

**The Manichean World of Madness: A Reading of
Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* and
Miri's '*Ayam al asal wa al junoun*
(*Days of Honey and Madness*)**

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Abstract

The researcher has chosen two novels one written in 1962 (cuckoo's nest) & the second written in 1982. In the thesis he attempts to compare between two different views of madness, first through backing his arguments with a great bulk of up-to-date philosophical, sociological, literary works, like Foucault, Lupack, Shakespeare and Cervantes.

In some societies, madness was considered as a work of the devil and unstable persons as very dangerous, hence imprisoned in solitary areas, rooms or dungeons.

In the novels under study here he shows that madness was sometimes pretended to give vent to their Revolutionary ideas and ego unpunished. At other times they were treated by electric shocks which damaged their brains – used as medicine but it was a means of torture to stop and silence their voices.

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عالم الجنون الثنائي: قراءة فى رواية
"طار فوق عش المجانين" لكن كيزى/ وأيام العسل والجنون لميرى

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ملخص

أختار الباحث نصين الأول كُتب في عام 1962 والثاني في عام 2008 ، وقام بمقارنة موضوع الجنون من وجهه نظر فلسفية ونفسية وذلك من خلال كتابات حديثة لوباك ، وميشيل فوكوه ، وأيضا من خلال قراءات لاعمال كُتاب كبار مثل شكسبير (الملك لير) وسرفانيس (دون كيخونة) ورؤية هذه المجتمعات المختلفة للمجانين علي أنهم خطر علي المجتمع وضرورة حبسهم وبدون محاولة علاجهم ، ثم يرصد تحول رؤية الكتاب للجنون علي انه صوت متمرد علي السلطات الظالمة من خلال تصنع الجنون ، أو تصنع الجنون ليتفادوا السجن ويذهبوا الي المشفى ليتلافوا اسواط الجلادين في المجتمع المتوحش .
لذلك فان الباحث يركز علي الثنائيات في المجتمع الذي يرصده مثال – الظلم مقابل ، والحاكم في مقابل المحكوم ، والقوي في مقابل الضعيف ، وبالرغم من النهاية المساوية في الشخصية الرئيسية في كيزي ، وانهزام الآخر ولكن يظل النصين يشيران إلي تقديم مزيد من الثوار لمحاربة جبروت السلطات ونصرة الضعفاء .

Years ago novels used to end in institutions-marriage (if it was a happy novel), an insane asylum (if it was touched by despair); but contemporary novels begin in the institution and aspire to go beyond. [...] often right in the actual asylum, which becomes an apt symbol for the organized madness of modern life, particularly for those absurd forces which attempt to deprive the hero of his identity and individuality-ironically, at one time the very measures of his sanity and worth. Madness is both a result of the startling reality and a way of commenting on it. (Lupack, "Inmates" 172)

Introduction

Though madness has been an incessant theme that preoccupied the western imagination, it is in the twentieth century that it has acquired a particular space as pulpit through which, out of step and at odd with the society, literary men utter a truth-telling and protesting treatise against the monstrous mechanization of the modern world. In this realm, such people feel physiologically imbalanced; "fragmented, debilitated, and emasculated by institutionalized technology" (Lupack, *Insanity* 65). Only in his relegation to the asylum, can man find a refuge, an alternative and secure world.

Throughout *Madness and Civilization* (1988), Michel Foucault posits that madness is a condition influenced by various historical, intellectual and economic structures conducive to "that other form of madness, by which men, in an act of sovereign reason, confine their neighbors, and communicate and recognize each other through the merciless language of non-madness..." (xi). This citation penetrates beneath the veneer of organized society to locate mental illness within a spatial framework of unremitting and dynamic state.

Foucault's argument presents madness as a multifaceted issue. In the Middle Ages and up until the Renaissance, disputes with madness was a dramatic debate in which man confronted the secrets of knowledge clouded by images of the Fall and the Will of God. Madness was assigned "a place in the hierarchy of vices" (21), and, in the majority of the cities of Europe, detentions were erected for the mad. When leprosy vanished, the structure that surrounded it

remained and madness filled its space shifting the concern from the diseased bodies to the diseased minds. The insane were treated as subhuman beasts that jeopardized the lives of others, and thus chained to the cell walls. "This model of animality," Foucault indicates, "prevailed in the asylums and gave them their cagelike aspect, their look of the menagerie" (71). Foucault illustrates his argument by quoting Coguel's description of La Salpetriere at the end of the eighteenth century: "Madwomen seized with fits of violence are chained like dogs at their cell doors, and separated from keepers and visitors alike by a long corridor protected by an iron grille; through this grille is passed their food and the straw on which they sleep" (71). Considering the mad as untamed and fierce motivated and justified the merciless and heartless treatment. In this respect, Lillian Feder comments on their portrayal in creative works, she maintains that "the prototypical mad man [and] woman [as] analogous to the wild man" accounts for their depiction as "an imaginary being ... in various forms throughout Western literature and art..." (3).

Although the nineteenth century brings about a different attitude towards the insane as "psychiatry is constituted" (Felman 40), Foucault considers this another form of confinement since madness is reduced to the diminished status of a moral and mental disease. Modern medicine and psychiatry have failed to understand or listen to the voice of the mad in ways other than their being deranged. With such recognition of insanity, Foucault argues that this is a stage that marks the emergence of a new sensibility; society no longer evades or seeks to deny madness. It is a stage in which "reason" that encapsulates "the rules of morality" reigned in triumph over a turbulent "unreason" that "had been sequestered ... in the fortress of confinement" (64). Madness, now that it is conceptualized as a discipline, was torn from that imaginary freedom which allowed it to flourish in artistic creativity.

Artists, in their literary production, have been capable of disrupting the silence imposed on the discourse of madness. A literary work probes into the depth of reality. Taking account of the works of Shakespeare, Foucault proclaims that the fictional characters in *King Lear* and *Don Quixote* give an outlet to the suppressed voice of

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madness in society. Texts as such conjure up madness as a speaking subject breaking through the blockades erected around mental institutions to unfold the truth about a discourse that has been for long been subjected to a marginalized and excluded position in the dominant discourse. In the dominant discourse, “most of the therapists present themselves ... [as] the arbiter of normal, and their patient/client is abnormal” (Chambon, Irving, and Epstein 174). Holding authority and power, therapists advocate an imbalanced ideological belief that becomes the social norm in which the powerful occupy the dominant position while the powerless dwell in a subjugated realm. However, “these imbalances are not immutable ... they give rise to counterstrategies of resistance” (Chambon, Irving, and Epstein 174). Suppression emits affirmative action; the dominated challenge the categorization of the therapists’ interpretations, and seek to execute a change. They refute them as false. Foucault explains, “To be more precise, we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies” (*History* 100).

Additionally, for Shoshana Felman, a literary text that gives voice to madness creates a new sensibility promoting “what has been excluded, decreed abnormal, unacceptable, or senseless- by a dynamically renewed, revitalized relation between sense and nonsense between reason and unreason, between the readable and the unreadable” (5). These binary correlations suggest that literature has always been interconnected with madness and represents “the sole channel by which madness has been able throughout history to speak in its own name” (Felman 15) in a society that defines itself as “sane.” Madness is mediated through literature. The “mimetic nature of literature” as Allen Thiher explains, “allows it to know madness by speaking it” (12).

The affinity of literature and madness has often been underlined. As areas of non- conformist experience, literature and madness convey the potential of liberating, releasing and activating repressed energy. Because they subsume under anti-establishment

activities, both are subjected to the possibility of being thwarted. Literature, like madness, is banned in its “undoing” of “the cultural codes responsible for its repression” (Felman 15). Throughout history, literature like madness suffered forms of suppression and disavowal; they have been regarded “as objects of misapprehension and denial, as gravitational poles for the very energy of repression as it is activated within a shifting but ultimately irreducible field” (Felman16). In fact, the convoluted kingship created between madness and literature is marked by dualism and contradiction.

In tracing the historic journey of the mad from liberty, reason and discourse to confinement, unreason and silence, Foucault relies on such dualistic notions, paradoxes and contrasting images. He writes, “Confinement, prisons, dungeons, even tortures, engaged in a mute dialogue between reason and unreason ... [in which] silence was absolute; [and] there was no longer any common language between madness and reason” (*Madness* 162). He demonstrates how such a dualistic construction has served various social and political functions, and how the cultural predicament hinges on the incapacity to give madness an audible voice in a clear discourse.

What adds to the inaudibility of the voice of madness are the policies practiced by the dominant powers to repress and confine persons who were unwilling and/ or unable to preach the status quo and conform to the established dictates of social norms and established standards. Foucault refers to the practices in Western Europe when medieval “rites of purification and seclusion,” acted out upon lepers, were transferred to the insane (*Madness* 3). This led to what is labeled as “the Great Confinement” wherein the indigents, the unemployed and the displaced were confined in hospitals that they shared with the criminals and the insane.

In fact, the earliest phase in the history of psychiatry attests to “a profound relation...between madness and confinement.” Foucault explains further that such “a link which was almost one of essence” had been instituted (*Madness* 228) due to the persistence of psychiatric therapy in criminalizing, and hence committing the insane to a secluded and constrained existence. It was such institutionalization that led to “the Birth of the Asylum,” that has been

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identified as a special space for the confinement of madness under the authority of medicine.

