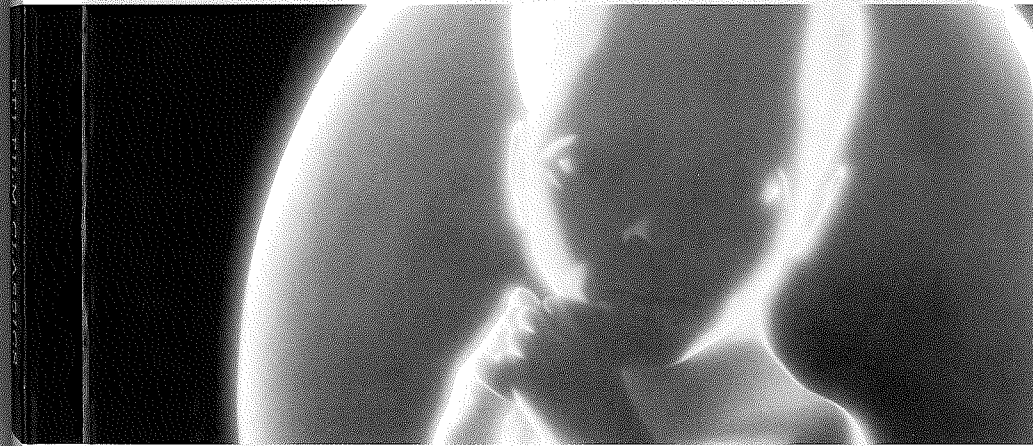
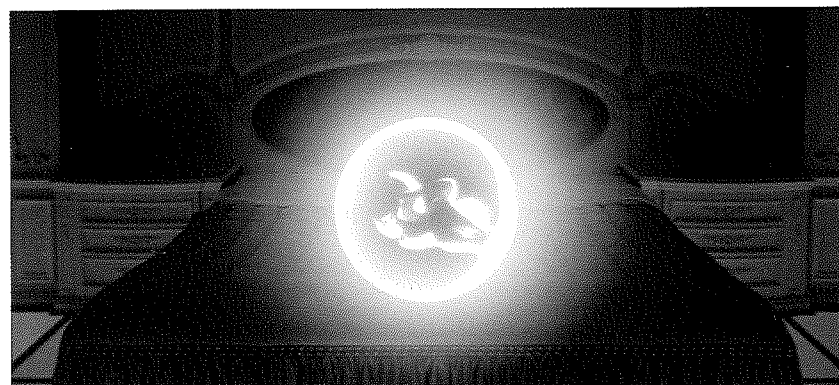
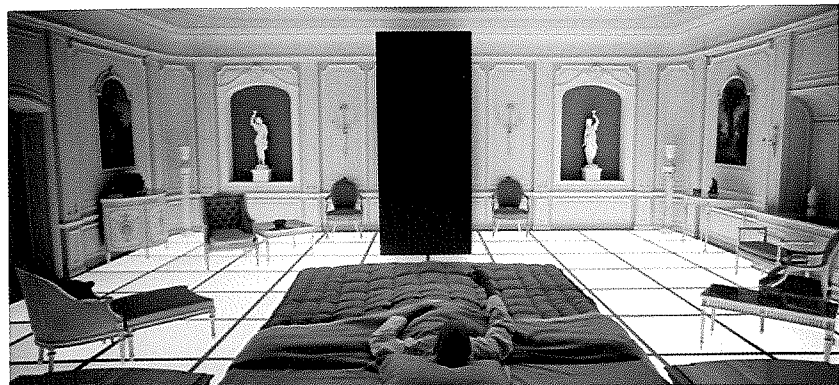


FILM CLASSICS

2001: A Space Odyssey



PETER KRÄMER



Introduction

In the final images of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), a very old man raises his arm to point at a black rectangular slab in front of his bed. The next moment he is gone, and instead a giant foetus with wide-open eyes hovers in a luminous, transparent bubble above the bed. There is music, and the camera moves towards the black monolith and through it into the blackness of space. The Moon can be seen and then also the Earth. The foetus floats towards the Earth before it turns around to look at – us. Image and music fade out to leave us in total darkness and silence. Thus ends a story which has moved from the origins of humanity millions of years ago to the exploration of space in the twenty-first century, tracing the transformative impact of several monoliths – appearing on Earth, on the Moon, near Jupiter and in front of that very old man – on pre-human, ape-like creatures and on human beings.

From the first moment it was presented to the public in spring 1968, the film has generated a passionate debate about its qualities and meanings among regular cinemagoers and professional critics.¹ Many people sent letters to Kubrick to tell him about their responses to *2001*, most of them regarding the film – in particular its ending – as an optimistic statement about humanity, which is seen to be born and reborn.² The film's reviewers and academic critics, by contrast, have tended to understand the film as a pessimistic account of human nature and humanity's future.³ The most extreme of these interpretations state that the foetus floating above Earth will destroy it.⁴ This understanding is derived from a particular interpretation of the novel *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which was published a few months after the film's release.

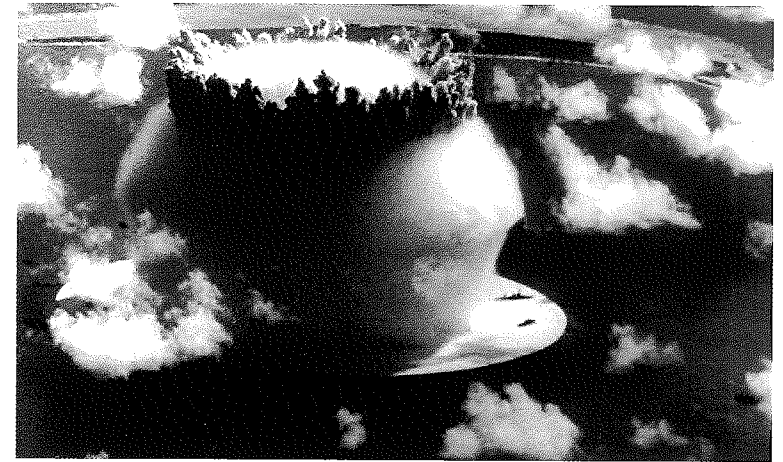
Both the novel and the film are the result of an unusual collaboration between the film-maker Stanley Kubrick and the

science-fiction author Arthur C. Clarke that started with a letter Kubrick sent to Clarke in March 1964. Together they wrote the film's story in the form of a long, novelistic treatment, which they then developed into a screenplay for a big-budget movie and also into a bestselling novel published under Clarke's name. The novel offers explanations for many of the film's mysteries, but also raises new questions about the intentions of the extra-terrestrial beings behind the monoliths and of the foetus they create at the end. The fact that the novel closes with the foetus exploding nuclear weapons in Earth's orbit allowed for a deeply pessimistic reading of the story, which was not, however, what Clarke and Kubrick intended.

Thus, when, in July 1968, the science writer Jeremy Bernstein, who had been one of the film's greatest supporters, sent the page proofs of his book review to Kubrick, it contained the claim that Clarke's novel 'comes to a Strangelovian close' as the foetus 'watches over the nuclear destruction of the Earth'.⁵ This refers to Kubrick's previous film, the nuclear comedy *Dr Strangelove, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964), which ends with the explosion of a nuclear 'doomsday device' that will destroy all life on the Earth's surface. Kubrick left a note on Bernstein's proofs: 'The book does not end with the destruction of the earth.' Kubrick pointed out that the foetus destroys nuclear weapons, not humanity. In his 1972 book about the writing of *2001*, Clarke commented:

Many readers have interpreted the final paragraph to mean that he [the foetus] destroyed Earth, perhaps in order to create a new Heaven. This idea never occurred to me; it seems clear that he triggered the orbiting nuclear bombs *harmlessly* ... But now, I am not so sure ... We have wasted and defiled ... the beautiful planet Earth. Why should we expect any mercy from a returning Star Child?⁶

Clarke's comment is clearly informed by the environmental movement gathering momentum in the early 1970s, and it thus indicates how open his novel is to divergent interpretations arising



from changing historical circumstances. This applies even more to the film, which is constructed with little regard for the conventions of Hollywood storytelling. Instead of following the actions of a single protagonist or group of protagonists, pursuing a well-defined set of goals, the film tells three different stories, each with its own protagonist(s) whose goals are not always obvious: ape-like creatures – or hominids – who are difficult to tell apart from each other and whose behaviour can therefore be puzzling; a scientist travelling to the Moon, whose motives for doing so are revealed only at the end of his journey; two astronauts on a spaceship to Jupiter, one of whom goes on a further, utterly mysterious journey after reaching the planet. Instead of outlining clearly how one thing leads to another, *2001* breaks down the cause-and-effect chain of events, both at the level of the film as a whole – it is, for example, difficult to determine how its three stories are connected to each other – and at the level of individual scenes, such as the ending. It is often unclear how the action depicted in one shot is causally linked to the actions shown in earlier shots, or how the events of one scene arise from those shown in earlier scenes. What is more, instead of selecting only those parts of an action that might be deemed relevant for the ongoing story (or

The ending of *Dr Strangelove*

stories), much of the film consists of shots leisurely and meticulously depicting earthly landscapes or celestial formations as well as the often very slow movement of people and spacecraft through these, with little or no concern for narrative progression.

It is astonishing that a big-budget science-fiction film would take this shape, and even more so that it could become one of the biggest hits of the late 1960s and early 1970s in the United States. It is much less surprising, though, that over the last four decades, critics have responded to the challenge posed by the film with a wealth of analyses, producing more writing about *2001* than about almost any other movie.⁷ In the process, they have by no means settled their disagreements about the meaning of *2001*; instead, the film's very ability to provoke and sustain countless interpretations is seen to be one of the markers of its outstanding quality.

Indeed, *2001* is now widely regarded as one of the best films ever made. This is evident in the most comprehensive survey of international critical opinion conducted every ten years since 1952 by the British film magazine *Sight & Sound*. In September 2002, the results of the latest survey were announced.⁸ Almost one hundred and fifty critics from around the world were asked to identify the ten best films of all time, and the ten most frequently mentioned films were then ranked according to the number of votes they received. As in every *Sight & Sound* survey since 1962, *Citizen Kane* (1941) came out on top, having been listed by forty-six critics. *2001* was at number six with twenty-one listings, two places behind the first two *Godfather* films (*The Godfather*, 1972, and *The Godfather Part II*, 1974), which together received twenty-three votes. Apart from the unusual joint ranking of the *Godfather* films, *2001* was the only film in the top ten which had been made after 1963. In 1992, when it had first appeared in the top ten, at number ten, *2001* had been the only film in this elite group made after 1958, and in 1982, when it had been at number eleven, the top ten had included no film made after 1963.⁹ In other words, since the 1980s, *2001* has been perceived as the very best film of recent decades, and its status appears to be growing as the years pass.

We could easily find more evidence for the film's important place in contemporary culture, ranging from its high ratings on the Internet Movie Database which place the film in the top 100 of the IMDb's users' chart,¹⁰ to its climb up the American Film Institute's '100 Years ... 100 Movies' listing (from number twenty-two in 1997 to number fifteen in 2007).¹¹ References to particular elements of the film can be found everywhere, including countless, often comical, appearances of mysterious monoliths in print or on television; the presentation of celestial and other events to the accompaniment of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, which is the music played over the film's ending (as well as two earlier scenes); and Buzz Lightyear's memorable rallying battle cry 'To infinity and beyond!' (a play, no doubt, on the title of the final segment of *2001*, 'Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite') in the *Toy Story* movies. More generally, the film's influence can be felt in the proliferation of science-fiction blockbusters in recent times, because the enormous success of *2001* helped to raise the genre's profile in Hollywood, while its spectacular visuals and thematic richness inspired a wide range of film-makers to work along similar lines.

How, then, did this remarkable film come about? What were Kubrick and Clarke's original plans for *2001*, and what motivated MGM to fund this unusual project? How did the project's shape change over time, and why? How can we best describe the resulting film? How successful was its initial release with critics and audiences, and what was the film's long-term impact? These are some of the questions this book tries to answer, by drawing on a wide range of published materials and archival sources, including many that have only recently become available at the Stanley Kubrick Archive at the University of the Arts London.

My answers will surprise some readers, because they often depart from the received wisdom about *2001*. I argue that, first and foremost, despite persistent claims about the film-maker's pervasive pessimism, Kubrick developed *2001* as an optimistic antidote to the apocalyptic conclusion of *Dr Strangelove*, and that the film's basic

story was largely derived from Clarke's previously published work. I also show that both Kubrick and MGM conceived of *2001* as a family-oriented blockbuster deeply rooted in the dominant box-office trends of the 1950s and 1960s; only at the last minute did Kubrick decide to transform the film into a highly unconventional cinematic experience, which was nevertheless aimed at, and largely positively received by, an all-inclusive mass audience. Thus, I go against what is perhaps the most widespread legend surrounding *2001*, namely that it initially flopped at the American box office (while also first being rejected by many critics), before it was resurrected by young and often countercultural audiences, who returned again and again to experience the film – frequently under the influence of mind-altering drugs – as a psychedelic trip.¹² Instead I show that Kubrick's attempt to provide cinemagoers with a transformative and hopeful cinematic experience was a big success with mainstream audiences right from the beginning, and that the film's hopefulness was also crucial for its long-term impact on science-fiction blockbusters.

I start my discussion of the origins, development and impact of *2001* with an account of the novel – which was a huge hit in its own right¹³ – because so much of the writing about the film is informed by it. Although the novel was, as mentioned earlier, written in parallel to the screenplay, in many ways it stayed much closer to the film's original treatment than the finished movie. In particular, like that treatment, it developed important themes and offered explanations which are never made explicit in the film. It is helpful to outline what these themes and explanations are before embarking on an account of the project's development.

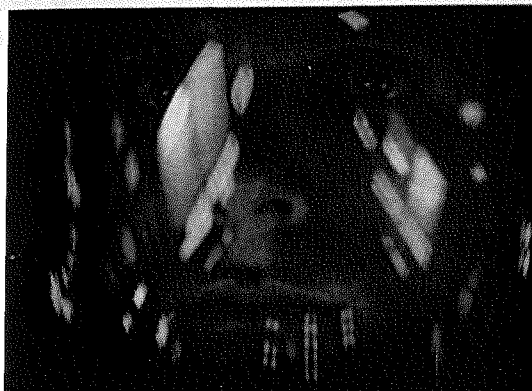
1 The Novel

The beginning is ominous: 'The drought had lasted now for ten million years, and the reign of the terrible lizards had long since ended.'¹⁴ This is the first sentence of Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The chapter in which it appears is entitled 'The Road to Extinction', referring to the 'man-apes of the [African] veldt' who are 'already far down' this road and about to join the 'terrible lizards' (i.e. dinosaurs) in oblivion when the story begins three million years ago.¹⁵ The fate of the 'man-apes' – or hominids – is changed when one band, headed by a male called 'Moon-Watcher', encounters a 'completely transparent', 'rectangular slab', a 'crystal monolith', which turns out to be a technological device created by explorers from outerspace with the intention of transforming the hominids – through sounds and images and the direct manipulation of their brains – into users of tools.¹⁶ Because Moon-Watcher and his band learn how to use stones, sticks and bones as weapons with which to kill animals and members of rival bands, they are able to survive and prosper, laying the foundation for their descendants to evolve into 'Man', who, by the second half of the twentieth century, has long 'conquered his [*sic*] world', yet lives 'on borrowed time' because weapons have evolved as well, gaining 'all but infinite power'.¹⁷ Thus concludes the first part of the novel, entitled 'Primeval Night'.

