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2001: Kubrick's Odyssey of Film History

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Introduction

My thesis is simple: a serious film about human evolution must necessarily also be a film about the evolution of cinema.[1] "The Dawn of Man," the first part of Stanley Kubrick's *2001 A Space Odyssey* (1968), clearly demonstrates the growth of cinematic narrative form up to the classical system generally developed by D. W. Griffith and others. Following this "Dawn" little of any real import seems to have happened in human evolution aside from the development of even more tools (spaceships); the same is true for cinema, which has devolved into a few genres, which *2001* allusively and abstractly deals with in its long middle section. All the while too, we witness how deeply the world of *2001* is awash in "all things cinema"—from vast multiplex-seeming buildings filled with innumerable screen-like windows to a variety of "smaller" or functional types of films—and how this "being-in-cinema" works to determine the fate of the hero/astronaut. The penultimate episode, the Star Gate, an example of experimental cinema, is a purgation of conventional cinema, while the film's conclusion, the scene in the Regency Room, can be seen as an example of a possible "cinema of the future." It is in these last two scenes that the two themes—human and cinematic evolution—merge. In the Star Gate we witness numerous images of cosmic conception and birth, suggesting that the universe is in a constant state of self-renewal and transformation. And so, appropriately, crucially, the hero/astronaut not only becomes the Star Child, but transforms himself into *homo cinematicus*.

2001 is not *sui generis*; precedents may be difficult to find, but surely they exist. *Quatermass and the Pit* (1958 and 1967, Rudolph Cartier and Roy Ward Baker, respectively), seems to be one. Kubrick also drew inspiration from the National Film Board of Canada's 1960 *Universe* (Colin Low), and the television program *Thunderbirds* (1965–1966).[2] The film is very much a product of its time. Even a cursory glance at the work of the major filmmakers of the time reveals Kubrick's affinities with them. Don't Kubrick and Michelangelo Antonioni share an openness to silence and new forms of story-telling that are almost wholly reliant on images and

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narrative openendedness? And though not overtly similar, don't Kubrick and Federico Fellini share an extravagance of imagination? And what are Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood but Bressonian "models"? As for earlier filmmakers, can't we regard the monolith as the "Rosebud" of a later generation? And is it solely for its graphic quality that Monument Valley figures in the Star Gate sequence? (Yes, John Ford is here, Howard Hawks too.[3])

2001 is a film in which ideas—images—preside over sentiment. Kubrick put it this way: "The problem with movies is that since the talkies the film industry has historically been conservative and word-oriented. The three-act play has been the model. It's time to abandon the conventional view of the movie as an extension of the three-act play." And: "Largely it's just a matter of photographing a lot of people talking to each other on sets that are more or less interesting with actors that are better or worse. Essentially films are confined to being elaborated three-act plays. They have had a great problem breaking out of that." (Philips 2001, 90, 77.)

In *2001* Kubrick creates not merely *a* myth,[4] he creates a specifically *cinematic myth*. This is a world permeated by cinema, with screens in abundance and infusions of light suffusing the body of the astronaut-hero, as if to say that only by recognizing one's being a part of the cinematic can one ever change and move forward. Fortunately, Kubrick did this in a genre in which the *new* is a (positive) convention. Science Fiction cinema before *2001* participated in that "three-act play" view of the movies. But isn't this an artistically wrong-headed way of regarding the genre? Ought not films *about* the future be examples of films *of* the future[5]? Accordingly, *2001* is a film that welcomes the new in cinema[6]: new narrative form, and an editing to images instead of dialog (indeed, a style of editing that calls attention to itself[7]). The viewer may sense, but is never sure if the end is a (re)beginning. It should come as no surprise then to regard *2001* as almost necessarily a film about cinema itself—as Annette Michelson (Michelson 1969) remarks, "If one were concerned with an 'ontology' of cinema, this film would be a place in which to look for it." (Schwam, 197).

Dawn of Man/Dawn of Cinema

SUNRISE
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SUNRISE

Thus "The Dawn of Man"[8] begins: nine silent shots of sunrises, each "beautiful" in a conventional sort of way. But they are photographs, pre-cinematic, not unlike a *magic-lantern* show. And then In the tenth shot, the camera *tilts* up:

SUNRISE

Suddenly, dramatically (if ever so subtly), we are present at the Creation. Not the creation of the world but one much better: the creation of cinema. (And later, much later, seven tilts will introduce us to yet another world.)

The first *cinematic* scene of *2001* consists of medium and long shots of animal and human bones, apes munching on vegetation, a group of tapirs, some apes "grooming" one another, apes and tapirs eating, and finally, a single ape attacked from above by a leopard. We begin then with images of death, a skull, then a skeleton, followed by images of life, of animal sociability. But at scene's end we watch an act of deadly aggression. In at least a couple of these shots the apes move about *within the frame*, as if we were observing a *shadow-play*. The scene is also reminiscent of short peepshow narratives. The first two images—the skull and the skeleton—could also be said to resemble dioramas in some natural history museum. The entire scene can be seen as resembling a BBC or National Geographic documentary—or even more appropriately, a multi-shot Lumière *actualité*.

The next short scene is cinematically more complex, with shots ranging from medium close-ups to medium shots, plus at least a couple of dramatic long shots. The actants are now only apes, the peaceful tapirs are gone. This is a *one-set scene* at or around a watering hole at what seems the foot of a rocky mountain range with a wide plain behind. It begins in long shot with a group of apes around the watering hole. There is a clear act of aggression by one ape toward another, and later one group sneaks up on the first. Then the two groups shout, scream, gesticulate wildly, stamp their feet and jump about until finally the usurpers chase the first group away.

"Man" is developing rapidly; and so is cinema. Besides the "single set" and *variety of shot types and angles* (and, of course, their compositional beauty), we also have here a far broader and more complex variety of "speech": play the scene without looking at it and hear the variety of growls, screeches, grunts and barks made by the apes. And again there is even greater shadow-play. Is this a regression? Perhaps it is only a matter of Early Cinema sorting itself out. In the very middle of the scene when the lead aggressor comes forward we see apes moving back and forth across the screen as well as frontally. The foregrounding is very noticeable, and certainly deliberate; plus, the action is viewed from opposing angles.

Soon comes a nighttime scene whose images look *tinted*. Groups of apes are huddled together in dread as they listen to the many animal sounds

around them. The penultimate shot is nothing less than a *close-up* of one of the apes, a face of wonder and apprehension. Certain dramatic changes have occurred by this time. Peaceful cohabitation seems to have gone, killing is in the air, and the apes are afraid. Who knows what the morning will bring?

It is (perhaps) the next morning. One of the apes wakes up, looks about, and then begins to stomp and scream, awakening its neighbors. Then, centered in long shot, we see it: tall, black, pillar-like: the monolith.[9] The apes go wild over it, fearful, amazed, wondering. In medium-long shot they continue so while also approaching the object more closely. And finally, in medium shot they come closer yet—as the camera approaches, so too do characters (we feel the presence of the cameraman here, as later, at Tycho, we shall in fact see him)—some being so bold as to touch and smell it. And then cut to—an "alignment" of monolith, sun, and planet.

Followed by the first great dramatic turn in the film, the ape's discovery of the bone as both a tool and as a weapon—and simultaneously, his capacity to think. He is crouched before a pile of bones, foraging. He stops, his head held down, as if something has just occurred to him; he seems to *consider* something, though he may not quite know what it might be or even what that act of considering might mean—and he slightly *tilts* his head up. This is followed by a quick cutaway to the monolith and the alignment. Then cut back to the ape,[10] his head turning left and right, head *thinking* and eyes *glancing* (as the astronaut will later glance toward the bed in the Regency Room). He begins to inspect and to toy with one of the bones at his feet, slowly swinging it against the ground and the other bones; the *Zarathustra* music is heard, the banging increasing, the arm stretching wider, the rhythm accelerating. Then cut to an empty sky—*empty space*—that is taken over by the ape's arm in firm vigorous motion, rising, bone in hand, then coming down, and cut again to a *low-angled* shot of the bone striking the bones of the skeleton, causing other bones and smashed fragments to fly into the air (*across the frame, and toward the screen*); then he strikes the skull and as it shatters the film cuts to a shot that is strictly *out of continuity* (but somehow fitting in this very dramatic moment) of a tapir, felled and falling heavily to the ground[11]. Then cut again to a remarkable close-up of the ape's face, mouth wide open, arm with bone rising into the air, and again the shot of the arm against the sky, and then very rapidly cut shots of the ape—the lust fully upon him now, smashing, smashing, smashing—then another cutaway of a falling tapir, and finally a low-angle medium shot of the entire ape in *slow-motion*, *bursting the bounds of the confining frame*, savagely, wildly exultant, torso twisting and arms flung open, bone cast aside, wholly spent.[12]

While humans are certainly evolving fast here so too is cinema. Slow-motion, rapid cutting, a strong awareness of the frame's liminal qualities: it is not that the ape has become bigger than life, bigger than cinema, but rather, he has become bigger than *this sort* of life, *this sort* of cinema.

The final section opens with a view of an open plain. The ape comes, as it were, onstage, or *into-frame from off-screen*, taking over the "empty" landscape, frame, screen. That is, where just earlier we'd seen an arm intrude into the "empty" frame/space of the sky, now the entire body does. We are again at the watering hole. He walks in then, bone in one hand, raw meat in another. A group of apes (clutching bones) is in the background, another group jumps about in the foreground (again, as if in shadow-play). Then the attack. In a variety of shots and views (medium and long, from close to the apes and from behind). An ape is struck, then again; other apes come forward, they strike the felled ape; the defenseless apes move farther back. The attackers have triumphed—the group together in medium shot—they stand boldly, bark and growl. And finally, cut to the ape "leader"—in "plan Américain"—exultant, bone in hand, he twists his body, lets go the bone, cut to another shot of the sky, the flung bone rising in it, the camera rising too, cut almost invisibly as it flies even higher, and just as it is beginning its descent, *cut*.