Significantly, madness in Arab culture acquired the same space and social framework it was allotted in the twentieth century in the western world: it has been regarded as a tool of protest and a truth telling voice. However, by virtue of the specificity of the Islamic Arab context, the issue of insanity and madness was dealt with in different terms. Mona Fayad points out the distinction, "Throughout the Islamic-Arab civilization, the insane person has never been stripped of his humanity and was treated accordingly ... this tolerance and humane attitude persist up till the present day in urban milieus, in general, and in rural areas in particular" (cited in Al-Samman 40 *my translation*)⁽¹⁾. This citation indicates a stark contrast with the aggressive treatment that the insane received in the West. In his comprehensive critique of the discourse of madness in Arab culture, Mohammad Al-Samman elaborates on such clemency and benevolence: he affirms that this stance "was not specific to the ordinary people, but it has extended to the sophisticated and ruling class ... including its representatives such as the caliphate, the sultan and the counties governors" (Al-Samman 45). More factors promote such disposition of absolution towards the deranged members of the community. They have been regarded as "prudent and pious people who are blessed with knowledge of the unknown. Hence, they were highly venerated to the extent that often they walked the streets naked, and nevertheless they received all due respect" (Al-Samman 52).

In a similar vein, Ahmed Khosoy elaborates on the phenomena of folly and madness in the period extending from Jahilia to the fourteenth century. He professes, "The madman is no longer an ordinary passerby whom boys in the streets chase and harass, but he has attained the position of the solemn sheikh and the insightful critic whose talk is awaited with great enthusiasm" (187-188). Hallowing of the mad contributed to the attitude of tolerance since they were raised to the level of "*wali*, the sanctified friend of Allah" (Al-Samman 50). Consequently, the communal criteria that governed the outlook of the people not only bestowed a metaphysical aura on the mad but also resulted in treating them kindly and humanely. Such inclination

culminates in the great interest in establishing the “Bimaristan” and the asylums to host the insane. Within the Islamic Arab context, the goals of these abodes have not been to seclude and confine its residents because they are dangerous, "but to care for them and provide cure for their ailments" (Al-Samman 40). Notwithstanding the unease with which the deranged person may be regarded, there was a general concern for their well-being that was qualified with sincerity. They were visited by family and friends, "who wished him good health and a speedy recovery, and looked forward to the day he returns home" (Khososy 183). Thus, the public outlook appears replete with good intentions.

This study undertakes to investigate the portrayal of madness in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) and Khodeir Miri's *'Ayam al 'asal wa al junoun* (2008) (*Days of Honey and Madness*)⁽²⁾. The study draws on the theoretical framework delineated in the discourse of madness in Western and Arab contexts. It is noteworthy that the setting of both is the mental hospital; a “distorted world [that] is being ... systematically dehumanized” (Sutherland 28). Throughout their textual exposition of a disturbed atmosphere, Kesey and Miri attempt to disclose “the struggle for the individual narrative to be heard” (Baker, Crawford, Brown, Lipsedge and Carter 71). The endeavor is to disrupt the dryly objectifying aims of diagnostics and classification” characteristic of madness depiction, and promote instead “the need for subjectivity in examinations of madness” (Baker, Crawford, Brown, Lipsedge, and Carter 71). In her critique, Salwa Bakr comments that both texts “are basically about madness and arise from the notion of madness, thus they should be judged accordingly i.e. they deconstruct all taken for granted structures. They incite the reader to deal with them on their own terms and according to the specificity of the logic of madness” (cited in Sobhy). They encapsulate the madness discourse in different contexts.

In the case of Kesey and Miri, lived personal experience contributes to their lucid understanding and effective portrayal of the modern asylum's mission of the objectification and fetishization patients. The realm conveyed in the texts is not a distanced imaginative asylum. Kesey's experience goes back to the early 60's

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when he used drugs to kindle his imagination and volunteered for drug experiments performed at the Veteran's Hospital in California where he worked as a psychiatric assistant. A considerable portion of his text is a product of these experiences. In her exploration of the asylum as an institution, Barbara Tapa Lupack states, "Kesey's own experiences in the psychiatric wards allowed him to render accurately the hallucinatory and haunting quality of Bromden's narrative" ("Inmates" 174). Likewise, Miri's awareness and knowledge that go beyond the fences of the asylum are attributed to the gloomy days he spent in Al-Rashad hospital. Furthermore, such direct exposure to this realm enables Kesey and Miri to present a dual perspective; namely, a form of "clinical madness... [with its] destructive, deviant behavior and abnormal consciousness" (Rieger 2), and a kind of madness produced in Kesey's text by hallucinatory drugs, and in Miri's textual world through electro-shocks.

By virtue of their grasp of the true nature of the asylum's dehumanizing constraints, considered a microcosm of the society world, Kesey and Miri endeavor to empower their narrators to endure the horrid experience. In their attempt to survive, the two protagonists, McMurphy and Miri, feign madness; a strategy which Daniel J. Vitkus notes is utilized by a writer "who wishes to communicate ... dissent against the dominant regime" (67). Pretension of madness does not only enable the protagonists to evade the societal penalties and the coercion of the regimes, but also it allows them to excavate and dissect the setting and the atmosphere of a world absented and marginalized by society, to present a precise portrayal of its forms and to give voice to the inmates immured within constricting walls.

In Kesey's *Cuckoo's Nest*, madness for McMurphy, the protagonist, is seen as one method of gaining a form of power over the judicial system. He feigns insanity to escape the real world of punishment and to serve out his prison sentence in the hospital. He tells the other patients on the ward: "The court ruled that I'm psychopath... I'll be whatever their little heart desires, be it psychopath or mad dog or werewolf" (13). On another scale, the autobiographical narrator in Miri's text tries to empower and protect his feeble body against the lashes of the regime's gladiators. He writes

“I claimed madness to defend myself against the previous regime” (cited in Sobhy). The resort to a discourse outside of reason is a strategy prevalent among dissidents under a tyrannical rule. In this respect, Al-Samman captures a stark discrepancy in the attitude of the regime by noting its tolerance of insane voices that denounce it in contrasts with its coercion and ruthlessness in dealing with the non-conformity of the sane” (49). Al-Samman goes further and adds

In the process of confronting despotism and assassination both of which represented salient means in managing conflicts in the Arab-Islamic society, wherein the individual seems enormously frail in his encounter with the executioner and the establishment and where fear results in deprivation of all power and will, the speech of the mad crop up to create balance ... and conjure up a dream of challenging and transcending fear. (81)

Indeed, madness has proved, over time, to be an effective means to manipulate unjust authority and maintain counter- hegemonic maneuvers within the despotic context. Khosoy's succinct commentary accentuates the instrumentality of the strategic function of madness,

Madness functions in two ways though different, yet they lead to the same result. In the first, a person pretends to be insane, though he's not; he's using madness as a defensive armor of the campaigns he launches and enflames. In the other, the sane uses the truly mad to convey the rebellious message in order to evade responsibility; the mad person internalizes the message and spells it loudly as his own. (187-188)

The social context of the narrative worlds of McMurphy and Miri views them as mentally ill, yet the reader is made conscious of their faked madness. Richard P. Bentall reckons, “The line between sanity and madness must be drawn relative to the place at which we stand. Perhaps it is possible to be, at the same time, mad when viewed from one perspective and sane when viewed from another” (117). The boundary line is impalpable. For both protagonists madness is a means to an end; both seek to unveil repressed and silenced reality. Accordingly, they highlight the value and credibility of a condition that is generally denounced and repelled. “Standing in opposition to the generally accepted view that madness is one of the worst things

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that can happen to any individual,” their state of mind is upheld as “a veritable celebration of madness” (Baker, Crawford, Brown, Lipsedge and Carter 22).

In their preoccupation with disclosing the facts about the maniac tools of American hegemonic ideology, the two authors, each in his way, rely in their respective texts on dualistic and opposing constructions that characterize the world of madness. Embracing modes of manichean polarities endows resonance to the voice that counteracts and combats ideologies of destructive intent. The texts sharpen the bludgeons of truth-telling. A roaring protest is launched against an unjust world drenched in terms of binary constructions. The juxtaposition of the inner world of psychiatry and the outer world of the community underlines the polarities of reason and unreason, the powerful and the powerless, matriarchy and patriarchy, black madness and white madness, as well as freedom as versus repression.

Miri's title ‘Ayam al ‘asal wa al junoun crystallizes the dichotomous state linking madness with honey. Al-Sayed Al-Wakeel notes, “The juxtaposition of ‘honey’ and ‘madness’ implies a contradiction that saturates the work” (cited in Sobhy). The two terms of “honey” and “madness” stand for two elements of never-ending characteristics with the former carrying favorable and encouraging connotations while the latter implies chaotic associations. The amalgamation of divergent elements on the levels of content and form indicates Miri’s intention of classifying the text as “catastrophic writing” that “transgresses the standard criteria of novelistic writings” (cited in Sobhy) as Salwa Bakr puts it. The inhabitants of the asylum are almost unaware of the outer world with its conflict and scramble for profits. Nevertheless, the calamitous effect of oppressive powers chases both the sane and the insane. Beyond the confining parameters of the mental hospital all sense of security and safety is shattered by the persistent shelling of the building. The text represents the irrationality of warfare portraying fighter aircrafts targeting an asylum.

On another plane, the use of the word “Flew” in the title of Kesey's text focuses openly on a quest for freedom from cramping bonds. It captures human yearning for escape from the fetters of the conformity that society values over and above people’s well-being.

“Cuckoo's Nest,” the rest of the title, underlines a discrepancy in the light of its link with the mental asylum. It quells the aspiration to fly the constrictions, and encompasses the restriction on movement.

Indeed, the proximity of the worlds of the cuckoos and that of the ostracized mental patients discloses a shared eccentricity and oddity in the two realms. In the former, peculiarities are maintained in the cuckoo's odd habits of not building nests of their own and putting their eggs into other nests where the newly hatched young grow and is raised by someone else. They are typically bigger and push other young ones. They act freely as if the nest is theirs. Needless to say, being in someone else's nest, the cuckoos are not only unwanted but also they are separated from their own world. In world of the ostracized mental patients, McMurphy bears a great resemblance to the odd ambiance of the cuckoo. He believes that flying to the mental asylum brings him freedom and salvation from both the prison sentence and the fetters of the social conformity. Yet he ends up escaping, like the cuckoo bird, to a world that is not his own where he feels unwanted and achieves nothing but death- in-life and ultimately an actual death, with the closure of the novel.