The remainder of the novel tells the story of how, at the turn of the twenty-first century, three further encounters with monoliths left by the ancient extra-terrestrial explorers lead to the transformation of one human descendant of Moon-Watcher's band into a 'Star-Child'.¹⁸ The second part of the novel opens with scientist and presidential adviser Dr Heywood Floyd's reflections on the 'excitement' of leaving Earth and on the imminent danger of its nuclear devastation: 'he wondered if it would still be there when the

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2001 a space odyssey

A NOVEL BY ARTHUR C. CLARKE
BASED ON THE SCREENPLAY OF THE MGM FILM BY
STANLEY KUBRICK and ARTHUR C. CLARKE**2001 a space odyssey**

is the history-making motion picture
produced and directed by Stanley Kubrick,
starring Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood
In Cinemascope

time came to return'.¹⁹ Floyd visits the American Moon colony to discuss a three-million-year-old black monolith which has been excavated in the crater Tycho, yet has been kept a secret due to the 'immense' 'political and social implications' of the discovery.²⁰ While Floyd examines the monolith, it is triggered by its first exposure to sunlight and sends a signal 'towards the stars'.²¹

Parts three to five deal with the spaceship *Discovery's* journey to Saturn, which turns out to be the target of the alien device's signal. Because 'the highly advanced HAL 9000 computer, the brain and

nervous system of the ship', commonly referred to as 'Hal', has to keep the true goal of the mission secret from the two astronauts David Bowman and Frank Poole, it suffers a mental 'breakdown', killing Poole and three hibernating astronauts, before in turn being disconnected by Bowman.²² On the Saturn moon Japetus, Bowman then discovers a giant monolith, which functions as a 'Star Gate', installed three million years earlier by the extra-terrestrials, who in the meantime have 'become creatures of radiation, free ... from the tyranny of matter', yet who 'still watched over the experiments their ancestors had started'.²³

The novel's sixth and final part, 'Through the Star Gate', describes Bowman's journey across the galaxy to an 'elegant, anonymous hotel suite' constructed by alien intelligence 'twenty thousand light-years from Earth', where he is reborn as an 'immortal' 'baby'.²⁴ Following the appearance of another monolith, the Star-Child, comforted by the certainty that '[w]hen he needed guidance in his first faltering steps, it would be there', is transported back to the vicinity of Earth where he (it?) decides to detonate the nuclear weapons orbiting the planet - 'because he preferred a cleaner sky'.²⁵ The Star-Child is now 'master of the world' and 'history as men knew it would be drawing to a close'.²⁶ Humanity's future depends on what the new master decides 'to do next', but instead of outlining this future, the novel comes to an abrupt end; its last sentence merely announces that the Star-Child will 'think of something'.²⁷

As readers, we cannot be sure whether the Star-Child's detonation of nuclear weapons in Earth's orbit is the beginning of a nuclear holocaust, or, on the contrary, the first step of a campaign to remove the threat of such weapons. The book's ending refers back to an earlier chapter, which relates how Moon-Watcher first uses a weapon to kill another hominid and concludes almost exactly like the book as a whole: 'Now he was master of the world, and he was not quite sure what to do next. But he would think of something.'²⁸ The following chapter is entitled 'Ascent of Man'. This suggests that the book's conclusion also marks the beginning of a new evolutionary

development, now characterised by the ascent of beings that are post- or superhuman. In this context, Moon-Watcher's murderous violence could be seen to serve as a contrast to the peaceful means and intentions of the much more highly evolved Star-Child, or, on the contrary, to prefigure its even greater murderousness.

The ambiguity of the book's ending can hardly be resolved this way, nor does the description of the extra-terrestrial beings whose monoliths are responsible for both evolutionary leaps provide a clear-cut answer. Having 'found nothing more precious than Mind', they have used 'godlike powers' to nurture and protect the emergence of intelligence and consciousness on Earth and elsewhere in the universe: 'They became farmers in the fields of stars; they sowed, and sometimes they reaped. And sometimes, dispassionately, they had to weed.'²⁹ Indeed, when Bowman arrives in the alien hotel room, he suspects that he is being subjected to 'some kind of test', the outcome of which could determine 'not only his fate but that of the human race'.³⁰ Does his subsequent transformation into the Star-Child mean that he and humanity have passed the test, or is it the Star-Child's task to decide, on behalf of the extra-terrestrials, whether humanity has to be weeded out? As we saw earlier, despite his original intention to offer an optimistic ending, Clarke later acknowledged the validity of a pessimistic reading as well, thus affirming the fundamental ambiguity of the ending.

In novel form, then, *2001* deals with ultimate questions arising from evolutionary biology, historiography, current affairs, futurology and religion, questions about the ever-present threat of extinction each species has to confront in nature, about the (natural and not-so-natural) forces at work in human evolution, about the origins and future of humankind and its potential for nuclear self-destruction, about the judgment that may one day be passed on humanity and the consequences of such judgment. The film, by contrast, does not include any explicit references to nuclear weapons or to the environmental plight of the hominids, which lessens the expectation of imminent extinction so pervasive in the novel. Nor does the film

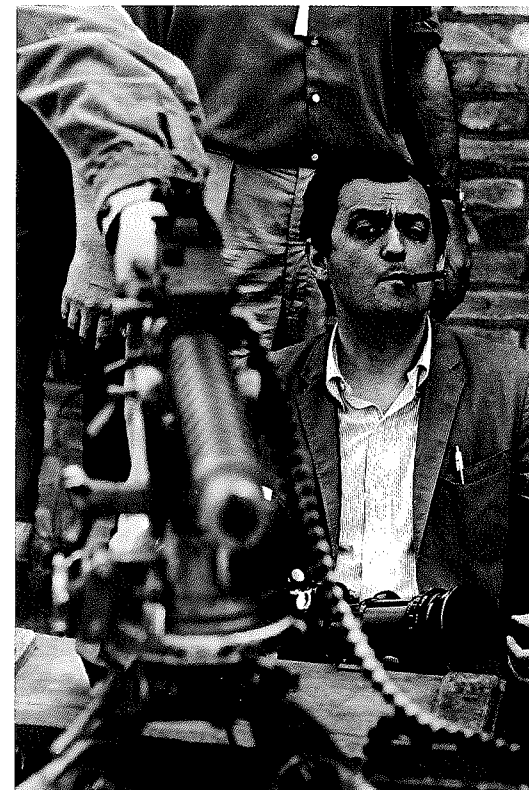
offer any explanation for the origins and function of the monoliths, and it never even mentions their almost godlike builders, which means that their potentially negative judgment of humanity never becomes an issue – except, as we have seen, for those who approach the film with knowledge of the novel.

Now that we have a good sense of how the project turned out in the end, let's look at its very beginnings.

2 Origins

On 31 March 1964, two months after the release of his latest film *Dr Strangelove*, which consolidated his reputation, at the age of only thirty-five, as one of Hollywood's most controversial and most successful film-makers, Stanley Kubrick wrote to Arthur C. Clarke about 'the possibility of doing the proverbial "really good" science-fiction movie'.³¹ He suggested a meeting 'to determine whether an idea might exist or arise which would sufficiently interest both of us enough to want to collaborate on a screenplay'. The scripts of all of Kubrick's previous seven features had been the result of his close collaboration with other people, mostly novelists rather than established scriptwriters,³² and the last five had been based on novels. It is therefore not so surprising that Kubrick approached a novelist about a possible joint project. But why did he want to make a science-fiction movie?

With this last film, Kubrick had already entered the realm of science fiction, insofar as *Dr Strangelove* extrapolated from the technology and politics of the present to depict possible developments in the near future, building up towards the explosion of a 'doomsday device'. In addition to this extrapolation, during the writing of the script Kubrick had considered a science-fiction framing device, whereby the film would begin and end with voice-over narration which represented the point of view of an extra-terrestrial civilisation in the distant future, looking back on a decisive moment in the history of the long-dead planet Earth.³³ The opening voice-over, accompanied by images of outer space, was to point out that the 'odd story' about to be told had unfolded on Earth because 'the full consequences of nuclear weapons seemed to escape all governments and their people'.³⁴ The film was to end with the camera pulling away from the Earth into space and the narrator commenting that



Stanley Kubrick during the making of *Dr Strangelove*

the events of this 'quaint comedy' took place at a time 'when the primitive organisation of sovereign nation states still flourished, and the archaic institution of War had not yet been forbidden by Law'.³⁵ The script thus provided – through the example of a much wiser extra-terrestrial civilisation – an alternative to humanity's nuclear self-destruction, in which the true horror of nuclear war could be recognised, the division into nations overcome and military conflict abandoned.

These references to extra-terrestrials provided a direct link to Kubrick's next project, because, in his letter to Clarke, he identified

as his own 'main interest' – 'naturally assuming great plot and character' – the following three themes:

1. The reason for believing in the existence of intelligent extra-terrestrial life.
2. The impact (and perhaps even lack of impact in some quarters) such discovery would have on Earth in the near future.
3. A space-probe with a landing and exploration of the Moon and Mars.

The abandoned framing device of *Dr Strangelove* thus gave rise to the serious investigation of humanity's relationship to other intelligent life in the universe. This investigation would allow Kubrick to develop the idea from the *Dr Strangelove* script that extra-terrestrials could offer an alternative to humanity's self-destruction. If, rather than having its ruins examined by aliens thousands of years from now, humanity made contact with extra-terrestrials 'in the near future', might this help to unify it and thus to prevent earthly conflict? Also, might there be lessons to be learned about the pitfalls of using hugely destructive technologies from an advanced civilisation that had long mastered such use without destroying itself?

By the early 1960s, questions like these were being frequently addressed in science fiction, in the widespread discussion of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) and in scientific debates about extra-terrestrial life, all of which Kubrick had probably come across during the initial research for his new project in the months, perhaps even years, before he first wrote to Clarke.³⁶ In science-fiction films and literature, for example in Clarke's work, humanity's divisions and conflicts were often overcome through its first encounters with extra-terrestrials – who attack the Earth and thus unite its nations, or come in peace and warn humanity that it should cease its military build-up and fighting before it either destroys itself or provokes catastrophic preventive measures by alien observers worried about eventually becoming targets of human aggression.³⁷ When reports of

UFO sightings and also of communication with their extra-terrestrial crews became a fixture of public discourse in the United States from the late 1940s onwards, press reports and books about these phenomena sometimes suggested that the aliens had come in response to the explosion of nuclear bombs in the United States and Japan in 1945, either to help humanity before it self-destructed or to monitor its progress closely in case it began to take its weapons into outer space.³⁸ Finally, when scientists making use of radio telescopes embarked on the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence (SETI) in the late 1950s, they tried to estimate the number of highly developed civilisations in the Milky Way which might be able and willing to engage in interstellar communication.³⁹ In doing so, they considered the likely number of habitable planets in the galaxy, the fraction of such planets on which intelligent life had emerged and the average lifespan of technologically advanced civilisations. With regards to this last point, the ability of such civilisations to destroy themselves with advanced weaponry was a main concern, which in turn implied that actual contact with an extra-terrestrial civilisation might lead to important insights into how humanity could avoid this fate.⁴⁰

In this context, the project Kubrick initiated with his letter to Clarke appears to have been an attempt to find a hopeful response to the pessimistic conclusion of *Dr Strangelove*. We cannot be sure that this was Kubrick's conscious intention, but there are good reasons for assuming at least an emotional link between the two projects. To begin with, Kubrick was convinced that nuclear war was almost unavoidable. In a November 1963 interview with *Cosmopolitan*, he had stated:

The catch is that the inadvertent use of the bomb is, and will always be the greatest risk – a nuclear Sword of Damocles, which, in the words of President Kennedy, 'can be cut at any moment by accident, miscalculation or madness'. ... If the system was safe for 99.99 per cent of the days of the year, given average luck, it would fail in thirty years.⁴¹

An intimate connection between Kubrick's pessimistic views on the nuclear situation and his hopes for extra-terrestrial contact is suggested in a second letter he composed on the same day that he first wrote to Clarke, concerning a potential film project about the nuclear scientist and peace campaigner Leo Szilard, who in 1950 had first publicly discussed the terrifying prospect of a 'doomsday' machine.⁴² In this letter, Kubrick reflected on the research he had done for *Dr Strangelove*, in particular on the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union over the stationing of nuclear missiles on Cuba in October 1962 which had brought the world to the brink of nuclear war:

one of the most alarming features of the Cuban crisis, to my eyes anyway, was the lack of concern on the part of most of the people ... an incredible number of people thought of it either as a bluff which they could not take seriously or else they had an incredible kind of denial-resignation which allowed them to say if it happens it happens.⁴³

If people refused to acknowledge the threat of nuclear war, Kubrick's letter implied, there was not much hope that anything could be done to remove it.

Intriguingly, the phrase 'lack of concern' echoes the reference to 'lack of impact' in the letter to Clarke. Why was Kubrick specifically interested in the possibility that the discovery of extra-terrestrial intelligence would have no impact 'in some quarters'? Perhaps it was because he felt that this discovery needed to impress everyone on Earth in order to exert its redemptive power. In line with their response to the nuclear threat, if many people failed to acknowledge the significance of alien contact, then human politics would not be transformed, nothing would be learned and nuclear self-destruction would remain a near certainty.

With regards to the 'nuclear nightmare', Kubrick had written in an article published in June 1963 that filmic dramatisations such as *Dr Strangelove* had a particularly important role to play in public

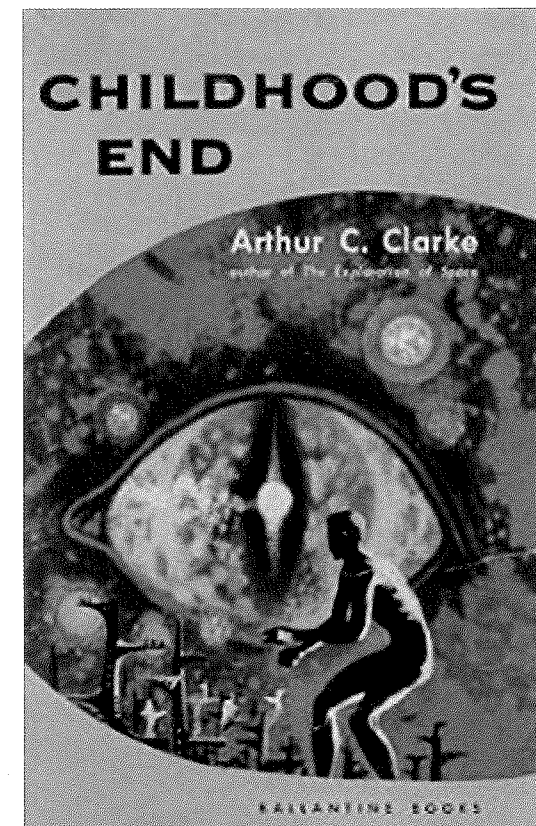
debate because 'it's the only social problem where there's absolutely no chance for people to learn anything from experience. If it ever happens, there may be very little of the world left to profit by the experience.'⁴⁴ One could only hope, then, that people might learn something from a film about this experience. Along similar lines, one might say that the (implicit) purpose of the proposed film about extra-terrestrials was to teach an important lesson about the unity of humankind, because, given the imminent threat of nuclear war, there was no time to wait for an actual alien encounter to do the job.

Thus, Kubrick's plans for a 'proverbial "really good" science-fiction movie' were at least partly motivated by a desire, responding to his own expectation of nuclear war, to offer an alternative, more hopeful vision of the future of humanity. While one is inclined to interpret his ambition to make a 'really good' film in terms of the scientific rigour and aesthetic quality which, in his view, most previous science-fiction movies had been lacking, Kubrick's phrase could also be understood as referring to the 'proverbial' optimism of much science fiction. Indeed, the partner he was courting for his project was a leading representative of optimistic science fiction.

3 Development

Arthur C. Clarke had first been recommended to Stanley Kubrick by Roger Caras, who was Columbia Pictures' publicist for *Dr Strangelove* (and would soon be employed by Kubrick in a similar role for *2001*). In February 1964, Kubrick had told Caras that he was doing research for his next film, which would deal with extra-terrestrials, to which Caras had responded with the suggestion that he contact his friend Arthur C. Clarke, who was 'the best' writer in the field.⁴⁵ The forty-six-year-old Clarke was perhaps best known as the 'father of satellite communication' for a technical paper entitled 'Extra-Terrestrial Relays', which had first been published in 1945 and proposed a network of geostationary satellites facilitating instant communication around the globe – a proposal that was becoming a reality in the early 1960s.⁴⁶ In 1945, Clarke had also written a prescient essay on the future of warfare in the nuclear age.⁴⁷ As a member of the British Interplanetary Society since 1934, Clarke had long been an avid promoter of space flight.⁴⁸ His numerous publications were equally divided between, on the one hand, science-fiction short stories and novels, often dealing with space exploration, alien encounters or the future evolution of humanity, and, on the other, non-fiction articles and books mainly focused on space exploration and the development and largely beneficial impact of technology.⁴⁹ For his achievements as a science populariser, Clarke had been awarded UNESCO's prestigious Kalinga Prize for Science Writing in 1962.⁵⁰

When he received Kubrick's letter of 31 March 1964, Clarke responded enthusiastically.⁵¹ On 8 April 1964, he wrote to Kubrick that the "really good" science-fiction movie is a great many years overdue', and suggested that they meet during his visit to New York later that month.⁵² Clarke's first letter referenced a wide range of



films – some chosen because they were 'the only ones that came anywhere near qualifying' as good science fiction, others because they 'had their moments catastrophe-wise' – and several of his own publications, both non-fiction and fiction, most notably his novel *Childhood's End* (1953), 'which everybody agrees is my best book'. Clarke emphasised that he had written extensively on space exploration and enclosed a letter he had recently sent to *Scientific American* expressing his support for research on interstellar space flight and the search for extra-terrestrial life. In this letter, he

speculated that 'we may have been visited [by extra-terrestrials] innumerable times in the past', yet admitted that 'the chance of finding evidence for such visits is minute'.⁵³

Having thought about Kubrick's suggested film project some more, the very next day he wrote to him again with detailed ideas.⁵⁴ Clarke included a copy of the most recent article he had written on the topic he was most famously associated with, entitled 'The World of the Communications Satellite': 'This may give you some ideas – esp. the marked passages.' These passages include statements about the 'coming of the communications satellite [which] will make it impossible for any human group – indeed, any individual – to be more than a few milliseconds from any other', with vast 'social consequences', 'for good or evil', for a 'still divided' world.⁵⁵ Starting from such concern about the future unification of humankind, Clarke presented Kubrick with 'a nice opening for a space movie', the overall narrative of which would combine his short story 'The Sentinel' (originally published as 'Sentinel of Eternity' in 1951) with the epic sweep of, but not necessarily the actual events depicted in, *Childhood's End*.⁵⁶ Indeed, in his first letter to Kubrick, Clarke had stated that he was already in the process of 'developing' the basic theme of *Childhood's End* – 'the impact of a superior race on humanity' – for another novel, an effort that, presumably, he was willing to divert into their joint film project.