Let me summarize how I believe "The Dawn of Man" functions as a very clear example of cinema's early development (its first two decades, say). The film begins with a slide-show of nine photographs; with the tenth the camera moves, announcing cinema proper: movement, time, an observer. As the scene develops, we move slightly forward in early cinematic form; the camera itself may not move, but whatever action there is is confined to within the frame; there is no sense of off-screen space. The first attack at the watering hole represents another and crucial step in the development of cinematic techniques as the shots alternate from one group of apes to another. This is not true cross-cutting between two distant scenes, but the hint of its possibility is there. We also continue to see a bit more shadow-play. A few of the shots in the next section, the "night of fear," resemble tinted images; it also contains another crucial technique, the close-up. Then comes the discovery of the monolith. At first it is seen in long shot, then medium, then closer yet: the camera has learned to create drama through variation in shot length and scale. Things become more sophisticated and complex in the next scene when the ape discovers his weapon. Besides some slow-motion (a variation in natural time) and an insert of a felled animal (another temporal or imaginative variation), we also sense a striking awareness of the frame's space as an arm moves into an empty frame. This sense of space is brought forward once more in the next segment as an ape moves in from off-screen on to the empty plain. Finally, in the second

attack, while again we get some shadow-play, the cutting is much more rapid and to far greater dramatic effect. Overall, it as if we are watching "Griffith and Company" putting together the basic elements of classical film narration, the result being an exciting short film that might be called "Ambush at the Watering Hole."[13]

What is the lesson here? It is simple: A primitive time demands a primitive cinema.[14] Or, to reverse Garrett Stewart's terms: This movie about the past tends to be about the past of movies.

Bone/Cut/Ship

The cut has been called the "most spectacular ellipsis in cinematic history,"[15] and "the triumph of Icarus. The victory over gravity."[16] But what does it mean? In a stroke, Kubrick is saying that between that "dawn" and now *nothing important* in human existence has happened. ("But, but," we almost hear ourselves exclaiming, "what about Dante, Velázquez, Keaton?") It is then an astonishing flash-forward, not for what it drives us toward, but for what, it—in its violent imaginativeness—denies[17], and drives us away from, including the *fall* back to earth of the bone, *that* victory *of* gravity.[18]

But is the cut really a flash-forward? Perhaps not, as there is no necessary relation between the two scenes, other than the resemblance of the two objects. The two shots rhyme (as shapes) as much as they separate (as objects); but they are also part of a continuity: the film, remember, is still under the sign of "The Dawn of Man." Or: this is not (only) a flash-forward; it is the oldest trick in the cinematic book, the first cinematic special effect: shoot, stop the camera, shoot something else, so that the transition looks like magic. It is, at last, Méliès.

2001 And Cinema's Genres

Just as the cut dispenses with all that came between those two moments—from the time of the ape's triumph to man's leaving his earthbound existence behind (And again we cry, "But Goya!, Baudelaire!, Mizoguchi! What about them?")—so for now *2001* will use the bare bones of narrative before leaping beyond even those in the final two sections of the film.[19] Those "bare bones" will reform themselves into three genres in the film's long middle section until humanity (or at least the astronaut-hero) is ready to take the next big step in human evolution via the Star Gate and on to the Regency Room. Until then *2001* will allusively and abstractly parody three major genres—the Musical, Film Noir, and Melodrama. In them conventional cinema reveals its self-exhaustion. The Family is split: Daddy mouths platitudes; Mommy has gone shopping; and Daughter ("Squirt"—a

reference to her origins?) wants yet another toy. The Thriller is still about America versus Russia, but their stand-off is boiled down to an "I'm sorry, but I'm not at liberty to discuss the matter." And Romance? A stewardess wrapped from head to toe puts a strapped-in traveler's "pen" safely back where it belongs—no chance at romance here.

2001 As Musical

The bone-become-ship scene opens with a variety of views of a variety of ships and heavenly bodies—the passenger plane Orion, the great double-wheeled space station circling upon itself, earth, moon, sun—forward, back, up, down, across. All this is accompanied by Johann Strauss's "Blue Danube Waltz." The cliché is unavoidable: this is a "music of the spheres," a choreography of benign heavenly order. In film genre terms, *2001* has become a science-fiction musical,[20] and as such joins a very small company, most notably *Just Imagine* (David Butler, 1930). But here the dance partners—Astaire and Rodgers being our ideal—have been abstracted to a sleekness even they could never have imagined, though the beauty of their black and white forms remains. This opening is interrupted by a cutaway to inside the Orion where we see Dr. Heywood Floyd asleep, a *video monitor* on the rear of the seat before him, his pen (shaped like the bone and ship) floating in air. A stewardess enters—stepping very carefully thanks to her "Grip Shoes"—retrieves the pen and places it securely in the breast-pocket of the sleeping passenger.[21]

Then back to the Musical. The ships weave in and out, approach and depart in a kind of playful manner until Orion is poised to enter the shuttle. This is a taut and delicate moment; the dance has become a seduction. The small, winged Orion seems to hover in space like a tiny hummingbird about to taste the nectar of some weird flower. Just before Orion's entry, Kubrick cuts to what must certainly be one of the most beautiful (and neglected) shots in the film. It begins abstractly, with fuzzy white light at the very borders of the frame, and a bluish-purplish foggy-starry interior, which very quickly focuses into a rearward zoom from somewhere in the center of the huge ringed ship, and which momentarily sections off outer space as a rectangular *frame-within-a-frame* revealing at the end not only the spectacular immensity of the shuttle/hotel, but also more and more *windows/screens*—in some of which we see people moving about (both upright and upside down!). The vaguely framed foggy space is now fully framed by a trapezoid of white light. (Figure 1a, b) The scene concludes with the double-wheeled ship *revolving* and approaching the screen until it passes beyond.

Following Floyd's encounter with the Russians, the landing at Clavius is a gracefully edited sequence of twelve shots: we see two pilots in their cabin

Figure 1. (a) Space frame. (b) Multiplex 1.

with seemingly very little to do but look through a large, two-part *window/screen (or eye* of some monstrous head as this is what their ship resembles). Our notions of scale and distance are upset[22]; only in retrospect, do we come to understand the nature of this lunar base with its domed roof. But at the landing's conclusion we are again astonished to see the base with its massive interior, a red, hexagonal space with immense *window-screens* revealing rooms in which again we can observe people moving about. (Figure 2) This remarkable sequence ends with the final flourish of the "Blue Danube." Music, dance and seduction—all we expect from a great Musical: It is a bravura performance.

Screenings 1: Anti-Cinema

There are even more screens in the scene of Floyd's speech on Clavius, a neat and subtle piece of political power.[23] It is delivered in a strange, unsettling conference room whose four walls are largely pure *white rectangles*.

Figure 2. Multiplex 2, Clavius.

They do not seem to be windows as nothing is seen through them. (Presumably, the scene takes place underground, so what would they reveal but lunar rock?) They could be *screens* or *light boxes*—but again, showing nothing. Here is a group of officials who might be said to be *surrounded by cinema* but are oblivious to it. But for all the blindness here, there is the narcissistic presence of a dandyish photographer skipping about and recording images. Floyd is as charming to his fellow country men and women as he was to his rival Russian colleagues. He reminds his audience of the need for "absolute secrecy" and concludes by informing them—he acts as if he had just remembered it—that they will all have to sign a "formal security oath." This is antithetical cinema. Garrett Stewart (1998, 108, 109) rightly and cleverly mocks Floyd's speech in terms of its *mise-en-scène* as being both a "whitewash" and a "*screening out*" of the truth (emphasis his).

Floyd continues his dominance in the flight to Tycho to see the monolith for himself. One of the men remarks that the thing they are talking about "seems to have been deliberately buried," to which Floyd—in a shot that isolates him in his response—repeats the last two words, guffaws, shakes his head—and *like the ape—seems to think to himself* for a brief instant—and then asks, "Well, I don't suppose you have any idea what the damn thing is, huh?" Finally, another landing takes place, during which we cut to another strange and beautiful shot of a purple-lit interior, where an unknown man observes the landing on both a monitor and yet one more *rectangular window/screen*. (Figure 3) As the ghostly voices of Ligeti's "Requiem" is heard, space-suited men enter an excavation site—*looking not unlike a film set*—from off-screen. They march forward. Floyd approaches closer; obviously he feels—*like the apes millions of years before*—the need to touch "the damn thing."[24] He does so, the lights glowing brightly white

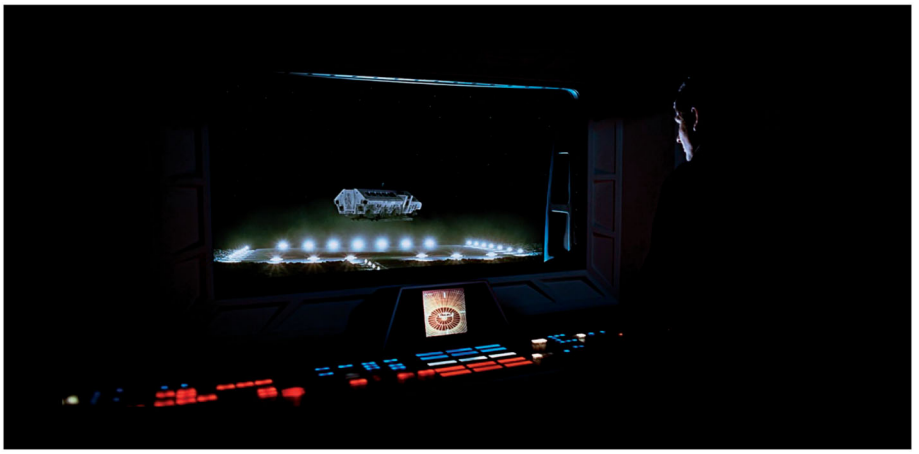


Figure 3. The unknown watcher.

and yellow and reflecting off of the monolith, then red and violet as he touches it. As the loud, high-pitched signal begins to resound in everyone's helmets, the handheld camera moves forward and in an over-the-shoulder shot we see Floyd turn round to gaze up at the monolith and to observe another alignment of monolith, sun and planet, and—cut.[25]

Howard Hawks at Tycho

We know that in preparing his film, Kubrick looked at an immense number of science fiction films, both good and bad,[26] including Howard Hawks's production of *The Thing from Another Planet*, which, though credited to Christian Nyby, was in fact primarily directed by Hawks.[27] I believe that the scene of the men at Tycho is inspired by a scene from *The Thing*, and as such serves as both quotation of and homage to Hawks. Such instances are certainly rare in Kubrick's oeuvre, and this one is so indirect that few would have noticed it at the time (in fact I have no knowledge of anyone ever having done so), and if they had, they might only have responded, "Christian who?" (This question of indirect homage will become even more acute when I later consider Max Ophuls.)

