in the psychiatric ward needs to be done. The patients are obedient to all the rules implemented by the Big Nurse, and they make no effort to try to change the system of the ward. That is, however, only until McMurphy comes to the ward, and encourages them to find their inner strength to fight back. The concept of individuality is prominent in this book, as these characters find it hard to advocate for themselves. Whenever they find themselves in a situation where they can influence certain events by "democratic voting", they back out most of the time when they see Nurse Ratched's face, and when she is showing disapproval.

The next character that will be analysed is Dale Harding. He is an intelligent and smart man, who is one of the first patients to talk to McMurphy. As Bromden describes him, he is "a flat, nervous man with a face that sometimes makes you think you seen him in the movies, like it's a face too pretty to just be a guy on the street."⁸⁶ It is apparent that he is a homosexual, which was problematic, as homosexuality was not acceptable by society at that time. Nevertheless, Harding often talks about his wife, who is a beautiful woman herself. He "brags a lot about having such a woman for a wife, says she's the sexiest woman in the world and she can't get enough of him nights."⁸⁷ This signifies that although he tries to seem tough and masculine, wanting everyone to feel jealous of him, he is simply insecure. In a way, he is trapped inside his own body, not being able to express himself fully and be truthful. After McMurphy dies, Harding leaves the psychiatric ward and becomes free of the implemented system again.

⁸⁶ Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 19.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Charles Cheswick is a patient who considers McMurphy his role model. He admires McMurphy's courage but is too afraid to follow in his footsteps. This character dies and his death is blamed on McMurphy by Nurse Ratched, giving her another reason to torture McMurphy by her unpredictable behaviours.

Billy Bibbit is a shy patient who is extremely reserved when it comes to women. He commits suicide after Nurse Ratched finds him in a room with one of the two prostitutes that were present at the secret party in the ward. Billy is so excited about spending time with Candy, one of the two prostitutes that he forgets about Nurse Ratched and all the possible consequences. When Ratched finds the two of them in the room, she threatens to contact his mother, and he is unable to bear the heavy burden of guilt, as he would let his mother down. When he decides to take his own life, Nurse Ratched has yet another thing to blame on McMurphy. The fact remains, however, that the party was one of the few moments when the patients felt healthy and normal, as they could escape the strict regime for a while.

George Sorenson is another crucial character in the whole story. Everyone in the ward knows is extremely hygienic. When everyone, who was present on the fishing trip is forced to go to the washroom to get rid of all the dirt from the trip, George Sorenson has a hard time surrendering to one of the black aides, which McMurphy cannot seem to accept. This results in McMurphy attacking one of the black aides. However, it is at this exact moment when everyone realizes that McMurphy genuinely cares about all the patients and freeing them from the oppressive system.

The rest of the character list includes for example the doctor, who allows Nurse Ratched to be in charge of the ward, Mr Turkle, the night guard, who seems to be more on the patients' side, or Chief Bromden's father.

Chief Bromden's father is a meaningful figure in his son's life, as Bromden keeps going back to him in his memories and dreams. The father is a big, strong man, who Chief Bromden often compares to McMurphy himself. The fact that Bromden compares his father to McMurphy is obvious from the first time he hears McMurphy talk to all of the patients in the ward for the first time:

“Good mornin’, buddies.”

There's a paper Halloween bat hanging on a string above his head; he reaches up and flicks it so it spins around.

“Mighty nice fall day.”

He talks a little the way Papa used to, voice loud and full of hell, but he doesn't look like Papa; Papa was a full-blood Columbia Indian – a chief – and hard and shiny as a gunstock. This guy is redheaded with long red sideburns and a tangle of curls out from under his cap, been needing cut a long time, and he's broad as Papa was tall, broad across the jaw and shoulders and chest, a broad white devilish grin, and he's hard in a different kind of way from Papa, kind of the way a baseball is hard under the scuffed leather.⁸⁸

Bromden regards his father highly, as he is smart enough to trick “the Combine”. In the book, however, it is explained that although he was once a very strong man, and many looked up to him, he ended up drinking alcohol and died because of the addiction.

On top of this, Bromden sometimes admires McMurphy's appeal to freedom, which he is determined to fight for, and he believes that McMurphy is not going to let the “evil” system win, unlike his father with whom this was unfortunately not the case.

4.2.5 Connection between Ruckly and McMurphy

Ruckly is another character worth mentioning. He is one of the first indicators to show that there is a dark side to the psychiatric hospital. In fact, he is considered by the psychiatric hospital as a mistake, as described by Bromden in the book, they “made a mistake in one of their head installations.”⁸⁹ As it was mentioned in the book, prior to him being lobotomized, Ruckly had been quite difficult to deal with – the system, or more precisely, Nurse Ratched was unwilling to tolerate such behaviour, so she decided to destroy him completely. There is a connection between Ruckly and McMurphy, as they both seem to be unaccepting of the established system. The fact that Ruckly's story is at the very beginning of the novel seems to be a sort of a sign – the sign of McMurphy having the same fate of becoming a Chronic and losing his freedom forever.