Clarke envisioned the film beginning in the near future with a sunrise on the Moon and the discovery by a lunar 'survey team' of something highly unusual.⁵⁷ This opening was then meant to blend into 'The Sentinel', in which a geologist remembers how he first found 'a glittering, roughly pyramidal structure, twice as high as a man' on a lunar mountain, which 'has taken us twenty years' to open up so as 'to reach the machine inside those crystal walls'.⁵⁸ The geologist concludes that, '[w]hen our world was half its present age', this machine had been left by an extra-terrestrial civilisation, which had been 'masters of a universe' as yet empty of other intelligent life.⁵⁹ Motivated by 'the loneliness of gods looking out across infinity and

finding none to share their thoughts', they had left sentinels 'watching over all worlds with the promise of life' so as to alert them to the emergence of civilisations which met the 'double challenge' of surviving their 'conquest of atomic energy' and 'crossing space'.⁶⁰ Now that the 'alarm' has gone off, the extra-terrestrials 'will be turning their minds upon Earth. Perhaps they wish to help our infant civilisation. But they must be very, very old, and the old are often insanely jealous of the young.'⁶¹ From this, Clarke suggested in his letter, a story about humanity's direct interaction with the extra-terrestrials could be developed, along similar lines to what happens in *Childhood's End*.

Childhood's End tells the story of human interaction with an extra-terrestrial species, the 'Overlords', who arrive on Earth in giant spaceships some time in the near future. While there is a lot of distrust and some rebellion, eventually humans accept the benevolent rule of the technologically far superior Overlords 'who had brought peace to all the world for the first time in history', creating a 'united world', a 'World State'.⁶² For decades, the Overlords remain unseen, and then they reveal themselves, looking like devils: 'The leathery wings, the little horns, the barbed tail – all were there.'⁶³ This indicates that they have visited Earth 'before the dawn of human history', have 'come into conflict with ancient man' and entered 'the myths and legends of the world'.⁶⁴ It turns out that the Overlords are mere servants of the inconceivably more powerful, immaterial 'Overmind', and their role is to be 'midwives at a difficult birth', guiding humanity towards the next stage in its evolution.⁶⁵ This is achieved when children with extraordinary mental powers are born, who are soon able to leave their material existence behind, merging into a vast mental entity which in turn will one day become part of the Overmind, whereas regular humans die out and the Overlords prepare to move on to guide another species towards transcendence. Why did humanity need guidance in the first place? One of the Overlords explains: 'you were on the point of destroying yourselves with the powers that science had rashly given you. Without our intervention, the Earth today would be a radioactive wilderness.'⁶⁶

It is easy to see that the novel Clarke eventually produced with Kubrick is indeed the result of ‘developing’ the ideas presented in *Childhood’s End*: alien encounters in the distant past leaving their mark on human history; a twentieth-century humanity headed for nuclear self-destruction; further alien encounters facilitating global peace and the next stage in humanity’s evolution; the end point of all evolution being an immaterial, purely mental existence, which – given the explicit references to religion in both books – one might call spiritual. There is also a fundamental tension at the conclusion of *Childhood’s End* between the children who achieve spiritual transcendence and older generations who simply die, prefiguring the opposition between the Star-Child and humanity at the end of *2001*. Despite all these similarities, it took Clarke a long time to get from the story outline suggested in his letter of 9 April 1964 to his *2001* novel, the manuscript of which did not win Kubrick’s final approval until spring 1968.⁶⁷

When Clarke and Kubrick first met in New York in April 1964, they decided to write up the story of the planned film in the form of a novel-length treatment, which could be used to get funding for the production, and would then provide the basis for the screenplay and for a novel to be published in conjunction with the film’s release. Some of the earliest drafts emphasised the necessity to neutralise the threat of nuclear weapons.⁶⁸ For example, an ‘outline’ from July 1964 explains that the ‘skills’ used to build an underground base on the Moon had originally been developed for the construction of ‘hardened missile site[s]’ on Earth.⁶⁹ Thus ‘Cold War’ technology ‘had been turned to the purposes of peace’, which indicated that space exploration had finally, ‘[a]fter ten thousand years’, managed to provide ‘Man’ with ‘something as exciting as war’. That the two writers were developing their joint project with the possibility of imminent nuclear war in mind is also humorously demonstrated by Clarke’s diary entry for 26 July 1964: ‘Stanley’s birthday. Went to the Village and found a card showing the Earth coming apart at the seams and bearing the inscription: “How can you have a Happy Birthday when the whole world may blow up any minute?”’⁷⁰



Arthur C. Clarke
(centre) and Stanley
Kubrick (right)

By February 1965, the two collaborators were able to submit a ‘film story’ entitled *Journey Beyond the Stars* to MGM; it had probably been completed in December 1964.⁷¹ The manuscript had over 250 pages and was divided into two parts – one set millions of years ago, the other at the turn of the twenty-first century – and thirty-eight chapters, the fictional story being preceded by a ‘foreword’ taken from a *New York Times* article by a NASA scientist about the vastness of the universe and the near certainty of the existence of extra-terrestrial intelligence somewhere in it. The most important addition to Clarke’s initial outline of 9 April 1964 was the prehistoric sequence of Part I, which was inspired by Clarke’s story ‘Expedition to Earth’ (1951, also known as ‘Encounter in the Dawn’) about human-like extra-terrestrials visiting the Earth 100,000 years ago and interacting with a human male, to whom they appear as ‘gods’.⁷² It is

also worth pointing out that Part II of *Journey Beyond the Stars* ended before any substantial interaction between humans and extra-terrestrials – as originally envisioned by Clarke’s reference to *Childhood’s End* – could take place. Finally, with *Journey Beyond the Stars*, Kubrick and Clarke settled, for the time being, on an unambiguously optimistic story, although they had considered a much more pessimistic view of human–alien interaction as well. For example, Clarke had proposed at the end of May 1964 that the extra-terrestrials ‘might be machines who regard organic life as a hideous disease’, noting in his diary that Kubrick ‘thinks this is cute and feels we’ve got something’.⁷³ Although this idea was soon abandoned, it indicates that the optimism of *Journey Beyond the Stars* was haunted by a much darker vision.

What, then, is the story of *Journey Beyond the Stars*? Part I, in which hominids are manipulated by an alien device (here depicted as a transparent cube rather than a slab), and the first section of Part II, which narrates Dr Heywood Floyd’s trip to the Moon and the triggering of the alien device that was found there (here depicted as a pyramid), are already fairly close to the corresponding segments of the novel that Clarke would publish in 1968. The remainder of the manuscript, however, develops quite differently. After it has sent a signal to Jupiter, the alien device’s existence is made public and is widely perceived as a potential menace: ‘for the first time in history, there might be a reason for all the nations of the world to combine against a common threat’.⁷⁴ After extensive preparations, a spaceship is sent to Jupiter manned by a crew of six astronauts, five of whom are soon put in hibernation so as to save resources. The only companion of the remaining astronaut, David Bowman, is the female-voiced computer, whose ‘nickname’ is ‘Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom’, and with whose ‘psychological’ quirks Bowman is gradually becoming familiar.⁷⁵ On finally reaching Jupiter, Bowman is confronted with technical problems, including a lethal malfunction during his attempt to wake up the first of his fellow astronauts and a broken antenna. Eventually, however, these problems are solved,

and the five surviving astronauts find a mysterious opening on one of Jupiter’s moons. When Bowman enters into it, he is transported to another planet where he moves through a futuristic city full of humanoid aliens and ends up in a room modelled on television programmes from Earth. After he receives a phone call telling him that he will be sent home soon and asking him to leave the room, he steps into complete darkness. Then he becomes aware of a glimmering light: ‘Suddenly he is looking at a cube about fifteen feet on a side made of some completely transparent material; indeed it is not easy to see except when the light glints at its edge.’⁷⁶ With this encounter, which echoes the initial confrontation between hominids and alien technology and thus implies that another evolutionary leap is about to take place, the film ends.

A few days after a ‘reader’s report’ on the above manuscript was submitted on 15 February 1965, MGM agreed to fund the production of *Journey Beyond the Stars* with several million dollars (the figure usually given in the literature is \$6 million).⁷⁷ This was a very substantial financial commitment, especially when we consider that the average budget of a Hollywood movie at that time was only around \$1.5 million.⁷⁸ What is more, all the noteworthy science-fiction films that Clarke had mentioned in his first letter to Kubrick – ranging from *Things to Come* (1936) to *Forbidden Planet* (1956) – had earned less than \$3 million in rentals in the United States.⁷⁹ Why, then, did MGM consider that its huge investment in *Journey Beyond the Stars* was commercially viable? In the absence of sources directly documenting the studio’s decision-making, we can turn to its public announcement of the project, which indicates what MGM perceived to be its most important marketable elements.

4 Trends

On 23 February 1965, MGM sent out a press release with the headline 'Stanley Kubrick to Film *Journey Beyond the Stars* in Cinerama for MGM'.⁸⁰ More than half of the document consisted of a long statement by Kubrick, who was introduced in the opening sentence as 'the director of *Lolita* and most recently *Dr Strangelove*', for both of which he had 'received world-wide acclaim'. Thus, above all else MGM was making an investment in Kubrick, whose track record could be seen as a promise of future success.⁸¹

Indeed, after a commercially undistinguished career in the 1950s, with the release of the \$12 million Roman epic *Spartacus* in 1960, Kubrick had become one of Hollywood's top hit-makers, whose films also garnered tremendous critical acclaim.⁸² At the



beginning of 1965, *Variety* ranked *Spartacus* fourteenth in its list of 'All-Time Top Film Grossers' in North America with rentals of \$14 million.⁸³ The film had been nominated for six Academy Awards (but not in the main categories), winning four.⁸⁴ It had also won the Golden Globe for Best Drama from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and been selected by *Time* as one of the eight best American films of 1960.⁸⁵ While much less successful than *Spartacus* (and also much less expensive at about \$2 million each),⁸⁶ both the bestseller adaptation *Lolita* (1962) and *Dr Strangelove* had been substantial hits. *Lolita's* rentals of about \$4 million had placed it among the twenty top-grossing films of 1962 in the United States.⁸⁷ With rentals of \$5 million, *Dr Strangelove* had been among the fifteen top-grossing films of 1964. It had received four Oscar nominations (for Best Picture, Director, Actor and Adapted Screenplay), had been declared the year's best film by the *New York Times* and the year's Best-Written American Comedy by the Writers Guild of America, while also winning Best Direction from the New York Film Critics Association.⁸⁸ By any measure, then, by 1965 Kubrick was at the top in Hollywood, and therefore also at the forefront of MGM's thinking about, and press announcement for, *Journey Beyond the Stars*.

Another prominent item in that announcement was Cinerama. By 1965, the Cinerama company had ceased producing films in its original three-strip process which had launched the widescreen revolution of the early 1950s, using three cameras and three projectors.⁸⁹ Instead, the company now licensed the major studios to use the Cinerama label for particular single-strip 70mm productions which were guaranteed a release in Cinerama theatres with their huge curved screens. Cinerama releases had an impressive commercial track record. The original three-strip process had been launched with the travelogue *This Is Cinerama* in 1952, which, after a run of several years, eventually earned rentals of \$15 million, thus becoming the highest-grossing film released in 1952.⁹⁰ The next two Cinerama travelogues, *Cinerama Holiday* (\$12m, the top-grossing film released



in 1955) and *Seven Wonders of the World* (\$13m, the 4th highest-grossing film released in 1956), were also very successful, as were the first Cinerama feature (the epic Western *How the West Was Won*, \$21m, 1st/1962) and the slapstick extravaganza *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (\$21m, 2nd/1963), the first single-strip 70mm film to be released in Cinerama theatres. Despite the abandonment of the three-strip process in 1963, then, the excellent track record of Cinerama releases appeared to continue with single-strip films.

Whether they were three-strip or single-strip, documentary travelogues or fictional stories, Cinerama releases foregrounded sequences displaying natural scenery, which gave spectators the impression of being located within the landscape, and/or shots taken from fast-moving vehicles, giving audiences the dizzying sensation of actual movement. Instead of, or in addition to, telling a story, Cinerama films presented themselves as a form of virtual tourism and as virtual amusement-park rides, bringing the cinema closer to those

Privately, Kubrick and Clarke referred to their project as 'How the solar system was won'

leisure-time activities which, unlike cinemagoing, experienced a tremendous boom in the post-war period.⁹¹ As was already signalled by its title, *Journey Beyond the Stars* had great potential in this respect. The opening sequence set in prehistoric Africa promised to provide ample opportunity for spectacular landscape displays. Curiously, this sequence is never explicitly mentioned in the press release (it is only implied in the question: 'has anyone already visited Earth?'), which instead focuses on Kubrick's statement that the film would be 'an epic story of adventure and exploration, encompassing the Earth, the planets of our Solar System, and a journey light-years away to another part of the Galaxy', allowing audiences to go where no one had gone before. In other words, MGM recognised that the film could be marketed as the ultimate (virtual) tourist experience.

It could also be understood as the ultimate epic. Historical epics set their often intimate stories of personal struggle and love against the backdrop of important events and developments in (usually western) history, and stage these momentous episodes in a most spectacular fashion.⁹² Ever since D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), epics had been Hollywood's most prestigious and most expensive production category, and from the late 1940s onwards they had completely dominated the American box office in their various guises, ranging from biblical spectacles such as *Samson and Delilah* (\$12m, 1st/1949) to epic World War II movies such as *The Longest Day* (\$18m, 2nd/1962).⁹³ Many of these epics had a truly international outlook, as they were often based on non-American source material and used both foreign personnel and locations.

MGM's press release explicitly linked *Journey Beyond the Stars* to this tradition by declaring, somewhat misleadingly as it turned out, that the film would have 'a cast of international importance' and 'be filmed on locations in Britain, Switzerland, Africa, Germany and the United States'. The announcement also contained Kubrick's claim that the exploration of space and 'the electrifying discovery of extra-terrestrial intelligence' depicted in the film 'will transform our

civilization, as the voyages of the Renaissance brought about the end of the Dark Ages'. MGM could have gone even further by pointing out that the film would transcend the usual chronological framework of historical epics by going back to the very origins of humanity and setting up a fundamental break in human history in the near future. Once again, *Journey Beyond the Stars* must have appeared to the studio as an expansion and intensification of existing box-office trends.

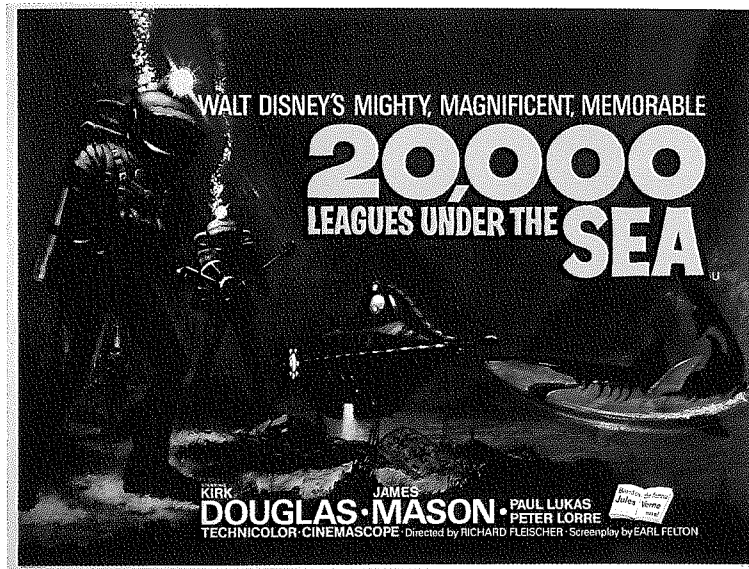
In addition to the project's general connection to the historical epic, there are several hints in the press release (and, of course, in Kubrick and Clarke's 'film story') at specific links to its biblical variant,⁹⁴ and also to the presence of supernatural, mostly divinely inspired, events in so many of Hollywood's hit movies (more than 10 per cent according to one quantitative content analysis) across a range of genres in the two decades after World War II.⁹⁵ MGM's announcement promised that *Journey Beyond the Stars* would depict encounters with 'extra-terrestrial', that is heavenly, beings, 'explore the infinite possibilities' and 'wonder' of 'space', that is the heavens, and contemplate the vastness and mystery of the universe. The inclusion of a quotation from 'the great biologist' J. B. S. Haldane – 'The Universe is not only stranger than we imagine; it is stranger than we *can* imagine' – suggests the limits of scientific knowledge and thus perhaps the need for a more spiritual approach.

