

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

After I finished reading and analysing the novel, I argue that Ken Kesey delivers the social critique through the allegory skillfully and effectively. Some of the major events and the characters represent the social critique towards the circulating issues in the United States society during the 1950s. A social critique novel usually ends in tragic way for the protagonist, including this novel. That kind of ending for the character makes the readers tend to pay attention to how the situation affects the protagonist and implicitly suggests that the problem remains.

The life of protagonist, McMurphy, ends tragically as he is lobotomised and then mercily killed. Through McMurphy's death, Kesey suggests if only a few people are fighting against the authority, they will be defeated and the tyranny will remain. This kind of ending raises an awareness of the real situation in real life.

Chief Bromden represents people in general in the 1950s U.S society. His initial characteristics are pretentious, submissive, paranoid and attentive. In the society, being pretentious is an attempt to cover any sign of nonconformity. A nonconformist would be discriminatorily treated by both the society and the government. Besides that, the government arbitrarily punished people that results in submission and paranoia. Bromden's attentiveness, however, becomes an intermediary of his characteristic change. It changes him as he likes to observe his

surroundings. Gradually, he can be himself, he is no longer paranoid and becomes rebellious. His change allegorically shows that people should be aware of the oppression and learn how to be free from oppression. Being oneself is not always in accordance with what most of the society think. Forceful conformity will restrict individual freedom. So, people need not to be afraid of the government to aspire their voices. To be free from oppression, sometimes rebellion is the only way.

McMurphy is portrayed as rebellious as the basic characteristic of a nonconformist. His rebellion is a “product” of oppression. He rebels and breaks the rules to make the hospital life more bearable. From his actions, it can be concluded that rebellion or nonconformity will not happen if the government cooperates with their people and is willing to hear people’s aspiration. Since a nonconformist needs support to make a change, he or she would provoke people to aspire their voices towards the government. That is also why McMurphy, who represents the nonconformist, is portrayed as a provocative person.

Nurse Ratched is portrayed as tyrannical and manipulative. By portraying her in that way, the readers, who are also the part of society at that time, might find the resemblance between Ratched’s characteristics and their government. She controls the patients arbitrarily and makes them conform to the ward rules. As a result, her methods of curing only makes the patients worse. Her tyrannical characteristic allegorically shows that oppression and arbitrariness in a governance makes people unhappy and may trigger rebellion. Her manipulative characteristic hints at the dominating power of the government over the alleged communists or nonconformists. Misused power would bring disadvantage for many people.

The fate of the major characters in the end is the crucial part of the allegory. Firstly, Nurse Ratched’s re-controlling the ward. After McMurphy’s lobotomy, the ward returns to its normal condition under Nurse Ratched's control. The patients

return to their old routines and submissively follow the regulation. The condition allegorically implies that the society were still under the control of the government's tyrannical and manipulative system. Secondly, Bromden kills McMurphy. On the night after the electroshock incident, Bromden finds that McMurphy's body is "ruined" by the machine. McMurphy is now in a "vegetable" state, which means that he will stay longer in Ratched's ward. Bromden thinks that McMurphy may suffer for the rest of his life if he stays in that condition. Hence, Bromden performs a mercy killing before fleeing from the hospital. His fleeing symbolises the regeneration of the non-conformist. Bromden is now McMurphy's successor, which also means that he will continue the struggle. McMurphy's death does not seem to change anything, but it gives hope through Bromden's escape. The situation at the end of the story reminds the society that they need to keep fighting to get their freedom and change the system.

Having analysed the novel, I learn how an allegory can be a tool to convey an important matter, such as a social critique. I have learned the way the author delivered the message through the allegory which I may apply to my own writing someday. Besides the narrative, the issue served in the novel, individual freedom and repressive system, also teaches me the impact of a one-way governance that results rebellions in the society. In daily life, governance also occurs when we involved in a structured group, such as an organisation. Leadership is a kind of governance in which everyone should cooperate in a democratic way. Everyone should have a chance to aspire their voices and opinions to prevent rebellion.