The scene I am referring to in *The Thing* comes early in the film when the military men and the scientist go to investigate the landing—crashing, really—of an alien vessel on the North Pole. Like Floyd and his men, they fly to a strange, barren landscape; as the monolith site has been excavated, so the alien ship's site has been cleared away as a result of its crash and subsequent burial in ice; the two are also singularly shaped, the ship being described as "perfect … round." (As seen through the ice; the men and we are only able to see what appears like a fin.) However, In both scenes, the men approach the anomaly in a group, though in Hawks's case certainly

less processionally. There is a moment of metaphysical awe in *The Thing* as the men spread out to determine the size and shape of the ship; as they reach its outer limits, their arms extended, the group forms a ring of crosses. Instead of being called a "damn thing," the ship is referred as "a weird-looking thing." And where the monolith is judged to have been there for four million years; the (mad) scientist in *The Thing* speaks of having "the key to the stars, a million years of history are waiting for us in that ice." Floyd receives a briefing at Clavius and while on board, while here a briefing is made at the site. In both films a photographer is present. And again in both, a man reaches out to touch the mysterious object. Both films too are concerned with evolution and alien intelligence. Their great differences lie in their political messages. Hawks's team is informal and includes a woman, confident and undaunted. Kubrick's group is spearheaded by a single man in charge, no questions asked. Resemblance? Certainly. Homage? Probably.

Two Genres, Two Deaths

Two dramatic turns of events occur when the astronaut Frank Poole (Gary Lockwood) and HAL are eliminated, one after the other. The first is sudden, unexpected, and cold-blooded (or however one calls a murder by computer). The second is slow, cool and methodical (murder by astronaut), and comes compete with an aria. What makes these interesting is not only how they are performed cinematically, but how the two deaths can be read generically: Film Noir for Frank, and Melodrama for HAL.

The Death of Frank Poole

HAL has alerted the astronauts to some trouble with the AE35. Dave Bowman (Keir Dullea) has gone EVA and retrieved and brought it back on board the Discovery to test it. But it seems to be alright. Puzzled, and suspecting that something has gone wrong with HAL instead, Frank and Dave converse privately, not knowing that HAL can read their lips. Frank now goes EVA to return the AE35 for further testing, while Dave waits for him in a pod, a monitor showing Frank's actions. HAL knows the game is up. In long-shot, we see Frank move between the pod and the ship, but then, strangely, the pod—its arms slightly akimbo, four bright, eye-like headlights shining—turns on its axis. In the next shot, the pod dominates the frame; it is still turning round and stretching out its arms, which divide into claw-like parts. A medium close-up reveals a HAL "eye panel" just below the large window-eye of the pod. Then in rapid succession, come four more shots, each closer and closer—cut!, cut!, cut!, cut!—to HAL's eye and the

burning red core that is its center. Cut quickly to Dave, his head turned away from his screen; he turns to look and cut to his view of the monitor and Frank whirling past the antenna, out of the monitor's frame; then cut to Frank twirling silently in space, struggling for his life.

This *coup de théatre* is a beautiful, cinematic death. It is also Kubrick's variation on Film Noir stylistics: the weird, quasi-expressionist composition of the shot of the ship's rib-section at a diagonal; the large, round killing-machine pod dominating the right of the screen, and tiny Frank in between; the luminous whites of the two ships and the deep blacks of space. The turning pod and its unfolding arms evoke so many suspenseful moments when we do not know if a character is going to prove to be benign or malign. The silent "cut!, cut!, cut!" replaces the conventional "bang!, bang!, bang!."

Dave maneuvers the pod toward Frank, the lights reflecting on his face. He is *absorbing light*; and for one moment the lights even seem to form a small mask around his eyes. A long shot shows us once again the ship's entire length across the screen, the tiny pod moving below it and forward. We watch Dave at work: focused on the view out the window, and at the various monitors around him. He is a total professional, wholly in control, without a doubt in his mind. (This short bit, in which Kier Dullea shifts between looks forward though the window or rapid glances in different directions is a beautifully controlled piece of acting.) Then, having had to abandon Frank's body and needing to reboard the ship, Dave bursts through the airlock, until, in *the film's only dissolve* we see Dave, now helmeted, marching determinedly forward, not unlike how we initially saw him: but this time, instead of seeming to emerge from the "HAL eye," he is entering it, dominating it, ready to extract revenge. (Figure 4a, b) The dissolve shows him taking over as the eye fades away and Dave strides forward. A dissolve, is usually used to elide two disparate places and times. Here instead, Kubrick uses the dissolve almost viscerally; elision is secondary to what the dissolve's essential nature is: the physical taking over of one image by another. (One is tempted to say, the violent overthrow of one reality by another.)

The Murder of HAL 9000

Dave passes through an ante-chamber, then via a ladder he proceeds up a passage ribbed in white padding, the camera directly below him (in a Kubrick "crotch shot," one might say); he exits through a door just where the second section of the passage begins, looking somewhat intestinal or even anal. The set and its lighting are visceral, and for a moment it seems that Kubrick here is prefiguring contemporary "body horror." A door slides open and Dave emerges into a small room. HAL remarks apologetically, "I

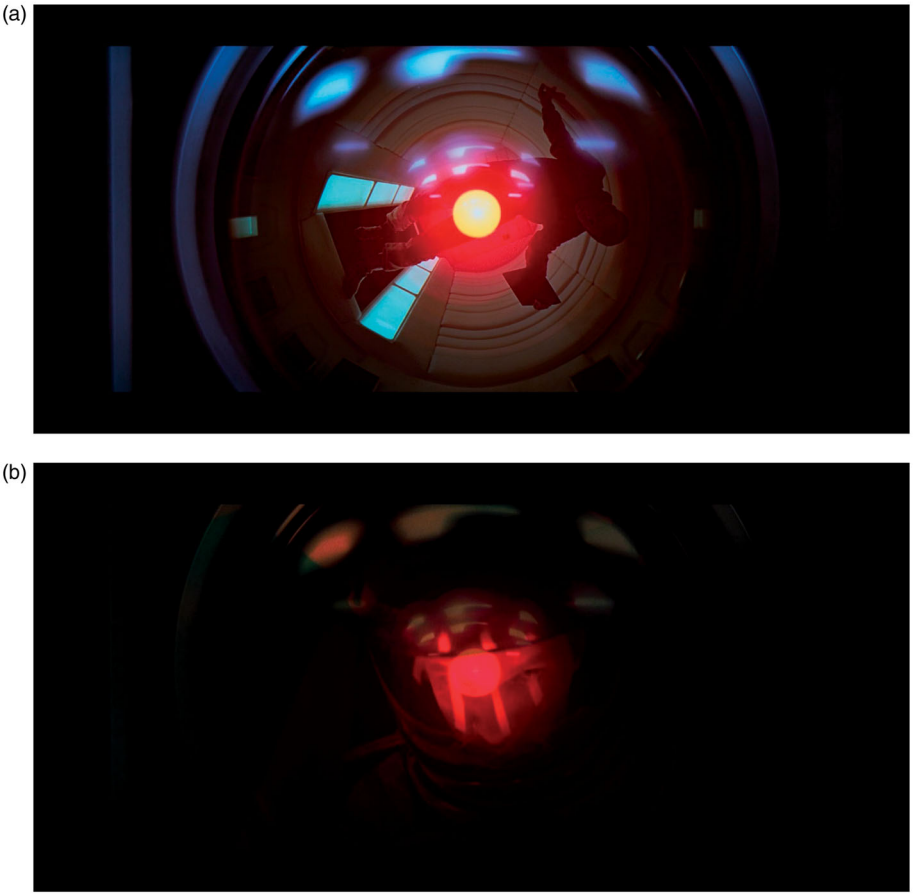


Figure 4. (a) Dave emerges from HAL's eye. (b) Dave overtakes HAL.

know everything hasn't been quite right with me, but I can assure you now, very confidently, that it's going to be alright again." The camera at a very low angle, we observe Dave full-length from below. HAL's voice is slower than usual, and obviously very worried; he now definitely has "genuine emotions." ("I feel much better now, I really do.") Dave enters the "Logic Memory Center" and floats up into the tall room—toward us. We see the room reflected in HAL's red eye like an x-ray through the eye and into the brain. In an overhead shot we see Dave twisting a key in what look like rows of modern-day hard disks, or small screens (or even small, white monoliths). They make the room—HAL's brain, recall ("Dave, my mind is going. I can feel it. I can feel it.")—into another metaphoric multiplex. In a word, the brain is a cinema. And its workings—thought—are its movies. While in this closer view we can see Dave's visor, we cannot see his face inside it; he is continuing to *absorb light*, presaging his later transfiguration. From below, he seems to float freely in the space of the room.

("I'm a- …fraid. Good afternoon, gentlemen. I am a HAL 9000 computer. I became operational at the H. A. L. plant in Urbana, Illinois on the twelfth of January, 1992. [The third birthday of the film!] My instructor was Mr. Langley, and he taught me to sing a song. If you'd like to hear it, I can sing it for you"). Dave finally speaks: "Yes, I'd like to hear it, HAL. Sing it for me." And he begins, "It's called 'Daisy.' 'Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer do./I'm half crazy, all for the love of you," and then a close-up of Dave's face, and finally the words deteriorate into pure distorted sound as HAL reverts to the condition of a computer-ape.

