

**THE ENIGMA OF THE OTHER IN THE EYES OF PSYCHIATRY:  
MARGINALIZATION IN *THE BELL JAR* AND *ONE FLEW OVER  
THE CUCKOO'S NEST***

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**Abstract:** The present paper is devoted to the study of the prejudices and biases in psychiatry toward women and different ethnic groups as “the other” in Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar* and Ken Kesey’s *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Through the application of anti-psychiatric and political notions, this study is conducted to depict how psychiatry as an agent of the power structure succeeds in suppressing “the other’s” inclinations and, on the contrary, to what extent “the other” is successful in confronting the power structure by projecting its proclivities in these two notable American fictions of the 1960s. The results of this study suggest that there is always a suppression/resistance dialectic between the power structure and “the other” in these works of fiction.

**Keywords:** Ethnicity, Femininity, Ken Kesey, Power Structure, Psychiatry, Sylvia Plath, The Other.

**Introduction**

One of the most significant censures against psychiatry is its prejudices against various ethnic groups and different gender roles in a specific society. Perhaps, it can be announced that psychiatry is one of the medical fields that is profoundly racist and sexist. This is not surprising at all since the bases of psychiatry have been fomented in degrading, segregating, and even eliminating “the other”, or in other words the ones who are thinking and acting contrarily to what is regarded as customary. This issue has received significant academic attention: numerous studies have been conducted on political and psychiatric prejudices against a specific group of people considered as eccentric or nonconformist (e.g. Burstow, 2016; Rosen, 2017). These studies have accentuated the partiality of psychiatry in diagnosis and treatment. On

the other hand, the notoriety of the nexus between psychiatry and the power structure is another significant point emphasized in these studies. However, there is no thorough research conducted on dialectic nature of the conflict between psychiatry and women or any ethnic groups other than the white male who sets the rules and manipulates all these political and psychiatric associations. Through the application of anti-psychiatric and other political notions to first clarify how gender and racial biases work in the heart of psychiatry and then to depict the instances of resistance of the marginalized agents of the suppressed, namely women and colored individuals, this research paper sets out to address this gap through a thorough analysis of the racism and sexism inherent at the core of psychiatry as one of the techniques of the suppression and the elimination of the other, and the other's reciprocal reaction toward such a dominance demonstrated in literary works of the 1960s, specifically, Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

#### **Historical and Theoretical Background**

America, celebrated as the land of dreams and prosperity, has always been censured as the generator of all the prejudices and partialities toward "the other". In fact, America has generally been regarded as the land of "others" in the social, political, and even psychological levels. When one brings the most popular American literary works in mind, he/she realizes to what extent the American "othering" culture works on different levels of human life. For instance, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is devoted to the representation of the black slave woman as "the other" in a white male dominated society. J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* is a depiction of the process of othering among the American teenagers, as a result of schooling and parental demeanor. Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*, Kurt Vonnegut's *The Crying of Lot 49*, and Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* are all but a few instances of the American literary fictions of the 60s which depict their major characters as "the other", feeling secluded and even excluded in a society that spawns "otherness" among its citizens. However, this paper majorly focuses on the process of othering generated by psychiatry as the agent of the authority in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* in America as an apt ground for such estrangement in female and colored ethnic characters of these works.

Similar to most of the scientific and medical fields, psychiatry is founded on the notions of white male members of the western societies. As a matter of fact, part of the bases of the modern psychiatry is established on the diagnosis and treatment of some strange imaginary

diseases like drapetomania and dysaesthesia aethiopica which are exclusively related to the slaves. Samuel A. Cartwright coined these two psychological disorders in 1851, the first one related to the Africans' desire for fleeing captivity and the second one, laziness among slaves. Though these fictional disorders may seem preposterous at the moment in the eyes of the contemporary individuals, akin to the whole idea of slave-driving which seems absurd for a modern individual, at that time these diagnoses were taken seriously and slave owners even applied the physicians' prescriptions in order to put more pressure on the slaves and turn them into submissive beings.