4.3 McMurphy's Arrival

In this subchapter, the arrival of the novel's protagonist will be analysed.

As was already established, McMurphy's arrival was a kind of a mystery at first. Apparently, due to his previous criminal activities, he was sent to a farm to work to serve his sentence. Nonetheless, he was willing to do anything to avoid being there, as he believed

⁸⁸ Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 10.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

that it would have been much more difficult to be forced to work there. His approach to the whole situation is illustrated in the following lines, where McMurphy explains his situation:

“What happened, you see, was I got in a couple of hassles at the work farm, to tell the truth, and the court ruled that I’m a psychopath. And do you think I’m gonna argue with the court? Shoo, you can bet your bottom dollar I don’t. If it gets me outta those damned pea fields I’ll be whatever their little heart desires, be it psychopath or mad dog or werewolf, because I don’t care if I never see another weddin’ hoe to my dying day...”⁹⁰

From this paragraph, the arrogance and contempt for the system can be sensed from McMurphy. This approach of his is important to note because despising the system, both the prison system and the mental hospital system, is one of the most important aspects as far as McMurphy's character is concerned. In spite of the fact that he himself is a flawed character in many ways, he does not want to conform to the established system that harms all the people that are trapped in it.

4.4 The Dynamics between McMurphy and Ratched

When the book’s protagonist, Randle Patrick McMurphy, first enters the psychiatric hospital, it is immediately apparent that he is rather different from the rest of the patients. He is loud, talkative, and not afraid to stand out from the crowd, which is unusual for such an establishment, where everyone simply listens and does what they are told to. He also makes sure to personally meet and greet everyone from the psychiatric ward, soaking up the overall atmosphere and maybe even testing the waters.

His very presence was a cause for concern to Ratched – the Big Nurse who fears that her perfectly established regime could be potentially threatened by this free-spirited man. At first, however, she makes no sign of herself. She watches McMurphy closely, sensing a potential threat. It is certainly clear, however, that McMurphy is equally observing her alone.

The relationship between these two characters evolves throughout the whole book, yet the dynamics between them remain – McMurphy pushes Ratched’s limits, expecting her to react, and lose her temper. She, on the other hand, tries her hardest to remain calm but when he crosses the line multiple times, it gets harder and harder for her to keep a cool head.

⁹⁰ Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 13.

In prison analogy, McMurphy would be a rioting prisoner, whereas Nurse Ratched would be an abusive prison guard.

From the first moment they meet each other, it is apparent that there will be something going on between them, as she even addresses him by a different name:

“Aide Williams tells me, Mr. McMurry, that you’ve been somewhat difficult about your admission shower. Is this true? Please understand, I appreciate the way you’ve taken it upon yourself to orient with the other patients on the ward, but everything in its own good time, Mr. McMurry. I’m sorry to interrupt you and Mr. Bromden, but you do understand: everyone...must follow the rules.” He tips his head back and gives that wink that she isn’t fooling him any more than I did, that he’s onto her. He looks up at her with one eye for a minute. “Ya know, ma’am,” he says, “ya know – that is the ex-act thing somebody always tells me about the rules...” He grins. They both smile back and forth at each other, sizing each other up. “...just when they figure I’m about to do the dead opposite.”⁹¹

It is clear from this conversation that McMurphy is teasing Nurse Ratched, and his last words sound somewhat threatening. A playful side of McMurphy can be observed, and from the way Nurse Ratched reacts, it is obvious that she wants to put him in his place.

Ratched emphasizes that everyone in her ward must obey the rules. It signifies that she is under control, and no one can, in fact, do anything that she does not allow. This is again a sign of the superiority and power that she holds.

4.5 The Life of Bromden

Throughout the whole story, Bromden’s character is constantly evolving – the deaf and dumb submissive gradually becomes a strong man again, thanks to McMurphy himself and due to everything that happens in the mental hospital because of him. McMurphy tells him that he is going to become *big again*.⁹²

After years of being locked up like a caged animal, he finally manages to escape the “prison” as a free man.

His life was not easy. When he was younger, he witnessed his father’s destruction – his father sold the tribe’s land, and he could not handle the consequences of his actions. The people from his tribe got their part of the money, but they did not know what to do with

⁹¹ Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 23-25.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 191-192.

them, and their lives changed forever. As Bromden describes – the Combine, the system – won.