And then the other voice. "Good day, Gentlemen."

2001 As a Melodrama

HAL's death is for many the emotional highpoint of the film. (Though for me it is the ape's discovery of the bone's potential.) We have seen this entity change from one that is perfectly calm, controlled and confident to one that is scheming, then murderous, and finally cowering and pleading for his life. His trajectory is high-pitched melodrama. But is it tragedy as well? This depends on how we are to account for his story about the AE35. Is it hubris, overweening pride that causes him to make up the story and take over the ship? As he tells Dave, "This mission is too important for me to allow you to jeopardize it. "But if he plans to see the mission through on his own, then this must surely be foolishness when we consider that he had first tried to "seduce" Dave into joining him. By choosing to go it alone he is surely acting out of pique. After all, he certainly needs Dave more than Dave needs him.

In some strange generic mix his story might be called "The Romance of the Revenge of the Rejected Virgin." Return to the "attempted seduction" scene. The lines are clearly drawn: Frank Poole is a bit of a bully and thinks HAL an inferior being. Dave Bowman, on the other hand, is sensitive (he sketches), he is gentle (those eyes), and he takes HAL seriously as an equal partner. He is also open to the possibility of HAL developing "genuine emotions." And so HAL does develop them—whether or not they are "genuine" is beside the point. What is important is that HAL *thinks* his "emotions" are "genuine," and one of the first of these is fear. He knows that there is a mystery behind the Jupiter mission; but he does not know what it is or what it may entail. His fear of the unknown prompts him to attempt to enlist Dave's partnership. He may hint around his fear ("I'm just projecting my own concerns"), but would not admit it, for that would result in the crew having serious concerns about his capabilities. He must then appear strong and concerned for the crew and its mission. At the same time, HAL is "testing the waters" of his new-found emotional side.

He is, in a word, virginal when it comes to matters of the heart. And so he appeals to Dave for understanding, acceptance, and bravery. But, Dave rejects him. Dave perceives nothing of his state, and like Frank, sees him only as a machine—important, but not unexpendable—that is meant to keep the ship running and the mission on target. It is a cruel blow, and HAL knows of no way to react other than hysterically. First get rid of Frank and the three hibernating crew members. And as for clever Dave? A grandiose death: silence and exile—but he does not count on Dave's cunning (to invoke Stephen Dedalus's trinity).

But Dave really is clever, and brave, and survives HAL's attempt to get rid of him, and then wreaks his own horrible revenge. One of the funnier comments about HAL was by the *Newsweek* reviewer who said that HAL "turns on its crew and carries on like an injured party in a homosexual spat" (Schwam 2000, 176), a comment that is not wholly inaccurate. Other reviewers wondered if HAL were gay (see Schwam 2000, 165, and Agel 1968, 276[28]), and though Kubrick denied it (Philips 2001, 94), in his diary entry for October 17, 1964, Clarke wrote, "Stanley has invented the wild idea of slightly fag robots who create a Victorian environment to put our heroes at their ease." (Clarke 1972, 34). The robots became the unseen intelligences behind the monolith; the Victorian room became Regency; the heroes became Dave alone; and the "slightly fag," I would suggest, became an element in HAL's character. HAL's emotions are brand new; from what we learn and see of him, his sole "social" experience has been among men; he has had very little experience of women; indeed, we might even wonder what sort of sexual knowledge he possesses. Too, does he even know what he wants from Dave? Strength, companionship? Not only is he virginal, he is also—looking after the crew and supporting them—maternal. As hinted at above, Dave enters, or takes HAL from behind. Worse than screwing HAL, Dave unscrews him. And it is at this moment that HAL proclaims his fulfillment: "I can feel it." And, he declares his love, and his fault. "Daisy, Daisy"[29]—read "Davey, Davey"—"I'm half crazy, all for the love of you." Why "half-crazy"? First, it implies that he is also half-sane; this is his mechanical side. His craziness then must stem from his human side, his being a human product, and his maker's awful decision to design him so that he "acts like he has genuine emotions," infecting him thus with the human stain. But too he is crazy in love. And so in true melodramatic fashion we have seen this calm and sophisticated creature turn to murderous evil and finally to sentimentality and in the end devolve back to babbling incomprehension. As we have seen Kubrick rework cinema's period of classic narrative development and the Musical, so here he performs the same with Melodrama, but one that is both rarefied and skewed. Again, simply look at the cutting of the scene. Though confined to rather small

spaces, it is in its own way operatic: shot types, angles and sizes vary, from the conventional move in from long to medium to close-up; to the narcissism of the many self-reflecting shots (Dave seen in HAL's eye, HAL's brain in Dave's visor), and especially the dramatic shot of Dave, all-powerful now, floating freely in HAL's very interior, a phallic invasion indeed. The colors are über, abstracted Sirkian: pure white, glowing red. The sounds, an ominous buzzing, Dave's heavy breathing (passionate, but decidedly not loving), and HAL's long, desperate monologue. This monologue too is the very stuff of melodrama: repetitious (repetition unto death!), self-justifying, pleading, and in "Daisy, "Daisy," a last attempt by the fearful and masochistic HAL to soothe and win back the cruel lover's heart. Oddly, movingly, "Daisy, Daisy" becomes HAL's *Liebestod*.

2001 As a Film Noir

But this, the great romance of the film, is not merely the tale of a spurned lover, it is also the tale of the spurned one's extreme revenge. Consider it as a Noir plot involving a gang of five men, plus one young woman. She's brainy, but no looker. However, she knows all the codes necessary to the high-risk, tell-no-one job. Then, suddenly, she wants all the loot for herself, plus the guy she's fallen hard for. But he coolly rejects her as being just a "dumb kid," and so she impulsively decides to kill 'em all. She succeeds with the first four, but Dave, as he is called, manages to overcome her, and in an awful denouement, just as she declares her love to him, he—his eyes solely on the job—gets rid of her: point blank through the brain. He goes on to see the nightmarish job through on his own. In this regard then, the melodramatic woman of the section above has turned into the avenging femme fatale of Film Noir; HAL becomes the combined Kathie Moffat and Phyllis Dietrichson of Science Fiction.[30] Too, HAL is a mastermind who thinks of himself as superior to humans, and with all available technologies at his hand; in this regard he is not unlike one of Fritz Lang's master criminals, Dr Mabuse or Haghi,[31] who sends out his minions (the pod) to do his dirty work. What a complex character then is HAL—pubescent adolescent, fully sexualized femme fatale, and master criminal!

Screenings 2: "the World Tonight" and Other Movies in 2001

Not only is 2001 filled with he signs of cinema's presence—screens and seeming-stage sets, etc.—but too there are many other, smaller "movies" in the film. To begin with, there are two brief views of films glimpsed on monitors during the flight to the Moon. The first is the one that is not being watched by a sleeping Dr. Floyd and consists of at least ten shots: a zoom in from a landscape to an automobile, followed by a two-shot of a

couple conversing; most of the rest of the shots are singles of each person: they are, in fact, shot/reverse-shots.[32] This is basic classical cinema indeed: a man and a woman, a car and a landscape (only a gun is missing). Commentators seem to assume that this is an in-flight movie; but mightn't it simply be a television commercial? Kubrick admitted to admiring their economy and expressiveness.[33] The second in-flight film is of a Judo tournament (in widescreen) glimpsed in the ship taking Floyd to the moon. A third "film" is the prerecorded "Voice-Print Identification," something from out of Floyd's world of security and surveillance.

But the first "film" of any length is Dr. Floyd's video telephone call to his daughter. Besides the slight thrill that it offered to 1968 viewers of how the telephone's capacity might develop, it is also seems that in the future telephone cameras will be able to track the participants in a phone call. Besides the screen being now in portrait mode, the video camera here tilts and pans along with Squirt as she moves nervously about. (Just as HAL will be seen to have panning abilities when his view switches from Dave to Frank and back again in the lip-reading scene—not to mention his skill at lip-reading on the perpendicular!)

More significant than these brief examples is the BBC's "The World Tonight." It serves its purpose by filling in some expository material (the hibernating astronauts, HAL). But it is a very curious show in that it begins with questions about hibernation—a sort of half-state life—and concludes with questions about HAL—unnatural though life-like in some regards—and without any inquiries about those actively living on the ship, Bowman and Poole. Nor are there any questions about the mission itself (or none that we hear); like Floyd's talk on the Moon, it seems to function then as some sort of cover-up, carefully scripted but meant to appear spontaneous. Notice, for example, how, at the beginning, when the interviewer asks the astronauts, "How's everything going?," first Dave says, "Marvelous," and then Frank begins with a somewhat nervous, "Have no—," stumbles, and Dave laughs and takes over, with the full phrase, "We have no complaints." Has the line been scripted but badly rehearsed? And if scripted, then by whom—Heywood Floyd? Notice too the narcissistic eagerness with which Dave and Frank watch their performances.

The call to Squirt can be juxtaposed with the call to Frank from his parents. They have called to wish him a happy birthday. The *mise-en-scène* here is certainly dull: the father wears dark clothes against a dark background, the mother light against light, signifying familial division. Between them is a diamond shaped, gold-ringed birthday cake. They babble on, keeping up a steady patter so as to drown out the familial silence. The call is only alleviated by a beautiful cut-away close-up of Frank, eyes seemingly shut in indifference, head slightly askew, in orange glasses, and with an abstract pattern of color behind him. (Figure 5) This is, apparently, not a

Figure 5. Abstract Frank.

telephone call, but rather a time-delayed "transmission." And so, appropriately, there is no conversation possible between parents and son, and when the Father signs off with "See you next Wednesday," we know that no one really sees anyone here. (As mentioned above, Romance is dead here; so too it seems is the Family.)

