**Abstract**

Against the backdrop of the counter cultural ambience of the 1960’s the novel can be critiqued as a post modern myth of liberation from confinement, individualism from group mentality, independence from acquiescence and liberal sexual freedom from sexual repression. The protagonists in this novel are misfits in society. In the post modern era the individual lacks historical consciousness and thus fails to comprehend the socio cultural totality. The alienated, rootless individual withdraws from real human existence and finds solace in hallucinations and ends up as a schizophrenic. The schizophrenic individual has a tendency to withdraw from real existence and they live in a reverie. Most of us are trapped by the social conventions set up by the society which we term as reality. Ken Kessey is of the opinion that one has to rely on his own individual sanity to find meaning and value of his life as well as others.

The protagonists of the postmodern fiction are the marginalized people segregated from the main stream society. McMurphy and Chief Bromden are psychopaths. Randle McMurphy is transferred from the prison work farm to the hospital declared as a psychopath. McMurphy exhibits extraordinary courage to liberate the inmates from the asylum. The story is narrated by Big Chief Bromden, an imbecile inmate in a mental asylum. He is born to a Red Indian father and white mother. Big Chief’s narrative is disruptive by his reminiscences about his past life in the tribal hamlet.

Postmodern fiction brings to the fore front the psychological ramifications of the characters for they undergo emotional turmoil as they are unable to acclimatize to the contemporary reality and try to retain their sanity by reminiscing their past. This novel reveals that modern reality is determined by technological and organizational phenomena. The novel captures the absurdity of human situation, quest for reality in a meaningless universe and the incessant human struggle against obstacles in spite of the insignificance of individual human endeavour.