Apart from highlighting Kubrick, Cinerama and *Journey Beyond the Stars*' epicness (and spiritual potential), the MGM press release foregrounded Kubrick's collaboration with Clarke, whose scientific credentials it listed. Together with the serious tone of Kubrick's long statement, Clarke's expertise was seen to ensure that the film would address questions about space exploration and extra-terrestrial life which '[d]uring the last few years, some of the world's best minds have applied themselves to'. In doing so, the film would 'break away from the clichés of Monsters and Madmen' of much previous science-fiction cinema, which raises the possibility that MGM conceived of *Journey Beyond the Stars* as suitable only for

more informed and refined audiences rather than for the great mass of potential cinemagoers. This is, however, unlikely given the following clause which Cinerama Inc. inserted into all its contracts with distributors and producers: the company had to be 'satisfied that the photoplay does and will constitute a "road-show" photoplay suitable for "family entertainment"'.⁹⁶

The term 'road-show' referred to Hollywood's dominant release strategy for big-budget movies in the 1950s and 1960s, whereby a film would first be shown at premium prices only in a few showcase cinemas (which, in the case of a Cinerama release, were mostly Cinerama theatres equipped with their special screens).⁹⁷ A roadshow release aimed to have very long runs in its showcase cinemas, where it was presented with all the trappings of a night out at the 'legitimate' theatre: separate performances (instead of the normal practice of running films continuously throughout the day), advance bookings, an orchestral overture and an intermission. In this way, the initial presentation of the film became a special cultural event, which was, however, addressed not to the discerning few but to everybody who was willing and able to pay the higher ticket price. Later on, the film also received a general release at regular prices in regular cinemas, often while the initial roadshow engagements were still running. Across their two stages, roadshow releases tried to appeal to all segments of the population, not least by being presented as entertainment for the whole family. So, how could *Journey Beyond the Stars* be understood as family entertainment?

To answer this question, it is useful to take a look at the output of the Disney company. Disney's first CinemaScope production, *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* (\$9m, 3rd/1954), paved the way for high-profile Jules Verne adaptations by other studios, which, like the Disney film, depicted fantastic journeys, albeit in historical rather than futuristic settings. The most successful of these was *Around the World in Eighty Days* (\$23m, 2nd/1956). Disney also produced successful comedies about scientific discovery and technological innovation, notably *The Absent-Minded Professor* (\$9m, 5th/1961)



and its sequel (*Son of Flubber*, \$7m, 5th/1963). What is more, from 1955 to 1957, Disney made three episodes on space exploration, partly based on a series of articles published in the hugely popular magazine *Collier's*, for its *Disneyland* show, which was one of the highest-rated programmes on American television; the show continued to deal with future technological developments into the early 1960s.⁹⁸ This suggests that family entertainment and scientific as well as technological themes were by no means at odds with each other.

MGM appears to have perceived the portrayal of space exploration as the key marketable feature of *Journey Beyond the Stars*. No doubt this had a lot to do with the fact that a real-life space race was in full swing in 1965. As Kubrick put it in the press release: 'the first man-carrying spaceships are actually being built, and the United States is spending over \$10,000,000 a day to reach the Moon, and robot probes have already been launched to Mars and Venus'.

MGM could count on the increased level of public interest in the American space programme ever since President Kennedy had declared in a speech to Congress on 25 May 1961 that 'this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to earth'.⁹⁹ Indeed, this goal neatly dovetailed with the opening sequence of the second part of *Journey Beyond the Stars*, which depicts a trip from Earth to a lunar base, and with the phone call Bowman receives at the end of the story assuring him that he will be returned home. MGM could count on lots of free publicity for this project every time a major new development in the space race took place – another great achievement by the Americans or the Soviets, or perhaps a tragic accident. By 1965, several unmanned spacecraft had already gone to the Moon (but none had yet achieved a soft landing), and both Soviet and American astronauts had orbited the Earth (but none had yet left the orbit, finally escaping the Earth's gravity); during their missions, some of the astronauts had to deal with life-threatening accidents.¹⁰⁰

The popular appeal of space travel was evidenced by the fact that, ever since Alan Shepard had become the first American in space on 5 May 1961, broadcasts of American space missions had attracted huge television audiences, although only the rocket launch could be seen live on television, while during their time in space the astronauts could be heard but not yet seen.¹⁰¹ At the same time, it is important to note that the space race was by no means uncontroversial. A Gallup poll from July 1965 revealed ambiguous attitudes among Americans.¹⁰² Intriguingly, the very same factors that made the space programme controversial – the gigantic expenditure of taxpayers' money, the possibility of national humiliation should the Soviets win the race, the enormous risk for astronauts – made *Journey Beyond the Stars* look even more attractive as a virtual alternative: only MGM's money would be spent, the Soviet film industry could never rival Hollywood and no one would die. Whatever happened in the real space race, *Journey Beyond the Stars* would ensure that the Americans got there (the Moon, Jupiter, another planet light-years

away) first. Furthermore, the film would deliver moving pictures from space which television broadcasts of space missions had so far been unable to present.

We can conclude, then, that, judging by MGM's February 1965 press announcement, the studio's investment in *Journey Beyond the Stars* was based on the perception that what Kubrick and Clarke had outlined in their 'film story' was an innovative movie that was nevertheless firmly grounded in recent trends in Hollywood entertainment. *Journey Beyond the Stars* was going to be a roadshow attraction for the whole family; a big-budget historical epic and futuristic Cinerama travelogue which promised to take audiences on the most spectacular journey of their lifetime while also dealing with crucial developments in human history; a spiritual film which raised questions about humankind's relationship to higher powers in the universe; a speculative, yet scientifically based and thus educational docudrama which extrapolated from the current state of knowledge and exploited the intense public interest in the space race; a science-fiction film featuring futuristic hardware and exotic, yet humanoid, aliens; the latest work of a young director who was increasingly perceived as one of the great masters of Hollywood cinema.

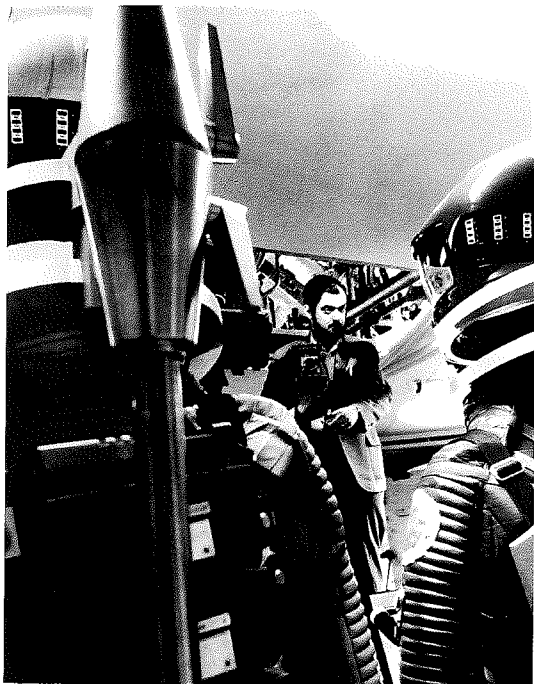
In the press release, MGM stated that Clarke's novel would be published 'this winter' and shooting would start in August 1965 so that the film could be released by the end of 1966.¹⁰³ The studio probably did not expect that the release date would be missed by more than a year, and that, during this time, Kubrick would take the project into a radically new direction (while also raising the production budget to almost \$11 million).¹⁰⁴

5 Transformation

After MGM had committed to *Journey Beyond the Stars* in February 1965, Kubrick and Clarke continued their collaboration in New York. By July that year, they had adapted their 'film story' of December 1964 into a screenplay, which included extensive voice-over narration and was now entitled *2001: A Space Odyssey*.¹⁰⁵ During the summer, Kubrick and the production team he had assembled relocated to England where the film was shot from 17 December 1965 to 14 July 1966, mainly at MGM's studios in Borehamwood near London. Additional material for the prehistoric and Star Gate sequences was shot by a second unit in Africa and the United States. Kubrick himself shot material for the film as late as the autumn of 1967, notably scenes featuring the hominids and screen



MGM's Borehamwood studios



tests for various ways to represent the aliens. Furthermore, across 1966, Roger Caras (by now an employee of Kubrick's) filmed interviews with leading scientists and thinkers in the UK and the United States, including a priest and a rabbi, for a planned ten-minute prologue to the film. The interviews dealt with the existence of extra-terrestrial intelligence, the possibility of communication with it and the likely impact of such communication, but also with related questions about the origins of life, the future evolution of humankind and the development of machine intelligence.

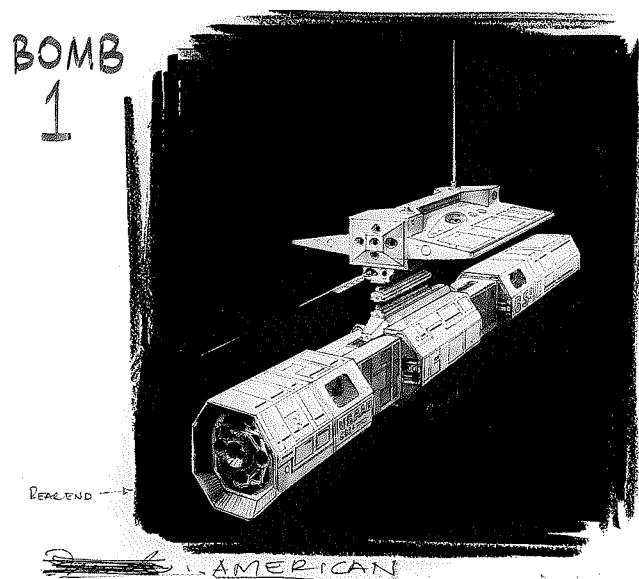
By the summer of 1966, Clarke had revised the 'film story' for publication as a novel, yet Kubrick demanded further changes and in any case wanted to delay the novel's publication until after the film's release, which was now scheduled for late 1967 or early 1968.

In addition to revising the novel, Clarke continued to supply material for the film's dialogue and voice-over narration, which remained in a state of flux until early 1968. Clarke also was involved in pre-release publicity activities for the film and composed various texts to be used in promotional materials. This was part of the major publicity campaign launched by MGM with the official announcement of the project in February 1965; for this campaign, the studio was working closely with Kubrick through Roger Caras. The film's immensely complex post-production, involving numerous special-effects shots, dragged on until March 1968, with Kubrick making key decisions, in particular about editing, music and voice-over narration, very late in the process. Post-production was completed only a few days before the film's first screening for the press at the end of March, and Kubrick made further cuts a few days after the film's premiere in selected American cities at the beginning of April. Clarke's novel was finally published in July 1968.

During the period of more than three years that it took to turn Kubrick and Clarke's 'film story' into Kubrick's film and Clarke's novel, the project was constantly evolving.¹⁰⁶ This evolution can be understood in terms of two overlapping movements of, on the one hand, narrative and thematic elaboration (predominant in the early stages and applying to both novel and film), and, on the other, formal contraction, accelerating towards the end of the production process, but only with regards to the film.¹⁰⁷ Kubrick and Clarke's first screenplay of 6 July 1965 demonstrates that the film was initially meant to stay very close to their 'film story'. The manuscript is 108 pages long, and, like other Kubrick screenplays, it does not always follow the stylistic and layout conventions for scripts. Many of the scenes are presented in novelistic prose, rather than being broken down into dialogue (or other spoken material) and brief descriptions of the action. The scenes which are presented conventionally make extensive use of voice-over narration similar in tone to the novelistic prose used elsewhere in the script. Hence, it is likely that some of this prose was meant to be used as voice-over narration. In general, the

function of the voice-over was to provide background information, to make sure that the action could be followed easily, to indicate what its wider significance might be and to tie the different parts of the story together.

For example, after the first twenty-five pages of prehistoric scenes written much like a chapter in a novel, the second part of the script starts with a brief description of a spacecraft orbiting Earth accompanied by an extensive voice-over which identifies this object as a nuclear bomb, explains the danger that nuclear weapons pose for humanity, relates this danger back to the drought which threatened the survival of the hominids and introduces an additional global problem: 'By the year 2001, overpopulation had replaced the problem of starvation but this was ominously offset by the absolute and utter perfection of the bomb.'¹⁰⁸ When Heywood Floyd is briefed about the discovery of a pyramid left by extra-terrestrial beings on the Moon millions of years ago, the voice-over adds: 'There was



A design sketch

triumph and yet melancholy in this discovery ... what might we have learned from [the extra-terrestrials].'¹⁰⁹ This comment implicitly refers back to earlier scenes showing how an ancient extra-terrestrial cube saved the hominids from starvation, and looks forward to the possible impact of future encounters, which may save humanity from nuclear self-destruction.

Another voice-over, used in a scene depicting life on the Moon base, provides a lot of information on space exploration and then comments: 'the time was fast approaching when Earth, like all mothers, must say farewell to her children'.¹¹⁰ This resonates with statements at the very beginning and end of the script, which, while not marked as such, were probably intended to be used as voice-over narration. In the opening scene, Moon-Watcher is handling the corpse of a fellow hominid, who, the script tells us, was his father: 'such a relationship was beyond his understanding ... [yet] he feels something, something akin to sadness'.¹¹¹ Mirroring this opening, the script's final scene concerns one of the 'unbelievably graceful and beautiful humanoid creatures' inhabiting the distant planet to which Bowman has been taken; after Bowman is told that he will be returned home, the extra-terrestrial 'carefully takes the Earth-man's hand, and leads him forward into the void, looking not unlike a parent leading its child'.¹¹² Thus, the father that Moon-Watcher lost at the beginning; and also Mother Earth which has been left behind by the inhabitants of the Moon, is replaced by a benevolent, parental alien who can guide humanity through its difficult and potentially self-destructive childhood. In this way, the otherwise disconnected parts of the script were integrated into an overarching narrative, with voice-over narration doing most of the work of integration, much like the narrator would do in a novel or the commentary in a documentary.

Clarke and Kubrick were not satisfied with certain aspects of the script. Kubrick, whose initial letter to Clarke in March 1964 had highlighted 'great plot and character' as key elements of the project he envisioned,¹¹³ wanted to increase dramatic conflict and character

development in the story, and he eventually did so in a highly unusual manner. In the July script (as in the earlier 'film story'), the Jupiter mission is marred by technical problems, and one of the two non-hibernating astronauts – a change from the 'film story' where only one astronaut stays out of hibernation – hurtles into space when his space pod malfunctions and eventually dies, while another astronaut dies during a failed attempt to get him out of hibernation. These are merely accidents; there is no antagonist here and hence no conflict and also little character development. Kubrick came up with the idea that the astronauts have not been told about the true objective of their mission (nor has the rest of the world), whereas their board computer is fully informed. Building on references to the computer's 'psychological' quirks in the 'film story' and on the statement that it was 'quasi-conscious' in the July 1965 script, Kubrick saw a way of giving it a character arc and turning it into the much-needed antagonist. The burden of having to keep a secret interferes with Athena's smooth functioning so that it starts to make mistakes, which in turn give rise to increasingly desperate attempts to cover up these mistakes, eventually leading to multiple murder. While Clarke thought that it was unrealistic for the astronauts to be left in the dark about their real mission, he appreciated the conflict arising from this plot device.¹¹⁴ Instead of being 'just an episode invented for excitement', the escalating technical problems and climactic lethal accidents now became more 'integral' to the film's story and 'our theme': 'After all, our story is a quest for truth. Athenas' [*sic*] action shows what happens when this truth is concealed.'¹¹⁵

In the revised script, which Kubrick and Clarke completed in December 1965 just before shooting started, much emphasis is placed on the battle between the board computer (now called Hal) and the two astronauts, culminating in the killing of all astronauts but one, who then disconnects Hal.¹¹⁶ There is plenty of dialogue – involving mission control on Earth, the astronauts and Hal – exploring the conflicted feelings and faulty reasoning behind Hal's increasingly destructive behaviour. In another revision of the script from February

1966, completed while shooting was already under way, Hal even has a schizophrenic breakdown, fragmenting into two personalities, with one explaining and condemning the actions of the other.¹¹⁷ For subsequent script revisions, Kubrick suggested the use of voice-over narration to further explore Hal's psychology.¹¹⁸ In addition to the development of Hal's character, script revisions were aimed at giving the human characters – notably Floyd and the two astronauts Bowman and Poole – more depth, mainly through long-distance conversations with, or dialogue references to, family members. As we have seen, this was also crucial for the portrayal of Moon-Watcher, who mourns his father in the opening scene of the July 1965 script, and, figuratively, it applied to humankind as a whole, which was defined through its relationship to Mother Earth and to aliens acting in a parental capacity.

In this way, Kubrick and Clarke worked hard throughout 1965 and the early months of 1966 at introducing more conflict into the story, and expanding the use of spoken words in voice-over narration and dialogue. At the same time, Kubrick expressed doubts about the wisdom of this approach. For example, in a letter from August 1965, Clarke was critical of the ending of the July script (the alien taking Bowman by the hand to lead him into the void): 'we never explained what happened to Bowman, but left it entirely to the imagination'.¹¹⁹ He suggested that instead of this open ending, the alien should give Bowman a spaceship, which is 'man's new tool – the equivalent of Moonwatcher's weapons', yet is much more feminine ('beautiful', 'soft', 'warm') than the phallic bones. According to Clarke, who wanted to 'push all sorts of subconscious and even Freudian buttons', the final voice-over should be: 'Now he was master of the world.' Kubrick commented simply: 'I prefer present non-specific result for film. Maybe this can work in a book but it wont [*sic*] on film.'¹²⁰ Over the next two and a half years, the idea that the novel might be suitable for presenting explanations, while the film would work better through a more open-ended narrative and ambiguous images, became ever more central for Kubrick's conception of the project. A kind of

division of labour was slowly emerging whereby the film could afford to be mysterious because the novel would explain everything.