Subsequent to the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, the projection of the psychiatric disorders on the black community was considered as the best substitute for the slave-driving period in order to restrain the black people. However, in the 1960s, during the height of Civil Right Movement and the deinstitutionalization, the suppression of the races other than white communities transformed into the social field of advertising industry. In the 1960s, the commercial for the treatment for schizophrenia depicted a black man as a violent psychotic on the loose:

An ad for the antipsychotic Haldol depicted angry black men with clenched fists in urban scenes with the headline: "Assaultive and belligerent?" At the same time, mainstream white media was describing schizophrenia as a condition of angry black masculinity or warning of crazed black schizophrenic killers on the loose. A category of paranoid schizophrenia for black males was created, while casting women, neurotics and other nonthreatening individuals into other expanded categories of mood disorders. (Perzichilli)

The shift from Slavery to the social and commercial attacks against the marginalized races depict the fact that racism has been an inseparable part in the field of psychiatry. There have been numerous studies regarding racism in psychiatry (e.g. Medlock et al. *Racism and Psychiatry*, 2019 and Frenando, *Institutional Racism in Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology*, 2017) and all of these studies assert the fact that racism has always been present from the birth of psychiatry and it cannot be denied at all. However, there are some attempts nowadays to reduce such inclinations in this field. To what extent these attempts have been successful is of course impossible to respond since the techniques of submission and suppression have become so intricate and complicated that has made the access to such information nearly impossible.

According to Bonnie Burstow, a contemporary psychotherapist and an anti-psychiatry scholar, most of the diagnoses made by a psychiatrist and even the whole science of psychiatry are absolutely groundless. She believes that “psychiatry is fundamentally problematic. The problem is more basic than the obvious difficulties posed by drugs, electroshock, and incarceration. Psychiatry has no viable scientific or even conceptual foundations. It is based on the concept of mental illness” (21). She continues that illness is solely related to physical dysfunctions which could be easily diagnosed with the physical tests such as a blood test, CT scan, or fMRI. As far as there is no physical side to the mind, which is the brain’s activity rather than having a physical existence, we can’t attribute the idea of illness to mental dysfunction:

The brain is physical, and so there can be and indeed are brain diseases. Alzheimer’s is a case in point. With genuine brain diseases such as Alzheimer’s, there are observable lesions or swelling. People with “mental illnesses” such as schizophrenia, however, have no such brain lesions or swelling. Moreover, as psychiatrist and psychiatric researcher Peter Breggin (1983) clearly demonstrated, despite years of attempting to prove chemical imbalance, the only chemical imbalances that people called “schizophrenic” and “manic-depressive” can be shown to have are those that psychiatric drugs themselves produce. (21)

However, this is not totally accurate since there are certainly some changes of the brain cells depicted in the CT scan of the brain of the people who suffer from schizophrenia. However, there have been no correct and definite patterns to these changes discovered by the scientists yet. In an article published in *The Source* in 2015, Dr. Robert Cloninger announced that through the brain scan, not all the schizoids show the similar pattern of physical changes in the brain cells. For instance, he mentioned that “the brain scans of people with schizophrenia showed various abnormalities in portions of the corpus callosum, a bundle of fibers that connects the left and right hemispheres of the brain and is considered critical to neural communication.” (Dryden) In fact, a part of these abnormalities in the corpus callosum is related to schizophrenia; “when the researchers looked at abnormalities across the corpus callosum, they found that certain characteristics revealed in the brain scans matched specific symptoms of schizophrenia.” (ibid) However, the majority of these abnormalities had other causes, “patients with specific features in one part of the corpus callosum typically displayed bizarre and disorganized behavior. In other patients, irregularities in a different part of that structure were

associated with disorganized thinking and speech and symptoms such as a lack of emotion. Other brain abnormalities in the corpus callosum were associated with delusions or hallucinations.” (ibid)

Nonetheless, we have to believe the fact that the attribution of the mental disorders to the physical side of the brain, which some supporters of psychiatry underscore in order to justify the prominence of the psychiatric practices as eligible in the field of medicine and science, is actually a double-edged sword. For instance, if there exist such changes in the brain of a schizoid, then this disease should be in the domain of the specialties of neurology and a neurologist is the best choice as an expert to diagnose and treat this neural dysfunction. On the other hand, if the mental disorders are other than physical malfunctions of the body, then associating such disorders with illnesses in order to take it under the umbrella term of medicine, is also problematic and what Burstow has mentioned turns out to be accurate. All in all, the problematic existence and credibility of psychiatry is totally under question, especially when it comes to the elimination and marginalization of “the other”. “The other” in this context is attributed to anyone other than a white male individual who is defining all the rules and prescribing all norms and deviancies.

