

**Notes for
2001 and Counting:
Kubrick, Nietzsche, and Anthropology**

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Page 13: Kubrick states that *Metropolis*, which is set in the year 2000, is the reference in his title *2001*. In other words, *2001* is the return of that which was first indicated in *Metropolis*—Human Being bound within the technology, within the machinic, of its own invention.

Page 22: I have stressed the efforts to separate Nietzsche from association with Nazism. However, for many, especially Marxists, he cannot easily be absolved of a deep conservative tendency that is particularly expressed by his lack of reaction (perhaps motivated by his opposition to socialist ideals of equality) to the massacre of 30,000 participants in the Paris Commune of 1871 by the agents of the state.

Page 27: At the time of working on *2001*, Kubrick was reading Robert Ardrey's *African Genesis* and *The Territorial Imperative*. Reference is made to them in the film, especially the scenes at the waterhole in The Dawn of Man opening sequences. Ardrey drew on the work of the South African anthropologist, Raymond Dart. Broadly, Ardrey argued a naturalistic position, that Human Being is subordinated to Natural Law, his argument bearing strong resemblance to some work in present day socio-biology or evolutionary psychology. Ardrey, a playwright, insisted that Human Being was not a sovereign being as he claimed many social scientists were presenting. He asserted a position in some ways reminiscent, I hesitate, of some anti-constructivist positions that are becoming more commonly voiced today. Most of all Ardrey insisted that humanity's propensity to violence and war was hard-wired into the very being of human being. This was powerfully resisted by the anthropologist, Marshall Sahlins starting in an article published in 1956 in the *Scientific American* entitled

“The Origin of Society.” Sahlins has since followed this up in a spate of other articles and books which argue for humanity's cultural creation of what it is and whatever it becomes throughout the diversities of its historical and cultural existence. Ardrey and others have reduced this to the well-known Nature/Nuture argument, a kind of round robin dialectic. The point of Sahlins and effectively Kubrick (his readings are always critical and subversive) is that human being in terms of the realities that it spins around itself, and in its reactions to the realities that it lives, is through and through a creature of its own invention. More broadly, and in my view, Kubrick's use of Nietzsche in *A Space Odyssey* breaks out of the kind of circular argument to which Ardrey condemns himself—and us.

Page 29: Cinerama was invented by Fred Waller and was introduced in the 1950s. It used three synchronized projectors on to a wide deeply-curved screen much larger than conventional box screens. By the time of Kubrick's use it involved a single projector using 70mm prints. Etymologically the term “Cinerama” combines *cinema* with *panorama*, which derived from the Greek means all (*pan*) + seen (*orama*). Whether intentionally or not it corresponds with the “all-Seeing” eye of HAL, a dominant image in the film. Effectively Kubrick engages technology aspects of which he critiques and which he places his film audience within.

Page 30: The mobile camera in cinema enabled a resolution of a problem in natural perception that phenomenologists such as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty discuss at length. In natural perception there are regions that remain inaccessible to the eye yet are integral to human

motion into experiential reality. Human beings fill out imaginatively what they cannot directly see as part of their action. The concept of apperception relates to this capacity and is a vital element in the human imaginary. The camera and photography and especially the mobile camera are able to present those dimensions of the real that cannot be seen, that are apperceived. Artists resolve the problem in different ways, for example, Picasso's famous three-dimensional representations of the face on a flat canvas. It could be said that the camera and the mobile camera enable a more direct or empirically accurate representation that does not appear as imaginal distortion.

Page 36: The distinction between cinema of the "movement-image" and that of the "time-image" is developed with specific reference to *2001* by Anna Powell in *Deleuze, Altered States and Film* (2007) and by myself with reference to ritual and a concern to overcome some of the limitations in Victor Turner's perspective to ritual in an article "Montage and Time" appearing in *Transcultural Montage* (2013) edited by Christian Suhr and Rane Willerslev.

