



Foucauldian Study of Discourse-Resistance Nexus in Ken Kesey's One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest

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Abstract- This paper studies discourse-resistance nexus in Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* by employing Foucault's insights about power. Belsey's method of Textual analysis is applied to study the negotiation between the central and the peripheral in the novel. Foucault believes that power is a dynamic process and not a static product and its discourse not only promotes but also hinders its dissemination. He asserts that resistance is engraved within the very discourse of power and an act of resistance is itself an expression of power. This paper explores the inherent contradictions of discourse concealed under its seemingly seamless façade by examining the two antagonistic characters located in a power ridden situation of the novel. Textual analysis of the novel establishes that both the central and the peripheral are constrained in a discourse driven environment in which discourse produces its reverse discourse in form of resistance.

Key Words: Power, Discourse, Reverse discourse, Resistance, Central, Peripheral, Constraint

I. INTRODUCTION

Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) represents a microscopic view of a discourse driven world which is run by clinical exactitude and statistical efficacy. Set in Oregon Mental Institute, the narrative presents a tough situation in which human agency is shrunk and individual spirit is crushed under an enormous pressure of collective normality. Miss Ratched, an epitome of inflexible conventionality, is resisted by McMurphy – an embodiment of bohemian individuality. He exposes the emasculating ward policy and motivates other patients to act against Miss Ratched's matriarchal autocracy. The story narrated by Chief Bromden, a schizophrenic Indian, portrays a perpetual tussle between the oppressor and the oppressed. The former tries to maintain its control while the latter tries to transcend authority and the story becomes a dialectic between recurrent jubilations and disappointments.

This paper, unlike traditional Marxist and Feminist critique of power, investigates the cracks within discourse and establishes that discourse is not only a transmitter of power but also a resister. Nothing is beyond discourse and power is exercised as well as resisted through discourse. Marxists and Feminists assert that power is always repressive but Foucault believes that power is productive and itself produces resistance. Production of resistance among characters of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* is inspected in this paper to validate that where there is power, there is resistance. Foucault's ideas of power, discourse and resistance are employed to undertake textual analysis of the novel. This paper proposes a research model which can be used in marxist, feminist, post-colonial and global contexts to study power not as a coercive product but as a productive process.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Semino and Swindlehurst (1996) trace and define Bromden's mind style as an idiosyncratic way "of the conceptualization of reality" (p. 144). They are of the view that whenever Bromden is exposed to a challenging situation, his perceptions are recorded in rigid mechanical terms because his pathetic past has made him believe that "people ... really are machines" (p. 152). He is "overlexicalised in the semantic area of machinery" and "underlexicalised when it comes to the inner workings of people" (p. 151). He imagines

that the world is run by a huge Combine that has its mechanical penetration even into the minutest sections of life and the interconnected mechanical components of Combine “can be altered slightly to work more efficiently” (p. 154). “Powerful is big” (p. 157) is another conceptual metaphor in Bromden’s mind style and he believes that only the big is the powerful. Metaphors of “mechanical Combine” and “powerful is big” are recurrent perceptions in Bromden’s world view and it is significant to remember that “what is metaphorical for the reader is in fact literally true for him (Bromden)” (p. 159). Ware (1986) states that Bromden “experiences an identity crises” and he is “torn between his desire to maintain his Indian heritage” and the need of appropriation into “dominant white culture” (p. 95). He is “intimidated, confused and self-deprecatory” and “adopts silence as a survival technique” (p. 97). He has lost his tribal home, Indian name and cultural heritage. His fellow patients call him chief to ridicule his degenerated duty of floor mopping. His huge size, once the celebrated feature of Indian identity, is of no worth any more. His loss of identity is further complicated by the fact that his mother is a white woman who hates Indian heritage. Bromden, even after his escape from the ward, is unable to determine his course of action and it seems that he “is not completely self-reliant” and is not a “hero who is ready to fight other people’s battles” (p. 101). Semino, Swindlehurst, and Ware construct their argument from a deterministic stance without negotiating with the fact that Bromden’s liberation is a result of his manipulation of the same tools that had kept him under the yoke of strict bondage. The Combine which had confiscated his mental and physical space brought about his emancipation and the discourse, that had constructed a schizophrenic consciousness, created a self-conscious individuality also.