### **Racism and Sexism as Elements of the Othering Process**

The woman as “the other” is considered as one of the central notions of patriarchal societies. In fact, the woman is seen as a subsidiary being whose existence depends on the wellbeing of the male individual. However, there is something in the woman which causes fear in the status of power. This fear could be regarded as the reason for the women’s suppression throughout the history. However, the question raised at this point is what causes this fear in the patriarchal power structure concerning women and how the power agents attempt to confront the mysterious and enigmatic power of women. In order to answer such questions, it will be beneficial to take a look at the history and review the instances of the women’s oppression throughout the time. One of the appalling instances of the suppression of women by the patriarchal religious government occurred in Salem, Massachusetts known as the incident of witch-hunting in the puritan society. The hysteric reaction of the government due to the fear from these women who were claimed to be witches and had strange ceremonies in the middle of the night in the jungle is astounding since believing that a woman is a witch and has unknown connections with the devil could only be considered as a topic of a fantasy novel. In the account of Britannica, it is mentioned that “Accusations followed, often escalating

to convictions and executions. The Salem witch trials and executions came about as the result of a combination of church politics, family feuds, and hysterical children, all of which unfolded in a vacuum of political authority.” (Wallenfeldt) The last words of this description is really significant since it depicts profound chaos in the heart of the political authority as the power structure confronting such a terrifying event. As a matter of fact, an internal vacuum of the political structure and the intervention of the church in politics led to such confusions which resulted in considering women as the source of the evil. The notion that women are the source of corruption alludes the biblical story of Adam and Eve and the seduction of Adam through the collision between Satan and Eve. In other words, the mysteriousness and the enigmatic nature of the women has a long story, as old as humanity and creation.

So where does this fear from a woman and her fundamental corruption arise from? Or in other words, why is the patriarchal power structure terrified of women to the extent that they decide to marginalize and even eliminate them? There are a lot of justifications for such a terror, though. In fact, there are a lot of biblical, mythological, and even contemporary figures of women who were known to be the sources or the collaborator in corruption. Actually, the power structure and the religious beliefs dictate the fact that women should stay at home and take care of the husband as the breadwinner of the family and raise the children. When the contrary happened, a woman was seen to be doing something other than the norm or even disobeyed the husband. But the question raised here is at the age of technology and unlimited access to all kinds of knowledge, what substitutes are there for the old-fashioned methods of restriction like witchcraft as an excuse to suppress women. As time passed, such supernatural powers gave way to psychological abnormalities and psychiatric disorders, such as hysteria, oppositional defiant disorder, and borderline personality disorder. Such obstructive techniques, namely false accusations, and psychological disorders are to label women who have the potential to gain the power either in the family or in the society and disturb “the balance”.

Sexism and gender bias is to be considered as another impact in the field of psychiatry until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but with the advent of feminist movements which changed most of all these biases and compelled numerous fields to comply with the fact that the status of women is no different from that of men, psychiatry as well, changed its attitude toward women gradually. However, these biases never waned and depicted themselves in various ways. For instance, hysteria

and borderline personality disorder are the two psychological disorders that were associated with women more than men in the 1960s and 1970s. Jimenez in her paper, "Gender and Psychiatry: Psychiatric Conceptions of Mental Disorders in Women, 1960-1994" mentioned that "Borderline personality disorder is used as a diagnosis far more often for women than for men. Widiger and Weissman (1991) estimated that 76% of the people who receive this diagnosis are women. Several mental health experts have suggested that there may be gender bias in the diagnosis." (161) "Momism", a term which was put forward to demonstrate the dangers of the overprotective mothers on children, is another concept associated with women, specifically in the 1960s. It was actually believed by the psychiatrists that schizophrenia generates from bad mothering. (Hirshbein, 340) However, these are just a few instances of gender bias which have been rooted deeply in the field of psychiatry. Generally speaking, racism and sexism are the two underlying features of psychiatry as a tool for the power structure to suppress and eliminate "the other" in a society where these marginalized agents may confront the authorities.