"Good day, gentlemen." This is another *coup de cinéma* with the moment of HALs death arriving with the moment of revelation. It is so unexpected (but too, a near echo of the just heard phrase of HAL's, "Good afternoon, gentlemen"—two death forces coinciding in their false politesse), that at first Dave does not even seem to react; a split second later he glances four times about himself, and then has to twist his suited, helmeted body back and around to discover where the voice is coming from. (As earlier, Floyd and his crew twisted in their suits and helmets when they heard the monolith's signal.) Another shot from beneath him—his feet free of any surface—shows, screen-left, a monitor (in square format) on what we take to be the ceiling of the chamber. Dr. Heywood Floyd is speaking. There is no close-up of the video monitor, he is kept at a distance in this strange *mise-en-scène*. He sits hunched before a desk, a white disk surrounding him—like what, a lunar god, a sainted interstellar traveler?—and a smaller disk/planet in the upper right corner. What has become of the lunar flaneur, the jaunty Dr. Floyd? He has become the penultimate man—Dave shall be the last, and the first. The light from the monitor is strobing rapidly.[34] The voice continues, "Eighteen months ago the first evidence of intelligent life off the Earth was discovered. It was buried forty feet below the lunar surface near the crater Tycho. [...] its origin and purpose still a total mystery." These are the last words spoken in the film, which has yet another thirty minutes to go. The majority of this short part of this scene is a close-up of Dave, his helmet at a slight angle, his eyes looking forward,

trying to comprehend, plus the red light of the room and the white light of the video flashing on his visor. Again, he is taking in *everything:* the message and, especially, the light. His red eye-visor has now replaced HAL's red eye. Inside the brain-room, he watches a projected image that is also reflected on his face/screen. He is *becoming his own cinematic apparatus*. For now, the overall *mise-en-scène* is one of sound and language embodying themselves as light. It really is cinema, and the perfect foretaste of what is to come for the cinematic man of the future.[35]

The Star Gate: Purgation of Cinema

The Star Gate is preceded by a sort of "prologue" that is also a return to the Musical, but this time even more abstract and decidedly avant-garde. Now it really is a case of a "music of the spheres" as the many dance partners are in fact a planet, moons and a monolith choreographed to the music of Ligeti's "Requiem." The sequence consists of only nine shots, beginning with five tilts (down, up, up, down, down), a pan left, two still shots, and ending with one last tilt up when all the elements are in unison, forming yet another conjunction. I cannot think of a single sequence in film history so dominated by and articulated so thoroughly by tilts. We have seen a fondness for using the tilt throughout the film—indeed, it was used to signal the first instance of the cinematic in that tenth sunrise. The tilts here serve as a sharp contrast to what is to follow, much of it seeming to be a very long zoom. Vision tilts upwards and then moves forwards—very positive movement indeed. Too, they serve to "cleanse" the viewer's vision, removing us from the conventions of establishing shots, and preparing us instead for something entirely different, a much expanded cinema. Having seen its way past cinema's generic modes then, the film explodes into what must certainly be for the vast majority of its viewers their most sustained exposure to or experience of experimental cinema, perhaps the most expensive experimental film ever made.[36]

The Star Gate can be divided into four sections: Douglas Trumbull's "slit scan" method (vertical and horizontal), including four close-ups of Dave's twisted and distorted face; explosions (astral and organic); crystalline images; and landscapes (horizontal and solarized split-screens).

Very near the beginning of the first section, as the pod shakes violently, Dave opens his eyes wide in wonderment and shock; then as the light strikes sharper and faster he tightens them (turning his own vision into slits). Throughout the film, we—and he—have been preparing for this moment: we have seen Dave's face reflect and take in light; apprenticeship is over, he must now become a body of light.[37] (Figure 6a–c)

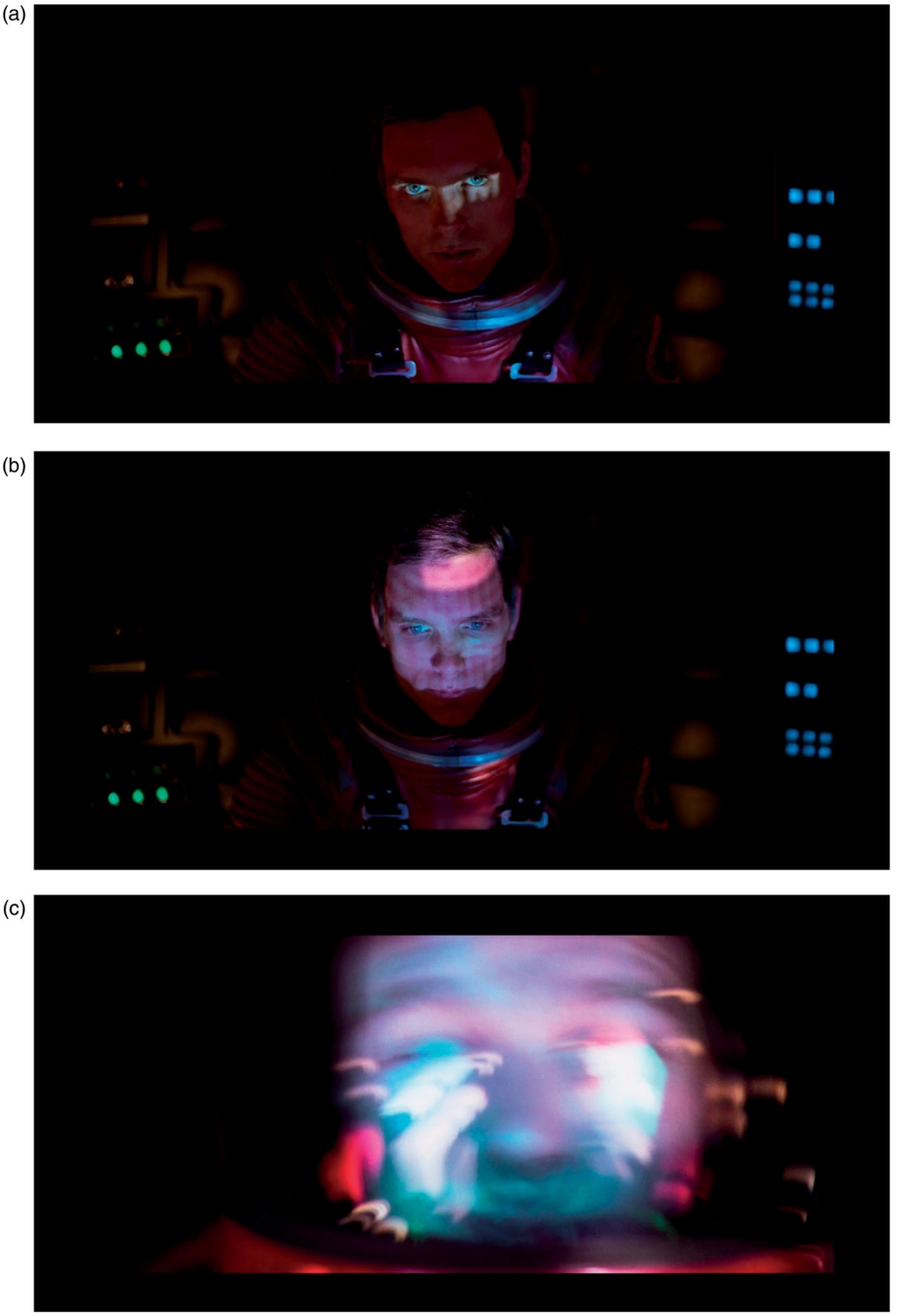


Figure 6. (a) Dave masked in light. (b) Dave absorbing light. (c) Dave overcome by light.

The transitions between each section are marked by a solarized negative of Dave's eye.[38] Each close-up seems to "give birth" to the following section thus: we see the eye, it blinks, and the next section begins.

Then (in the second section) we see and hear a stellar explosion that also resembles an eye, as if the finite were being answered by the infinite; as if Dave's human look was giving birth to a vision of (cosmic) birth. A zoom in cuts to a view of cosmic growth, a spiraling nebula of a universe; this then cuts to a view of a single star shining so brightly in its maturity that it has brightened the normally dark space around it; it too could be the pinpoint of light at the center of an eye. This all seems then to be a kind of "mini-cosmic" narrative of birth, growth and development. These images of growth are followed by the sounds of more explosive, sidereal births: blood red, mouth or eye, foetus-like, even placental or spermatic, in all of which light bursts forth.

The next sections are relatively brief (and once more zooms). We see five, and then seven diamond-like objects; light now in a non-organic, sparkling and crystalline form.[39] Then we see the screen split horizontally, two solarized landscapes; because the higher one is lighter (light blue) than the lower (dark blue and red), it feels like the shot is upside-down.

Finally, we come to something familiar and real: landscapes. (Again in negative; they were shot in the Hebrides and Monument Valley—Kubrick taking John Ford into the next century.) Mesas and valleys, mountains and seas, bizarrely colored, are slowly zoomed over; vasts of solid space here become defamiliarized landscapes that might possess solidity and weight, but are here transformed into shades and degrees of light: the world is all surface and texture, light made solid.[40]

The scene ends—or the next one begins—with another close-up of Dave's eye; but this time each time he blinks the colors change; this occurs seven times; at the last, polarization is at an end, and we see his eye, human, flesh. But there is a little drama here too. In the first part of the shot, Dave actually blinks four times until his eye changes from red and blue to red and green; thereafter each single blink effects a color change. In a word, he is learning to see, learning his new art of vision; he has, as the next scene will show, turned himself into a camera, his eye its shutter.[41] It is a process of self-discovery and empowerment, not unlike what the ape experienced in the "Dawn of Man." As the ape turned the bone back and forth until he saw the logic of striking and hitting, so Dave blinks and blinks again until he learns to "strike" his eyelids close and open and thus take control of his visionary destiny. The ape exults by throwing his bone into the air; Bowman exults by blinking once more and changing his world, changing his view, *projecting* himself forward into the cosmos.

As for the Star Gate possessing a narrative: It moves from a sort of linear geometry to organic scenes of cosmic creation (from birth to maturity), and then again from crystalline geometry to a fully formed (however wildly) landscaped world, as much cosmic as it is familiar and earthlike.

Bare-bones narrative, perhaps, but narrative nonetheless, a narrative in the most conventional sense, a narrative of the growth, development and transformation of an individual. The Star Gate is a *Bildungsroman* in miniature.

