Invisible Power and a Flight for Self-Establishment: Focused on *Naked Lunch* & *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*

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I. Introduction

William S. Burroughs’s *Naked Lunch* (1959) and Ken Elton Kesey’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1962) project a totalitarian atmosphere of American society that includes the American sociopolitical atmosphere formed by the Cold War after World War II, and the anticommunism sensation led by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the early 1950s. As the narrative of *Naked Lunch* is composed of the confessions of a drug addict, William Lee, and that of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* is voiced by Bromden, who suffers from paranoia symptoms due to electrical shocks and drugs, these two works are “chaotic in structure, disorderly in style, and fragmented in imagery” (Peterson 79). But these two novels are not pointless. These two novels present the mechanism of ruling power being resisted and rejected, a flight for self-establishment, and the recovery of one’s lost identity. They hold scathing criticism of institutional violence that wields influence deeply over personal life. The following research asserts that Michel Foucault’s power discourse and G. Deleuze and F. Guattari’s concept of the flight play a complementary role to one another for understanding that the subject in the postmodern situation put a premium on individuality, autonomy, and diversity. Additionally, assuming that

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1 What made modern times and the modern way of thinking possible is the discovery of subjectivity. Enlightenment thinkers’ reasonable thoughts and assertions of objectivity emphasizing faith in human rationality is the classic example. However, Postmodernists have more interest in ‘unconsciousness or problem of desire’ and shake up the basis of the modern way of thinking by asserting that subjectivity is formed by knowledge and power. Habermas, who attempted to outrun
these concepts could act as useful analytical tools, this research aims to analyze the presented mechanism of invisible power and the flight of main characters to establish self-awareness.

To borrow Foucault’s terminology the Freeland Replublic, Annexia, where Benway worked as a councilor in Burrough’s Naked Lunch, and the mental hospital dominated by the Big Nurse in Kesey’s One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest are the ‘carceral network’ (Discipline and Punish 305) where disciplinary power is used effectively. The ‘carceral network’ can be referred to as an immediate watchdog agency like a prison but on the larger scale, it includes school, military, mental hospital, society, and even the nation itself. A ‘carceral network’ denotes strong suppression that restricts corporeal bodies, but it allows for authority to pass freely, through which it enables that authority to effectively exercise power. Foucault states that “relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter” (History of Sexuality, vol.1, 94). So, according to Foucault, power can equally permeate all members of society.

As the power permeates equally all through all members of society, control becomes intensive and its well-ordered society is the “Disciplined Society” (Foucault, Discipline and Punish 218). This disciplined society puts members who reject norms and orders into prison or mental hospitals; the kind of places that attempt to tame them into puppets of authority, puppets who have lost their indigenous human identity. Since most people adapt to the pressure of authority upon their individual selves in the “disciplined society,” it results in a loss of authentic self and self-consciousness. Most of characters that appears in Burrough’s Naked Lunch and Kesey’s One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest are effigial of modern people who have lost the intrinsic identity of their consciousness.

the modern philosophy of subjectivity, recognizes that subjectivity is formed socially through discussion by presenting the verbal communication paradigm between the subject and the other. But Habermas’s formal pragmatics cannot embrace the problem of unconsciousness and desire. Regarding this point, the discussion of Foucault’s knowledge-power and the concept of a flight caused by desire, formulated by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, hold a complementary role to one another (Sang-Hun 9). That’s why this paper uses Foucault’s power discourse and G. Deleuze and F. Guattari’s concept of the flight as the theoretical frame of reference simultaneously to analyze the subject matter in the postmodern situation.