Sutherland (1972) expresses that McMurphy’s redeeming profanity in *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* is suggestive of the vision that “all human things are potentially sacred” (p. 30). He is of the view that systematic dehumanization of patients cannot be depicted in polite language and mild language cannot make the patients realize that they are human beings and not some castrated rabbits. “Miss Ratched speaks properly but does unspeakable things” (p. 29) and masks her suppressive vigilance under the guise of politeness. Zubizarreta (1994) argues that “Miss Ratched’s antiseptic desexualization is abhorrent” (p. 63) but McMurphy’s sexualized potential is inspiring. The former believes in stabilized coherence and the latter aspires after disrupting adventure. Desexualized and sexualized versions of personalities present a disparity of point of view in the novel. Both Sutherland and Zubizarreta are concerned with lingual and artistic aspects of the novel and show little interest in the power politics demonstrated in the story. McMurphy’s redeeming profanity as well as his sexualized virility come onto the stage not from any external source but are brought into the ward from the same Combine that tries to suppress profane sexuality. This paper is focused upon examining the discourse which is not only coercive but also productive.

Nostrand (1976) expresses that patients in *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* are caricatures whose hollow existence is “filled with an incomprehensible pain” (p. 25). They are trapped in a temporal vacuum and their support for McMurphy wavers every now and then because they have internalized that Miss Ratched’s dehumanizing authority is invincible. McMurphy is a lone ranger and “his rebellion reduces into an empty protest, a personal expression of disgust” (p. 25). Schopf (1972) suggests that “promethean man falters” as he has “made himself too big, too visible, too polarized to authority” (p. 97). One must be invisible like Bromden if he wants to survive. McMurphy is alone in his struggle against authority and Miss Ratched manages to keep him “chained with the rock of futility” (p. 90). On the other hand, Bromden makes himself too insignificant to be noticed as his past has made him observe the things without being observed. He seems too impotent to arouse any suspicion because “the principle of nonattachment offers a choice, perhaps the only real choice of existence” (p. 91). Both Nostrand and Schopf argue about the manifested futility of an individual’s struggle against society without paying much attention to the inherent possibility of liberation ingrained in the very structure which seems to be subjugating human potentials in the first place. This paper explores the possibility of inherent resistance written within power discourse.

Gefin (1992) calls *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* a misogynist’s work because “Kesey the novelist constantly muddles the efforts of Kesey the Satirist” (p. 98). Miss Ratched “as a satiric target becomes both victimizer and victim for narrative reasons” (p. 97) and, though she is portrayed as a desexualized castrator and “a mixture of machine and beast” (p. 98) yet her big breasts remind the reader that she is a woman after all. Though Shandy is presented as a foil to Miss Ratched yet even she cannot escape men’s ridicule. Kesey’s narrative proves that Big Nurse is a warm and pink human being with a “thwarted womanhood and humanity” (p. 98) and Shandy with her bruised breasts shows a “humanity wounded and violated” (p. 100). Vitkus (1994) like Gefin perceives that Kesey seems to be celebrating misogyny and embraces “male myth of sacrifice and violence” without providing any “positive alternative”