An important turning point was a letter Kubrick sent to Clarke in April 1966, roughly halfway through the film's principal photography, and also halfway between the project's inception in March 1964 and the film's release in April 1968. By this stage, the film's ending had changed dramatically. In the February 1966 script, there are no more humanoid aliens; instead an extensive voice-over explains that the aliens are immaterial beings still watching over the experiment on Earth which their ancestors had started millions of years ago by leaving behind a cube designed to change the lives of hominids. At the end of the script, Bowman is transformed into a baby and then transported back to Earth, all of this facilitated by another cube. Kubrick was not happy about the different ways in which the script showed the workings of the cube in each case. In the prehistoric sequence, the transparent cube affects Moon-Watcher's band by showing them three-dimensional scenes of a group of hominids using bones as weapons, eating meat, etc.; Moon-Watcher and his group learn by copying these little educational movies. By contrast, the end of the movie does not explain exactly how the cube brings about Bowman's transformation. Kubrick was concerned that '[i]f we show the literal images of what the lessons are for Moonwatcher, we are adding to the risk of frustration at the end by *not* showing what the lesson is for Bowman'.¹²¹ His solution was to concentrate, in both instances, on the 'spellbound faces' of those confronting the cube, on the 'hypnotic' quality of what they are staring at and on the transformative impact it has on them, without ever showing 'the contents of the lesson'. This also had the advantage of adding mystery and complexity to the proceedings: 'Aside from possibly better narrative construction, it seems to me that not showing the visions in the Cube helps prevent a kind of silly simplicity of which I think we are presently in danger.'

Kubrick also proposed that the cube's impact on the hominids should be made more dramatic. In the February 1966 script, even

before the arrival of the cube, Moon-Watcher is drawn into actual fighting when his band is challenged by a rival group of hominids. According to Kubrick, it would be 'much better to make the point that though they are strongly territorial, fighting and killing has not entered significantly into their lives'; it is the cube which introduces both weapons and murder into the hominid way of life, thus making a 'much more significant' impact. As a consequence of Kubrick's proposal, the prehistoric part of the film would ultimately be structured around a fundamental change in Moon-Watcher's outlook and behaviour – from helpless posturing to efficient killing. This parallels the character development Kubrick had previously introduced for Hal. During the Jupiter mission, the computer's outlook on the astronauts and its own role is changed so drastically by the requirement to keep a secret that it, too, becomes an efficient killer.

By spring 1966, then, Kubrick and Clarke had come up with the narrative that they would largely stick to for both novel and film. However, after principal photography was completed in July, the long-drawn-out process of post-production saw a shift in Kubrick's conception of the movie, which built on the preference he had earlier expressed for a 'non-specific' ending and for the avoidance of 'literal images' in the lessons taught by the alien cube. More specifically, in rejecting the 'silly simplicity' of the cube showing educational movies to hominids, Kubrick seems to have become aware of uncomfortable parallels between those educational movies and certain aspects of the very film that he wanted to present to cinema audiences. With its planned prologue featuring interviews with scientists and its abundance of explanatory voice-overs and dialogue, *2001* was shaping up to be, among other things, a very 'literal' film designed to teach viewers lessons about human evolution, extra-terrestrial intelligence, space exploration and artificial intelligence.

Indeed, when Kubrick mentioned the 'silly simplicity of which I think we are presently in danger', he appeared to refer both to the specific scene in question and to the current state of the overall

project. In this context, his proposal to Clarke about how to deal with the cube's lessons offered a model for revising the film as a whole – and also a daring vision of what *2001* might be able to achieve as a new kind of cinematic experience. Kubrick's proposal to replace the 'contents' of the cube's lessons with a focus on 'hypnotic' images and the 'spellbound faces' of the hominids was clearly applicable to *2001* and its prospective audience, as was the idea that the aim of these hypnotic images was to utterly transform their spellbound viewers.

From this, a new conception of *2001* could be derived which focused not on what was in the film but on the effect it was meant to have on its viewers. It became possible to imagine that cinema audiences in front of huge Cinerama screens, like the hominids in front of the alien cube, would be 'spellbound' and transformed by the experience of *2001*, and that such an effect might best be achieved precisely by emptying the film of its 'contents' and instead concentrating on the creation of 'hypnotic' images (arguably a strategy which had been employed successfully by Cinerama travelogues). Of course, this would constitute a dramatic departure from the conventions of mainstream narrative film-making, going against most of the expectations audiences would bring to a roadshow epic, but this was precisely the point. Within the film, hominids were transformed by their encounter with an alien artifact, something way beyond their horizon of expectations; if there was any chance that *2001* could have a similarly transformative effect on its viewers, then it, too, had to become wholly alien.

It is impossible to know whether this is how Kubrick arrived at the decision to fundamentally reshape his movie, but the fact is that he did reshape it. By November 1967, he had come to the conclusion that the voice-over narration could largely be dropped. He sent a telegram to Clarke: 'As more film cut together it became apparent narration was not needed.'¹²² Clarke replied that he was 'rather upset' and sceptical, yet also expressed his basic agreement with Kubrick's approach: 'I'll be v[ery] interested to see how you can possibly dispense with much of the narrative material while at the

same time I feel it's a good thing if you can.'¹²³ Kubrick was still interested in using some narration, and Clarke continued to send him new drafts for bits of voice-over until well into the new year.¹²⁴

At some point, probably in late January or February 1968, only a few weeks before the film's scheduled release date, Kubrick decided to drop the voice-over narration altogether. At the same time, he informed the film composer Alex North that he would make little, if any, use of the score he had composed and recorded for *2001*.¹²⁵ In the end, Kubrick replaced North's score with a selection of pre-recorded nineteenth- and twentieth-century classical and avant-garde music, which was unprecedented in mainstream film-making. He had also decided to reduce the dialogue drastically. By this time, the planned ten-minute prologue of interviews, the opening scene with Moon-Watcher and his dead father, and all attempts to include images of the aliens in the film's finale (with test footage having been shot in September 1967)¹²⁶ had been abandoned as well.

All of these changes meant that, while the underlying story basically remained in place, it would be almost impossible for viewers to understand what this story was and how the various parts of the film fit together. After Kubrick's last-minute changes, the film no longer shows or even mentions the intelligent extra-terrestrial beings whose grand experiment with life on Earth motivates much of what happens on screen, especially the operations of the ancient artifacts they have left behind. Nor does the film provide an obvious causal connection between the prehistoric scenes and the events at the turn of the twenty-first century; and even the connection between events on the Moon and the Jupiter mission is only explained towards the end of that mission. No explicit reason is given for Hal's initial mistakes and later murderous actions. Everything that happens after Bowman has disconnected Hal remains completely unexplained.

In addition to reducing the comprehensibility of the story, Kubrick's changes also removed what had been one of the project's most important themes, namely that extra-terrestrial intervention was needed to counter the threat of extinction, both in the distant

past (featuring starving hominids unable to deal with a long drought) and at the turn of the twenty-first century. As we have seen, in the mid-1960s, Kubrick was convinced that nuclear war was going to take place within the next few decades; yet, in response to this conviction, he was able, with Clarke's help, to imagine an alternative future in which space exploration and an encounter with extra-terrestrial intelligence unified and transformed humanity so much that nuclear self-destruction could be avoided – although, on Clarke's side, this optimistic scenario had long been haunted by a darker vision of the aliens themselves posing a potential threat to humanity. In Kubrick's film released into movie theatres in April 1968, none of this was any longer stated explicitly, but, as we saw earlier, Clarke's novel, published a few months later, continued to hint at the potential extra-terrestrial threat and to foreground the theme of nuclear destruction.

In interviews following the film's release, Kubrick offered a complex rationale for the unconventional shape the film had taken. *2001* was primarily meant to be a purely visual experience rather than a story conveyed with the help of the spoken word. The film was designed to be open to a wide range of intellectual and emotional responses, with different people being able to respond in very different ways. Beyond such differences, however, the film was meant to touch on deep-rooted, perhaps universally shared human needs and longings, which across human history have traditionally been served by myth and religion. Finally, the film's unconventional shape was in fact in the service of its pursuit of scientific accuracy: since the immense superiority and otherness of extra-terrestrial intelligence and its technology would make it totally incomprehensible to humans, it could most accurately be represented through incomprehensible images.¹²⁷

This is a perfectly good rationale for many of the unique formal features of *2001*, yet it was provided retrospectively, and does not explain how Kubrick came to prefer those features to the overly explicit, literal and indeed educational film, so heavily dependent on the spoken word in its prologue, voice-over and extensive dialogue,

which he and Clarke had been working towards for at least two years. What I want to suggest is that the drastic changes Kubrick made late in the production were, directly or indirectly, derived from his critique of the film's leaning towards 'silly simplicity' in April 1966, and from the general emphasis on transformative experiences brought about by encounters with extra-terrestrial intelligence which had been at the heart of this project from its inception. From spring 1964 to spring 1966, Kubrick and Clarke had developed a story about mysterious artifacts precipitating the transition from hominid to human being and from astronaut to Star-Child. Kubrick's letter from April 1966 challenged the simplistic way in which the operations of one of these artifacts were represented. This in turn provided him with a possible model for thinking about the operations of his own movie and its intended impact on audiences. As a result, he eventually decided to turn his film into a mysterious artifact as well, hoping perhaps that its very alienness, itself the result of a radical transformation of a long-standing project, might in turn provide audiences with the opportunity for a transformative experience.

At some point in 1966, Kubrick, who had until then been toying with various shapes for the alien artifacts on Earth, on the Moon, near Jupiter and in the alien hotel room, decided that all of them would be thin, narrow, tall, rectangular slabs, geometrically perfect, sharp-edged, shiny and utterly opaque. It is tempting to relate the film's own perfect design and opacity back to that of the monolith, and to see this object as a playfully inverted (black instead of white, standing up instead of lying sideways) geometric reminder of the rectangular, extremely wide screen for which the film was made. In other words, consciously or not, Kubrick turned *2001* into a filmic monolith, which meant that viewers encountering this monolith in the cinema would find themselves in a position similar to that of the hominids and David Bowman in the film: on the verge of a transformative experience lifting them to a higher level of consciousness, which is exemplified in the film by the birth of the

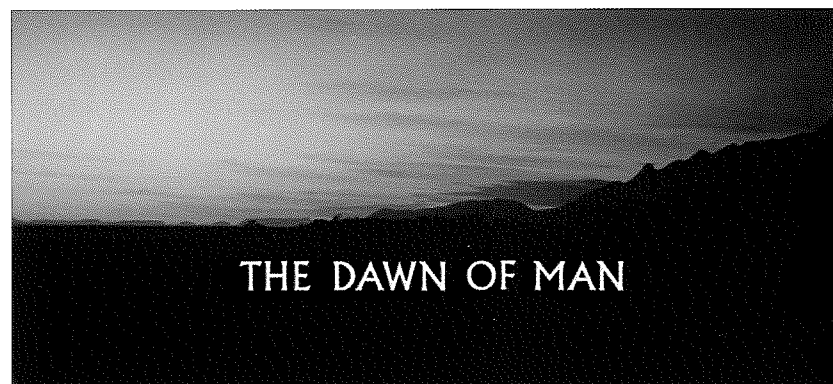
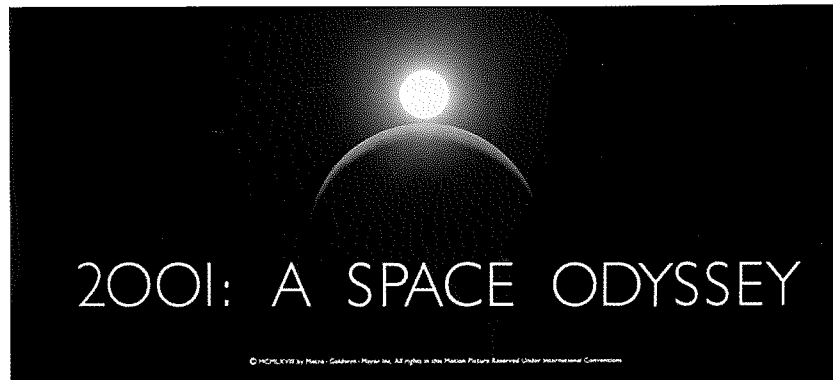
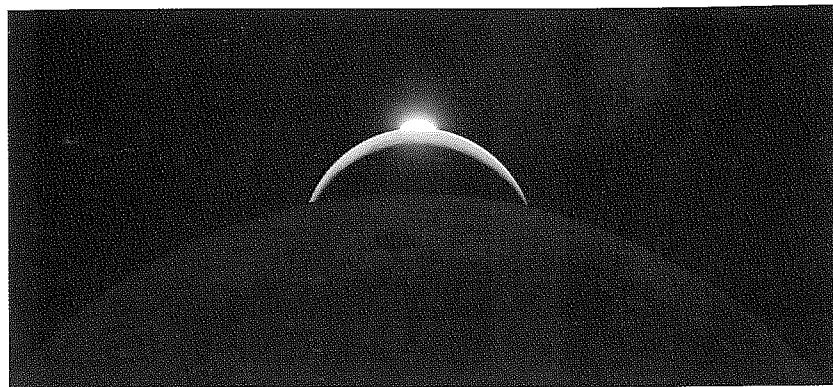
Star-Child at the very end. As we will see later, when examining letters written to Kubrick after the film's release, many viewers did in fact experience *2001* very much on these terms.

Let's first take a closer look, though, at this monolithic movie as it was initially widely seen by audiences in 1968.¹²⁸ Fortunately, recent DVD releases of the film replicate its roadshow presentation, complete with an overture, a music-filled intermission and a musical endpiece. My analysis of *2001* concentrates on the guidance provided by the film itself, especially its opening sequence, for how we might be able to process its spectacular images and haunting sounds, and its cryptic narrative. As I demonstrate, an important aspect of such processing is the willingness to leave much of the film's mystery intact, rather than explaining it away.

6 The Film

The beginning is ominous: Against the backdrop of total blackness, strings and then winds and brass can be heard, their eery, disharmonious sound slowly welling up, then receding again before another brief build-up and, finally, silence. After this three-minute overture (from György Ligeti's *Atmospheres*) – which would have been played in movie theatres against closed curtains, while the audience was still in the process of filling up the auditorium – a bright blue and yellow MGM logo appears, soon to be replaced by a black screen.¹²⁹ This in turn gives way to a very dark image of the Moon's surface, above which the Earth, and behind it the sun, begins to rise, with most of the Earth shrouded in darkness, only a curved sliver of its surface visible. Already starting with the appearance of the logo, the music of Richard Strauss's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* builds up from almost imperceptible beginnings towards its loud and triumphant climaxes, while the camera tilts up from the Moon so as to focus only on the Earth and sun, beneath which the credits appear: 'Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer presents/A Stanley Kubrick Production/2001: A Space Odyssey'. At the end of this almost two-minute credit sequence, the image fades to black, while several seconds later the music also fades away to complete silence. Against the black screen, insects and birds can then be heard, before a landscape dowsed in the reddish light of daybreak appears, the title 'The Dawn of Man' superimposed on it.

What is one to make of this beginning? The overture is unsettling, combining a sense of mystery with an element of threat, but also the promise of peace. After the brightly coloured and highly stylised MGM logo, the film returns viewers to darkness and then places them on – or rather, just above – the Moon, looking out over a desolate landscape. In a surprising and disorienting and also perhaps



– in the light of Strauss’s music – triumphant reversal of their real-life experiences, viewers then witness the rise of the Earth on the Moon rather than seeing the Moon rising in the night sky above Earth. As soon as viewers get accustomed to their unusual lunar position, the camera’s tilt removes the lunar surface, leaving them, as it were, hanging in empty space. The sunrise they witness once again references familiar experiences, yet offers a radically new perspective on them, with the full sun topping a sliver of Earth seen from afar.

Placed beneath this image, the film’s title suggests frameworks for making sense of what has been presented so far. ‘2001’ indicates that the camera’s position in space is due to the fact that the film’s action takes place at the beginning of the twenty-first century, by which time, viewers in the late 1960s could speculate, seeing the Earth rise above the Moon may have become a commonplace experience for space travellers. ‘A Space Odyssey’, however, promises something beyond the commonplace: like Odysseus, a space traveller may be forced to take a long detour, may even get lost for a while and separated from his mates, before finally returning home.¹³⁰ The first shot after the credit sequence suggests that the starting point – and also, presumably, the end point – of this odyssey is the Earth: that is, the very place where the film’s viewers find themselves. The opening of the film’s story explicitly references the mundane and familiar. Echoing both the Earth rising on the Moon and the sun rising above the distant Earth in the credit sequence, the film’s story begins with views of what is literally an everyday event: daybreak and sunrise on Earth. The title ‘The Dawn of Man’ plays on the time of day depicted in the images, yet once again promises something far beyond the everyday – the emergence or awakening of humanity.¹³¹

More generally, the tension between the ordinary and the extraordinary set up in the credit sequence and the opening of the story suggests how this film is going to engage its viewers, offering them familiar images, situations and actions which are, however, presented from unusual perspectives and surrounded by mystery. As a result of this, viewers can expect occasionally to find themselves

without a ground to stand on, lost in cinematic space, as it were. Thus, it is the viewers – as much as any travellers within the film's story – that the second part of the film's title promises to take on an odyssey across the unfamiliar space depicted in the credit sequence; they are warned that they may feel disoriented for a while, yet assured that eventually they will return home safely.

