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### **One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest Movie Review**

Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* offers a unique perspective of mental institutions in the fifties. Kesey's novel was written to shed light on the atrocious conditions of mental institutions, and to argue that many patients would be able to live better lives outside of an institution. Although the all content of the book cannot be directly compared to the film, Miloš Forman's movie adaptation was able to transport Kesey's motivation for the book onto film.

The casting choices for *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* could not have been better. Jack Nicholson's portrayal of Randle McMurphy was perfect. Nicholson brilliantly captured the spirit and emotion that McMurphy carried and gave to the other patients. The casting of other patients also represented key aspects of their characters very well. Brad Dourif was a very good visual representation of Billy Bibbit, and did a very good job showing his transformation throughout the story. Nurse Ratched's cold, manipulating personality was portrayed very well by Louise Fletcher. Casting choices in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* were able to capture key aspects of all the characters.

The movie was able to represent the purpose of the story through the community of the characters rather than focusing on many acts of rebellion. Since the movie could not include as many moments of rebellion as the book, it instead showed the community that was formed when

McMurphy came and brought them together. One of the biggest turning points of the movie was when McMurphy sprayed all of the men in the game room while they were arguing about monopoly and got everyone, even Harding, to eventually be happy. Other moments where the men came together and rebelled were shown excellently on screen, like the fishing trip, the party, the world series, and even playing basketball. Showing the community of the ward rather than rebellion worked wonderfully on screen.

Most of the men were characterized in the movie very well. McMurphy had many defining moments where he helped out the men on the ward, either helping them have fun or saving them from Ratched's wrath. Billy's transformation throughout the film was excellent; he went from being scared of everything to "partying" with candy, and was heart-breakingly shut down by Ratched. However, Chief's representation in the movie was confusing and lackluster. Of course Chief could not be the narrator as he was in the book, but his role was inconsistent. For most of the movie he was either ignored or made less important, such as not being included in key events such as the fishing trip. Seemingly out of nowhere, Chief starts having a role larger than the other patients when he helps fight in the shower, has the conversation about size with McMurphy (which viewers which didn't read the book would not understand), and eventually is the main focus of the conclusion of the movie. It would have most likely been better to keep Chief equal in significance with the other patients rather than building him up out of nowhere at the end. Even though Chief's character wasn't done optimally, the characterization of the men on the ward excellently contributed to the piece as a whole.

Many film techniques were used well in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* to emphasize qualities of the characters. The primary focus of these film techniques was Nurse Ratched. Throughout the movie, Ratched had many close-up shots of her face with a small grin, exemplifying her malicious manipulation of the patients. Another technique used for Ratched was that her hair and nurse's hat made her look like she had devil's horns, showing her demented personality. Although Chief was not a very significant character in the movie, there were still many shots that compared him to McMurphy to contrast their physical size and the size of their personality. These techniques added subtle characterization of important characters to the movie.

Overall, the movie adaptation of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* brilliantly conveyed the statement that the book made. The movie excellently shows the mistreatment that took place in mental institutions at the time through the depiction of Nurse Ratched and her ward. The community that was created throughout the movie by McMurphy is able to show that the men on the ward would be just fine in normal society with the help of a brotherhood. Just as Kesey intended to in the book, the movie shows that many mental patients can be helped much better by company and individual help rather than being institutionalized.