The contradictory ambiance is accentuated with the connotations of characters' names. A case in point is that of the Chief. Even though he is given such a grand name that implies an overseeing and overpowering status, he is useless in the mental institution. Yet he possesses a characteristic integral to the management of such a place, a lack of integrity. In the course of the narrative, he has never revealed his first name. Elaine Ware comments that he as the “Son of a Chinook Indian Chief, Bromden should have viewed his personal name as important ... [and] in the Chinook tradition ... [it is] hereditary” (96). Besides, Hubert Howe Bancroft indicates that the name assumes “a personality; it is the shadow or spirit or other self... [and] between the name and the individual there is a mysterious connection” (cited in Ware 96). Ware underlines the significance of the patients' deformation of Bromden, the Chief's last name. They “call him Chief Broom, a derogation of his status as Chief and a ridicule of his floor mopping duties in the hospital ward” (96). The ridicule implied in the nicknaming reduces him to an object, as

Lupack points out, "indistinguishable from the broom that he pushes" (Insanity 67).

Cuckoo's Nest and 'Ayam al junoun in the Scale of Credibility:

As witnesses of the world of madness, Kesey and Miri adopt the mode of internal focalization narration in their respective textual renditions. This mode of narration is characterized by the "straight forward single character bound epistemology" (Meister and Schönert 15). Alternately, it conveys "the mixed position of 'narratorial co-vision'" presenting "a defined reflector character which ... goes along with ... [an] external perspective onto all other characters" (Meister and Schönert 15). Kesey and Miri appropriate such complex narrative perspective to their purpose. In *Cuckoo's Nest*, the narrative mode promotes authenticity since it makes the Chief, who is presumably telling the tale from outside, seem trapped inside the ward. On the other hand, the 'autodiegetic' in 'Ayam al junoun' is instrumental in constructing a narrative in which the narrator is also the protagonist of the narrative.

Miri narrates his story seven years after being released from the asylum. Being outside the asylum is functional in portraying the asylum as a replica of the world outside. This applies to *Cuckoo's Nest*; what is degenerate in the ward and Nurse Ratched, who is known as the Big Nurse, is reflective of the outside world and its Big Brother-like powers. The hospital is part of the same conspiracy and the same mechanizing system, one that claims to be democratic. Dr. Spivey, the main doctor who is in charge of the psychiatric ward, announces in a brazen manner that he recreates the model of the democratic larger society in a democratic ward run completely by the patients who have the right to vote, "much like your own democratic, free neighborhoods" (40). In fact, the doctor's words are empty liberal rhetoric often "ignored whenever it even remotely threatens the policies established by ward authorities" (McGrath and Barber 366). Equally deceiving are the retorts of the Chief who sees the ward as "a microcosm for the other institutions in American society" (McGrath and Barber 366). For that reason, the Chief muses that the hospital is "a factory for the Combine. It's for fixing up mistakes made in the neighborhoods and in the schools and in the churches" (36).

Though the two texts are narrated utilizing the same mode of internal focalization, in 'Ayam al junoun, Miri is at the centre of the events as a protagonist and a rational narrator who survives in the Al-Rashad asylum, while in Kesey's Cuckoo's Nest, the role of the narrator is assigned to Chief Bromden. The Chief's narration of the story of a ward in a state mental hospital in Oregon is parallel to that of the rational hero McMurphy whose rebellion against the system is more visible. Unlike the unconcealed rage of McMurphy, the Chief's method of protest is delimited; it is conveyed by "simply staying put and being "cagey" as John Zubizarreta notes. He pretends to be mute and silent throughout the narrative. "McMurphy provides much of the action," yet Bromden "provides the deep and poetic resonances of the novel" (Lupack, "Inmates" 174). To assign the role of the narrator to Bromden, external to the central character McMurphy, Kesey seeks to maintain the objectivity and reliability of narration.

Despite the different positions of Bromden and McMurphy, both narrators are ablaze to communicate their version of the internal world of the asylum with its discipline, and members of doctors, nurses and patients. In the Chief's side of the story, he attests, "It's gonna burn me just that way, finally telling about all this, about the hospital, and her, and the guys- and about McMurphy. I been silent so long now it's gonna roar out of me like floodwaters" (8). However, he attains ultimate power through his silence during most of the story; he remarks: "They laughed and then I hear them mumbling behind me ... humming hate and death and other hospital secrets...because they think I'm deaf and dumb ... being cagey, helped me all these years" (4). Early experience taught the Chief his wily ways; after "witnessing as a youth the destruction of his father's home and life-style by real estate agents and local public officials" (McGrath and Barber 366).

The pretense of being mute is significant in two ways: it endows the Chief access to everything in the hospital; he can hear the conversation of the employees talking freely in his presence. The Chief adopts what Goffman describes as the tactics of "situational withdrawal." He "withdraw[s] apparent attention from everything except events immediately around his body and sees these in perspective not employed by others present" (Baker, Crawford,

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Brown, Lipsedge and Carter 78). Fake mutism endows him “knowledge, which is power and then freedom” (Baker, Crawford, Brown, Lipsedge and Carter 78). Moreover, under the mask of dumbness, no one can take the Chief seriously as the contender for social norms so he protects himself from the mechanized system of the asylum that tends to usurp his individuality as well as his freedom.

Because the two stories are recounted in a flashback, the minds of both the Chief and Miri’s autobiographical persona are murky. Nevertheless, retrospective narration is highly significant since as Wallroth suggests, “The I-narrator can very well be omniscient and omnipresent” (cited in Broman 60). Such a technique of narration enables the narrators to “use the time that has passed ... to gain information about what all the other persons thought and did” (cited in Broman 60-61). The Chief tells the reader that his mind is still not “clear.” Diagnosed as paranoid-schizophrenic, the Chief’s memories of madness are reported with all the distortions of reality that accompanied his original perception of those events. Although his account is conveyed as “crazy,” the Chief’s narrative offers an alternative vision. It is enforced by what Foucault calls “the merciless language of non-madness” that dominates the scene in the “serene world of mental illness” where “modern man no longer communicates with the madman” (Madness xii). Within the scope of such a world, the only means of communication for the mad with society is “the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order, physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the group, the requirements of conformity” (Madness xii) as stated by Foucault. In fact, the words of Foucault are revealing in this context; they disclose Kesey’s representation of the true nature of the mental ward where all coercive measures of submission and acquiescence are inculcated in the minds of the patients. Only by crushing and debasing the rebellious and the dissidents, both morally and physically, that the overseers are able to control the asylum.

In ‘Ayam al junoun, Miri tells the reader “I shouldn’t have waited that long to prepare my report of those dark and gloomy days that I spent in Al-Rashad asylum” (9). When Miri labels his self-text a report, the narrative is directed away from the common novelistic

technicalities. This complicates the classification of the work and detracts from situating it within a specific genre. Commenting on such circumvention, Al-Sayed Al-Wakeel notes that referring to the text as a report of days in his life implies that “we are presented with journals, memoirs, or documentaries of momentous incidents” (cited in Sobhy). Moreover, Miri pours his critique of the American aggression on the asylum into the mould of a report. Calling it a report has the effect of strengthening the reliability and credibility of the narrator in what Genette’s calls “internal focalization.” Genette illustrates his conceptualization of internal focalization, he states, “The narrative in that case can tell us everything this character perceives and everything he thinks” (74). In autobiographic narration, this mode of focalization is “completely self –centered” (Meister and Schönert 15).

“Rabbit” versus “Wolf” Worlds:

Through the power of word, Kesey and Miri unveil the truth about what the powerful can do to the underprivileged and marginalized. It is the potential force of self-expression that “highlights the sometimes oppositional and often marginalized discourses of sufferers themselves, particularly via the representation of the abuse of patients by those with power in psychiatric systems” (Baker, Crawford, Brown, Lipsedge and Carter 62). Generally, the powerful deny the powerless any existence except that of the peripheral and marginal weak. The “wolf”-“rabbit” relationship that characterizes modern world is where the Darwinian law of the jungle prevails. The terms of such an oppressive formula gives the big fish the right to eat the little one and forces the weak to be removed to clear the way for the “progress” and “civilization” of the powerful.

Appropriately, the focus on the truthfulness of the experiences recounted is crucial for the narrators. Miri tries to create a forceful testimony against an unjust world in which “a pack of madmen has been murdered 'incidentally’” (25). However, he is still ambivalent as far as reviving horrific memories that would aggravate his agony vis - a- vis a painful past. In Cuckoo's Nest, the Chief tries to endow his rendition with authenticity partly by swearing that “his story is true ‘even if it didn’t happen’” (13) and partly by uttering statements such

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as “this is too horrible to have really happened, this is too awful to be the truth!” (13). He is compared to “Roseanne,” the main character in Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008), who “needs to commit her story to paper, for her memories to be revealed through her testimony” (Baker, Crawford, Brown, Lipsedge and Carter 72). Such connections and associations with other texts highlight the value of the multi-dimensional potential of the text. Through intertextuality, this individual text absorbs a multitude of other texts. In autobiographical texts, intertextuality argues against the uniqueness of the present moment and the specificity of the personal experience. Through it, writers relate themselves to other writers undergoing a similar experience. Thus, they ably portray past common experiences of injustices as an instrument in preventing future disasters and constructing a better world.

As one of the inhabitants of the periphery, the Chief narrates his horrid experience of “rabbithood” and the violation of its innocence at the hands of the government that took away the land from his tribe, destructing his father and incarcerating him for fifteen years in a mental asylum. This memory has incapacitated the Chief and he can no longer communicate with the external world using the language of reason. The story he tells and recalls is pronounced “crazy” and “illogic,” yet he emphasizes that it is true, and that it conveys a critique of the way the American society functions. As far as the reader is concerned, this story enables an access into the Chief’s inner world since it translates his past madness into a present true tale about “the hospital, and [the Big Nurse], and the guys-and about McMurphy” (13). He grapples with the clutches of a coercive system that demands total subservience to its regulations.

