# Benefit of Text Replete with Misogyny and Extreme Representation of a Capitalist Society: Watchman Versus One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest

It can be argued that a communist economy and equal opportunities for all genders will lead us one step closer to a Utopia. One way to reach out to people around the globe in achieving a visionary place in which everything is perfect, is through literature. Literature is one of the most effective ways to rapidly increase one’s learning, and lead to a world with a perfect amount of imperfections. However, literary criticism of pessimistic ideas is where the greatest amount of learning occurs. When analyzing text, it is more beneficial to read about negative representations of feminism and society’s economic division, as it allows the reader to use the imaginative, destructive world as an opportunity to learn and grow from it. Considering these statements, the graphic novel Watchmen, by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, when analyzed using the lens of Marxist-Feminism, is a more relevant text to study in Grade 12 literature rather than Ken Kesey's One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest. Watchmen clearly reveals how the male characters in the elite bourgeois class have full control, while the women are oppressed through systems of capitalism. The genius writing and illustrations in the comic convey a dystopian picture against the stereotypical notion of an ideal superhero, all while providing an engaging reading experience, and a greater understanding of Marxist-Feminism ideology.

Alan Moore and Dave Gibbon’s revolutionary graphic novel does an exceptional job in portraying capitalism through male characters with high social, economic, and political status. One prime example of Marxist theory is Ozymandias, also known as Adrian Veidt, who has ultimate power due to his unlimited resources, and his ability to influence the proletariat and the bourgeois class at his disposition. After unleashing his faux-alien bomb and killing half of New York, Ozymandias explains, “I’m not a republic serial villain. Do you seriously think I’d explain my master stroke if there were even the slightest chance of you affecting its outcome?” (Moore and Gibbons, XI, 375). Veidt’s plan to unite the world against a common enemy is successful, but despite all his wrong doings, he gets away with everything due to his position of being at the top of the capitalist system pyramid-which can be seen symbolized in him residing in an actual pyramid by the end of the novel. He is aware of all the power he possesses and there is nothing anyone can do about his exploited actions. In the book Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, Louis Althusser explains, ‘‘the State and its Apparatuses only have meaning from the point of view of the class struggle, as an apparatus of class struggle ensuring class oppressing and guaranteeing the conditions of exploitation and its reproduction. But there is no class struggle without antagonistic classes’’ (Althusser, 125). This quote implies that Ozymandias’ empire of peace, like those created by Alexander and Ramses II, is only temporary and ill-fated if the truth is revealed. It makes no difference how elaborate Ozymandias’ plan is however, as he can do nothing to change humanity in the long run. This idea reveals how the apparatuses serve to keep the ruling class in the world of Watchmen in power, and in the larger picture can be used to see how the ruling class shapes everything to their liking in modern society.

In addition to Moore and Gibbons, Ken Kesey also succeeds in connecting One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest with the economic and sociological view of Marxism. Initially, it is difficult to see the economic implications of the novel, but with a closer look of the numerous textual references

to power, production, and profit, One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest can be interpreted in a different light. The text illustrates the conflict between Nurse Ratched as the ruling class, Dr. Spivey as the middle class, and the patients as the working class. Nurse Ratched urges patients to talk about their past misdemeanors when she says, “Talk...discuss, confess. And if you hear a friend say something...list it in the log book for the staff to see. It’s not squealing, it’s helping your fellow” (Kesey, 47). These discussions create an uneasy feeling of contempt and competition between the men, and competition is the antithesis of Marxism. This is one of many of Nurse Ratched’s abuses of power over the ward. As readers see throughout the novel, “Nurse Ratched is far from the guardian angel her role purports her to be, she actually uses implicit and explicit measures to oppress them and keep them captive in something which very much resembles a dictatorship. Arguably, Nurse Ratched and her staff pose as the ‘elite’ bourgeois who exploit and undermine the proletariat of the novel: Randy McMurphy and the other ‘Acutes’” (Murphy, An Analysis Of “One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest”). Similarly to Marx’s proletariat, the patients are alienated by Nurse Ratched as she directs and oversees their labour. The way she runs the asylum represents the economic systems that distributes aid at its own leisure, and how the ruling class keeps the working class confined. Nurse Ratched has the power to shape the ideology of the ward, which is indicative of the ruling class having the power to shape the ideology of society. Nonetheless, although One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest does show examples of Marxism, Watchmen achieves it with an extravagant plot that is more relatable to the reader. The realism derived from the masked vigilantes and the historical accuracy within the graphic novel allows it to be more applicable to the real world, thus giving the reader the ability to critique the physical world through a marxist lens.

Not only does Watchmen provide a reference that is very suitable for a Marxist analysis, it is a great source for a feminist ctritique as well. Despite the important roles of Laurie and Sally Jupiter, representation of gender through the treatment of female characters is old-fashioned. Watchmen removes the pro-feminism effect of the women characters and reduces them to companions for men by being replete with misogynistic, outdated gender roles, and sexist physical representation. On a dinner with Dan Drieberg, Laurie remarks on her Silk Spectre II costume with “that stupid little short skirt and the neckline going down to the navel...God, that was so dreadful” (Moore and Gibbons, I, 33). Dan responds insincerely when he says, “God, yes. Dreadful” (Moore and Gibbons, I, 33). Laurie is aware of her image and how society tries to sexualize her, and is able to circumvent that. However, Laurie is still oppressed through her situation as a character, as she is only valued as a sex object, regardless of her costume.