#### **The Process of Othering and the Enigma of the Other in *The Bell Jar* and *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest***

Looking at the American fiction of the 1960s, one comes across Esther in *The Bell Jar* as a girl with the potential to succeed and gain a lot of power through her writing career. However, such a woman is a danger for the status of the other men and therefore her skills should be belittled and her personality should be sabotaged. Due to the religious and political justifications available for restricting women in the 1960s, such limitations led Esther to believe that she has acted inaccurately throughout her life and everyone around her who is attempting to restrict her is unerring. In other words, she is obliged to believe her limitations and consider her points of strength as psychological and social deviancies. Of course, when psychiatrists like Szasz and Laing consider schizophrenia an understandable phenomenon, this could be the reason that the society and the "norms" lead a woman to believe that such dichotomies should exist in her life and she has to cope with it. Most of Esther's friends have complied with this fact and they have surrendered to accept the norm when they thought what Buddy, Esther's boyfriend had done in betraying her was normal and something most of the men would do. However, she couldn't be submissive and passively accept what has happened to her and Buddy. When she saw such dichotomies in the way women have to

cope with and live without questioning such rules but accept them as standards, she became depressed and schizoid.

These dichotomies are exactly in line with what Laing explained about the cause of schizophrenia and psychosis in an individual. When a woman faces a lot of paradoxes during her personality identification, and when the whole family and the society act as if these dichotomies in a woman's life is a normal event and it is something the woman has to cope with, she either internalizes these dichotomies and accepts them all in order to complete her personality identification process (though erroneously and imperfectly), or they can't internalize these dichotomies and accept such paradoxes and the process of personality identification goes wrong and it turns out to become psychological distress or in a few cases, it turns to become schizophrenia or even psychosis. This is actually what happens to Esther in the course of the novel too. She wants to become an author, so she seems to have a very sensitive personality characteristic. In the course of the novel, she describes her mother and what a domineering personality she possessed, and then she explains how she became devastated when she learned about her friend, Buddy, cheating on her. She couldn't consent to such a terrible fact like her friends who were the recipient of such behavior. This led her to a failure in her personality identification and it ended in a psychological disorder.

Esther's psychological condition deteriorates when the most intimate and feminine events were to be defeminized in front of her eyes. Luke Ferretter in his paper entitled "Just Like the Sort of Drug a Man Would Invent": *The Bell Jar* and the Feminist Critique of Women's Health Care analyses the childbirth through the eyes of Plath which is no longer a feminine act and men have occupied this field as well:

In *The Bell Jar*, Plath articulates precisely this critique. For Plath, obstetrics and gynecology are patriarchal institutions, in which men alienate women from themselves by assuming, under the beneficent guise of care, control of women's bodies. Her critique is most explicit during the scenes in the novel in which Buddy Willard takes Esther to watch a woman give birth in a teaching hospital. She describes the delivery table as an instrument of torture: I was so struck by the sight of the table where they were lifting the woman I didn't say a word. It looked like some awful torture table, with these metal stirrups sticking up in mid-air at one end and all sorts of instruments and wires and tubes I couldn't make out properly at the other. (136)



With the introduction of the disease, the process of the treatment is of prerequisite and urgent need. As Burstow has mentioned, since women are not considered as the individual being and they are “body-for-man”, then all these treatment processes are fortunate, since the mind impeding treatment turns the woman into a serviceable subject for men. This is not just related to the psychiatric treatments and as Esther emphasized in the novel that even the childbirth as the most sacred feminine act is also dominated by men and when her friend Buddy mentioned that the woman is given some drugs to forget her pain after delivering the baby, Esther mentioned that this drug is a man’s invention:

I thought it sounded just like the sort of drug a man would invent. Here was a woman in terrible pain, obviously feeling every bit of it or she wouldn’t groan like that, and she would go straight home and start another baby, because the drug would make her forget how bad the pain had been, when all the time, in some secret part of her, that long, blind, doorless and windowless corridor of pain was waiting to open up and shut her in again. (81)

As Esther mentioned, men desire women to be more serviceable and docile. If they are so, they praise them and turn them into a baby delivering machine, and if they are not, they attach a lot of mental disorders that they need to be treated as soon as possible. In other words, the nonconformity and deviancy in women are considered as a lack of mental equilibrium and it needs urgent care. When a woman doesn’t want to be considered as the “body-for-man” and attempts to help other women too, she is diagnosed with such mental disorders as borderline personality disorder or psychosis, needing urgent treatment. In other words, when you read what Esther wants to depict in the society she is living in, you become more certain that she isn’t mentally ill. She is just trying to defy what men have created out of women, a docile and obedient female who agrees with what the male figure of the family defines. Such defiance which is against the norms in the patriarchal society leads her and the people around to believe that she is mentally disturbed and needs psychiatric treatment, a masculine castration process to create submissive subjects.