The Combine: Violation of Natural life and Order of things

The combine is depicted as a vast system of machines and robots, engaged in choking spirit and imagination, and turning the human world into a machine world of compliance. Its machine-like quality is emphasized in its automotive reaction to forces that threatens to dismantle it; it seeks to adjust uncooperative individuals to its mechanism. This machine-like quality is emphasized in the sound the Chief heard; “low, relentless, brute power” (76). It is

noteworthy that Vitkus visualizes the Combine as “a kind of socio-economic conspiracy” (65).

For the Chief, rendering the combine's “stealth control and manipulation” (Smith 83) is of greater concern than medicine timetable and electroshock therapy. Most of his talks with McMurphy revolve around the Combine and the Big Nurse. He warns McMurphy, “They work on you ways you can't fight ... They install things. They start as quick as they see your gonna be big and go to working and installing their filthy machinery when you're little, and keep on and on and on till your fixed!”(189). It is obvious that pretensions to upholding individual rights are false. Liberal individualism is subordinated to the authoritative order of the day. No wonder, the Chief views the combine as “slowly but surely turning society into a dehumanized, homogenized culture” (Vitkus 65). On their part, the patients seem feeble and defenseless in face of the omnipotent normalizing clutches of the combine machine.

In fact, the Combine symbolizes social coercion and suppression of freedom practiced against the underprivileged. Its robotic and suffocating impact is not limited to the individual and personal level, but it goes beyond encompassing the natural hierarchy and order of things. The Combine's violation of the personal natural life is reflected in the Chief's following hallucinatory words

All up the coast I could see the signs of what the combine has accomplished since I was last through this country things like, for example-a train stopping at a station and laying a string of full-grown men in mirrored suits and machined hats, laying them like a hatch of identical insects, half-life things coming pht-pht-pht out of the last car ...Or things like five thousand houses punched out identical by a machine and strung across the hills outside of town, so fresh from the factory they're still linked together like sausages.
(203)

As a matter of fact, spoiling or rather violating the Chief's natural life by “neighborhoods, or rabbithood” (58) effaces his identity and drives him crazy. “Neighborhoods” obliteration of identity is evident in the Chief's words; he says: “Five thousand kids [who] lived in those five thousand houses, owned by those guys that got off that train. The houses looked so much alike that, time and time again, the kids went home by mistake to different houses and different families. Nobody

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ever noticed”(206). These words dramatize the machine of the Combine at work: the products, mainly humans, needed to be identical and indistinguishable in the sense that they are all role-players and conformists to the dictates of the “rabbithood.” Harding, a patient who is keenly observant, divulges such a fact saying, “This world ... belongs to the strong, my friend ... existence is based on the strong getting stronger by devouring the weak” (57). Therefore, he adds, “we’re all in here because we can’t adjust to our rabbithood. We need a good strong wolf like the nurse to teach us our place” (58). These words stress the fact that it is the Darwinian law that dominates, and modern man “must learn to accept it as a law of the natural world ... [and] accept [the] role in the ritual and recognize the wolf as the strong” (57). Harding elaborates on the matter explaining that the rabbit becomes “sly and frightened and elusive and he digs holes and hides when the wolf is about” (57). For him, it is the essence of wisdom for the weak “rabbit” to avoid the combat with the wolf because it is asymmetric. In fact, Harding's succinct portrayal and its references to the strength of the Nurse epitomize her steel and machine like quality. The impact of the mechanical nature of the Combine gets fiercer with the Chief's depiction of the hospital as an automotive mechanic's garage where the employees confess, “It's getting so I can't install the simplest frigging component but what I need a bracer. Well, what the hell, it's better'n garage work” (32).

Indeed, the impact of the combine is not limited to the personal life of the Chief; it extends to spoil the natural order of things. Thus, chaos and discord replaces order and harmony. This is obvious in the gendered reversed construction of the asylum staff that begins with the Nurse and includes the doctors and the aids and finally the patients. Harding expresses such a matriarchal domination in the asylum as follows: “the doctor doesn't hold the power of hiring and firing. That power goes to the supervisor...[who] is a woman ... We are victims of a matriarchy here, my friend, and the doctor is just as helpless against it as we are” (56). The fittest combat for survival maintained in the Nurse's matriarchal hegemony spoils the natural hierarchical chain of things that is explained by Robert P. Waxler, he states, “In such a system, meaning always operates within a hierarchical language system. Oppositions are established, and manhood is won when the

male presence governs the female absence” (156).

To keep herself at the top of the hierarchy and to consolidate her triumph via her authoritarian control of everything and every life in the ward, the Nurse resorts to a strict system of surveillance. In adopting this system, the Nurse “situates [the patients] in a network of writing... engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them” (Discipline 189). Everyone and everything is rewritten not to be heroized but to be objectified and subjected in a whole mass of documents and registration. After the Nurse gets her staff, she locks the ward efficiently like a watchman's clock and “everything the guys think and say and do is all worked out months in advance, based on the little notes the nurse makes during the day” (28).

By virtue of the Nurse's efficiency and precision, the Chief imagines her growing bigger to dominate and control her surroundings. Moreover, he himself feels “small, puny, and incapable of real action” like a rabbit; albeit, he possesses gigantic bodily strength as “A former high school athlete and a combat veteran of World War II” as Lupack identifies him (Insanity 67). The Chief pithily expresses his perception of the absolute power of the Big Nurse in terms of the wolf- rabbit theory as follows

The Big Nurse tends to get real put out if something keeps her outfit from running like a smooth, accurate, precision-made machine. The slightest thing messy ...in the way ties her into a little white knot of tight-smiled fury ... She don't relax a hair till she gets ... what she calls 'adjusted to surroundings'. (25)

The Big Nurse tends to show that she is such an invincible machine-like woman who gets everything under surveillance and control. The Chief adds “She’s in there, looking out through her window, got a tape recorder hid out of sight somewhere, getting all this down—already planning how to work it into the schedule” (64). The Big Nurse's surveillance comes full circle with the Chief's following comment, “It's not just the Big Nurse by herself, but it's the whole Combine, the nation-wide Combine that's the really big force, and the nurse is just a high-ranking official for them” (164). The repeated use of the attribute “big” in relation to the Nurse reflects “Bromden's perception of her power rather than her actual size” (Semino and Swindlehurst). Though he is “the biggest Indian [McMurphy] ever saw,” the Chief feels that his experience shrunk him and sees himself not big anymore

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in comparison to The Nurse. The decrease he perceives in the physical body size makes the Chief lose both power and strength. Robert P. Waxler writes “Confronted with Big Nurse and her social order, the Chief is powerless ... [and] immobilized” (156).

The helplessness of the Chief within the asylum echoes his own “rabbithood” outside and inside its walls. In fact Dr. Spively, the Chief's Psychiatrist, emphasized this in his theory of the Big Nurse's ward. He describes it as “a little world Inside that is made-to-scale prototype of the big world Outside” (48-9). Consistent with this theory is the Big Nurse's justification for her iron-clad rules; they are made for those who could not “adjust to the rules of society in the Outside world” (170). Vitkus elaborates on the prevalence of the matriarchy as follows: “With the Big Nurse as the microcosmic manifestation of the Combine, resistance to the Combine becomes a struggle of a male community against the women that oppress them” (66). In accordance with this perspective, Robert Forrey points out, “The premise of the novel is that women ensnare, emasculate, and, in some cases, crucify men” (224). In view of this idea, the Chief's description of the Big Nurse's physical physiognomy emphasizes the ensnaring perfect machine like nature,

Her face is smooth, calculated, and precision-made, like an expensive baby doll, skin like flesh-colored enamel, blend of white and cream and baby-blue eyes, small nose, pink little nostrils-everything working together except the color on her lips and fingernails, and the size of her bosom. A mistake was made somehow in manufacturing, putting those big, womanly breasts on what would of otherwise been a perfect work, and you can see how bitter she is about it. (6)

Such contrasting features about the Nurse's seeming appearance as a baby doll and her actual being as a mechanized steel woman highlights the paradoxes that govern the world of madness. Vitkus compares her stern features to “the routine of ward life” that is “grotesque and exaggerated version of everyday life under modern American capitalism ... [and] dehumanizing, tedious, and repetitive pattern which is scientifically measured and automatically scheduled for maximum precision”(71-72). Hence, within the asylum, she loses all her feminine traits and turns into a sullen manufacturer that is so overpowering that it dominates the whole setting; and patients, wards

and doctors have to “either conform to ... [the rules of the Big Nurse] or become ‘mule stubborn’ and rebel against [them]” (Madden 207). The Big Nurse has introduced the reader to such a fact early in the novel when she states that “everyone . . . must follow the rules” (24). She has “whipped” (189) the men in the ward and has taken away their manly ability of poise and laugh, and replaced them with fear and terror.

Definitely, within such an imaginative construct humans are turned into lifeless products; “When a completed product goes back out into society, all fixed up good as new, better than new sometimes, it brings joy to the Big Nurse's heart” (36). She believes that such a product is then “a functioning, adjusted component, a credit to the whole outfit and a marvel to behold.” It is also her belief that the patient himself is “happy with it;” he is finally able to adjust to the surroundings” (36). For Harding, the Chief is a good example of those who have been adjusted and got fixed since he conforms to the ethics of the new mechanical world in which he comes to be a taciturn android “giant janitor ... Vanishing American, a six-foot-eight sweeping machine scared of its own shadow” (62). This adjustment signifies turning the mental patients into compliant and fetishized automaton dominated by the Nurse Rachel who runs and controls the enclosed world of the ward. These viewpoints show more explicitly facets of the vulnerable and susceptible nature of the products of the Combine. It is inculcated in the minds of the residents of the ward that they can only survive through being dominated by the strong whoever they are, be it the Big Nurse, McMurphy or the wife.