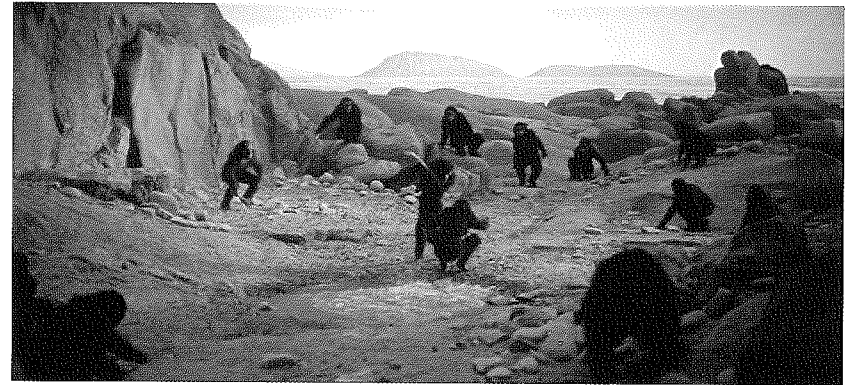
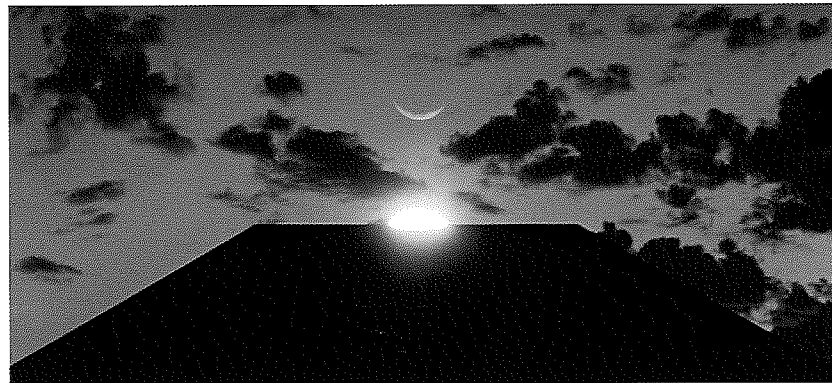
If one were to respond to the film's beginning in the manner described above, one would be well prepared for the story that then unfolds, and also for the unsettling and disorienting way in which this story is presented. The film can be divided into five major narrative segments, varying in length from fifteen to thirty-five minutes, with three of them being shown before the intermission and two afterwards:

Segment 1 (c. 15 minutes):	prehistoric times on Earth
Segment 2 (c. 35 minutes):	a trip to the Moon at the turn of the twenty-first century
Segment 3 (c. 33 minutes):	a trip to Jupiter at the turn of the twenty-first century
Intermission	
Segment 4 (c. 27 minutes):	continuation of the trip to Jupiter
Segment 5 (c. 23.5 minutes):	a trip from Jupiter to an unknown destination and back to Earth, starting at the turn of the twenty-first century

The transition from the first to the second segment is marked by a huge spatio-temporal shift in the story (moving millions of years ahead to the turn of the twenty-first century and thousands of miles away from Earth into space), while the beginnings of the third and the fifth segment are marked, just like the beginning of the first segment, by titles ('Jupiter Mission: 18 Months Later', 'Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite') which are accompanied by further spatio-temporal shifts (of several months and millions of miles in both cases). Whereas the story develops continuously across the third and fourth segment (with only

a tiny spatio-temporal shift from the inside to the outside of a spacecraft while a few hours pass), their separation is marked by the intermission. Let's take a closer look, then, at these five narrative segments, paying particular attention to the ways in which they relate to the expectations raised by the film's credit sequence and by the title presented at the beginning of the first segment, 'The Dawn of Man'.

This first segment presents spectacular views of a landscape of rocky hills and dusty plains with little vegetation. One might want to call this landscape desolate, yet it is positively brimming with life when compared to the lunar landscape shown earlier. The segment shows how the life of a band of herbivorous and rather peaceful but also quite helpless ape-like creatures – who share their living space with tapirs, get attacked by a leopard (with one fatality) and respond to a rival band which challenges their access to a waterhole with ineffectual posturing rather than actual violence – is transformed by the brief appearance of a monolith. This appearance is preceded and accompanied by a cacophony of otherworldly voices (from Ligeti's *Requiem*), which intermingle with the shrieks and grunts of the apes who are initially afraid, yet then approach, touch and huddle around the monolith. The only other piece of music in this segment comes in the next scene, in which *Thus Spake Zarathustra* can be heard while the band's leader (who we can call 'Moon-Watcher', although he is never referred to as such in the film or in the credits) picks up a bone and toys with it. After a brief flashback to a shot from the preceding sequence – showing the monolith from an extremely low angle, with the sun rising at its top (and a sliver of Moon visible above the sun), echoing the sunrise both in the credit sequence and at the beginning of this segment – Moon-Watcher starts using the bone to smash other bones, including a skull, while further cut-aways show tapirs falling to the ground, thus indicating Moon-Watcher's thought process. Somehow inspired by the memory of his encounter with the monolith, he learns that the bone can be used to kill tapirs. Next he and his band are shown eagerly devouring meat, and then confronting the rival group once more, this time going on the attack



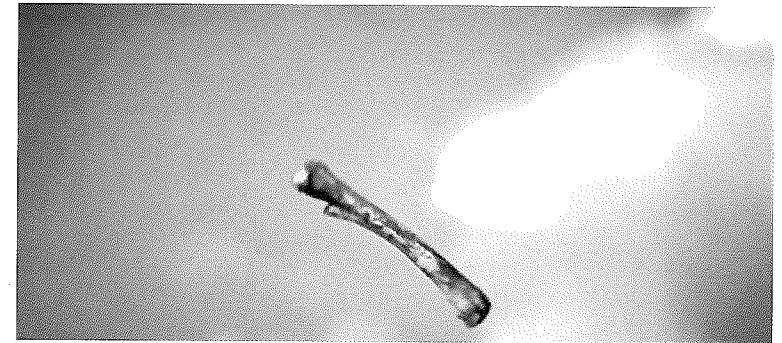
and beating their leader to death. The segment concludes with shots of the lethal bone that Moon-Watcher has triumphantly thrown into the air; against the backdrop of a few clouds in a blue sky and accompanied by the sound of wind, the bone is seen falling down – and the camera, and thus the viewer, appears to be falling with it.

As far as the space odyssey in the year 2001 promised by the film's title is concerned, these prehistoric scenes clearly have to be understood as a prologue (although one might wonder whether the monolith has arrived on Earth during an odyssey of its own). More immediately pertinent for making sense of this segment is its opening title, which has rich resonances across its imagery and

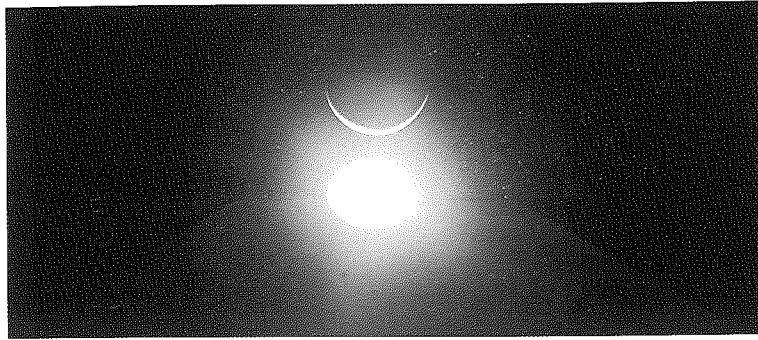
action. As noted earlier, at the most literal level, 'dawn' refers simply to the beginning of the day, and much of what follows depicts the daily routine of hominids – foraging and eating, going to the waterhole and drinking, grooming and jostling, posturing and evading enemies, sleeping and waking up. Yet, during one such literal dawn, their encounter with the monolith changes certain aspects of their daily routine for ever, because it dawns on them (this dawning being represented by a shot of the sun rising above the monolith) that bones can be used as weapons, animals can be eaten and enemies can be killed. This in turn implies that the scenes following the appearance of the monolith give us a first glimpse of 'man', whose 'dawn' the opening title announced. Yet, this dawn must surely be followed by the rise of man, just like daybreak is followed by sunrise.

The next segment begins with a (not quite perfect) match-cut from the falling bone to a vaguely bone-shaped spacecraft silently floating in blackness punctured only by the light of distant stars, thus returning viewers to space, where they had been located in the credit sequence. Accompanied by the beginnings of Johann Strauss's *Blue Danube* waltz, a pan reveals that the spacecraft, which exits the frame in the left foreground, is situated above the Earth. Both the match-cut and the fact that 'man' and 'his' tools have literally risen into space indicate that the dawning of humanity shown in the first segment has given way to its rise to predominance by the beginning of the second. Presumably having conquered the Earth (although we never see how life on Earth is organised now, except for brief glimpses of house interiors), humanity has moved on to explore the heavens.

It is tempting to think that the story has moved forward to the year 2001 of the film's title. The action depicted in this segment could thus be understood as the beginning of the 'space odyssey' viewers have been promised. Dr Heywood Floyd is on a trip to the Moon, transferring from the spaceship *Orion* to a space station and from there taking another spaceship (the *Aries*) to his destination, once again to the accompaniment of the *Blue Danube* waltz. He gives a short presentation at the Clavius base before taking a



Moon bus to the crater Tycho, where he is shown a four-million-year-old monolith which has recently been excavated. His journey to Tycho is punctuated by another of Ligeti's choral pieces (*Lux aeterna*), while his *Requiem* returns when Floyd visits and inspects the monolith, the music being disrupted when the mysterious object starts to emit a signal at the very moment it is first hit by sunlight. The segment ends with an extremely low-angle shot of the sun rising above the lunar monolith while also illuminating the Earth at the top of the frame (see p. 64), accompanied by an almost unbearable piercing sound. Thus, in addition to echoing the credit sequence (where the sun is rising above the Earth and both are rising above the Moon) and the two extremely low-angle shots of the monolith (with the sun rising above it, and a sliver of Moon visible above the



sun) in the first segment, the second segment ends like the first one begins – with the start of a new day.

Together with the absence of a separate title for the second segment, this formal bracketing suggests that the first two segments are closely linked. Perhaps the ‘dawn of man’ is not yet completed when Floyd encounters the monolith. Indeed, if the encounter shown in the first segment enables ape-like creatures to become more like human beings – carnivorous and murderous tool-users – then this second encounter might lead to another transformation, which is necessary for ‘man’ to fully awaken from, and rise above, ‘his’ animalistic prehistory. One might expect that this second transformation will be the result of the promised odyssey across space, which appears to have started with Floyd’s trip to Tycho and could now be given a new direction by the monolith’s signal.

At the same time, the bracketing of the two segments highlights the significant changes that have already taken place across human and prehuman history, and not only at the level of technology (with the transition from bone to spacecraft). The second segment is just as concerned with everyday routines as the first, only now they take place in wholly man-made rather than natural environments. Floyd is asleep when we first see him, and later on he drinks and eats (on several occasions), and considers the instructions for use of a zero-gravity toilet. In sharp contrast to Moon-Watcher’s band, Floyd’s

everyday activities involve little physical contact with others; in fact, during his flight he is mostly all alone. When, on the space station, he calls his daughter back on Earth to talk about her forthcoming birthday, this merely emphasises his separation from those who he is emotionally closest to (and also his daughter’s temporary physical separation from her mother). This is echoed in comments made by a female Russian scientist, an old friend he runs into after his phone call, who complains that work keeps her apart from her husband, and again in the speech he gives at the American base about the necessity to restrict communication between the base and colleagues, friends and family members back on Earth. Thus, the second segment emphasises that, unlike their hominid ancestors, modern humans are very much on their own.

What is more, Floyd’s aloneness is a bit of a mystery right from the beginning of this segment. The *Orion* and also the *Aries*, which appear to operate much like airplanes in earlier times, with stewardesses taking care of passengers who are so used to long-distance travel that they catch up on some sleep rather than admiring the view, are designed to accommodate dozens of people, and yet Floyd is the only passenger. This suggests that he is not taking an ordinary flight but is on a special mission. The conversation with the Russian scientists on the space station increases the sense of mystery



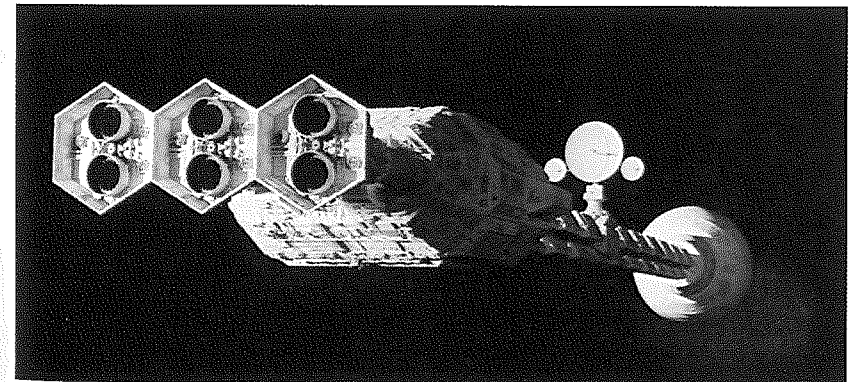
surrounding his trip, because the Moon base he is travelling to is said to have been cut off from the rest of the world, and rumours circulate about the outbreak of an epidemic. By stating that he cannot comment on these rumours, Floyd strongly implies that they are true, which would also explain the special nature of his trip. Once he is on the base, it is revealed, however, that the deeply troubling story about the epidemic is a cover for an even more troubling discovery that has been made on the Moon, a discovery so momentous that humankind may not be able to handle it. It is only during the journey to Tycho that the film reveals what this discovery is: an ancient alien artifact. With this revelation, the mystery surrounding Floyd's mission, and how it might be connected to the events depicted in the film's first segment, is finally solved for the viewer.

Unlike the first segment, which revolves around the transformative impact of a monolith, the second segment slowly builds up tension towards the final revelation of, and encounter with, such a monolith. Just when this encounter appears to play out somewhat anti-climactically, with scientists in space suits gathering around it and having their picture taken, a piercing sound serves as a wake-up call, signalling further change. In the first segment, we saw how such change resulted in the hominids' deadly violence. Throughout this second segment, violence is noticeably absent, and



Floyd's encounter with the Russians, which hints at superpower rivalry, is very civilised, when compared with the previous two encounters of rival bands of hominids at the waterhole. To a large extent, physical posturing and violence seem to have been replaced with the subtle deployment of language. Yet, it is made abundantly clear that language is used for the purpose of deception. Importantly, viewers move from being initially puzzled and deceived by what is being said into the privileged position of knowing the truth about the discovery on the Moon. This in turn raises the question of what will happen to them and to Floyd's group now that they have confronted the monolith, given that knowledge of its existence is deemed to be so dangerous, and also given that an earlier version of this monolith brought about so much change.

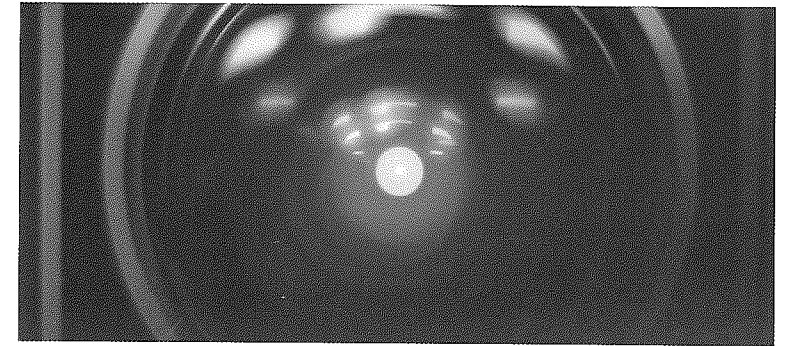
We can expect that the third segment will answer this question. It starts with a shot that both replays and varies the opening of the second segment. In silence and against a blackness punctured only by the light of distant stars, the title 'Jupiter Mission: 18 Months Later' appears, while the spaceship *Discovery* enters the frame slowly from the left foreground and a string section plays a yearning melody (taken from Aram Khachaturian's *Gayaneh* ballet suite). The title clearly states that the action depicted from now on does not take place in the same year as Floyd's trip to the Moon. So which of the



two takes place in the year 2001? The segment depicts life on board the *Discovery* millions of miles from Earth, focusing once more on everyday activities – sleeping, eating, drinking, exercising, playing games, grooming, executing routine work procedures – and on the increasingly problematic relationship between the two astronauts (David Bowman and Frank Poole) and the board computer Hal.