Apart from the marginalization of women as being “the other”, there are individuals with a non-white ethnicity whose personality identification process as the other in the society may lead to failure. *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* is a multi-faceted story with numerous perspectives which offers the best opportunity for the critics to analyze the text from different aspects. This novel is in fact the story of the

minority and marginalized group of Indian Americans who are to be eliminated due to their heritage and background in the American society. Kesey chooses an Indian American named Chief Bromden as his narrator of the novel in order to depict such inequalities and injustices toward the specific group of people. This choice of the narrator is as intriguing as the major topic of the story which is the psychological conditions of the white protagonist, McMurphy. Kesey chose an indigenous narrator in order to offer a completely different view of what is taking place in a white-dominated society. One remarkable point regarding the characterization of such a narrator is his feigned dumbness and deafness. He is in fact not disabled at all, but due to the conditions around him and his horrific memories of the past, he decided to feign being dumb and deaf. These disabilities symbolize the fact that such marginalized individuals are metaphorically unable to hear and speak. In other words, they do not have any voice to express their own individualized ideas and they can't even hear anything since they are believed not to be domesticated or blended in the white-dominated society. A choice of a dumb and deaf narrator also demonstrates a two-sided significance for the author; first, there is the clever use of such narrator as a representation of the author-like or a god-like figure to see and narrate what is going around in the psychiatric ward. The second reason is the social and political one since the marginalized group of individuals in a community are symbolically deaf and dumb and unable to talk and even hear anything.

In his paper entitled "Reading from the Heart Out: Chief Bromden through Indigenous Eyes" published in *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* in 2011, Conner has looked at this novel from Chief Bromden's point of view. He regarded Bromden's deafness and dumbness a technique and a blessing in this white-dominated environment:

We get one indication that there is method to Bromden's madness, so to speak, or a pattern to his narration, when he remarks on his Native American ancestry. Because his reticence caused whites to believe he was deaf and mute. Bromden pretends to be so, a sad irony that a descendant of an oral tradition would choose silence as a survival technique (Ware 97). Yet this technique serves Bromden well when he is institutionalized: he literalizes the situation and makes society believe that he actually is unable to speak or hear. Given that patients were treated as children and the establishment treatment of Indians was often highly patronizing, this response can be seen as quite rational. Bromden fakes his condition for his benefit, in full recognition of his power. (235)

Bromden asserts, "If my being half Indian ever helped me in any way in this dirty life, it helped me being cagey, helped me all these years" (Keseey, 4). He believed that he "had to keep on acting deaf if I wanted to hear at all" (179). Conner maintains that Bromden "attains control over his environment and his story through self-reliance on his ethnic traits and through a trickster-like inversion of the internalized self-hatred he experienced as a child when no one wanted to hear what he had to say." (Conner, 235)

Although Bromden has employed such a technique for his own benefit in order to be able to hear what he wants to hear without limitations, there are other factors involved in Bromden's feigned deafness and dumbness. According to most of the critics and based on his narration, Bromden is considered a paranoid schizophrenic, and he has been one of the long-term patients confined in the ward. However, this feigned disability hasn't brought him any real benefits for his condition and he has been confined without any resolutions. In other words, what Bromden is going through is the mental and psychological castration from which he can't get released. As a matter of fact, in such an intricate power structure, even if the subjects do something intentionally, it is going to be considered as something intended by the power structure beforehand for its own benefit and the subject's disadvantage. It is until the end of the novel and through his close acquaintance with McMurphy, a representation of a white male-dominated society that he understands the meaning of freedom.

At the end of the novel, when Chief Bromden took McMurphy's life out of mercy, and then he ran away, he attempted to overpower the white domination symbolically and he decided to set himself free after all those years of being stuck in the psychiatric ward, a place to control and dominate the nonconformists and dissenters. However, when he runs out of the psychiatric institution, he finds out that there is no such thing as running away and he is dominated and marginalized even more in the outside world as he said "I'd like to see what they've been doing since the government tried to buy their right to be Indians. I've even heard that some of the tribe have took to building their old ramshackle wood scaffolding all over that big million-dollar hydroelectric dam, and are spearing salmon in the spillway." (324) He understands that in fact there is nothing like running away and being a free individual. Perhaps this is the main reason why he hasn't thought of going out of the psychiatric ward for many years. Actually, from the time the government tried to marginalize the Indians and buy their lands, there is no freedom for Bromden anymore. Perhaps it was his best choice to feign dumbness and deafness in this condition as the best run-away.