The objectification of human fellows is evident in the story of the Chief about how such a mechanized society usurps him of everything “the tribe, the village, the falls” (188), has stripped him of his individuality and free spirit and has banished his tribe into a mechanical workforce where they became “half-life things” (205). The Chief's words are functional in two ways: As a Native American, the Chief laments the “hypnotization” of his people “by routine” (35) and the disintegration of his natural environment by the mechanical combine of modern capitalist America. This, in turn, underlines his “nostalgia... for retreat and regression to a simpler, happier world, and a corresponding rejection of the world [he] happen[s] to live in”

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(Berthold-Bond 75). Moreover, madness adds to his agony since it is “used to define the ‘native’s’ inferiority, a discursive tactic employed to reinforce Western superiority” (Himmelman 22). The space of madness that he inhabits as a Native American is diametrically opposed to reason; namely, the metropolis of Western domination. In fact, it is only through madness that his nostalgic state of being is asserted.

The Combine metaphor represents a powerful critique of American society. Grasped as a machine, the Combine's main purpose is to repress freedom, individuality and natural impulses in favour of the dominant social coercive ideology. Thus, control and discipline, not curing the patients, emerge as the supreme goals of the institution. To meet such target, the mental institution adopts the maxim of “divide and rule.” Everything is polarized and divided: the staffs are divided into black orderlies, nurses and doctors as versus the patients who in their turn are divided into Acutes and Chronics. The group of Chronics is divided into Walkers and Wheelers. This regimentation of the hospital echoes and reflects the classification of the society where “five thousand houses punched out identical by a machine” (206).

By setting for the supreme goal, the absolute control of the patients, the latter are worse off than when they were first admitted to the ward and committed to the care of its staff members. For instance, the mental states of the Chronic patients are seriously damaged due to the bad treatment by the Combine. The Chief notes, “But there are some of us Chronics that the staff made a couple of mistakes on years back, some of us who were Acutes when we came in, and got changed over” (15). Moreover, the doctors consider the Acute patients “still sick enough to be fixed” (13), whereas the Chronics are “machines with flaws inside that can’t be repaired, flaws born in, or flaws beat in over so many years of the guy running head-on into solid things” (14). The main reason formal treatment is that mental patients were not “subjects to be treated but objects to be managed” (Digby 56). In fact, the mental institution while claiming to offer therapeutic help for patients, furthers the damages to their individuality and psyche.

The Chief's “Situational Withdrawal” and Paranoia

Due to his fear of the consequences of resisting the

objectification of the disciplinary system over which the Big Nurse presides, and as a result of the appalling memory of the destruction of his own father, the Chief is pushed to withdraw into a murky reality pretending to be deaf and mute, and hide in the imaginary “fog machine” of the ward. He relates this state of being to the fog he experienced during wartime. It camouflages his ability to see the difference between hallucination and reality. The fog is too thick to spot accurately the nightmares he declares to be true, and the horrible experiences he undergoes with its concomitant dramatic sensations, that no one believes to have happened to him. He comments on his own condition,

I know already what will happen: somebody'll drag me out of the fog and we'll be back on the ward and there won't be a sign of what went on tonight and if I was fool enough to try and tell anybody about it they'd say, Idiot, you just had a nightmare; things as crazy as a big machine room down in the bowels of a dam where people get cut up by robot workers don't exist. (82)

The above words unveil how the Chief is experiencing self-deception vis-à-vis the reality about American aggression visited upon the Native American. In his mind, it is masked under the claim of being just a “nightmare.” Uttering the truth means that he is “crazy” and idiotic since those are just “nightmares” that “don't exist”, and thus “how can a man see them?”(80). The pitiful situation of reversing facts highlights the ability of American militants to sweep aside the reasoning faculties of the innocent powerless. In the Chief’s story, the government’s projects to build a dam entailed displacing the Chief’s tribe at The Dalles. The war against his people and the dam represent the aggressive machines which impaired the Chief: “I can see all that, and be hurt by it, the way I was hurt by seeing things in the army, in the war. The way I was hurt by seeing what happened to Papa and the tribe”(121). Thus, for the Chief, several factors, equally damaging to his mental and emotional state, have brought about his paranoia, his loss of identity and the degrading acquiescence he experiences; namely, the displacement of his tribe, his father's destruction and his post-combat trauma.

The Chief's paranoia appears in his account of an encounter between the Nurse and her three African-American orderly employees. He describes the impression they made on him; they have

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“eyes glittering out of the black faces like the hard glitter of radio tubes out of the back of an old radio” (9). At this point, the Chief describes the aids wearing white suits, dirtying the hall by performing “sex acts” and mopping “up before [he] can catch them” (3). The lowly and debased image of the black aids and their uncouth acts highlights “the civilized” image of the white Nurse who is described as treating them as dogs that “crawl... to her ...to the whipping” (86). The aids are portrayed as mere cogs in the larger omnipotent and ferocious machine that is maintained in the Big Nurse who first appears “in the shape of her hideous real self” (5) as a kind of robotic spider with a doll's face and mechanical insides. For the Chief, she is like a watchful robot, sitting in the centre of wires tending her network “with mechanical insect skill” (26). She controls everything and gets the results she wants the same way a “Medusah figure [does] with petrifying power to freeze all who disobey her” (134) as Elaine B. Safer puts it. The nurse attains ascendancy and supremacy through her manipulation of everything and everyone in the asylum. So suffocating and choking is the asylum milieu that the Chief, like the patients, loses his identity and emerges as a mute object. Consistently, it is implied that he is a product that is not yet ready to go to society since he is not completely fixed.

The Impact of McMurphy and His Rebellious Maneuvers

Instead of roiling in the artificial time of the ward, the influence of McMurphy assists the Chief and other patients to regain awareness of the actual time. The Chief recovers the use of his senses, the capacity for laughter, and finally his ability to speak and break the walls of silence under the Nurse's absolute dominion. McMurphy's galvanization of all the patients including the Acutes, the Chronic and the Chief is conducive to adopting insubordinate stances against those in power. Maneuvers of non-compliance result in drastic transformation on the part of the Chief. It was an effective attempt to break the coercive discipline and change the asylum's monotonous routine. Early in the novel, McMurphy states: “Yes sir, that's what I came to this establishment for, to bring you birds fun an' entertainment around the gamin' table” (11). The insane is referred to as “the birds” encaged in the cuckoo's nest (the asylum) and aspiring

to fly fearlessly. McMurphy's challenge of the Nurse's policy elicits Vitkus remark that the former "chafes under the rigid rules that govern the men's lives" (71).

Indeed, McMurphy seizes all the chances to upset the Nurse's discipline and challenges her cold logic and authority. Thus, once he is placed within the "therapeutic community" of the ward, McMurphy fights against "the merciless language of non-madness" (Foucault, *Madness* ix) through exposing various forms of mannish ambiances such as laughter, his hand shaking, gambling, whoring and his physical attack of the Nurse. These male attributes serve as a source of power for the metaphorically castrated narrator and patients. With such maneuvers, McMurphy brings "the man smell of dust and dirt from the open fields, and sweat, and work" (90).

As a matter of fact, McMurphy adamantly believes in laughter as a means of violating the order created by the Big Nurse and reviving the patients' manhood. It is his most forceful psychopathic power. The use of laughter as a defiant course culminates in a fishing excursion where the patients attain salvation from the shackling discipline of the Big Nurse. The epiphany occurs on the fishing boat, when the Chief feels himself transported by 'swinging a laughter that rang out on the water in ever-widening circles, farther and farther, until it crashed up on beaches all over the coast, on beaches all over all coasts, in wave after wave after wave" (215). For the first time the Chief seems optimistic and sanguine because he sees "some good in the life around [him]" (219). He sates "I was feeling better than I'd remembered feeling since I was a kid, when everything was good and the land was still singing kid's poetry to me" (216). He comes to see beneath the surface: "Maybe the Combine wasn't all-powerful. What was to stop us from doing it again, now that we saw we could? Or keep us from doing other things we wanted?" (255). Accordingly, through the power of laughter McMurphy and the patients can rehabilitate their safety and restore their true identities once effaced and distorted by the establishment. They can also act daringly against the oppression of the Big Nurse. Commenting on the power of the sense of humor, the Chief explains, "He's safe as long as he can laugh, he thinks, and it works pretty fair" (103). It is laughter that enables McMurphy to activate and galvanize the impassive patients into action

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against the repressive tactics of the ward.

In a conversation with McMurphy, Harding suggests that laughter is an ineffective means to show “a woman who's boss... So... man has but one truly effective weapon against the juggernaut of modern matriarchy, but it certainly is not laughter” (64). Harding says more on the matter and tells McMurphy that the Big Nurse seems to be an invincible champion. Thus, McMurphy rallies his sense of male honor, declaring “I've never seen a woman I thought was more man than me” and vowing to “put a betsy bug up that nurse's butt within a week” (67).