Bromden spends his days observing the psychiatric hospital, trying his best to block every negative remark directed towards him. Due to taking his daily medication, he often finds himself in “a fog.” There, in spite of being completely trapped and surrendering himself to the authority of Nurse Ratched and her prison-like system, he feels safe and comfortable. McMurphy’s voice is the only thing that pulls him out of the fog, and at first, he admits that he feels anxious about leaving the fog. This scene symbolizes the fact that, as a free man, he must decide on behalf of himself, and he must also take all the responsibility for his actions. He realizes that he must escape the prison of his mind.⁹³

4.5.1 The Relationship between Bromden and McMurphy

From the moment McMurphy sees Bromden, it seems like he sees through his bluffing. He always makes attempts to talk to him even though Bromden never answers – that is, however, only until they both end up together in the same room after the fight in the showers, as was previously stated above.

When Bromden finally starts talking to McMurphy, he tells him all about what he had observed while sweeping the floors of the psychiatric hospital. He warns him that there is no escape from Ratched’s authoritarian regime and that she will win, as the system always does.

Bromden's warning is eventually confirmed when McMurphy is lobotomized, and it is at this point that the strength of their bond becomes most apparent - Bromden knows that McMurphy would not want to live as "Chronic," so he kills him and leaves the rehab to live the free life he and McMurphy had fantasized about.

⁹³ Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 1-281.

5 THE IMAGE OF PRISON

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest is a novel that faithfully reflects the situation in mental hospitals in the US during the 1960s. The hospitalized patients became separated from the rest of the society, which often resulted in complete isolation. Instead of being helpful, some institutions were directly responsible for the degrading physical and mental health of their patients. The novel is “a key text for the antipsychiatry movement of the 1960s, it addresses the relationship between sanity and madness, conformity and rebellion.”⁹⁴

This is exactly the case of the patients in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, which is explained in the following lines in more detail.

5.1 The Psychiatric Hospital in the Novel

There are various wards in the mental hospital in Kesey's novel, one of which is controlled by “the Big Nurse” Ratched.

There are two types of patients in her ward – the Acutes and the Chronics, all of whom spend all their days together, mostly in the day room. Ratched always makes sure that the whole group stays together, attends group therapy sessions, and fulfils all their assigned responsibilities. This system is indeed similar to the systems in prisons, where inmates have to follow the scheduled timetable and obey all the implemented rules.

The whole ward is under Ratched's command, and no one makes any effort to change her ways, as they all believe that the established regime is necessary to help cure all the patients.

As was already mentioned before, there is a strong concept of authority present in the novel, and Nurse Ratched is the face of it. Her mind games persuaded some of the patients into thinking that she, in fact, is their saviour. Chief Bromden is one of the only ones who does not seem to submit to her seemingly sweet attitude, as he knows who she is deep down.

Bromden's view of Ratched's system in the ward will be revealed in the following excerpt as he describes her and the Combine:

⁹⁴ “One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified March 16, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/One-Flew-Over-the-Cuckoos-Nest-novel-by-Kesey>.

Yes. This is what I know. The ward is a factory for the Combine. It's for fixing up mistakes made in the neighbourhoods and in the schools and in the churches, the hospital is. When a completed product goes back out into society, all fixed up good as new, better than new sometimes, it brings joy to the Big Nurse's heart; something that came in all twisted different is now a functioning adjusted component, a credit to the whole outfit and a marvel to behold. Watch him sliding across the land with a welded grin, fitting into some nice little neighborhood where they're just now digging trenches along the street to lay pipes for city water. He's happy with it. He's adjusted to surroundings finally...⁹⁵

5.2 The Comparison of Prison Environment and the Psychiatric Hospital in the Novel

As was already described in the previous chapters, there is a strong connection between the two institutions.

In the following excerpt, the doctor's theory of the Therapeutic Community is described by Bromden:

I've heard that theory of the Therapeutic Community enough times to repeat it forwards and backwards – how a guy has to learn to get along in a group before he'll be able to function in a normal society; how the group can help the guy by showing him where he's out of place; how society is what decides who's sane and who isn't, so you got to measure up. All that stuff. Every time we get a new patient on the ward the doctor goes into the theory with both feet; it's pretty near the only time he takes things over and runs the meeting. He tells how the goal of the Therapeutic Community is a democratic ward, run completely by the patients and their votes, working toward making worth-while citizens to turn back Outside onto the street.⁹⁶

The doctor then continues to explain that all the patients in the ward are encouraged to talk about their problems and emotions, and if a friend of theirs has any problems he does not want to discuss himself, they should become the ones to inform the hospital staff about their issues so that they can be discussed at the group meeting.⁹⁷

This excerpt summarizes all the things mentioned in the previous chapters – the essence of heterotopia when the doctor describes that the only place the patients can be cured is the closed ward, the concept of structural violence when Bromden softly implies that the doctor is inferior to Nurse Ratched, and the overall similarity to a prison environment, where

⁹⁵ Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 36.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

the inmates are encouraged to reveal other prisoners' secrets. The fact that the doctor mentions democracy when talking about the psychiatric hospital is ironic, as none of the democratic principles works in this ward.⁹⁸

The similarity between prisons and psychiatric hospitals is undeniable. Another link is the fact that, just like in prison, the staff in this psychiatric hospital wears uniforms to be distinguishable from the patients and to emphasize, among other things, the distance between them.