Images of Conception and Birth

Part of Dave's growth involves his learning that he is now in a position to take his destiny in hand by projecting himself forward into it. *2001* may not be known for its erotic qualities, but the erotic is certainly present.[42] Conception and birth occur throughout, just not where we expect to find them, between happy human couples. Instead they occur on the metaphorical and mechanical levels, and on the cosmic. Recall the hummingbird of the Orion hovering before the space shuttle, poised for penetration; the vaginal-like lunar base/multiplex; the pod exiting the Discovery, and then the birth-like emergence of Dave from the pod; and then in the Star Gate the many scenes of cosmic, explosive birth that seem as intimate and micro-cosmic as they do impersonal and macro-cosmic.[43] Their meaning, I think, is simple enough: just as the major developments in the film are initiated by the alignment of sun, planet and monolith, so too, the film suggests, all forward movement—creation, progress, the new—is made possible by *conjunction*, union, call it sex if you will. These images assert that the erotic pervades, if not impels, the universe. (Figure 7a–g) Thus, just as the cosmos seems to be ever giving birth to itself so too will (must) the astronaut in order to continue his own forward journey "beyond the infinite."

The Star Gate as an Experimental Film

However strange, however different, *2001* remains a commercial, big studio production. What then is the status of the Star Gate as Experimental Cinema? Was Kubrick aware of what was going on in experimental cinema around the time of his making of *2001* (a very big "going on" admittedly)? Within the commercial strictures of his film's production too, we might suppose that he was aware not only of how far he could go—and he went very far, this too must be admitted—but also how far the viewer's cinematic experience needed to go: the film needed both Bowman and the viewer to undergo and sustain a visual experience unlike any they'd ever seen before. (Otherwise it would have been a mere "weird interlude," meaningless and quickly forgotten.) As a general statement, the Star Gate does succeed as an "experimental" film in its own right—again, nine and one-half minutes of sustained, (narratively) unexplained, and seemingly abstract pure visual and coloristic form.[44] Taken out of context, however, presented alone as a film, would these few minutes, again, succeed? Most probably. In the end, whether or not it "succeeds" in this way is beside

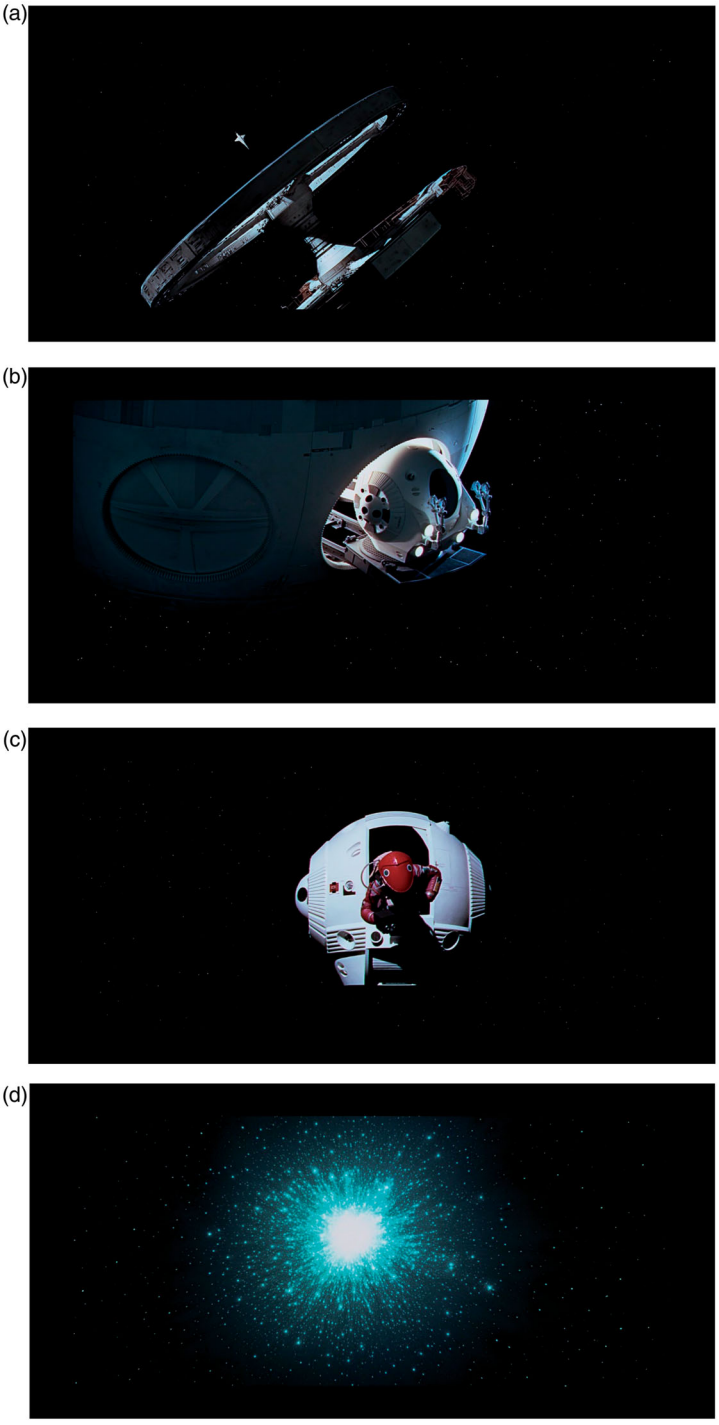


Figure 7. (a) The hummingbird. (b) Discovery gives birth. (c) A pod gives birth. (d) Explosive birth. (e) Cosmic life forms. (f) A pregnant cosmos. (g) Cosmic conception.

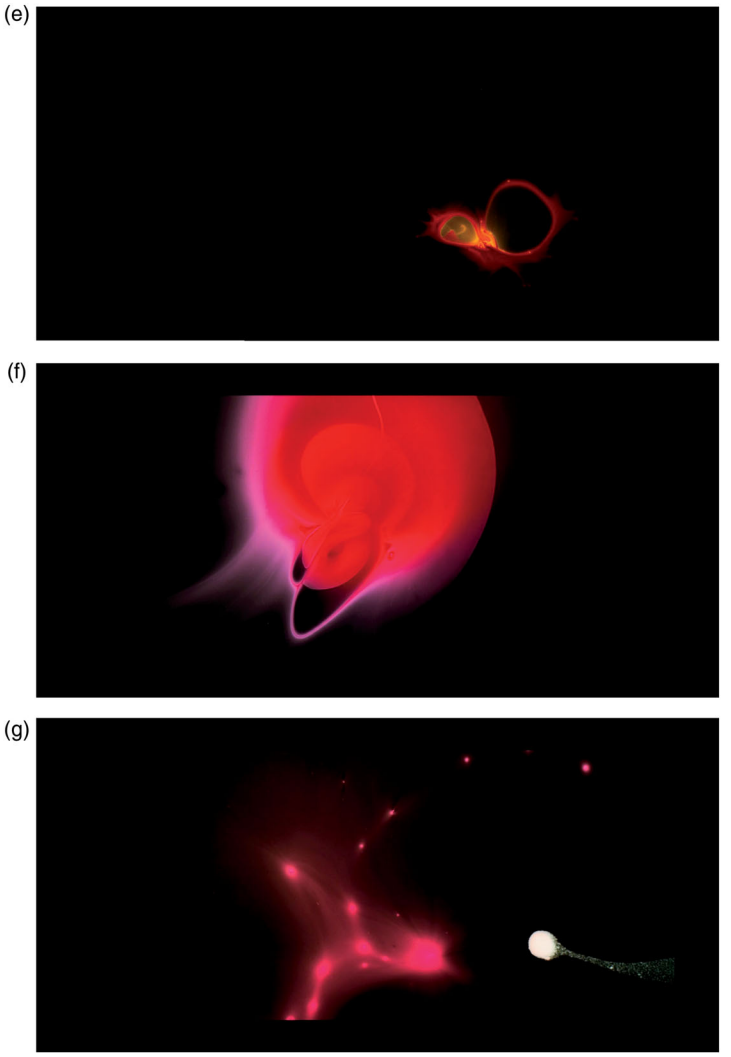


Figure 7. Continued.

the point—the point is simply that the sequence simply demonstrates that this too—no characters, no dialog, no story—is cinema, this too is possible. But the real experiment, the real challenge to both commercial and experimental cinema, lies in the scene to follow.

The Regency Room: The Future of Cinema/The Future of Man

What happens in the Regency room?[45] A man looks, walks across a room, looks again, he reaches across a table, a glass falls and breaks into pieces. (Like the smashed bones in "The Dawn of Man"; here too, the man looks at the fragments, and—as had the ape, as had Floyd—seems for a moment to reflect). Each time he looks he sees himself, but none of these looks is

exchanged, these are no conventional shot/reverse-shots, that editing technique most notoriously associated with classical Hollywood (and apart from those seen in the movie Dr. Heywood sleeps through in the Orion, wholly absent from *2001*[46]).

What a strange film this is! Once it leaves that weird beginning (apes in a science fiction film?), it plods along slowly (inside the great wheel) until it gets to where it seems to want to go (what will happen to Dave?), and then accelerates so fast that we can barely keep up with it (the Star Gate). Then, once its ending commences, we are back to a slowness that climaxes as much as it numbs (the Regency Room). This is a story that obeys no conventions in terms of narrative drive and that ends with the finality of a question that provides no answer, or should we say an answer for which we do not even know the question?