The Chief alludes to McMurphy's mannish hands to comment on the new defiant manly spirit brought to the asylum; he “shakes hands with everybody he comes to” (17) and “laughs again and shakes hands and sits down to arm wrestle every time that black boy gets too near him with the thermometer, till he's met everybody on the Acute side” (21). The Chief's minute delineation of the physical physiognomy of McMurphys' hands makes the challenge to matriarchal ascendancy fiercer,

I remember real clear the way that hand looked: there was carbon under the fingernails where he'd worked once in a garage; there was an anchor tattooed back from the knuckles; there was a dirty Band-Aid on the middle knuckle All the rest of the knuckles were covered with scars and cuts, old and new. I remember the palm was smooth and hard as bone from hefting the wooden handles of axes and hoes The palm was callused, and the calluses were cracked, and dirt was worked in the cracks. ... I remember the fingers were thick and strong closing over mine, and my hand commenced to feel peculiar and went to swelling up out there on my stick of an arm, like he was transmitting his own blood into it. It rang with blood and power: It blowed up near as big as his, I remember. (23)

The recurrence of the verb “remember” more than three times in association with the minute depiction of the ‘hand’ with a rough exterior discloses the Chief's intensification of the masculine characteristics of McMurphy. Working male hands is a symbol of power and manhood. The rebellious stance in association with hands comes to its zenith in the Chief's description of the voting of men against the Big Nurse's strict policy of watching T. V. by raising their hands: “That big red hand of McMurphy's is reaching into the fog and

dropping down and dragging the men up by their hands, dragging them blinking into the open" (121). In fact, the collective fantasy of watching TV represents an escape from reality and the stifling domination of the Big Nurse; "Television therefore becomes as powerful a force as the Big Nurse and her Combine" (Lupack, *Insanity* 153). It allows the patients to act as true human beings who are capable of forming impressions and voicing opinions. Such acts stand against the objectifying policy of the Big Nurse.

Rough hands epitomize male identity just as breasts and lips typify the Big Nurse's female identity. In delineating her domineering character, they constitute a focal point. Ironically, these two aspects are used to ridicule her lacking of motherly and feminine nature; so they are "like a doll's lips ready for a fake nipple" (23) as the Chief puts it. The Chief adds "that smiling flour-faced old mother there with the too-red lipstick and the too-big boobs" (43). With her torturing tactics of the patients, the Big Nurse's character is portrayed as a caricature and a parody of nurturing and protective motherhood. Laszlo K. Géfin states that she is a "Destructive Mother or the Bad Mother" (98) since her anatomy does not meet the patients' expectation "of softness and abundant giving one can associate with a mother's breast" (Ruth Sullivan cited in Géfin 98). In short, her asexuality as Napierski-Prancel states, "dismisses the notions of femininity" (227).

To reinforce his masculinity, McMurphy brings two prostitutes into the ward for the sexual initiation of the young Billy. The Big Nurse, seizing the opportunity to restore his maternal control, threatens to tell his mother. She leads him "into the office, stroking his bowed head and saying, 'Poor boy, poor little boy'" (273). This incident sheds some light on her tantalization of the patients on both the physical and the psychological levels. All the time she tends to infantilize and humiliate the men-to render them sexless. That is why McMurphy states that she is "a ball-cutter" (54). Such emasculating attitude echoes that of Harding's wife who belittles him, Bromden's mother who dominated his father and Billy's mother who never let him grow up. The same idea is emphasized in Harding's description of himself and the other patients as lacking "the sexual ability to make the grade as adequate rabbits" (59-61). He adds "Failures, we are-

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feeble, stunted weak little creatures in a weak little race. Rabbits, sans whambam; a pathetic notion” (60). Such emasculation of the patients counters the Big Nurse's denial of her own femaleness to make her dominion over men fiercer and more powerful. Michael Meloy posits that antagonism between men and men in the novel alludes to “a mysterious and alluring force that inevitably proves destructive to men.” He adds that it is better “understood in the context of the postwar era, where women in numerous sectors of the economy refused to return to the home when men returned from World War Two.” Such interpretation indicates a concern on part of Kesey that by moving into powerful positions, women would render men emasculate.

The consequences of the Nurse's domineering and humiliating policies culminate in Billy's suicide that, in turn, leads to the final confrontation between McMurphy and the Big Nurse. Later, he claims that if the only real problem were “just this old nurse with her sex worries, then the solution to all your problems would be to just throw her down and solve all her worries, wouldn't it?” (165). When Scanlon tells him that he is “just the stud to handle the job,” McMurphy seems to admit that this as the solution to their problems, but he is not willing to do “the job” himself because he is committed and needs the Nurse to recommend his release from the hospital. However, at the end of the novel, he does “the job” by attempting to rape her. Yet, this is dubbed as a “retreat to the savage environment and condition of the traditional wild man” (Feder 3). The Chief recounts the incident in a remarkably long sentence:

Only at the last—after he'd smashed through that glass door, her face swinging around, with terror forever ruining any other look she might ever try to use again, screaming when he grabbed for her and ripped her uniform all the way down the front, screaming again when the two nipples started from her chest and swelled out and out, bigger than anybody had ever even imagined, warm and pink in the light—only at the last, after the officials realized that the three black boys weren't going to do anything but stand and watch and they would have to beat him off without their help, doctors and supervisors and nurses prying those heavy red fingers out of the white flesh of her throat as if they were her neck bones, jerking him backward off of her with a loud heave of breath, only then did he

show any sign that he might be anything other than a sane, willful, dogged man performing a hard duty that finally just had to be done, like it or not. (275)

Here, the external conflict between the Big Nurse and McMurphy turns into a bestial combat, at the lowest level of human response. It is the instinctive drives that moved the men away from the fetters of Combine and toward their inner and natural entity and being. This is discernible in McMurphy's last utterance: "A sound of cornered animal fear and hate and surrender and defiance...the last sound the treed and shot and falling animal makes as the dogs get him, when he finally doesn't care any more about anything but himself and his dying" (275). That is why he flies the other way like the Cuckoo's bird: although he escapes to the mental asylum to attain freedom, he ends up like the cuckoo bird, in a world that is not his own where he feels unwanted and unsolicited, and achieves nothing but death- in-life, and ultimately an actual death.

In attacking the Nurse, McMurphy seeks to conquer the myth of the invincible woman and to secure a collective victory for the male patients that restores their lost masculinity. After remarking, "I've never seen a woman I thought was more man than me," she comes to be a weak woman whose "face swinging around" (275) as she screams. The scene appeals to the castrated patients, doctors and supervisors. McMurphy rehabilitates their masculinity. They feel for the first time that they are free from the fetters of matriarchy. Besides, McMurphy emerges as a strong hero who is "a sane, willful, dogged man performing a hard duty that finally just had to be done, like it or not" (275). However, McMurphy himself has lost his sanity and rationality under lobotomy and turns to be psychopathically mad beyond redeeming. In fact, he sacrifices himself for the common good so that the other men in the ward may be saved. In the Chief's words, he "doled out his life for us to live" (221) and "We couldn't stop him because we were the ones making him do it" (274).

For the Chief and the patients, McMurphy is a symbolic and a heroic figure, and "the thing he was fighting, you couldn't whip it for good. All you could do was keep on whipping it, till you couldn't come out any more and somebody else had to take your place" (265). However, he is sure that he "takes up a fight against an institution so

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large that he has no real chance to win because he realizes that the significance of the protest is in the effort, not necessarily the result” (Lupack, *Insanity* 60). In spite of the Chief’s adamant belief in McMurphy and his heroic role as a savior, he puts an end to his life. He justifies such an act in terms of McMurphy’s heroism that will be annihilated, especially after the lobotomy. Therefore, ending McMurphy’s life as a hero, and not as a psychopathically mad beyond redeeming, asserts triumph over the monstrous machine of the ward.

The Chief's Recovery of the Natural World and Release

Despite McMurphy's tragic ending, the Chief owes him the recovery and realization of the natural world. He admires his control of his own life and his rebellious behavior that has removed the fog, clears the mind and makes him no longer vulnerable “to any fiendish notion” (131). For the first time, the Chief vents out his realization of reality in the smell of the autumn air: “It's fall coming, I kept thinking... just like that was the strangest thing ever happened. Fall. Right outside here it was spring a while back, then it was summer, and now it's fall-that's sure a curious idea” (141). He goes further and adds some other examples that demonstrate his recovery of the natural world in looking out of the dormitory window and seeing a young dog loping in the moonlight chasing up a flock of migrating geese. The Chief narrates

The dog could still hear them a long time after me. He was still standing with his paw up; he hadn't moved or barked when they flew over. When he couldn't hear them any more either, he commenced to lope off in the direction they had gone, toward the highway, loping steady and solemn like he had an appointment. I held my breath and I could hear the flap of his big paws on the grass as he loped; then I could hear a car speed up out of a turn. The headlights loomed over the rise and peered ahead down the highway. I watched the dog and the car making for the same spot of pavement. (143)

The above mentioned quote divulges “the complexity of Kesey's thrust” (140) in the text, as put by Safer. The central image is that of the “loping dog” to which McMurphy is implicitly compared. On the one hand, the loping in the breeze of both the Chief and the dog signifies the Chief's freedom from the restrictions of the asylum. On

the other hand, this image reasserts the dehumanization of human beings and foreshadows later events, the fate of McMurphy. The Chief recounts that he hears a car speed up out of a turn after the dog runs towards the road. Then he sees the car and the dog make the same spot on the pavement. Such a comparison reverberates that the force of mechanization spoils that of nature. When the moon shines again, the Chief escapes throwing 'the control panel through the tub room window; and "the glass splashed out in the moon, like a bright cold water baptizing the sleeping earth" (271-72).

As he is finally released, the Chief feels rejuvenated and wants to go home to The Dalles, the pure land before it was corrupted by the white man "to look over the country around the gorge again, just to bring some of it clear in [his] mind again" (272). He has proved himself strong enough to shatter the fetters and make it to the Outside, but now he is as alone as McMurphy in the world that, in Harding's words, "belongs to the strong" (60). However, he has to test his ability to communicate in a society that speaks the language of the oppressive society; what Foucault terms "reason"; otherwise he will be destroyed like the "dog."