5.3 The Relationships of the Patients

It is apparent that the patients are in the same boat, and thanks to McMurphy, they become determined to change the system in the ward by standing up to Nurse Ratched more. For example, when Cheswick, who would usually be a sort of people pleaser, tries to oppose Ratched once. However, he backs up immediately after realizing that no other patient is following his lead. In this exact situation, similarities between the relationships of patients in psychiatric hospitals and inmates in prisons can be observed.

When the patients meet McMurphy, and he makes them more confident to speak their minds, they unconsciously form a union – a union that is against their common enemy, Nurse Ratched. They all seem to be on the same track, however, whenever there is a possibility to get punished for their actions, they immediately stop caring about the whole group and the only thing on their mind is their well-being.

The same thing applies to prisoners. If the prison guards are in the wrong, they would rather save themselves from getting punished than stand up for everyone and stop the injustice.

This behaviour pattern is common and is connected to the fear of someone above them reprimanding them. It is human nature, but it is a dangerous thing, as such behaviour leads to injustice and unfreedom, not only in prisons and psychiatric hospitals.

5.4 “Escaping” the System

As it was already mentioned, the patients live under the strict supervision of Nurse Ratched, who under no circumstances lets them feel like they are normal people. Nonetheless, the

⁹⁸ Ken Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 44.

system implemented by her is increasingly getting destroyed by McMurphy and the little things he does on a daily basis.

The first sign that things are starting to move were the daily meetings, where patients usually spoke only when they were asked to do so. McMurphy, being the loud person he is, does not submit to what he believes are absurd rules, and he talks whenever he wants to. The next step is changes in the daily schedule. Ratched feels threatened by McMurphy, so she tries not to give in to his demands. When patients are not allowed to watch the important baseball game, McMurphy pretends to watch the game on television, which only lures other patients into joining him and to cheering along. Again, this situation is one of those instances in which patients undoubtedly feel a kind of normalcy, or even joy, as they feel free of the system.

However, they feel most free on the fishing trip when they are able to relax and forget about the nurse and her rules. The fact that they are allowed to leave the hospital building undoubtedly only reinforces their feeling of freedom, and that they do not have to feel like they are ill and "imprisoned," but they finally feel free for the first time.

The last time the patients feel liberated during the party that McMurphy plans. After the party, some, including McMurphy, plan to escape, however, due to an unfortunate coincidence (where they are not woken up by Turkle), they do not manage to escape. McMurphy's failure to escape ultimately proves fatal to him, as after Billy Bibbit's death, McMurphy attacks Nurse Ratched, which results into him being lobotomized. After Bromden mercy kills him, McMurphy finally escapes the system he fought against, though not in the way he would have originally wanted.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to analyse the image of prison in the novel *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* and the society at that time, and the causes and events that this novel reflected.

The events of the 1960s show how important it is to strike the right balance between individual and collective freedom and how easy it is for some institutions (or individuals) to fall into structural violence and abuse their power. When an individual stands in a position of power, it is easy to slide into structural violence, as some commanders in the military, guards in prisons and even Nurse Ratched in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* undoubtedly do.

Analysing the historical context of the novel, one could not help but notice certain similarities with the present. Similar patterns of behaviour, where certain groups are oppressed, can also be observed today in China, for example, where the Uighur ethnic minority is being systematically oppressed.⁹⁹ We can also mention the situation in Russia, which is significantly affected by structural violence in the military and, ultimately, in society as a whole.

After analysing the novel and its historical background, the connections between mental hospitals and prisons were made obvious, and it was also discovered that the system in these two institutions was very similar in some respects, especially in terms of the treatment of patients and prisoners regarding the abuse of power of authorities and structural violence. The abusers of power in these institutions were mainly rank and file employees who had been given the right to decide on the daily actions of their wards, without any control by their superiors. It was the lack of supervision of the behaviour of these employees that, over time, led to the abuse of power and structural violence. These employees reach a state of not caring about the catastrophic impact that their behaviour has on their “victims.” However, some of these employees do harm intentionally, such as Nurse Ratched in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, which can have detrimental consequences on the well-being of the patients.

⁹⁹ “Who are the Uyghurs and why is China being accused of genocide,” BBC News, last modified June 21, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-22278037>.

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