(p. 87). Vitkus employs Foucault's concept of madness to elucidate the fact that McMurphy does not bring any commendable change. Foucault in *Madness and Civilization* (1988) asserts that madness is a political construction but it can also become a voice of liberation against corrupt autocratic rule. He parallels madness with non-conformity and believes in its positive liberating potential. Vitkus does not regard McMurphy's madness as a redeeming voice of liberation but a violent burst of misogyny because the narrative of the novel suggests "a nostalgia for the male myth of the American frontier hero" (p. 77). Gefin and Vitkus examined *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* in feminist perspective and ignored the fact that in a discourse driven structure of the novel, both male and female are empowered as well as constrained. This paper addresses this ambivalent situation in which discourse is found to be a stumbling block for both the empowered and the constrained.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Michel Foucault (1978) in *History of Sexuality* rejects the idea of power being deterministically oppressive and questions, "if power was never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really believe we should manage to obey it?" (p. 36). He in *Abnormal* (2003) considers power productive and regards repression only as a "secondary effect with regard to its central, creative and productive mechanisms" (p. 52). Mills (2003) asserts that "Foucault's view of power is directly counter to the conventional Marxist or early feminist model of power" which perceives power as essentially coercive (p. 36). Foucault does not consider power a product but a process through which it is disseminated throughout a social structure. Marxist and feminist perception of power makes power a static entity but Foucault conceptualizes power as a dynamic strategy in which both the powerful and the powerless keep on negotiating. He in *Discipline and Punish* (1995) claims that "power is exercised rather than possessed. It is overall effect of its strategic positions" (p. 26). Barry Smart (2003) states that "Foucault conceptualizes power neither as an institution, nor a structure, but in a complex strategical situation" (p. 70). Power being a strategy allows breathing spaces to its targeted individuals and consequently produces resisting behaviors. Power is exercised not from some invincible standpoint but through discourse which legalizes as well as automatizes the functions of power. Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) refers discourse as "the general domain of all statements" and simultaneously propounds that no discourse can claim absolute spontaneity and regularity (p. 80). Discourse is a political construction and one must examine it "in the exact specificity of its occurrence" (p. 28). Smart (2003) expresses that "Foucault decenters the sovereign subject" and emphasizes upon discovering all those discursive formations through which discourses "achieve a unity as a science, theory or a text" (p. 29). Foucault regards discourse as a political construction and believes that power is exercised as well as resisted through discourse. Discourse, being a set of manufactured statements, has inherent contradictions that prove to be stumbling blocks for power operations. Discourses are constructed to legitimize the operations of power but one must always remember that human agency cannot be everlastingly subjugated by ever repressing techniques. Power must have to give something to its targeted individuals if it wants to achieve public obedience because "individuals are vehicles of power as well as its points of application" (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). Discourses are claimed to be disseminated among individuals to make them believe that power is benign and works for the collective good of masses. Power can neither threaten individuals beyond certain limits nor impart death to its dissident members because death is the territory where reach of power is exterminated. Power strives for life and perpetually tries to ensure it. It has to maintain a delicate balance between pressure and liberty without falling from grace. The delicacy of such an ambivalent situation results in emergence of resistance.

Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1995) discusses public executions of Middle Ages extensively and concludes that "great spectacle of punishment ran the risk of being rejected by the very people to whom it was addressed" (p. 63). The criminal, if happened to be a man of common people, resists, mocks and abuses the authority on the scaffold. "Under the protection of imminent death, the criminal could say anything and the crowd cheered" (p. 60). Mills (2003) quotes Foucault's standpoint that "where there is power, there is resistance" and opines that "a relation where power is exercised, there has to be someone who resists" (p. 40). Resistance is written within discourse because power can neither be enacted in vacuum nor exercised over hopelessly subjugated individuals. It must have to construct disciplined, docile and useful individuals so even punishment as the coercive technique of power is not always a reliable option. Power must have to perform within a narrow range of possibilities. Power as well as its discourse is always caught up in a web of social relations and under specific conditions, every discourse is challenged by the very tools it applies to curb resistance. Smart (2003) notes that power cannot be