As with the site of "The Dawn of Man," we do not expect to see an eighteenth century room in a science fiction film. And so we are as surprised as Dave (Dave 1 we'll call him here, and number the others too) as he gazes at the room from within the pod. This is more than strange; in fact it is a new sort of beauty—or rather, an updating of one: this is Kubrick's version of Lautréamont's famous proto-Surrealist aphorism,[47] rewritten here as "Beautiful like an astronaut in a Regency room." But not only is the room strange, it is also in its way—coming just after the Star Gate—normal, even oddly reassuring: A big, comfy bed, a couple of genre scenes, the movie's first decent meal.[48]

The most extraordinary moment occurs when Dave 2 (now out of the pod), looking in the mirror, hears sounds of cutlery, turns his (reflected) head left (as his real body is turning right) as the camera pans along the bathroom wall, with the opening of the doorway at the center. A brief cutaway lets us know this is his point-of-view, and the pan continues. Throughout, we hear the sound of his breathing. The camera (and Dave 2) continue moving, the shot revealing the source of the sound: Dave 2 sees a man (Dave 3) eating at a table placed at about where the pod had stood. We hear Dave 2's breath, and the cutlery: the two exist in the same time, the two men are present to one another. The important difference is that the man at the table—he appears first as sound and then becomes (his own) image—is turned round: he does not see that Dave 2 is looking at him. There is another cutaway to Dave 2, beholding, breathing, and then cut back to the same view of the man at the table. *But now the sound of Dave 2's breathing has stopped*. The extra-alert viewer should infer that Dave 2 is no longer there—the view exists, but the viewer has disappeared. The viewer (the one in the audience) will infer then that Dave 2 has projected himself as Dave 3.[49] This is confirmed when Dave 3 walks toward the source of the sound he *had heard but no longer* hears. This is a

powerful, short scene, purely cinematic, dependent on the presence and absence of sound, camera movement, perfectly timed cuts and point-of-view.[50] (Look too at how Dave 3 walks, almost ape-like with one arm hanging and the other swinging; see too the ape-fur-like black dressing gown he wears. And think of his reaction when he recognizes that nothing is there. He *reflects* for a moment: could he be thinking a variation of that Heywood Floydism, "I wonder what the damn thing was?")

The second extraordinary event is the breaking of the glass. An accident! Can such things happen in what looks like a perfect, pristine world?[51] But mustn't we also wonder: what if Dave 3 had not knocked down the glass? Would he continue eating forever, or repeat his entrance and changes forever, until he did knock it over? What are the rules of contingency here? The "accident" seems, in fact, to be possessed of necessity. Kubrick mentions James Joyce's comment that "accidents are the portals to revelation." (Ciment 1999, 175[52])

Triumph: Cinematic Man

What happens in the Regency room? Dave has become his own cinematic apparatus, conjured up his own *mise-en-scène*, in this his private studio, and become (if I may put it thus) *homo cinematicus*,[53] recording and projecting himself, his own movie. During the Star Gate (and even preceding it) he absorbed light and learned to see. The act of blinking: a moment of closed vision, of darkness (visible), of timelessness and eternity; a split second of transition, or: the space between frames, an edit. Emerging from the (cosmic light-womb) Star Gate, and having passed beyond the infinite, Dave has conjured the Regency Room. He henceforth only thinks himself—thinks cinematically—or better, projects himself forward as he looks out of the oval pod window and sees himself standing across the room. The continuity of the sound of his breathing informs us that this is no mere flash-forward, no edit in cinematic time.[54] When we see Dave 1 and 2 together, Dave 2 and 3 together, and finally Dave 3 and 4 together, there is no unseen jump-cut (the continuity of sound proves this). The "accelerated aging" too is a result of Dave's will: he *wills himself forward*, wills himself to his death-bed so as to become himself re-born as the Star Child. Perhaps his looks of bewilderment are just looks of surprise: "Hey, it really works!" And as for the mechanisms behind appearance and disappearance: Dave I (inside the pod) disappears after three successive wide angle shots of the room that seem as much a "tour of inspection" as they do his acknowledgment that he is in it. In other words, that acknowledgment, that yea-saying,[55] propels himself forward. Dave 2 then vanishes when he acknowledges himself in the mirror; that we then hear the sound

of Dave 3 means that he already exists, that Dave 2 has allowed his own departure so that he can again go further forward. And finally, Dave 3 too, in breaking the glass—whether accident or willed—not only brings on an unseen flashback of extreme racial memory (the smashed bones), but wills and projects himself further forward in time. In these three forward movements there is also an element of self-gazing to be considered: A floor of glass, a mirror, a drinking glass, all of them reminding us that the cinema screen is reflecting mirror as much as window. The crucial transition, that between Dave 2 and 3, could also be put this way: Dave 2's disappearance is necessitated by Dave 3's being seen. What is the relation then between seeing and being seen? Here, Dave 2 sees Dave 3 through the doorway (a frame). But Dave 3 is aware that something peculiar has happened, that he has been seen (and recorded, his image "taken"). Once he acknowledges this, the recording apparatus—Dave 2—acts as its own projector[56], and throws that image forward in time: Dave 3. To see then is both to create (the future) and to destroy (the past). Or: to see is to give birth to oneself. At last, eye and brain come together as the triumph of vision: auto-genesis.[57]

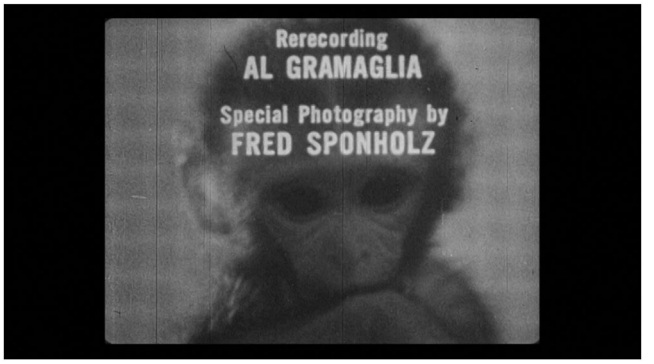
Finally, the scene in the Regency Room represents the triumph of Kubrick's goal of creating a new kind of cinema, of which this scene serves as only one example, one suggestion of cinema's many possibilities, a cinema that has swept aside all Hollywood convention; that hearkens back in some ways to the silent cinema (Keaton perhaps, Feuillade too), while also playing with new possibilities of employing sound; a cinema that reaffirms the primacy of editing and that is not afraid to startle the viewer with utterly strange images nor to employ any and all cinematic means to investigate the nature of cinematic space, time and the image.

The Star Child

Just as the Regency room possesses a certain arbitrariness in my assumption that Dave has all time and space available to him now, does he then too have his choice of whom he wills himself to become? Perhaps—but then the film, this film, not Dave's, possesses its own interior logic, and so yes, he must become the Star Child. Where can we—Dave, the film, humanity—possibly go from here? The shot from the bed gives us our first view of the Star Child, its small undeveloped hands—will they develop?, need they?—and a large eye that seems to be gazing out and up. After passing through the monolith the camera tilts in ascent and assent one last time until and finally—we see its glow (a new "Dawn of Man") before we behold its body[58]—a "heavenly body" indeed: the child.

Notes

1. I can recall only one other artwork that reviews its own medium's history, the fourteenth chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), known as the "Oxen of the Sun," which recapitulates the history of the development of English prose style. For a stimulating take on *2001* and *Ulysses*, see Boldrini (2003).
2. For that matter, could Kubrick have seen the 1960 television broadcast "Conquest" about rhesus monkeys and remembered close-ups of their wide-eyed faces, combined with, near the end, a comment about "the icy regions of interstellar space"? The program can be seen in Ken Jacobs's *Star Spangled to Death* (1956–1960/2003–2004), on the DVD about thirty minutes in.



3. Chion (Chion 2001, 41) mentions Antonioni's *Red Desert* (1964) and Jacques Tati's *Playtime* (1967).
4. As Arthur C. Clarke acknowledged: "We set out quite consciously and deliberately … to create a myth …" (quoted in Youngblood 1970, 147)
5. To invoke Garrett Stewart's quip, "Movies about the future tend to be about the future of movies." With the exception of *2001* however, I would question that "tend to." (Stewart, 1985, 159)
6. Freedman (Freedman 1998, 300) only goes so far as to maintain that "the typical Kubrick film tends to remake or redefine the genre to which it belongs."
7. And as Kubrick insisted, "[E]diting is the only aspect of the cinematic art that is unique." (Philips, 135; see a similar comment on page 103.)
8. The title brings the first reference, an allusion to Robert Florey's *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932). This film concerns the attempts of Dr. Mirakle (Bela Lugosi) to mate a human with an ape. As he points back to a chart depicting human evolution—reptiles, fish, apes—and presents his ape Erik as "the first man", he declares, "The darkness before the dawn of man." But beyond this we must also refer to the greatest of all ape films, *King Kong* (Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1933), and particularly to its special effects, created by Gordon Willis, effects as significant in their time as Kubrick's were to his.
9. One almost ones to give it the status of a character and capitalize the term, a point also raised by Boyd (Boyd 1978, 205). Kubrick himself mentions three "artifacts" (Philips, 91).
10. This is clearly not a shot-reverse shot, but the cutaway to the monolith suggests some sort of influence upon the ape.

