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5-4-17

Cuckoo's Nest Movie Review

When watching the film *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, by Milos Forman, you must understand that if you have read the book version, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey, prior to watching the film then you should not try and compare the two. They are their own separate entities and should not be held together side by side looking for similarities and differences. Although, since this is a movie review and the assignment is to include specific evidence and scenes from the movie AND the book, that is what I will be doing here. But it is still advised to not try to compare the two when analyzing them yourself.

Both the film and the book had their own takes on the story and the characters within the story, but the overall plot of both of them remained fairly similar. Reading the book first allowed it to be looked at as an original and something to compare the movie to. The director of the movie chose to make some very interesting decisions throughout the film which were able to change some points of the story and also give a visual representation that was not accessible within the book. Some of the most significant decisions that Forman made was the loss of power Nurse Ratched experienced, the boat scene, and the focus or point of view of the movie.

One major change that was made in the film as compared to the book was at the end when McMurphy strangled Nurse Ratched. In the book Nurse Ratched had her blouse ripped open exposing her breast and her voice was completely gone. This seemed to be the ultimate humiliation and loss of power. Not only did she lose her voice, which was where all of her power came from, but she was also exposed to be this weak feminine character who was not to be feared anymore. In the film however, her blouse was never ripped open and she didn't lose her voice either. She was left in a mere neck brace but could still talk and give commands. This shows that she did not have a significant loss of power over the ward and still remained the "Big Nurse." Forman may have made this decision to explain that McMurphy's rebellion wasn't enough to disrupt the productivity of the ward and that Chief's act of rebellion was more momentous and symbolic.

Another interesting decision that the director of the film made was during the boat scene. In both the book and the film this scene was full of chaos and confusion, but the film did an exceptional job at portraying this on the screen. Forman made the choice of using a high camera angle above the boat as nobody was steering. As everybody was running around on the boat

trying to get keep things under control this camera angle was able to capture the entire commotion. It was both ironic and symbolic that as this was all going on you could see that the boat was just spinning in circles. The path of the boat represented all of the patients in the way that no matter what acts of rebellion or stunts that they tried to pull, they would always end up back where they started.

The last and probably most noticeable change that the director had made was the focus of the story or point of view. In the book the narrator was Chief. This gave us first hand experience as to what his life was like and what he had experienced in the ward. This was not the case in the film. Chief was not the narrator and therefore much of Chief's character and origins are unknown to the viewer. We also do not get all of the insight as to all of the things that go on in the ward this way. The film is mainly focused on Jack Nicholson's character McMurphy, and although in the book Chief is our narrator McMurphy is still viewed as the main character in the film. The reason as to why Forman decided to abandon Chief as the narrator could be that he wanted McMurphy to truly take the spotlight and to make the story easier to follow and understand without all of Chief's flashbacks and "fog."

Again it will be stated that you should not try to compare and contrast these two pieces of work because they were created separately and both have their own take on the story. Though if you wish to do so then you will be able to notice many of the decisions that the director of the film had made such as the loss of power Nurse Ratched experienced, the boat scene, the focus or point of view of the movie, and probably many more. Each piece is both terrific in their own right, and having a movie adaptation to a great novel allows for a viewer or a reader to see certain scenes and characters come to life in a fresh unique way.