exercised over absolutely subjugated slaves and its function is most obvious when “there are free subjects whose conduct or action exists within a field of possibilities” (p. 131). Power is absent in a resistance free situation. Some critics argue that Foucault is diminishing the potentials of human agency and considering individuals as passive recipients of power, if resistance is ingrained within a power discourse. James Scott in *Damnation and the Art of Resistance* (1990) advocates Foucault’s stance of resistance and claims that in a power situation both the central and the peripheral are constrained. Neither the powerful enjoys omniscient authority nor is the powerless doomed to suffer from everlasting suppression. Apparently, the powerful enjoys authority and the powerless observes obedience. It is public performance. But in private, the powerful among his peers complains about the disciplinary issues that challenge his authority and the powerless among his fellow men mocks and abuses the powerful. It is a hidden transcript. Resistance emerges from the writings of hidden transcript. Ellen. K. Feder (2014) states that “for Foucault the very effort of resistance must be understood itself as an expression of power” (p. 63). Power is exercised over a multitude of diverse temperaments and resistance is bound to emerge in one or the other form because power cannot ceaselessly block the expressions of individualities. So, instead of becoming an inhumane tyrant, power assumes a benevolent face and consciously or unconsciously, produces resistance. Power must have to exert pressure to create docile and useful individuals without taking an extreme position and in words of Todd May, power tries to maintain “a particular balance between pressure and liberty” (2011, p. 78). This paper investigates McMurphy’s resistance in *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* by employing the outlined Foucauldian model of discourse-resistance and establishes that resistance is the product of very discourse which tries to suppress it in the first place.

Belsey’s textual analysis is used to apply Foucault’s concept of power-resistance in this paper. Belsey in her essay *Textual Analysis as a Research Method* (2005) asserts that when a reader is engaged in textual analysis, he generates some invisible meanings along with grasping the available meanings of the text. The available scholarship on *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* is either unmindful of the political dimensions of the novel or applies Foucault’s ideas on madness and sexuality without taking much notice of the hidden aspects of resistance in the power structure of the story. The employment of textual analysis in this paper examines Foucault’s concept of power-resistance to validate that power can be resisted by the very tools that are used to maintain its control.

Textual Analysis

There is always one who flies over the cuckoo’s nest because power is not only coercive but also productive and resistance to power is written within the discourse of power. “There is generally one person in every situation you must never underestimate the power of” (Kesey, 1962, p. 163). McMurphy is the one in *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* who, under the protective cover of insanity, challenges Miss Ratched’s matriarchal subjugation of masculine virility and exposes the contradictions and absurdities of her therapeutic discourse. The Combine which manipulates McMurphy’s criminal past as a pretext to transport him to the mental asylum empowers him instead of subjugating him and paradoxically makes him write his bohemian future. The farm management, an extension of the Combine, could neither allow McMurphy shirk work nor impart some inhuman punishment so it is compelled to shift him into the ward for undergoing a psychological diagnosis that is supposed to provide scientific reasons of his non-conformity. Miss Ratched too confident of her therapeutic skills considers McMurphy an ordinary admission whom she can trim like a lamb without realizing that he is the wolf who is going to disrupt her desexualized ward discipline by providing her castrated rabbit like patients with a deck of cards demonstrating sexual adventures in “Fifty-two positions” (p. 8).

Discourse determines what the central and the peripheral can and cannot do in a power ridden situation. This inherent binary of can-cannot in Miss Ratched’s discourse empowers as well as constrains her and the novel becomes a manifestation of power-resistance seesaw played by Miss Ratched and McMurphy. Psychiatric discourse authorizes Miss Ratched to run her ward like a factory “for fixing up mistakes made in the neighborhoods and in the schools and in the churches” (p. 28). She can construct techniques for patients’ psychological rehabilitation but she cannot anticipate, on the moment of allowing an admission, that the admitted patient, McMurphy, is going to fly over her nest and “make a hell of a mess and constitute a threat to the whole smoothness” of her carefully manufactured spatial and temporal discipline (p. 28). Discourse authenticates operations of power within a calculated space of pressure and liberty. Endless pressure devoid of any breathing space cannot produce compliant and useful individuals, so power is bound to negotiate with the ones it strives to control. Power can enforce law but it cannot exterminate the possibilities of individuals’ going beyond the law because its discourse always wants to exhibit a benign instead of a malignant face. Miss Ratched is bound to mask her matriarchal autocracy