Another significant issue in this novel is how the government attempted to get the Indians' lands out of their hand in order to build a dam, another symbolic representation of the government causing restrictions. When Bromden's father resisted, they metaphorically castrated him and from that point onward they castrated Bromden, too. Chief Bromden got her white mother's last name in order to hide her indigenous background so that he is not repressed by the government anymore. Conner regards such an incident as the most effective on Bromden's present condition:

Another complication is his white mother; she gives him her surname, thereby relinquishing their and his tradition because she has adopted the dominant culture's opinion of itself: "We ain't Indians. We're civilized and you remember it" (239). Bromden's self-concept becomes based on white people's perception of him, the same people "who don't care what tribe he is" (183). Although Chinooks were once proud of their physical appearance, especially of their custom of flattening the head which signified a high status (Bancroft 227), Bromden sees himself as being unattractive, the way white people saw him when they taunted him. (249)

This is not the only incident which affected Bromden and his Indian family. A lot of other events led him to this terrible state of mind, and feigning to be deaf and dumb is actually a natural reaction toward such pressures. The traumas that Bromden had suffered in his life signifies the fact that the psychological imbalances and disturbances in life are not totally related to genetics and the circumstances in life are the most important factors for someone to go through such psychological conditions.

As it was mentioned previously about the otherness in women, one of the major reasons why the authorities need to marginalize and even eliminate such minorities as well as the fear of their otherness. The otherness is considered as the Achilles heel of most governments. But why do governments fear the otherness in the marginalized individuals? Why was the American government terrified of colored people such as Blacks and Indians in the mid-twenties? Why did the United States as a one of the male-dominated societies feared women and the empowerment in the 60s? The answer to these questions is the enigma of "the other". The power structure is usually connected with the majority or at least they provoke the support of the majority. The minority, however, are usually marginalized and suppressed in order not to let them revolt against the state of power. On the other hand, the minorities in a community normally create such strong bonds that evoke

such a feeling of enigma and mystery. The government always fears that these minorities are planning something to betray and overthrow the power structure. In fact, what Hitler did to minorities, especially the Jewish people is exactly the fear of their surreptitious power, their aura and, enigma that may attract the attention of the majority and as a result, the government loses its popularity. Slavoj Žižek has studied the symptom of otherness in his book, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. He believed that the an individual of different race or gender as the other is not the reason of repulsion, but mostly of jealousy. The conclusion that we are here dealing with racism is further confirmed by the fact that this 'Che vuoi?' erupts most violently in the purest, so to say distilled, form of racism" (128). In other words, "the other" turns into a big enigma for the authorities that is the source of fear and envy at the same time and they decide to eliminate it as soon as possible. The United States' government employed different methods throughout the history, specifically in the mid-twenties and in the height of the civil rights movements in the 60s, to get rid of "the other". One of these methods has been the confinement in the psychiatric institution and psychologically and politically castrate them so that they can't do disestablishment activities against the power structure.

Nevertheless, even after the confinement and the elimination of "the other", the fear does not disappear since the actual fear originated from the mysterious, nonexistent source called "the Real" which the authorities created in their mind that even after the elimination of "the other", "the Real", continues to exist and is never defeated. "The Real" is actually something that anyone is afraid of and at the same time is eager to see. However, this is impossible and the only way to see the Real is destruction and nonexistence. All in all, Bromden in *Cuckoo's Nest* and his whole ancestors are the source of enigma and the way they always have a strong bond with each other and Bromden making everyone believe his deafness and dumbness and using special mythological examples like his ancestors in the text create such a mysterious aura that makes everyone terrified and at the same time fascinated with his behavior.

In contemporary mainstream societies, mythology is not often associated with the search for truth; in indigenous cultures, however, it may be the highest form of truth. Although the novel's plot was based on actual people Kesey experienced during his time working at a mental hospital, according to most sources Kesey was stuck in his writing of the novel until he got the inspiration to narrate the story from the personal viewpoint of Chief Bromden.