Accordingly, the narrative frame of Cuckoo's Nest indicates at both beginning and end that for the Chief, it is "still hard ... to have a clear mind" (13). His sense of the past must be reintegrated with his sense of the future. The text's concluding sentence, "I been away a long time" (281) alludes to the impossibility of escaping from society by running away. When the Chief describes his escape from the hospital, he says, "I felt like I was flying. Free" (272). However, such sense of freedom will dissipate and vanish when he returns to his tribal land and sees "that big million-dollar hydro-electric dam" (280-81). Such an ending is not the ideal resolution for the narrator's entanglement: "Kesey refuses to allow the reader to witness the success or failure of the patients in the outside world... Rather [he] sees masculinity as still very much endangered here" (Meloy). This closure is maddening and frustrating for the reader because it keeps him entangled more and more in "the polarities of rebirth and destruction, freedom and oppression, hope and despair" (140) as Safer puts it. Therefore, the ending dispels all hopes of getting out of the vicious circle of conformity to the social fetters and shackles.

Ayam Al junoun and Cuckoo's Nest: The poetics of madness

The Cuckoo's Nest approach to and exposé of the world of madness differ from those Miri undertakes in *Ayam al junoun*. In the former, the Chief prefers to withdraw to a world of his own where he is detached and pretends to be dumb and silent. He is mainly concerned with delineating the coercive discipline of the Combine maintained in the domineering female figure of the Big Nurse and Murphy's defiant tactics against it. The Chief escapes from the asylum to attain his freedom and release from its restrictions. On a different scale, the narrator in *Ayam al junoun* adopts an approach that is diametrically opposite.

a. Elopement and “Situational Withdrawal”

Unlike the Chief's escape from the asylum by the end of *Cuckoo's Nest*, in *Ayam al junoun*, Miri seeks the asylum in an attempt to evade imprisonment as a dissident, under the Iraqi dictatorial regime. Miri does not adopt the tactics of “situational withdrawal” like the Chief who is constantly aloof while claiming dumbness and deafness. With adamant persistence, Miri involves himself in the events arguing with the doctors, nurses and the patients themselves. His debates are rooted in envisioning himself saner than the patients; a “philosopher” and an instructor (‘Ustadh), as he calls himself. He narrates “As a man of discretion who is interested in philosophy and the field of rationalism, it is incumbent upon me to worship reason and only reason, anything apart from this is insanity” (68). Later, he adds, “I am the only here that Hassib calls me the professor” (115). The Chief's disparagement of his capability and aptitudes of resisting the combine's fetishization and objectification contrast to Miri's sense of sophistication and erudition.

In his discussion of Kudeir Miri's work as an attempt to reform the world through madness, Sherif Al-Gayar emphasizes the author's overstated opinion about the self in *Ayam al junoun*. He states, “The author in part one of the text endeavors to prove that he is a philosopher dealing with life and the American occupation of Iraq philosophically” (Al- riwa'iy, my translation). He expounds such perspective and declares that in the second section, the narrator in *Ayam al junoun* represents the “psychiatrist who gives the patient the

opportunity to vent his pains and sorrows.” Such statement points in the direction of Miri's self-concept as a man with a noble and lofty mission.

Owing to his deep involvement in the asylum's affairs, Miri does not pass through the Chief's phase of regeneration and recovery of the natural world. Early in *Ayam al junoun*, he materializes his realization of the exterior natural world and its interior counterpart. He opens his description of the asylum as follows, “The dull deserted gate of the asylum... the long streets with thick trees... the studio/atelier with the dusty paintings on the right side, and on the left side lie corridors of steel cells crowded with the insane, with worn out mattresses, with iron gates, and the rifles of the dark and desolate officers. (9).The constituents of this scene parallel those in *Cuckoo's Nest* since both Miri and the Chief portray a lifeless and bleak scene of ironed atrium inhabited by the mad and their armed officers. The juxtaposition of the reference to the powerful in the mention of “iron, officer, cannon, gates” in describing the asylum and its staff, and the reference to the feeble and defenseless patients give rise to a conflict between the two groups. In this sense, Salah Al-Serwi explains,

The text revolves around two worlds: an inner and an outer world. Madness begins and flourishes in the outer world and this is what the text suggests. The patients withdraw to the inner world although they are far from dangerous, as innocent from guilt as Iraq that surrendered all its weapons and opened its gates to the inspectors. Maybe it was this surrender that brought upon it all that madness. (cited in Sobhy)

In fact, the clash of wills, setting the powerful “wolves” against the powerless “rabbits,” is one of the prominent elements that determines the nature of the world of madness.

b. Black versus White Madness

Unlike Kesey who categorizes the world of madness in gender terms: a combat for survival between the domineering matriarchal Nurse and the docile patients, Miri's predominant interest in *Ayam al junoun* lies in making a sharp demarcation between other broader opposing worlds: the outside wolf-like world maintained in the American aggression and the inside rabbit-like one of the patients and the Iraqis. Miri is interested in debunking the claims of the Americans

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“holy” and “civilizing” mission of liberating the oppressed Iraqis that proves to be monstrous. In Miri’s text, aircrafts cannonades the asylum jeopardizing the life of more than 1500 patients “rabbits” in particular and assaults the unarmed and enfeebled Iraqis in general.

Ayam al junoun divides madness into two types: black and white. The former denotes the powerful wolf American aggression and violation of human ethics, whereas the latter signifies the inner pacific and tranquil world of the “rabbit” patients in Al-Rashad asylum. Miri recalls the American attack of Iraq in general and Al-Rashad Asylum in particular in the same vein the Chief reminisces and criticizes American violation of his land and his people's humanity. His memories function as candles that have lit the dark corridors of the bleak hospital to foreground surreal scenes of an alternative mode of madness which he depicts as black and white. He explains, “it occurred to me that madness is classified into Black and White ... Black madness wears the American uniform, carries a rifle and wears a tight hat, it flies a steel duck, beats drums upon the heads, yields death, human remains, smoke, tragedies and sows absence everywhere” (10). The American madness resembles “black magic” in the sense that it spreads pain and torture rather than reclaims and redeems liberation as the invading forces have alleged. The American forces invade Iraq in the name of freeing its people from the fetters and shackles of tyranny and dictatorship and under the banner of bringing them the blessings of the civilized world. However, they have brought upon the people death and destruction.

White madness, on another plane, is a state in which the mind goes far away from material existence and a scream rings loud: ‘In madness I have absolute freedom ... from the boundaries of the body, place, speech, thought and time’ (10). In fact, Miri “celebrate[s] madness as liberation from oppressive cultural constraints” (5) as Rieger mentions in another context. Through the faculty of imagination, this kind of madness goes beyond all frontiers. While black madness brings about ruin and annihilation, “white madness is inoffensive, obedient, and simple and harms no one but the mad person himself” (Miri 10). Moreover, it does not obliterate civilizations and lives the way black madness does. Miri goes further and ridicules the tools of black madness. The American claims that

they will civilize and construct, however, all the “constructive” tools utilized are fit only for destruction rather than construction. White madness is harmless; “if the person suffering white madness is addicted to cigarettes, the persons struck by black madness is obsessed with the smoke of weapons, war aircrafts, military clothes and sirens” (11). Succinctly, white madness, is represented by the mad in the asylum, and is characterized by being peaceful and benign, whereas black madness is identified as benighted and destructive. That is why Miri states, “I obtained from madness all that I was deprived of as a free man/Madness gives me what I do not have while I was free” (10). For Miri, it is a domain in which he has no concerns or feels no panic of the dictatorial regime outside the asylum and "when freedom is in danger" (10). In this context, Miri echoes Al-Samman's ideas about madness as a shelter and a refuge for freedom that is lacking under the yoke of dictatorial regimes. This sense of fear from the outside world render propels Kesey's narrator and characters cowardly. They abide “the cuckoo’s nest because [they don’t have] the courage to face the world ... [although they don’t] admit their fear of leaving the institution” (Sullivan 25). The above explanation relate to both texts in different ways: on the one hand, for Kesey’s characters, beyond the asylum, “the strong do indeed aggress against the weak; and though a few escape the trap, most are caught and destroyed” (Sullivan 25). The domineering officials play a ruthless role in divesting them of will power. On the other hand, the patients in Al-Rashad asylum have to encounter another form of horror outside the asylum embodied in the American consistent bombing and merciless devastation of Iraq.

Obviously, binarism as a textual tact is deployed by Miri on the level of content and form. The text chronicles the American bombardment of the asylum in 1991, where Miri resides hiding clutching to his pretension of madness. The assault of belligerent air forces disturbs the peace and serenity of the prevalent ‘white madness’ in his asylum. The assailant is bent on devastation without hesitation or consideration: “This is how the game of madness operates, its time, it forms and the potency of its presence and its force even in its absence ,the defenses, the attacks, the survival and the nihilism” (12).In the midst of chaos and annihilation, he philosophizes madness, death and war: he realizes that “a living insane is better than a dead

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sane” (43). Nevertheless, within the sphere of black madness, such obliteration of human lives is interpreted in different ways one of which is that of the Red Cross envoy. He tells Haifaa “your steadfastness is unparalleled/ unmatched” (107). Instead of indicting the American brutal attack, he praises the patients’ survival under that raid as a ‘heroic’ deed.

The duality of black and white madness is more conspicuous with Miri's painstaking depiction of the atmosphere and the locale in which the two modes of madness coincide: “black madness (represented in aggressor “American forces”) spoils the tranquil serenity of white madness milieu ...white madness was confined within the boundaries of the asylum presided over by drugs, food, screams and sleep... white madness has regressed; trained physicians are trifling with it hiding it behind walls away from public scrutiny” (12). Doctors themselves are unscrupulous in treating the mad patients. They are only interested in restricting their existence within the confines of the asylums, and regardless of how harmful or harmless their illness is, they are claimed to endanger the life of the people outside the institute. Meanwhile, black madness represented in the American air forces cross Iraqi skies freely with no restrictions on its movement. It seems as if it owns the sky and the air and presides over the land unchallenged. It launches its attack inconsiderately and adamantly. Miri’s meticulous description pervades the text depicting the site of the asylum. He states, “Annihilation sprawls the corridors of the asylum that lies on the outskirts of Baghdad governorate, there behind a dusty hill where the tombs of children, cars and rubbish are seen ... the asylum is situated adjacent to them”(12). In February the 29th, 1991, a blind and indiscriminate aggression is executed by the American pilot, the authorized envoy of black madness; it is directed at “the happily peaceful mad. As a consequence the helpless patients are left with no food, water, or medicine, with no ...no ...” (13). Miri’s thorough depiction of the locale in its spatial and temporal dimensions is significant since it belies the American claims of their inability to spot the place and hence widening the scale of their bombing. Clearly, Miri focuses on depicting the benighted nature of the American belligerent assault rather than going deeper like Kesey in illustrating the automaton nature of the asylum. Hifaa, the secretary

of the asylum, discloses such a fact saying: “What humanity? ... when they force a blockade and use the death machine against an asylum” (37).