11. This is a very questionable shot, as it is so outside of the simple narrative order that has been established thus far. What is it then? Is it a flash-forward, or even the ape's *imagined* vision of the implications of what he is caught up in? Does it imply the rapid development of human thought (in a film in which "speed" is usually very slow)? Too, notice the contrast between the defeated (horizontal) tapir, and the triumphant (vertical) ape.
12. Many people (e.g. Sobchack, 180) remark (in an access of sentiment) that the film's most emotional moment is HAL's pleading with Dave to be allowed to live and his subsequent "death," but isn't it really here, in the ape's tremendous exultation as he goes about destroying, in this *sense of himself and his power*?
13. Boyd (208) sees a "*cinematic* allusion" in "The Dawn of Man" to "one of the oldest chestnuts in film history, filmed twice by Griffith … under the title *One Million Years B. C.* … of how 'Brute Force' is defeated by 'Weak Hands' through the discovery of technology …," but fails to see the greater overall allusions to and enactment of early cinematic *form*. In her excellent essay, Landy (Landy, 88) makes reference to the film's "investigation on consciousness into a simultaneous investigation of the history and character of cinema," and later references silent film, but goes into no further detail.
14. I use the term knowingly here. *2001* was released at a time when cinema historiography still spoke of a "primitive" cinema that gradually developed into its somehow innate character of narrative "sophistication," best exemplified by the work especially of Griffith. That history largely ignored the many contributions of numerous neglected filmmakers (and so, as for "Griffith and Company," the emphasis must be laid on the final term), and only seriously began to be rewritten with the famous 1978 "Brighton Conference," and its work on what we now recognize as "Early Cinema," roughly 1895–1907. The point here is not to offer a schematic resumé of an actual development of cinematic narrative form, but rather a generalized view. Evolution, human and cinematic, is messy.
15. Annette Michelson (in Schwam, 198); she goes on to say that it "inscribes … nothing less than the entire trajectory of human history, the birth and evolution of Intelligence."
16. Chion, 119. Structurally, the ape/ship cut acts similarly to the Star Gate sequence, both taking us from one world or state of being to another. (And making the last astronaut a mere "later ape.")
17. But the past is not really or fully done away with as I will show much later below.
18. The idea of a fall—decline, decay—in *2001* is one taken up briefly by Chion (119), Geduld (Geduld 1973, 49, 68), and Dumoimt and Monod (Dumoimt and Monod 1978, 310), and probably needs more exploration. However much this theme may be present, I am convinced that the greater, overall thrust of the film is towards the positive, the new, and transformation. As Cimino says (146), Kubrick "is in reality a great liberator."
19. In the following, many of the (often italicized) images discussed point to the pervading presence of the cinematic mentioned in the Introduction. Many of these are circular (the great wheel of the space station) or recurrent (the ape thinking, Floyd thinking); in form and variation these point to the film's overall form and meaning. Many are rectangular, especially the screens and windows, as if the inhabitants of the twenty-first century dwell (however unknowingly) within a cinematic apparatus, or of the world become some interstellar multiplex (not unreminiscent of our own present). A small third group of images concerns the human body (afloat, perpendicular, see figure below). Awareness of this will become

useful when I later examine the Star Gate and Regency Room sequences and how the surviving astronaut becomes himself "Cinematic Man."

20. Burgoyne (Burgoyne (1981) 1982, 174) too recognizes this.
21. She also switches off his monitor. It should also be noted that this is the closest, most intimate moment between a man and a woman in the entire film.
22. This question of our perception of scale will also become important when we finally see the Star Child.
23. As Chion says, "*2001* is a film about a world where all aggressive behaviour is everywhere suppressed, policed and erased," (148).
24. Obviously, the ape was "the right man in the right place," but Floyd is decidedly not. As powerful as he is, and as long as he lingers in the background, he is merely instrumental.
25. We can also see Kubrick's own reflection in Floyd's helmet (he handled the camera for the hand-held shot). Accident or authorial signature?
26. LoBrutto 1998, 270.
27. See Todd McCarthy's (McCarthy 1997) account of the film's production, pages 472–484.
28. Sobchack (Sobchack 1987, 177) calls him "a chatterbox, a gossip, emotional."
29. The song is actually "Daisy Bell (A Bicycle Built for Two"), copyrighted in 1892—a century before HAL's birth—by Harry Dacre.
30. The femmes fatales, of course, of *Out of the Past* (Jacques Tourneur, 1947) and *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944) and played respectively by Jane Greer and Barbara Stanwyck.
31. Burgoyne (175) also notices the Langian connection.
32. Emphasis because *2001* supposedly does not have any reverse-shots.
33. See Philips, pages 175, and 199 ("some of the most spectacular examples of film art are in the best TV commercials"; and later he calls them "visual poetry").
34. This is somewhat apt as a strobe was one of the basics of 1960s psychedelic light shows, and this scene is about to usher in the Star Gate.
35. I should mention here too that in Clarke's novel the monolith at the dawn of man also serves as a sort of television monitor, instructing the apes. Of course, its silence in the film is the more compelling, but just imagine if Kubrick had filmed the monolith as monitor—and what might the instructional programs have been like? Television occurs again in the novel in the Regency Room, but there they only show entertainment programs for Dave to while his time away.
36. Or, "a superproduction and an experimental film," as Jacques Goimard puts it (quoted in Chion, 41). As for that "vast majority" we need to acknowledge the 1930s' GPO films of Len Lye and those of Mary Ellen Bute that were shown to general audiences as shorts accompanying feature films.

37. As Burgoyne (177) says, "light becomes the subject matter of the film."
38. Geduld too sees four sections, calling it a "highly structured recapitulation of the whole experience of *2001* thus far" (60). Dumont and Monod (310–311) also see four, saying "Each sequence is supposed to demonstrate the intellectual transformation which corresponds to its progress in the infinite … from a partial to an unlimited conception or vision of space," and later calls the Star Gate a "chromatic liberation." These three are the only ones who trouble themselves to examine the Star Gate closely. Chion, most disappointingly, only speaks of the "sublime optical effects in the Cosmic Trip sequence" (158).
39. Supposedly, the crystals are in fact aliens leading Dave's ship forward. But there is nothing in the film to support this view. Agel, however, does reproduce three photographs of long, thin sculpture-like lights; these seem to have been trial versions for aliens. A couple of pages later there is also a photograph of a "city of light." (These come near the end of the long middle section of photos.)
40. According to LoBrutto (290), these landscapes are not solarized, but "the result of mixing the records of the black-and-white separation masters … printing the yellow record on the cyan master and printing the cyan on the magenta."
41. I wonder if we might find a source for this looking-into-being in Alain Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad* (1960), At about minute 36, the man X seems to want to will the woman A into another story. He looks intently ahead, though not at her, despite her standing nearby; as he continues to stare, bright images of her flash forward, they are held briefly at first but gradually for longer periods of time, until finally this new scene is established. Too, it is established in an ornate Baroque room, where too she will drop a glass.
42. Most commentators recognize this. For example, Geduld ("The entire universe is made to seem an outsized uterus," (44); "the fetal development of technology that somehow corresponds to the fetal development of organic life" (49); see also pages 55 and 70); Ciment speaks of the Star Gate's "erotic and genital visions," and goes on to say as I do that "*2001* is full of sexual imagery—uterine, ovular and phallic" (134); Burgoyne speaks of "weightless, amniotic splendors" (174), and says suggestively that "In its interior architecture the space ship suggests two things, the structure of the mind and the phenomenology of the womb" (176). See also Chion, 149; and Youngblood, 140, and Vivian Sobchack (in Kuhn, Sobchack 1990, 110), who, speaking more generally, writes that "The narrative enterprise of space exploration and its accompanying visuals may be viewed as a symbolic representation of birth and/or intercourse: the expulsion from the body as well as the penetration of space, the infant's separation from the Mother or the adult male's reunion with the Mother in the form of the female Other."
43. And that inevitably remind us of the marvelous close-up of the "cosmic" coffee-cup in Jean-Luc Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967). Telotte (Telotte 48) sees Dave's penetration of the airlock as a sort of birth: "positioning the pod, as if it were a kind of womb […] and squatting in a fetal position."
44. In this regard too, one must consult Gene Youngblood's assessment of the Star Gate in his *Expanded Cinema* (1970). For Youngblood, of course, the film and this sequence represented a monumental change in the nature of cinema itself. Would that his vision had come true! Youngblood had also much hope for the films of Jordan Belson's truly cosmic cinema, which the slit-scan somewhat resembles. Belson would, of course, contribute to *Demon Seed* (Nicholas Roeg 1973).

45. Commentators seem evenly divided between calling it a Regency or a Louis XVI room, with the exception of LoBruttto (256), who calls it "Victorian." As I am not an architectural historian, I will refer to it as the former and hope that someone will come forward some day and clear up the issue.
46. Why this absence? Max Ophuls. Ophuls was one of the few directors that Kubrick admired (however briefly he discussed him). See for example, Ciment, 34: "Highest of all I would rate Max Ophüls" (sic). See too Philips, 104. I suspect Kubrick chose not to have any shot/reverse shots in the film (aside from rejecting it as a convention) because, simply, he felt he could not do anything original with it. How, that is, could he ever have outdone the fantastic shot/reverse-shot that occurs in Ophuls' *Caught* (1949)? In the particular scene, the Robert Ryan character announces, "Wait'll the next shot, the one after this," a line that is delivered as much to the characters in the scene as to the audience. As Brian Henderson remarked, "This is shot-reverse-shot as never done before or since." (Henderson (1971) 1976, 320)
47. "Beautiful like the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table."
48. Another genre parody (costume drama)? Or perhaps a pre-*Blade Runner* genre mix?
49. But Dave 3 was already anticipated: Notice that in the shot of Dave 2 going towards the bathroom we catch a glimpse of Dave 3's black robe and slippers on the edge of the bed.
50. My take on this scene owes much to discussions with Stephen Zepke, who has written the best philosophical essay on *2001* (Zepke 2020).
51. Boyd (207–208) sees a Homeric reference here to "Odysseus' final victory, his triumphant reclamation of his home."
52. Kubrick misquotes Joyce. The actual words are "A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery," and come from chapter 9 of *Ulysses* (page 156, lines 228–229).
53. I pursue similar ideas in my piece on Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and its relations with Eadweard Muybridge (Silva 2018).
54. Chion (147), surely mistakenly, says that "through the magic spell of editing, Kubrick takes Dave Bowman through several decades in three minutes. The three minutes and three edits suggest two contradictory things: both a vast span of diegetic time, and through editing, the materialization of accelerated ageing in film time."
55. One last Joyce connection: is this yea-saying somehow akin to Molly Bloom's? Dave's "beyond the infinite" might be matched with the time of Molly's chapter being given the infinity sign in Joyce's scheme for his novel.
56. As did the early Lumière apparatuses function as both camera and projector.
57. Stewart (1996, 229) creatively calls this an act of "photogenesis."
58. We should also be used by now to the distortions of space throughout the film. There is no reason to think that the child on the human-sized bed has suddenly grown planet-sized (as Chion, 91–92, does) as it gazes on the Earth. Just as the Moon in this next-to-last shot is, we know, fairly distant from the Earth, so we must surely assume that the child is gazing from a very far distance.

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