The astronauts' enormous distance from home (once again emphasised by long-distance conversations, including another birthday greeting, which foregrounds separation rather than connection), combined with the fact that Hal reports technical problems with the antenna that provides the spaceship's only link to Earth, vastly intensifies the sense of being separate and alone that characterises the modern humans in the second segment (when compared to the hominids of the first). The astronauts' situation also clearly has the potential – much more so than Floyd's rather mundane trip to the Moon – to develop into the kind of adventure associated with the idea of a 'space odyssey'. Hence, Bowman or Poole rather than Floyd seems destined to become the lone traveller who will take a long detour before returning home. This in turn suggests that it is only in the third segment that the film reaches the title year, whereas the action of the second segment occurs in 2000 or 1999.¹³²

However, for the promised odyssey to begin, something has to deflect the astronauts off course. Such an event is suggested by the final scene of this segment, in which Hal studies the lip movements of the two astronauts who, having made sure that 'he' cannot hear them, discuss the possibility of disconnecting the computer if its error messages about a faulty antenna component turn out to be wrong, which they will find out once they have returned the component to the antenna. The scene ends with an extreme close-up moving back and forth between the astronauts' mouths, with a diffuse iris and distortions of the image marking this as Hal's optical, indeed 'subjective', point of view. At this crucial point in the story, a title card announces the intermission. Accompanied by the same low-level roaring sound that could be heard over the preceding shots of Hal



observing the astronauts, 'Intermission' remains on the black screen for almost half a minute. During this time, the cinema audience would have started leaving the auditorium for a ten- to fifteen-minute break, encouraged to speculate on the likely course of action to be taken by Hal and how it might lead to the promised odyssey and also, perhaps, to the completion of the 'dawn of man' and hence the rise of that which is fully human.

The intermission also gives viewers an opportunity to reflect on their experience of the film so far, to ponder the nature and function of the monoliths and perhaps to articulate their disorientation and confusion, their sense of being somewhat lost in this movie. In other words, they may come to see their experience of the film – or at least of the previous two segments – in terms of the second part of its title:

that is, as their own odyssey across the space so realistically presented to them, and across the very film in which this space is being presented. Indeed, the shot of bone and camera falling in the skies at the conclusion of the first segment, and the disorienting match-cut providing the transition from the first to the second segment, as well as the subsequent image of a spacecraft in near nothingness, have confirmed that viewers themselves will be as much on a journey in space as any characters within its story. The remainder of the second and the third segments are very much concerned with depicting movement (as will be the rest of the film), including the movement of spacecraft in relation to each other and to celestial bodies such as Earth and Moon, as well as the movement of human beings within spacecraft, on the Moon and in empty space. Such movement is often depicted in full, rather than being edited with an emphasis on merely getting characters or vehicles from one point to another so that the story can proceed; instead, many minutes go by during which careful attention is paid to movement itself, and to the often disorienting spatial context in which it takes place, where categories such as up and down become meaningless (see pp. 72–3). In this way, viewers are given the opportunity to enter into an unusual cinematic space, rather than merely following a story.

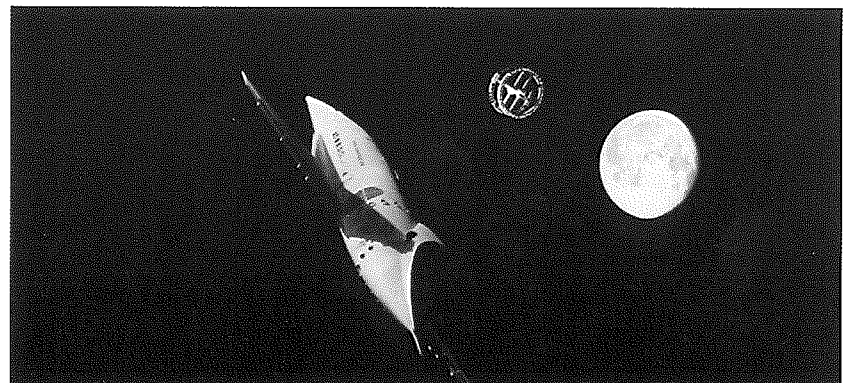
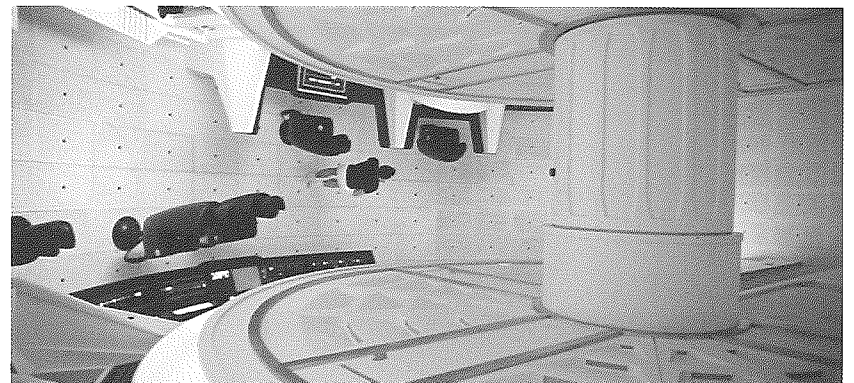
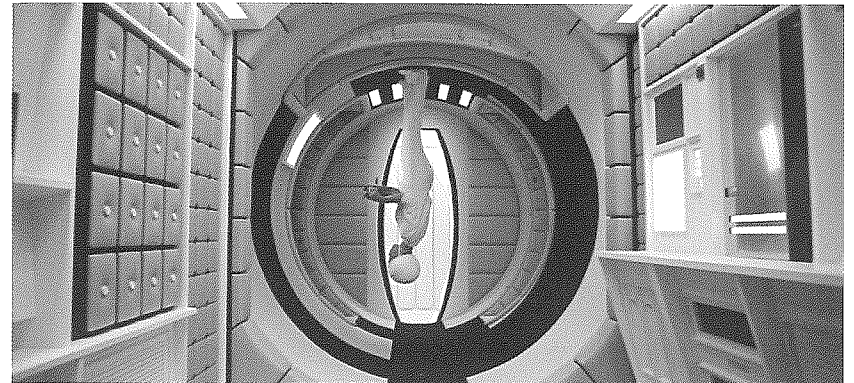
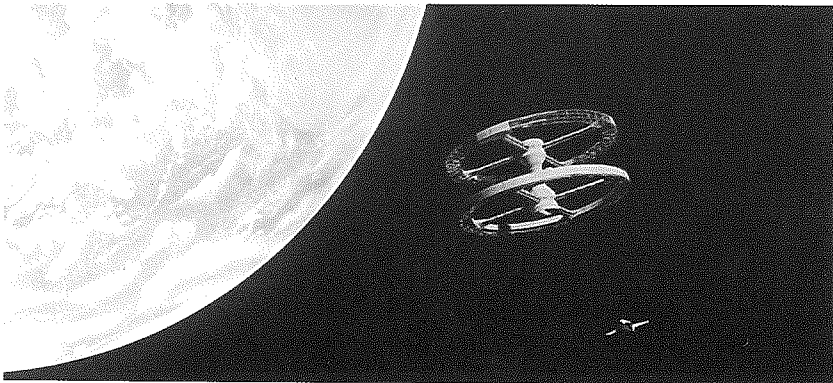
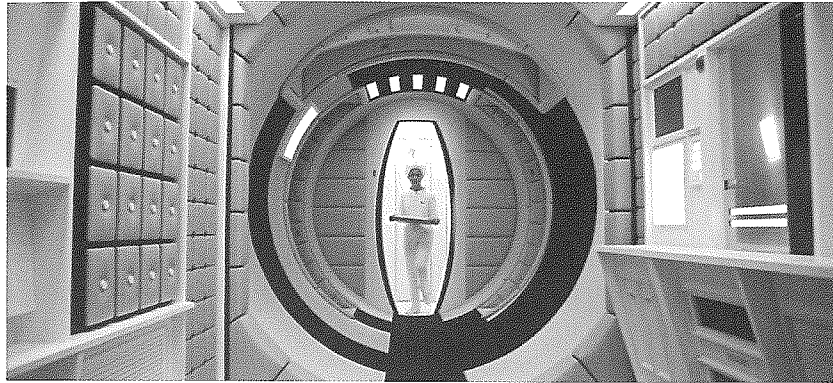
Another reference point for viewers' reflections on their experience of the film during the intermission is provided by the title opening the first segment, because it can be interpreted as an allusion to a gradual process of gaining awareness and understanding. Perhaps 'the dawn of man' is something that happens as much in the auditorium as on the screen, with audiences confronting the mystery of the film much like the hominids confronted the first monolith. Obviously, from its very beginning, the film has presented sounds, images and actions which are difficult to connect with each other and to comprehend fully. Yet, by revealing the truth about the discovery on the Moon to viewers (when it is withheld from almost everyone within the world of the film) and thus explaining the nature of Floyd's trip in the second segment and its connection to the first, the

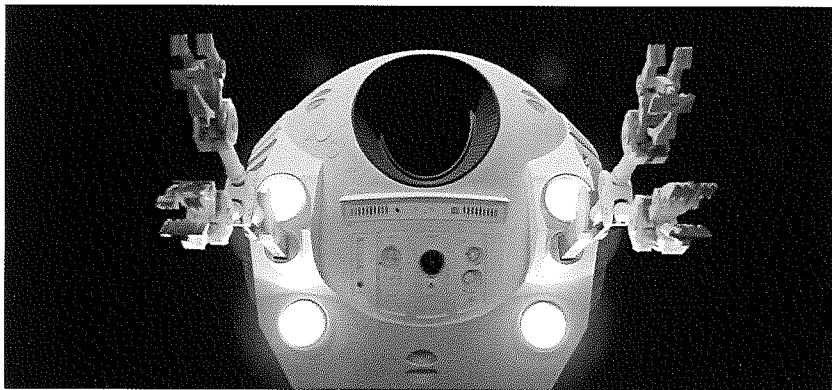
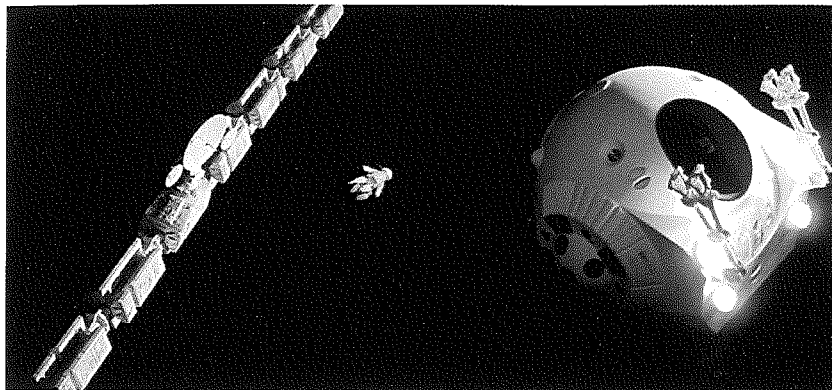
film has allowed viewers to gain at least a partial understanding of what is really going on.

During the intermission, they are in the middle of gaining such understanding about the questions surrounding the events of the third segment: how is the Jupiter mission connected to the signal emitted by the monolith on the Moon? What is happening with Hal? On reflection, the scene in which Hal first reports the imminent failure of the antenna component contains some clues. Before making 'his' announcement, Hal is talking to Bowman, and mentions rumours that their mission has something to do with a mysterious discovery on the Moon. When Bowman asks whether these comments are part of a psychological test, Hal quickly agrees – and immediately afterwards presents what would appear to be a false error message. Viewers might conclude that Hal shares their knowledge of the Moon monolith and is troubled by the fact that 'he' cannot share it with the astronauts, who are completely oblivious to it. As a consequence, he seems to start malfunctioning. How will this end? The computer's comments throughout the third segment about its own perfection and the fallibility of humans do not bode well for what is going to happen next.

After the intermission, music very reminiscent of the film's overture (once again taken from Ligeti's *Atmospheres*) can be heard for just over two minutes against the backdrop of a black screen; again, in the movie theatre, this music would have been played with closed curtains, while audiences were returning to their seats. Closely mirroring the beginnings of the previous two segments, the film's story resumes with a shot of the *Discovery* entering the frame from the left foreground, a large part of it already visible when the sequence begins. This is accompanied by a hissing sound and laboured breathing, the latter belonging to Poole, who has exited the spaceship to return the allegedly faulty component to the ship's antenna.

After he has left his space pod to approach the antenna, the pod ominously turns towards him (see p. 74), and soon afterwards he can be seen hurtling across space. Bowman goes out in a second pod to retrieve his body, during which time the life-support systems for the





hibernating astronauts on board are switched off, resulting in their deaths. When Bowman's pod arrives back at the *Discovery*, Hal refuses to open the pod bay doors, which forces the astronaut to enter through the emergency airlock, a dangerous procedure because he has forgotten his helmet. Once inside, Bowman, having put on a helmet, proceeds to the room housing Hal's electronic brain, and gradually disables the computer's higher functions. Slowly losing all mental powers, Hal begs Bowman to stop, and eventually regresses to what appears to be a computer's equivalent of early childhood, singing a song and then going silent. At this point, Bowman is confronted with a pre-recorded



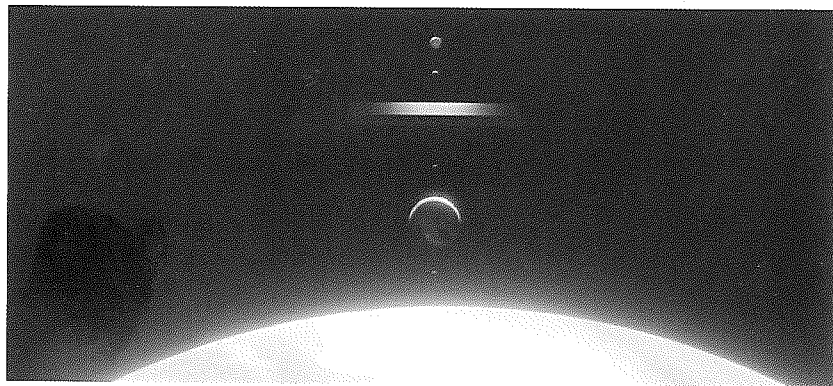
message from Heywood Floyd, revealing that the true objective of the Jupiter mission is to follow the signal emitted by the monolith on the Moon, which – as viewers might have suspected – Hal knew all along. The segment ends with a close-up of Bowman's face behind the reflecting visor of his helmet, set against the red backdrop of Hal's 'brain', looking slightly upwards at the screen on which Floyd declares that the 'origin and purpose' of the lunar monolith remain a 'total mystery'. All the while, just as at the beginning of this segment, the breathing and a hissing sound continue. Both image and sound fade away quickly after the word 'mystery' is spoken.

The fourth segment realises the worst suspicions about Hal's intentions that viewers might have developed during the intermission.