under the guise of democratic citizenship so she allows patients to express their grievance “instead of letting it fester inside” (p. 36). Instead of suppressing patients’ voice, she must have to frame their voice through group therapy sessions. Miss Ratched conducts group therapy sessions to collect data and examines the psychological health of her patients by propounding that “there should be no secret among friends” and “the goal of the Therapeutic Community is a democratic ward, run completely by the patients and their votes” (p. 36). Group sessions yielded desired results before McMurphy had arrived and Miss Ratched was always successful in getting whatever results she wanted but things change dramatically when McMurphy calls group sessions “pecking party” in which “a flock of dirty chickens” is made to devour one another (p. 42). Miss Ratched can arrange the meeting but she cannot exclude McMurphy from participations. She requires his subordination because her discourse demands it. She is bound to make McMurphy believe that he must participate in the meetings which are conducted to “soothe the aching Id and heal the wounded superego” (p. 43). Instead of making friends within the meeting procedures, McMurphy starts making friends outside the meeting and questions the validity of the “crummy meeting” by asking Harding, “you really think this crap that went on in the meeting today is bringing about some kinda cure, doing some kinda good?”(p. 43). Discourse is a stumbling block. Resistance does not come from exterior. It is in-built. Situation would have been different if McMurphy had neither been allowed admission to the ward nor permitted to participate in the sessions but Miss Ratched could not do so. Her authority has limits. Her insight is human not prophetic. Power is not some superhuman entity bestowed to supernatural beings but an earthly process involving earthly men and women as its carriers as well as points of application. Miss Ratched, though portrayed as more than a human being in the beginning of the novel, is humanized during the course of the novel. Discourse humanizes its wielders.

The discourse driven democratic design of the ward enables McMurphy to ask for the conversion of tub room in day room where Miss Ratched’s authority is mocked at and plans are made by patients to strip of her long held control and composure. McMurphy does not let his desire fester in his soul and according to the ward policy expresses the seemingly inexpressible. Dr.Spivey approves his request and advocates on his behalf by making Miss Ratched accept that “the age-old problem” of “the mixed population, the young and the old together” is not an ideal setting for “our therapeutic community” (p. 85). Miss Ratched yields because her democratic discourse demands her compliance to the suggestion of the medical man and just desire of her patients. She is outsmarted by McMurphy who uses the same tool kit of discourse that empowers Miss Ratched in the first place. He expresses his individuality by exploiting the very discourse that is constructed to suppress his individuality. It is significant to remember that the tub room is not constructed on McMurphy’s demand. It has always been there as a part of the spatial setting of the ward though the ritual of hydrotherapy is long discarded. It is also important to note that McMurphy could never have succeeded without Dr.Spivey’s favoring his request though Harding tells McMurphy that the doctor “is exactly like the rest of us, a frightened, desperate, ineffectual little rabbit” (p. 46). Power is a strategy to be exercised and not an asset to be hold onto. If power had been an asset, Miss Ratched would have silenced the doctor but she knows very well that the doctor is an integral part of the ward administration and she cannot everlastingly influence him without being occasionally influenced by him. Resistance comes from inside.

McMurphy resists because Miss Ratched is constrained by the very discourse that empowers her. McMurphy wants to watch baseball world series and requests for change in temporal setting but cannot get the required votes. Miss Ratched can turn down his request of changing time table of watching T.V but she cannot stop him from sitting in front of the blackout T.V screen along with a bunch of whimsical neurotics who are teasing “a fifty-year-old woman hollering and squealing at the back of their heads about discipline and order and recriminations” (p. 111). The patients can mock her but she can only shout hollow imprecations on mentally retarded men who have joined McMurphy “not just for watching T.V” but also to ridicule the way she has “talked and acted and beat them down for years” (p. 107). The craziness that had kept the patients under the yoke of perpetual submission empowers them and the rationality that had previously authorized Miss Ratched makes her stoop before the pack of unlawful trouble makers. The roles of master and slave are reversed. The public performance of power cannot be employed here and the hidden transcript of resistance is being written down by the powerless. Miss Ratched would have not been taunted mercilessly if she had agreed upon changing the schedule but she could not do so because it would have tampered her prudently constructed schedule. Her authority demands her sticking to her principles. She is constrained and the discourse that empowers her leads to the emergence of a reverse discourse.