Bromden was the character who could “return the world to pure story.” (Conner, 235)

What Kesey discovered in Bromden is in fact the mysteriousness and enigmatic presence of a colored figure, feigning to be deaf and dumb, who can be the best choice to narrate a story located in the mental hospital and could disturb the whole balance that the white authorities have created. In Fact, Bromden turns out to be the Real the whole power structure is terrified of, since these types of figures have nothing to lose and they concentrate all their energy and power to resist the authority.

### Conclusion

All in all, it should be highlighted that the reason why the authorities and the agents of the power structure attempt to marginalize and even eliminate the eccentric and nonconformist minorities like the colored individuals or even the women as “the other” is the enigma and the mysterious source of power that even after years of suppression and pressure, they have preserved their strong bond with each other and have even become stronger, as the saying goes, “what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” In other words, the fear of the other is closely connected to the fear of the Real and the confrontation with the Real means destruction and nonexistence. America, a country which has turned to be known as the land of prosperity and the world of dreams in the mid-twenties, has actually been proven to be completely opposite of what seems to be the reality. The amalgam of the 60s and various movements like the sexual revolution and the civil rights movements depict the fact that what is known to be the land of dreams is for just special kind of individuals and “the other” has turned out to be the medium for the minor wealthy groups to materialize their dreams. The othering process has occurred in the different levels of individuality in the United States and this fact is evident in the way the marginalized groups with different gender and ethnicity are being treated unfairly and put aside so that a specific white male individuals achieve their goals. Psychiatry as an instrument in the hands of the power structure has been one of the most active agents in order to empower the individuals who are considered as “the other”, obstructing the way of the agents of power.

As a matter of fact, this study shed new light to the analysis of the major characters of Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar* and Ken Kesey’s *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* in the midst of such amalgam in the American context of the 1960s, the period of uprisings and protest against the

oppression of the power structure on the marginalized group in the society in order to depict the dialectic conflict between the power structure and the other. In other words, the significance of this study lies in the fact that it depicts this conflict as not passive and submissive, but vigorous and dynamic; from one side, there is the power structure which attempts to suppress “the other” as a dangerous agent threatening its sanctity, and on the other, there is the opposing force of “the other”, clashing the authority in order to nullify its power. To put it another way, there exists a reciprocal resistance- oppression dialectic which proves the fact that the major characters in these novels, namely, Esther and Chief Bromden, are not the passive individuals being suppressed by the power structure, pitiful heroes who evoke the reader sympathy. On the other hand, they resist and react against such power in order to establish their own unique identity; however, it might be useless and futile due to the extensive power of the authority. What is seen in these works though is the sense of identification and individuality that these characters are projecting in their characterization. Esther, Chief Bromden, McMurphy, or Billy Bibbit, all living in the height of political and social clashes of the 60s in America, truly depict the sense of oscillation and ambiguity in their personality. It is as if these characters are similar to a child attempting to find out their real identity, the identity which is absolutely different from the conformity, and at this stage the power structure works in to annihilate such aberrant personalities.

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**L'ÉNIGME DE L'AUTRE AUX YEUX DE LA PSYCHIATRIE: LA MARGINALISATION  
DANS LA CLOCHE DE DÉTRESSE ET VOL AU-DESSUS D'UN NID DE COUCOU**

Le présent article est consacré à l'étude des préjugés en psychiatrie envers les femmes et les différents groupes ethniques comme "l'autre" dans *La Cloche de détresse* de Sylvia Plath et *Vol au-dessus d'un nid de coucou* de Ken Kesey. Par l'application de notions antipsychiatriques et politiques, cette étude est menée pour décrire comment la psychiatrie en tant qu'agent de la structure de pouvoir réussit à supprimer les penchants de "l'autre" et, au contraire, dans quelle mesure "l'autre" réussit à affronter la structure du pouvoir en projetant ses penchants dans les deux fictions américaines notables des années 1960. Les résultats de cette étude suggèrent qu'il existe toujours une dialectique répression/résistance entre la structure de pouvoir et « l'autre » dans ces œuvres de fiction.

**Mots-clés:** Ethnicité, Féminité, Ken Kesey, Structure du pouvoir, Psychiatrie, Sylvia Plath, L'autre.