Page 41: In my presentation of *2001: A Space Odyssey* I have intentionally, as far as I could, kept an analytic distance from Arthur C. Clarke's novel, unlike many other commentators on the film. I have done so because I consider that it confuses an understanding of the film and in a way devalues Kubrick's distinct and highly creative input. Clarke's book in my understanding is no more representative of the film than the film is of the book. A better text for comprehending the film is of course Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and especially the Prologue to that work.

Page 41: Chion in *Kubrick's Cinema Odyssey* (2001) describes Ligeti's *Atmospheres* as "an astonishing orchestral piece on the threshold of formlessness, close to what could be imagined as the sound of matter in continual transformation." This concurs with the idea of this piece of music as an image of the void and of creation from out of the void thoroughly appropriate to its positioning at the start of the film. Chion goes on to state: "It is like one single sound that slowly evolves; sometimes individualized sounds emerge from it, and even clear sustained notes of trumpets; at a certain point this sound reaches its height in strident line sounds, before plunging down again." I underline the music in Kubrick not as sound effects but as sound images, a major observation made by Chion.

Page 41: The Monolith as sign or plane of Rebirth has some support in my Sri Lanka fieldwork. In a Buddhist temple located near to where Arthur C. Clark had a house (*Unawatuna*) are frescoes concerned with the Buddha's life leading to his Rebirth. The event of his Rebirth is indicated by his standing on a horizontal black monolith very similar to that in *2001*. I have no evidence that Clark visited this temple but I consider it to be highly likely.

Page 42: A black hole is a deformation of space time that absorbs all the light reflected towards it from its boundary or event horizon. Static black holes are spherical whereas dynamic or rotating black holes are oblate.

Page 45: Other references are also conceivable in the context of this opening of *2001* such as Psalm 23: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil."

Page 45: The intermingling of apes with tapirs presents the ape-men as part of the herd, relatively docile and inferior, very possibly a Nietzschean reference.

Page 49: Chion describes *The Blue Danube Waltz* as an example of “*anempathetic music*” and as indifferent to the situation on the screen. It is clear that I do not agree with this although Chion’s recognition of its “eroticism” is relevant to the intimations of the sexuality of the technology: “the penetration of the spatial wheel by the Orion rocket.” Chion adds, “In the world of *2001*, as in the beginning of *Dr. Strangelove*, only machines make love.”

Page 50: The escaped pen, of course, indicates the developing independence of technology from human control. The role of the stewardess demands comment. The images present the female in the position of the servant, a machinic relation as it were, which then is assumed by the machines of technology most notably HAL, the key character of later sequences in the film. Kubrick is often criticized for the male centrism of his films and *2001* is singled out as a prime example. This episode (and others in the film such as the scene where the Russian and American scientists meet) express the idea of the female as the handmaiden, servant and subordinate to the male. The critique is subdued. However, in Kubrick’s last film, *Eyes Wide Shut*, the critical potential of Kubrick’s approach becomes fully realized where the female is presented as the slave to male desire and power.

Page 50: An extended camera shot of the instrumental panel in the cockpit of the space shuttle expresses the multidimensionality of space and that the coordinates

are not that of grounded experience. This, of course, is beautifully imaged in the shots of the spacecrafts, the shuttle, and the space station.

Page 52: The mediation of human relationships by technology leading to the displacement of human relations by technology is an aspect of the voice-identification in the film which Dr. Floyd is required to do when entering the orbiting space station. The image of a friendly female face appears on the screen of a machine that clears him for entry. The machine assumes the role of Human Being in her image—a stage in effect in the displacement by technology of Human Being and, perhaps, the assumption by the machine of the position of the slave/servant and intimating the crisis of resentment.