McMurphy's reverse discourse of resistance has all the implications of a discourse. He too is constrained. Being a self-appointed champion of human liberty and sentiments, he must have to stand for the rights of those who have long forgotten their true selves and believe that their "sweet, smiling, tender, angel of mercy, Mother Ratched" cannot be a castrator (p. 44). McMurphy is bound to collide against authority because his explosion against power is inherent to his resistance. He could have stepped back from his request and kept him safe at periphery but he could not do so because it would have proved that he is just more of the same lot. He can abuse Miss Ratched's emasculating ward policy but cannot escape from the doctor's judgment that his behavior betrays "a marked disregard for discipline and authority" (p. 117). His hamartia must betray him if he does not want to betray his fellow patients. The limelight he wins also brings him into the light where he is going to be inspected, examined and punished ultimately.

Every act of resistance manifests that power is a dynamic process caught up in a web of social relations. The powerful is not as independent in its choices as it looks like because power is driven by its discourse which carries inherent incongruities under its seemingly congruent façade. In order to mask her domineering techniques, Miss Ratched has to snub McMurphy within a range of possible transformation by maintaining a delicate equilibrium between her benevolence and malevolence. Her disapproval of Doctor's suggestion to send McMurphy to the ward of the disturbed is constructed from a strategical position rather than from any humanitarian concern. She is bound to forgive McMurphy to demonstrate that he is not "some kind of extraordinary being-some kind of super psychopath" who needs to be taken seriously (p. 119). Her imprudent fury would reduce her stature without blowing McMurphy's charisma up. She has to work within the limits designed by her discourse and make the patients believe that "their redheaded hero" is actually "a braggart and a blowhard of the type who may climb up a soapbox and shout for a following" (p. 119). She has to stride on a slippery slope where she is bound to humanize McMurphy without dehumanizing herself. McMurphy could have been taught a lesson if Miss Ratched had sent him to the ward of the Disturbed but she could not do so because her discourse constrained her. The story might have taken a different turn if Miss Ratched had been less prudent and McMurphy had been more pragmatic. Both are caught up in the tight jacket of their antagonistic discourses that are the two sides of the same coin called power.

McMurphy contrived the fishing trip but "he had to talk and wheedle" the patients to persuade them for the adventure that was in Miss Ratched's view vulnerable to "wrecked boats and sudden storms on the beach" (p. 159). Neither of them is as influential as they estimate about themselves as well as about each other. Moreover, the trip would have never been possible without Dr. Spivey's improvising his car for the trip. McMurphy's resistance prevails once again neither because of his chauvinism nor because of the support of his fellow patients but because of the doctor whom psychiatric community has appointed to cure bohemian non-conformity. The doctor becomes a tool of spreading disease instead of curing it. Resistance is a product of discourse. McMurphy had not anticipated that the patients would be dismayed and "everybody was thinking how easy it would be to return to the ward, go back and say they decided the nurse had been right" (p. 179). He finds patients confused, frightened and "uneasy about being out of the hospital" where no mother Ratched is available to adjust their maladjustments (p. 180). Resistance has its limits. McMurphy could furnish the trip, it is his successful resistance. He could not make patients feel easy, it is the limitation of his resistance. He could bring the bunch of lunatics outside the ward but he could not stop them observing "the fading of his magnificent psychopathic suntan" (p. 195). He is the one who is exhausted instead of looking jubilant and victorious. The inherent binary of can-cannot is applicable to both the central and the peripheral. None can go beyond discourse.