Subsequently, Miri portrays the droves of American army planes as a “flock of fatty ducks with long necks, and heavy wings... and rectangular eyes that are characterized by such a piercing, cold and prying look” (45). However, far from ordinary peaceful ducks; “they are a special kind, ducks whose eyes explode fire”(45) .Yet again, Miri uses zoological images and describes the American planes as flying cows and strange birds. Using these zoological pictorial images emphasizes the lack of sanity and reason practiced against the peaceful mad whose only crime is that they are mad. The resemblances Miri undertakes aggravates the manicheanistic and dichotomous features in the sense that ducks stand for freedom, as birds, whereas army planes restrict freedom, force a siege and spread annihilation. In addition, the danger of black madness exceeds all anticipation since they do not differentiate between cows or ducks, inanimate or animates, mad or rational, a friend or an enemy. They have a mission to be fulfilled; and devastation is its target.

c. Diverse Depiction of Female Figures

Focusing on the opposition between the American black devastating madness and the patients' white innocent madness, Miri's exposé and depiction of female figures assumes compelling dimensions. In *Ayam al junoun*, the nurses do not emit the bossy and coercive impression that prevails Kesey's text. So, unlike the reversed hierarchical gender order in Kesey's asylum, the hierarchy of power in the Al-Rashad asylum is a customary one, starting with the doctors at the top and the nurses, the aides and then the patients underneath.

The instance of Nesrin, the nurse, and Hiafaa, the secretary is a case in point. Nesrin has been introduced in section two as a truly kind-hearted woman. She has no helpers and the narrator does not delve deeper in her depiction: he does not give us a precise image of her physical or psychological physiognomy the way Kesey does in the description of the Nurse. Moreover, she seems to be not that serious in threatening the patients. When she taunts Hassib, the oldest patient in Al-Rashad Asylum, she does it jokingly; she wants to know what is

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going on “otherwise he would have six electroshocks at the weekend” (31). Procrastinating in carrying out the penalty makes it devoid of any harm and carries no implication of humiliation and threat to the patients. She treats them as true human beings and is convinced of a degree of certain logic in their thoughts and actions. Their madness, compared to black madness, is captured figuratively in Hassib’s description: “You can think of the wife of one of them frying potatoes on the clouds they create” (31).

Haifaa, the secretary, is more prominent than the nurse. She is comforting and sheltering in her attitude towards the patients: “For the residents of the place, she occupies a large space of their memories” (35) as Miri puts it. In a protective vein, she narrates her experience in the asylum,

Imagine, to defend madness for twenty years, is it possible to go back home every day feeling good, when you see human-like figures shaving off the skin of their heads with razors. Isn’t it heroic or even legendary to be able to maintain the difference between a vacuum cleaner and a Eucalyptus tree, between a paper cutter and piece of cheese, after getting a job here. I can only think of life as not living like these people. (36)

Haifaa's stance is as caring and compassionate as Nesrin. Both are sympathetic towards the sufferings of the mad, grasp their agony and try hard to alleviate it. The female's charitable attitude toward the mad reaches its peak in a scene where Haifaa is “giving [the patients] sweets and organizing their appointments with the medical committee” (99). Moreover, she maneuvers to help them evade electric shocks. She says, “I became addicted to them;” she argues with and objects to doctors who “consider them without feelings” (99). Accordingly, unlike the Big Nurse's heartless treatment of the patients, Haifaa's is fully empathetic. She promises Miri that “any kind of food she will get will be [his]” (37). At a point when she saw Miri downhearted, because of the intimidating scene where the American forces spread death and the dead bodies of the patients are scattered on the ground everywhere, Haifaa calms him down and states that “the mad do not die, you should not die if you lose your mind ... you should never die ... and now go to your room and try not to think” (100). She tries to give him a glimpse of hope that makes him cling to life.

Her dispute with the medical committee is a heart-rending scene wherein Haifaa's caring and affectionate stance toward the patients is reasserted. When they think of releasing the mad from the hospital and exposing them to the American shelling, Haifaa retorts, "It is the fate of those we call sick who represent 'the ship of fools' supposedly crossing the sea and ... cared for by the captain, the crew and his aides who preside over the tasks that require sanity" (104). She adds, "simply, the mad are now free and no one has the right to decide for them how they should die as long as no one has the right to grant them life of which they are ignorant" (105). The manager of the asylum taunts Haifaa saying she "feeds her babies" (109) apparently ridiculing Haifa's approach in dealing with the patients.

A panoramic view of Al-Rashad asylum discloses that Haifaa relentlessly defends the patients' "inalienable" right of life. She knows very well that the Americans proclaimed ideals assert such a right in the 1776 Declaration of Independence, which they deny others. The scene gets more complicated with the entrance of the Red Cross representative with his "civilizing and moral mission." He gets out a decorated box full of bars of chocolate and passes it around for the attendants to eat. Then he declares, "My companions are coming ... believe me there are a lot of things on its way ... [they] will try to save the patients who are still alive" (107-08). The fakeness of the generous approach of the Red Cross envoy toward the patients is obvious; it is in stark contrast with the genuine feelings of the nurse and the secretary in the Al-Rashad asylum. The former regards them as mere numbers: what matters for them is the number of those who died due to the American attack, whereas the latter is intent on treating them as individual subjects.

Indeed, in *Ayam al junoun* and *Cuckoo's nest* the powerfulness patients are perceived in the same way. They are regarded as "products," "objects" "nonentities," and are treated in terms of "blind numbers" (23): "the number of the besieged," "the number of the murdered" and the "number of the rescued and the survived" as noted by Hassib. This is how the representative of the Red Cross regards the patients and their dilemma; in mere numerical terms. His apologies are ludicrous, he justifies the bombardment of the building by explaining that "the place is not designated in our maps ... it is nobody's fault"

(108).

Consequently, “who am I?” is a futile question since they are all simply regarded as “a row of the insane” (23) in an asylum. The objectification of people is accentuated in Hassib's question: “what is a house?” The narrator replies “it is a door behind which one can ask: who’s knocking” (29). Again in an impressive quote that is fully drenched in dichotomous images, Miri asserts the rights of human beings, “There are things no one whether sane or insane can disagree on, the person's right to the dust under his feet, the wisp of a handful of air, a sip of water, your shadow under a unique” sky. (60). Such words uncover the true nature of black madness with its power to depopulate territories and violate other peoples' undeniable right to their own land, sky and water.

Furthermore, vindicating the ferocious attack on the ground that the asylum has not been allocated on the maps adds to the sense that the assailants regard the patients condescendingly. The excuse that no one is held culpable infuriates Haifaa who stood up against the degrading attitude of the Red Cross envoy. However, she knows that her objection is useless. All her efforts are in vain as if she is moving the “the mad to the oxygen room and she knows well it has no oxygen” (105). Thus, Haifaa is stern in her opposing stance arguing against the oppression of the patients.

Conclusion

In *Cuckoo's Nest* and *Ayam al junoun* Kesey and Miri divide the world of madness in different ways, yet the divisions carry the same implication and significance. Even though the two texts are informed by the codes of two different cultures and contexts, they derive the constituents of their construction from the same perspective; namely, that madness occupies position of inclusion inside the culture rather than a position of marginalization and exclusion outside it. There is a lot in common between the two texts. Thematically, the two texts are critiques of the American system through unveiling the world of madness. Both are narrated through the mode of internal focalization through which the narrators endeavor to assert their reliability and authenticity. However, the focal binary stances and dualistic issues that are under consideration are different in the two texts: Miri focuses

on the American aggression versus the madness of the peaceful patients, and the inner world of the asylum as versus the outside world. On another plane, Kesey's central point is the emphasis on the powerful matriarchal figure of the nurse, as a symbol of the American ideology, versus the powerless patriarchal ideology represented in the patients who symbolize the downtrodden and underprivileged.

In *Ayam al junoun* the portrayal of the powerless patients as rebels against the American atrocious aggression is not as commanding as Kesey's depiction of the patients' rebellion against the coercive domination of the Big Nurse. This is because reconciliation typifies the relationship between the patients and the asylum's doctors and nurses while antagonism and hostility characterize relationships in *Cuckoo's Nest*. Hence, characters in Miri's text emerge as passive critics who do not adopt effective procedures.

The mould in which the two texts are poured is different. Kesey's work is a novel built upon the elements of fiction. Yet, it is difficult to classify Miri's text since it is a report in which the writer is concerned about documenting facts rather than presenting an imaginative text.

Cuckoo's Nest and *Ayam al junoun* deal with one and the same issue of madness, yet the texts assume varied forms and present different perspectives. The victory of Kesey and Miri looms large since they are able to break the culture of silence about a discourse evaded on purpose and since they disinter a world that is hidden and mysteriously evaded. Both are triumphant because they challenge the status quo and seek change. Through their narrators, Kesey and Miri present madness as a means through which they offer new ways of conceptualizing a better future in which the binary polarity of the superior and powerful and the inferior and powerless is radically transformed.

Notes

1. Translations of quotations from Arabic texts are mine.
2. The texts are hereafter referred to as *Cuckoo's Nest* and *'Ayam al junoun*.

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