Page 52: Tycho is a lunar impact crater named after the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546-1601). A NASA aerodynamics scientist, Dean Chapman, had claimed from the 1950s that Australasian tektites (natural glass rocks) originate from Tycho. Tycho is distinguished by its bright ray system first drawn on lunar maps as early as 1645 by Antonius Maria Schyrleus de Rheita. The rim of Tycho was the target of the Surveyor 7 mission, the robotic craft touching down near the crater in January 1968. It had already been thoroughly photographed by Lunar Orbiter 5. I do not know if Kubrick had such knowledge but he was in contact with astronomers and physicists in the course of the making of his epic.

Page 53: The moon shuttle has a skull-like appearance. There is possibly a relation here between the skulls that are imaged in the Dawn of Man and which bear a

reference to the Valley of Dry Bones in Ezekiel. Kubrick may be expanding one of the core arguments of Ezekiel which prophesies resurrection and the re-fleshing of the dry bones. That is, the flesh of the dry bones is technology that has displaced human being and has denied its resurrection.

Page 54: The sound emitted by the Monolith may also be grasped as the commanding cry of dominant technology—as the grunting of the leopard in early scenes of the film is the sound image of its command. The actions of the astronauts, the blocking of their ears and body gesture has, I suggest, parallel with the images of the cowering and fearful ape-men in the context of the leopard’s predatory power in the early sequences of the film prior to the discovery of the tool-weapon.

Page 55: Other associations of the image of the Discovery are made by commentators, most commonly that the shape of the space ship may be likened to a spermatozoon. This might fit with earlier sequences in the film. Thus the space shuttle to the space station is sometimes likened to a phallus that finds further support in the docking sequence. Later in the film, specifically the descent to Jupiter, there are images of sperm uniting with ova. The phallic and reproductive imagery in the film is consistent with the overall theme of rebirth.

Page 55: Khachaturian’s music *Gayaneh* is for a ballet that plays out an amorous political rivalry. This has relevance to the theme of growing rivalry that develops from the apparent perfect harmony between Man and Machine (the relation between crew and HAL) as I understand the thematic development of the sequence.

Chion states that the music imparts a sense of solitude. He also argues for its relative independence of the scene, that it is a sound image that does not fix a definite meaning on the scene. Certainly in the development of the action, the music has a sense of ambiguity which underlies other music in the context of the film such as *The Blue Danube*.

Page 56: Poole and Bowman have a marked physical resemblance. Thomas Allen Nelson in *Kubrick: Inside a Film Artist’s Maze* argues that Poole and Bowman may be grasped as “mirror twins.” They parallel each other’s actions. Bowman is right-handed while Poole is left-handed. Each balances the other. Themes of mirroring and twinning are a feature in many of Kubrick’s films (especially in *The Shining*) and have a key role in *2001*. Here it might be expanded that Poole and Bowman together represent Human Being as a unity in which the one is related to the other, the same yet different or distinct individuations of the one overall similarity. This dynamic takes on new dimensions later in the film after Poole’s death at the hands of the computer HAL when Bowman is left alone becoming Nietzsche’s Last Man on the edge of his metamorphosis into the Cosmic Foetus. In effect, Bowman, who comes to stand for Human Being as a whole, begins to differentiate or individuate within himself becoming Nietzsche’s Overman.

Page 56: The circular centrifuge may be understood as a repetition of the earlier image of the revolving space station in the preceding sequences and a further extension of what is already implicit. Both may be indicative of the Buddhist Wheel of Life. Buddhist/Hindu images and references are apparent later in the film, especially during the descent to Jupiter.

Page 57: I indicate HAL's eye as a camera eye not only because I think this is the most apt description but also because it suggests an important analytical contrast with the cameras that are shown in the events involving the journey to the moon base. In these images the cameras that are shown are hand held and are extensions of the human eye. There is a similarity and a difference that might be noted between the totalizing sweep of HAL's eye and early camera sweeps, as if coming down from above, over the desolate Earth landscape in the opening frames of the film. This is also a totalizing sweep, perhaps the eye of God or of creation.