McMurphy's exhaustion turns into desperation when Miss Ratched makes the patients "take special showers because they were suspected of vermin" (p. 205) after the fishing trip and the black Aids compel intimidated George to get soaped. McMurphy protests against such intimidation and calls them "goddamned motherfucking nigger" but they don't take any violent initiative against him because they are "trained to take such awful-sounding insults from crazies" (p. 208). McMurphy's resistance exposed the fragility of Miss Ratched's seemingly seamless power but here, the cracks in his resistance are also revealed. Miss Ratched occupies the vantage point and keeps her composure intact because she is protected by the discourse of the Combine but McMurphy does not have any such privilege. "A silent line of nude men changed into a yelling circle" makes him swallow the fatal bait and McMurphy attacks the black boy but everybody "could hear the helpless, cornered despair" in his voice (p. 209). His resistance falters here and a staggering McMurphy is transported to the ward of the Disturbed for electric shock therapy. The course of events had been different if McMurphy had not tried to lead the patients from the front. He could have saved himself if he had comprehended that his resistance is bound to work within a

contracted space of allowances and restrictions. He could confiscate Miss Ratched's space for a short span of time but could not everlastingly humiliate her without getting humiliated.

Miss Ratched could send McMurphy to the ward of the Disturbed but she could neither stop patients from mocking her nor could she stop McMurphy from saying "I ain't scared of their little battery-charger" (p. 221). His pretentious bohemianism makes him call the electrodes "a crown of thorns" but his "face frosted white" tells a different story of his shrinking away under the shadow of electric cables (p. 216). Both are fighting a hard battle in which both have to pretend that they don't care about the consequences of their choices. Power keeps both of them perplexed, anxious but ostentatious. Miss Ratched cannot let McMurphy stay upstairs and perceived that "McMurphy was growing bigger than ever while he was upstairs where the guys could not see the dent she was making on him" (p.222). Though she is teaching him a hard lesson yet she is losing because the patients have mistakenly started celebrating McMurphy's legendary resilience in his absence from the ward. She must have to bring him back as a sign omitting tamed rabbit in the ward where "he could not continue in his hero role if he was sitting around the day room in a shock stupor" (p. 223). She has to prove that he is not some extraordinary super psychopath but a lunatic with human fragilities and vulnerabilities. She could have avoided the last explosion if she had kept McMurphy in the ward of the Disturbed but she could not afford losing to a pack of miserable fanatics who had witnessed the limits of her authority. McMurphy could have avoided the fatal end of his story, if his pompous hardheadedness had not made him believe that he could transcend authority. The stubbornness of Miss Ratched and McMurphy is a product of their opposite discourses rather than an outcome of any humanitarianism. Both want to possess power and prestige in their respective spheres and consequently they are constrained by the same discourse that grants them stature.

Resistance comes from inside the power mechanism and McMurphy is shrewd enough to persuade Turkle for permitting a night party accompanied by sex and drinking. Turkle, the night attendant, becomes the tool of spreading resistance though he was appointed to curb resistance. Miss Ratched's disciplinary regime is breached by the same force that was meant to defend it in her absence. McMurphy on the other hand, could make Billy have his maiden sex but he could not stop him confessing that it was McMurphy who had persuaded him for the heinous crime. McMurphy could have mocked Miss Ratched but he could not help strangling her after seeing Billy's self-slaughtered body. None could save him from his reckless explosion because they "were the ones making him do it" (p. 243). McMurphy had to cling to his hustling image because he could not admit that he too was vulnerable to weakness as everybody else was. He had irrationally constructed a brawling fighting self without rationalizing that he would have to pay a very heavy price for it. He simply overestimated his potentials and could not see that everybody had been seeing that "his feet and legs had given out" and everybody made him put on the smiling face though "his humor had been parched dry between two electrodes" (p. 243). Likewise, Miss Ratched too is a victim of over simplification and believed her three Aids would shield her against any violence but she would have been amazed to see "they weren't going to do anything but stand and watch" her being assaulted (p. 244). Her authority has limits. Trapped into a vicious nexus of can-cannot, she could not ignore the consequences of night party and acted. Imprisoned into an ambivalent situation, McMurphy could mourn over Billy's death only in form of self-annihilating aggression of "a dogged man performing a hard duty that finally just had to be done, like it or not" (p. 244).

