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Cuckoo for Cuckoo's Nest

CAUTION SPOILERS AHEAD!

Overall Rating: Five Stars

Let's get one thing straight...

Is the cinematic rendition of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* an exact replica of the book? No. The movie will never live up to the high standards of Ken Kesey's novel, so in order to properly appreciate the quality of the film, one must separate the two into completely different categories. This movie review highlights the positives of the films and therefore is not a comparison to the novel.

The music

Possibly the most unsettling part of the entire movie was the distracting classical music which was constantly playing over the loudspeakers at the mental institute in which the main character, Randle P. McMurphy (Jack Nicholson) was a psychiatric patient. It gave off the feeling of forced calmness-- a way to keep the mental patients under control so that their would not be any uprisings. The sophisticated music seems out of place in the dull recreation room, which makes the audience uneasy. This

intentional discomfort brilliantly gives viewers an idea of the uneasiness in the hospital as well as the growing tension between McMurphy and the movie's antagonist, Nurse Ratched (Louise Fletcher).

Color... or lack thereof

From the ceiling to floor, the entire set of the psychiatric hospital is bleach white. Typically white symbolizes purity and innocence, but not in this case. Instead, it shows Nurse Ratched's need to micromanage. White represents the order that the nurse desperately pursues. Towards the end of the movie, when McMurphy gets the rest of the patients to rebel by attending a party, Nurse Ratched appears in the scene wearing her black day clothes. Not only is this a sign of her evil ways, but also expresses how she has lost control of her ward. In the events of the McMurphy's wild night, a white Nurse's cap belonging to the nurse gets trampled and dirty. When it is given back to the Nurse the following day, it is just after a patient has a mental breakdown due to the temporary overthrow in power.

Key ideas

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest is undoubtedly a critique on society as a whole. People (McMurphy) are forced to conform to their society, government, etc (Nurse Ratched). It pushes the idea that society corrupts individuals and strips them away of their basic freedoms; it does much more bad than good. This is shown when Nurse Ratched orders that McMurphy gets a lobotomy in order to silence him and bring "structure" and "peace" back to the rest of the group. The film shows how people are easily manipulated in order for someone or something to remain in control of society.