Page 57: I am unclear regarding the symbolic import of HAL's red and yellow eye. I assume that the red is indicative of HAL's potency or will to power and the yellow suggestive of an inner core of destructiveness. Heidegger interprets the red/yellow combination in Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* as conforming "to what Zarathustra wants to have in sight: the color of deepest falsehood, error, and semblance, and the color of supreme passion, of incandescent creation."

Page 58: The Interviewer is Mr. Amor, a name that may also be a reference to the Nietzschean concept of *amor fati*.

Page 62: Kubrick introduced the film goer to such a voice in *Dr. Strangelove*. HAL's voice has resonance with the frequent expression in film presentation of controlling power especially dictators and agents of fascism, and their false claims to rationality, common in films about World War 2.

Page 63: The chess play is from an actual game (A. Roesch vs. Willi Schlage) and some analysts of the moves suggest that Poole gave in prematurely succumbing to HAL's bluff. That is, if Poole had played on he would have won. If so, the event is an indication of HAL's human capacity of deception that, moreover, is facilitated by Poole's unquestioning acceptance of HAL's rational superiority. In other words, it is a key instance of the participation of Human Being in acts of self-subordination and its retreat from self-affirmation that the computer HAL now affects.

Page 65: I have noted the significance of twins and twinship in many of Kubrick's films. What I think he is presenting in this concern is the dynamics of individuation. When apparent twins or doubles appear in his films these are never exact replicas of one another. On closer inspection there are clear differences. Indeed, I suggest, true twins, exact copies or replicas, constitute the property of the machine or the emergence of what I term the machinic in human beings. This is implicated in this event where HAL's lie is revealed through testing for the fault by passing the relevant information through HAL's twin computer. In effect, HAL has individuated himself from his twin 9000 computer demonstrating in his difference his assumption of human qualities. HAL is no longer a mere machine.

Page 69: The helmeted and suited space crew have the semblance of crustaceans. These as part of the arthropod class emerged in the period known as the "Cambrian explosion"—the period of the massive emergence of life. I suggest that Kubrick may have been making reference to this. The film sequences here are in effect the re-emergence of Life from the Void of

Space into the Discovery where HAL has both extinguished life in the Discovery and also excluded it.

Page 75: In 1961 an IBM 7094 became the first computer to sing, and the song was “Daisy Bell” or “A Bicycle Built for Two,” composed by Harry Dacre in 1892. The song referred to the tandem bicycle and by extension could indicate the unity between Man and Machine—heralded when HAL is first introduced—as now having come to an end. In the French version of *2001* the song chosen was “Au Claire de la Lune.”

Page 76: This should not overlook the possibility that Bowman also has resonance in these sequences with Odysseus and especially reference to the shipwrecked Odysseus, all his crew now dead, near his ultimate destination.

Page 76: The image of Poole’s limp body in the arms of the space pod has in my view clear reference to major art works of the Descent or Deposition of the dead Christ. Major works that might be compared are those of Rogier van der Weyden (1399-1435), *The Deposition* (Museo del Prado, Madrid); that of Fra Angelico, *Deposition from the Cross* (1432-1434, National Museum of San Marco, Florence); and, *The Deposition*, Raphael (1507, Galleria Borghese, Rome).

Page 77: The literature on sacrifice is extensive. Major works in anthropology on sacrifice of relevance to the argument I present here are those of Hubert and Mauss in their *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* and Robertson Smith in *The Religion of the Semites*. These works present a general or universal theory of sacrifice but are importantly criticized for their dominant Judeo-

Christian orientation and in the case of Hubert and Mauss, Brahmanic or Sanskritic-influenced interpretation. Luc de Heusch in *Sacrifice in Africa* has made an important criticism in anthropology using African materials along such lines. I agree with him but consider, nonetheless, that his position can be reconciled with the orientations that he examines. In my own work (see Kapferer 1997) I have attempted a reconciliation (but admittedly with South Asian Buddhist materials) which stresses the idea of sacrifice as an intense originating act of differentiation, the dividing act of sacrifice being its critical aspect. In the Buddhist sacrificial rites that I studied the central paradox—the regeneration of Life through an act of killing, Death—is avoided and the stress is placed on sacrifice as dividing and differentiating. The pure is separated from the impure and fragmenting and this involves an avoidance of killing which is impure perpetuating the condition for destruction and suffering even as it attempts to overcome such effects. This Buddhist understanding is engaged in Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* and I consider is present in the symbolic (Hindu and Buddhist) imagery that Kubrick uses in his film.