Miss Ratched could return after a short absence and bring McMurphy's lobotomized body back to the ward to demonstrate "it as an example of what can happen if you buck the system" but she could not stop patients from saying "what's the old bitch tryin' to put on us anyhow, for crap sakes" (p. 246). She could threaten the patients with imminent penalty, but she could not foretell that Bromden would smother McMurphy and escape the ward. She could neither kill McMurphy nor send him to a prison. Her discourse imparted her with a single option of bringing back McMurphy's lobotomized body for the sake of amplification of punishment. Her discourse demanded that McMurphy must neither be made a martyr nor a sympathy catching object but a sign producing subject. Crime must have to be objectified and pathologised for the sake of restoration of discourse and Miss Ratched did exactly the same without comprehending that every tactic of discourse produces reverse discourse. Bromden would have stayed in his impotent schizophrenic state if he had been uncertain about McMurphy's fate. His sympathies for the lost warrior would have been dissipated if he was told that McMurphy had died during treatment. Resistance emerges from the very setup that is planted to curb it. Bromden had always been there as a sign producing object and Miss Ratched had always used his presence as a reminder of her power. She had always demonstrated that if a giant like Bromden was tamed, the ordinary patients had no chance against her mechanism. A sign producing object became a sign resisting subject when Bromden uplifted the heavy water panel, smashed it against the iron window, escaped the ward, and proved that power can

be resisted by the same tools that are used to promote it. It is pertinent to remember that even McMurphy could not have uplifted the water panel but he showed the way of flying over the cuckoo's nest through his emancipating influence. It is also significant to remember that water panel had always been there as a part of spatial setting of the ward. It was a tool of the disciplinary mechanism but resistance is brought about with the help of the very tool that was supposed to hold it in check. Bromden and water panel prove to be cracks in the disciplinary regime of the ward and expose the limitations of Miss Ratched's power. Miss Ratched is beaten at the end of the novel neither by McMurphy nor by Bromden but by the very discourse that empower her in the first place.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper examined discourse-resistance nexus in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* and established that resistance is inscribed within discourse. Both the central and the peripheral are constrained in their choices and cannot act, think and even feel beyond discourse in a power ridden situation. Implementation as well as propagation of a discourse through discursive disciplinary techniques is bound to produce a reverse discourse. It will be over simplification of a very complicated process if one perceives the emergence of a reverse discourse as dismantling of the powerful. Power itself produces reverse discourse because it is bound to provide breathing spaces to individual agency. It can neither be operated in vacuum nor exercised over a multitude of hopelessly emaciated individuals. Power requires seemingly free individuals who act within a space of divergent possibilities. Any act of resistance is actually an expression of power's being disseminated within a society without occupying a single stable center. Power, being not a static product but a dynamic process, keeps on shifting its lodging. This paper explored that neither Miss Ratched nor McMurphy is omnipotent. Both are the agents of power and it is validated that both of them are empowered as well as belittled by their respective discourses of power and resistance. Resistance, being a reverse discourse, is bound to operate within a constrained space of liberty and pressure. It is not exempted from the implications of its discourse.

Every human relation is a power relation and operations of power can be delineated from family relations to global relations. The Foucauldian model outlined in this paper can be applied to study power-discourse and discourse-resistance nexuses in setting of families, educational institutes, religious practices, workplaces, prisons, hospitals, media studies, multi lingual-multi ethnic societies, and global relations. Critique of literary texts in marxist, feminist, post-colonial and global contexts can also be conducted by applying the Foucauldian model sketched in this paper. Wherever one goes, one can perceive that inherent binaries of the central and the peripheral keep on overlapping in human relations. The inter negotiation of binaries is not an exception but a rule and one must read the negotiation in its exact historical situatedness without overlooking the entrapment of power and resistance in their own webs.

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