Page 79: Within Judeo-Christian traditions of sacrifice (which I regard as being thematically central in the film), sacrificial processes effect a separation of the body from the spirit and also from that which is destructive and fragmenting: i.e. from that which is unifying and regenerate—Whole (Holy). The sacrificial logic of the separation of the Spirit from the Body is apparent in European kingship (see Kantorwicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*) and in Papal funerary rites (Paravicini-Bagliani in *The Pope’s Body*) which continue dimensions of pre-Christian ancient Roman rites of rulership.

Page 80: Effectively, with the death of Poole, Bowman becomes the Whole, the totality of Human Being, and is set to begin a dynamic of individuation within himself that is to be the dynamic of his metamorphosis.

Page 81: The *Dies Irae*—Day of Wrath or Day of Judgement—once integral to the Catholic Mass includes the verse:

*Mors stupebit, et natura,
Cum resurget creatura,
Ludiculi resposura*

Death is struck, and nature quaking
All creation is awaking
To its judge an answer making

Page 82: There are useful other descriptions of the Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite with which mine can be compared, aside from viewing the film. Chion in *Kubrick's Cinema Odyssey* gives a plain description relatively free from interpretation but with important reference to camera shots and techniques. A far more interesting account, but full of symbolic interpretation and of thematic relevance to my own, is that presented in Wheat's *Kubrick's 2001*.

Page 82: Anna Powell's argument in *Deleuze, Altered States and Film* bears comparison with what I present here but is more explicit in using *2001* as an illustration of Deleuze's orientation as expressed in his *Cinema* work. As I have said, *2001* is itself a cinematic discussion on the history and nature of film (it is a discourse integral to the argument concerning technology in *A Space Odyssey*) and might be said to anticipate much of what Deleuze considers.

Page 84: Kubrick's last film *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999) has some significance in relation to these images. Bowman's eyes could be understood as being forced open. The light of regeneration enters within him and is engaged in the reconstitution of his being. Kubrick's last film addresses the theme of mental closure, the refusal of human being to respond to what is before their very eyes and with regard to other features of the film, human blindness to the corruption of realities in which humanity participates. Thus the title, *Eyes Wide Shut*, indicates Human Being in absolute abjection and decline and without the capacity for renewal or regeneration. The film's key symbol of the Christmas Tree comes to communicate the very inverse, the negative, of all that it may otherwise signify.

Page 84: In Nietzsche the eye blink is indicative of the coming to the moment of creative re-generation.

Page 84: These crystals may be reference to Hindu/Buddhist tantric thought. They are crystals indicative of the generation of matter in existence. Also they may be a reference to Nietzsche's own reference in *Zarathustra* to the Seven Seals of the Book of Revelation signifying the Apocalypse but which for Nietzsche prophecy a new beginning.

Page 86: In one interview, Kubrick describes what critics generally describe as a hotel room to be a hospital room.

Page 86: Watteau was a court painter of Louis XIV at a high point of transition when the monarchy was under intense criticism, just prior to the Revolution and the emergence to dominance of Enlightenment

reason which gave rise to the situation—in the film—that Human Being is about to transcend.

Page 86: The mirror/mirroring sequences may also bear a Lacanian interpretation, a mirror phase in the emergence of Human Being. That is of Human Being leaving a childhood stage and coming to a new higher realization of itself and becoming again a Child oriented to a new and potentially higher state of being.

Page 98: A wonderful representation of the machinic that communicates what I am saying here is presented in the opening of Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis*.