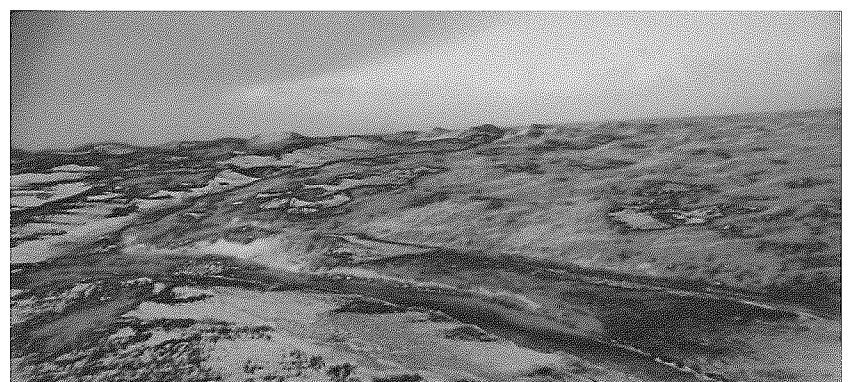
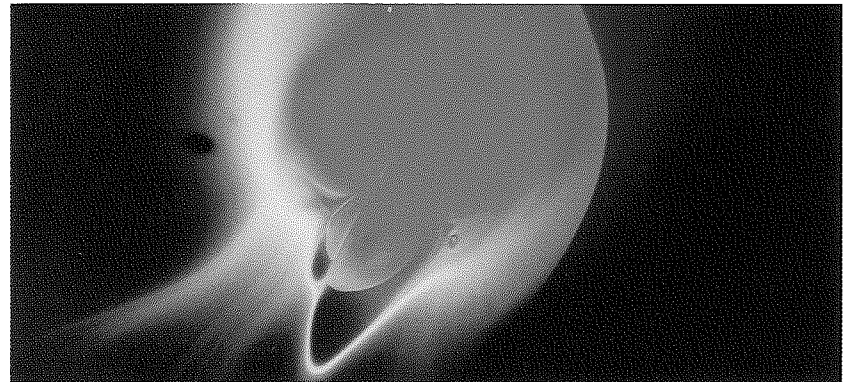
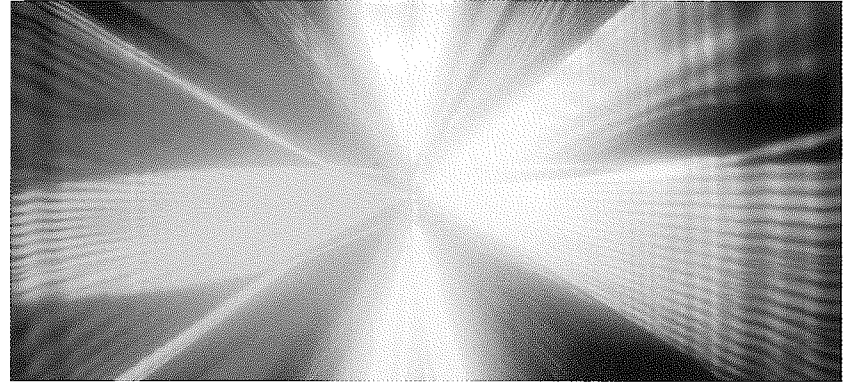
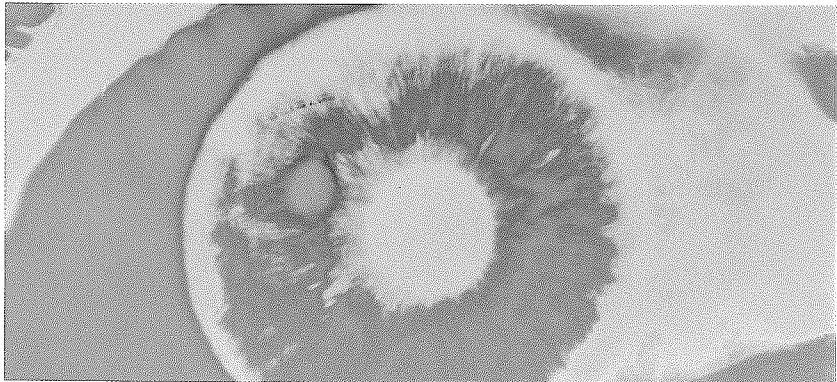
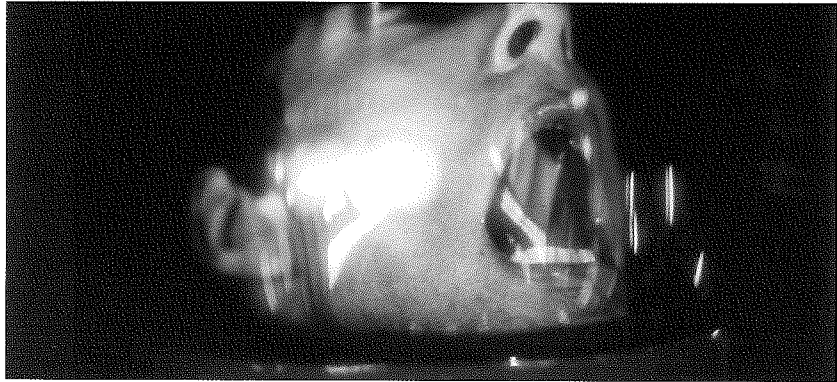
The computer almost succeeds in killing all of the astronauts, explaining to Bowman that this is necessary to protect itself and the mission. When Bowman responds by disconnecting Hal, he finally emerges as the lone traveller, utterly lost and far away from home, a requisite element in the 'space odyssey' of the film's title. This segment also allows viewers to make a connection – or to confirm their speculations about a connection – between the monolith's signal at the end of the second segment and the Jupiter mission. Indeed, just like the second segment, this one slowly builds up tension towards the revelation that a monolith has been discovered on the Moon. In that earlier instance, talk about the monolith was followed by a physical encounter. One might expect that such an encounter is now awaiting Bowman, leading to the long-anticipated completion of the 'dawn of man' as promised by the title of the film's first segment. In the same way that the impact of the first monolith on hominids initiated the dawning of humanity, we can assume that Bowman will rise to full humanity through his encounter with yet another monolith somewhere in space.

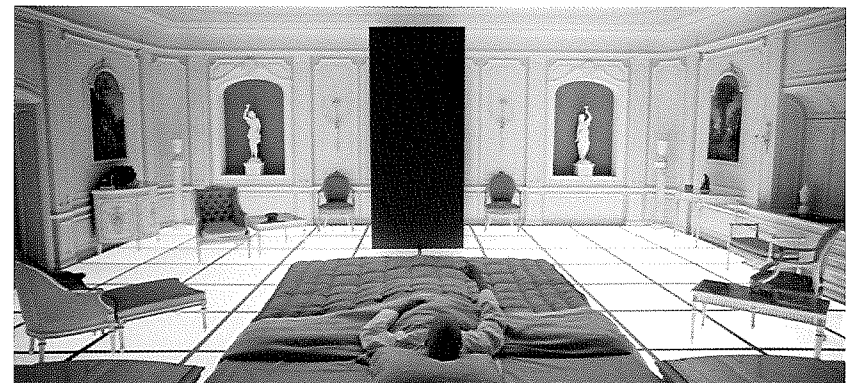
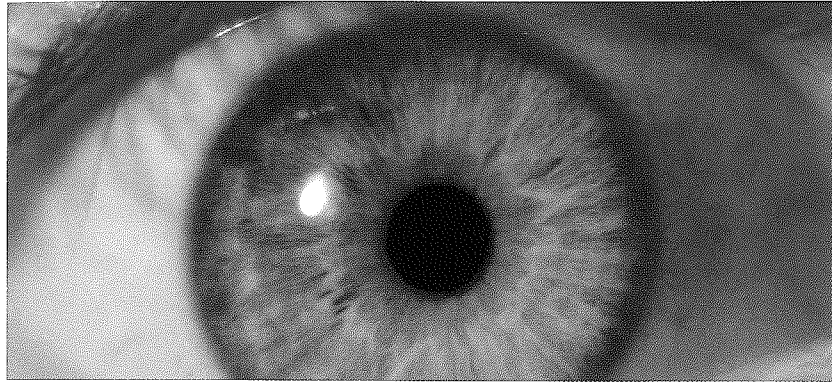
The fifth segment fulfils these expectations. It begins with the title 'Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite' shown against a totally black background, which gives way to an image of space once again full of stars, thus closely resembling the openings of segments two to four,



especially number three. While the eery vocalisations of Ligeti's *Requiem* are gaining in volume, the camera tilts down to reveal Jupiter (thus reversing the upward tilt in the credit sequence); soon a monolith floating in space enters the frame from the left side, and not long afterwards the *Discovery* emerges into view from the bottom of the frame. For a while, both the spaceship and the monolith (or possibly several monoliths) move in-between Jupiter and its moons, until a space pod finally emerges from the *Discovery* and the empty space before it cracks open. Initially shaking violently in his helmet and later reduced to a huge blinking eye, Bowman appears to move into and through the space that has opened up (to the accompaniment of *Requiem* as well as Ligeti's *Atmospheres*). First, colourful and ever-changing, abstract patterns rush past, followed by a display of what might be gracefully unravelling celestial events, before forward movement picks up again, now above strangely coloured planetary surfaces (see pp. 78–9). In the end, Bowman's blinking eye looks out from the space pod into a beautifully designed 'room, in which strange echoing sounds as well as distant and distorted voices (from Ligeti's *Adventures*) can be heard murmuring, screaming and laughing.

Outside the pod, Bowman sees an older version of himself. After the space pod and the younger Bowman have disappeared, this older version walks into the adjacent bathroom, from where he in turn sees an even older Bowman eating a meal. The latter soon gets up to examine the bathroom, finding it empty. When he has resumed his meal, he knocks over a glass and becomes aware of another presence in the room – it is a very old version of himself, lying in bed (see pp. 80–1). As already recounted at the beginning of this book, when a monolith appears at the foot of the bed, the man is replaced by a foetus, accompanied by the early rumblings of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. The camera then moves forward into the monolith's blackness, which gives way to a shot of the Moon. Once again, the camera tilts down, this time to reveal the Earth on the right side of the frame, while from the left the foetus – or Star-Child – in its bubble





enters the frame. The final shot is a close-up of the Star-Child turning slowly towards, and staring directly at, the camera. Just before the musical piece is completed, this image quickly fades out.

Focused solely on Bowman's experiences, to the accompaniment of music throughout but without a single spoken word, this final segment contrasts sharply with the preceding one, which is full of conflict and features verbal sparring, emotional pleading and a revelatory message, but no music (except for Hal's song). The fifth segment picks up on, and intensifies, Bowman's total isolation at the end of the fourth, which in turn marks the end point of a steady process of separation, during which the close-knit group of hominids millions of years ago gives way to the dispersed families of turn-of-the-twenty-first-century humankind and the ultimately dysfunctional unit of two astronauts and a computer millions of miles away from the rest of humanity. If Bowman is the loneliest human being who ever lived once he has disconnected Hal, his subsequent journey makes him lonelier still. This is one way of understanding the segment's title, 'Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite': when he reaches Jupiter, Bowman is already unimaginably lonely, but then he is taken far beyond even such 'infinite' loneliness. There are indications, though, that he will not remain this way: the voices featured in Ligeti's music provide him with a kind of company, as do the appearances of his older selves in the alien room. There is also the promise of the film's title; if this is indeed an odyssey, then the lone traveller will eventually return home.

Before he does, Bowman is reborn. His transformation into a foetus is the culmination of birthday references throughout the film. There is Floyd's conversation with his daughter about her birthday, and the birthday message sent by Poole's parents to the *Discovery*, as well as the computer's regression towards the moment of its 'birth'. At the same time, the Star-Child's wide-open eyes would seem to suggest that it is wide awake, and hence that the 'dawn of man' announced at the beginning of the first segment has finally given way to the rise of an entity that is fully human. Indeed, just as the

dawning of human intelligence (and murderousness) – in the scene in which Moon-Watcher learns to use bones as weapons – is accompanied by *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, so Bowman's transformation into the Star-Child is associated with this piece of music. Importantly, the triumphant climaxes of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, previously synchronised with Moon-Watcher's bone-smashing, now accompany the Star-Child's return to the vicinity of Earth and its final turn towards the camera. Instead of the triumph of violence, the film now presents the return home as the ultimate triumph. In this way, the final reprise of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* responds to its very first appearance in the film's credit sequence, which, through the film's title, promised viewers a 'space odyssey'. In the final shots, this odyssey is completed. The space traveller has returned home – where 'home' is both the Earth floating in the darkness next to the Star-Child and the cinema auditorium into which it stares in the final frames.

One might wonder about the precise nature of the Star-Child, and what it will do. In a way, the film freely admits its own inability to answer these questions. While it is obvious that the emergence of the Star-Child is somehow connected to the operations of the monoliths across human and prehuman history, the very last words spoken in the film concern the fact that the 'origin and purpose' of these monoliths remain 'a total mystery'. These words echo across the remainder of the film, encouraging viewers to consider it with the same sense of mystery that Heywood Floyd admits to with regards to the Moon monolith. But if the film shares the monolith's mysteriousness, may it also share its transformative power?

This opens up another approach to understanding the Star-Child. Throughout Bowman's final journey and during his stay in the alien room, the film places a lot of emphasis on the act of looking, and thus equates Bowman with the film's viewers, who have been concentrating on this act all along. During his journey through space, Bowman is frequently reduced to the image of his eyes, and in the alien room, his most important action is to look at older versions of



himself, an act which is followed by the disappearance of each younger self. At the end, the very old man's look at the monolith leads to his transformation into the Star-Child, who eventually directs its gaze at us, the viewers. Does the subsequent disappearance of the Star-Child mean that it turns into what it last looked at? If so, the Star-Child becomes us; we become the Star-Child – this transformation the result of our encounter with this monolithic movie.

There is more to come. The quick fading out of the image of the Star-Child and of the accompanying music is followed by a very brief moment of blackness and silence. Then credits appear to the accompaniment of Strauss's *Blue Danube* waltz, and while the credits end – with 'The End' – after four minutes, the waltz continues over a black image for another four minutes. In the cinema, the curtains would close and the lights would come on at this point as the audience rose to leave the auditorium. Both *2001: A Space Odyssey* and the journey promised by the film's title are completed, and like the Star-Child going back to Earth, people are now returning home from the otherworldly space of the movie theatre. One might also say that they have awakened from the dream of this movie to return to their everyday lives – thus, the end of the film is their 'dawn'. Or one might consider the possibility that the whole film has been their dawn

– and now they rise; like Bowman, they are reborn, as another version of the Star-Child.

In any case, the last image they have seen is that of the Star-Child, fully awake, staring at them, mirroring their own staring at the screen; the last words they have heard are: 'a total mystery'. Leaving the cinema, viewers have thus been encouraged to gain some understanding of the film but also to accept its mysteriousness, and to take with them a sense of awakening and even rebirth. The waltz accompanying their departure from the auditorium would seem to suggest that, despite its final focus on the individual Star-Child, the film does not leave viewers feeling separate and all alone but rather as people involved in a communal activity. Individual contemplation of the film and one's experience of it are thus allied to the co-ordination and connectedness and also perhaps the joy and exhilaration of dance.

7 Impact

On 16 July 1968, a young woman from Ohio wrote to Stanley Kubrick to tell him that *2001* was

the greatest movie I have ever seen in my life. In fact it's one of the *greatest* things that ever happened to me ranking with Expo 67 and (of course!) the Beatles. My parents didn't exactly dig it – they liked the realism, the technology, but they complained of not being able to find a story in it. ... [2001 is] a hand reaching from destiny to help us on to better things. Mr Kubrick, your movie – on me at least – has had the same effect as the monoliths pictured in the film had on the race of man. ... May that which is defined as 'God' bless you and the whole human race.¹³³

For this viewer, the personal impact of *2001* was so enormous that she was moved to make explicit what I have suggested is the film's self-reflexive dimension, whereby its very opacity and mysteriousness – that is, its refusal to make it easy for the audience 'to find a story in it' – mirrors the opacity and mysteriousness of the monoliths, thus suggesting that, ideally, its impact on viewers would mirror the 'effect ... the monoliths pictured in the film had' on Moon-Watcher and Bowman.

For this young woman, then, the film served as a wake-up call moving her on to 'better things'. While she could be sure only about her own transformation, she suspected that others were affected similarly; after all, she wrote that the film reached out to 'us', not just 'me'. Her references to 'destiny' and to the divine, which might be something other than the 'God' of traditional religion, also suggested that, in her view, Kubrick was doing God's work with this film. At the same time, the letter indicated, the film's impact depended also on its cultural context, in particular on a general climate of optimism

and hope for the future, here exemplified by the world exposition in Montreal in 1967, and on a process of rapid cultural change across the 1960s, as epitomised by the Beatles.

This is certainly an extreme response to *2001*, yet it is in line with the majority of the many letters that Kubrick received from regular cinemagoers after the film's release.¹³⁴ Given the film's radical departures from Hollywood conventions and the ambiguity, in particular, of its ending, it is remarkable that most correspondents – men and women, young and old, cosmopolitan and provincial, art lovers and entertainment seekers – wrote very positively about *2001*, and that many of them saw in it a message of hope. In doing so, letter writers frequently discussed 'birth' and 'rebirth' among the film's main themes, referencing especially the astronaut's final transformation into a foetus. According to one letter from May 1968, the film thus made a statement about the true purpose of the astronaut's journey of exploration: '[his] discovery is not of some strange new world but of himself; the wisdom of age is his rebirth'.¹³⁵

Several viewers felt, just like the woman from Ohio, that their own journey across the strange cinematic world of *2001* had strong parallels to that of the astronaut. Ultimately encountering themselves in the film, they were transformed by it, even reborn. '[2001] is constantly on my mind and has loosened some of my prejudices', wrote one correspondent in April 1968, who then asked: 'how many times must I be born to realize what I am?'¹³⁶ In addition to noting their personal transformation, some letter writers perceived *2001* as a radical break, and a new beginning, in film history. One of them claimed in May 1968: '*2001* does not mark the growth of the art of the cinema; it is the birth of the cinema.'¹³⁷ This writer went on to outline the enormous, positive influence he thought this reborn cinema could exert on viewers and perhaps on society at large:

[I]t is within the power of a film such as yours to give people a reason to go on living – to give them the courage to go on living. For *2001* implies much more than just an artistic revelation. On a philosophical level, it implies that

if man is capable of this, he is capable of anything – anything rational and heroic and glorious and good. ... How can man now be content to consider the trivial and mundane, when you have shown them a world full of stars, a world beyond the infinite?¹³⁸

In the light of the intensity and grandeur of many people's encounters with *2001*, it is not surprising that some equated viewing the film with a spiritual experience (sometimes in conjunction with offering a theological interpretation of the film's story). One pastor noted that, despite the fact that he 'did not fully understand' the film, 'the impression I carried with me as I left the theatre was that life begins with the infinite (God), and ends in the same manner'.¹³⁹ It is ambiguous whether he is commenting on what he perceives to be the film's message, or whether viewing the film actually brought him closer to God – or perhaps both. Another correspondent wrote: 'Bless you for your spiritual poem. ... You have created the aura of love in every frame.'¹⁴⁰ Once again, this does not appear to be a statement merely about the film's content, but also about the writer's experience of a transcendent love.

Thus, often taking their cues from the imagery and storyline of the film itself, these correspondents articulated the profoundly transformative impact the film had had on them and also their belief that its impact might be indicative of, and contribute to, wider transformations of cinema, culture and society. This is, I believe, the foundation for the film's enormous success with audiences in late-1960s America. Its story about the birth and rebirth of humanity, presented in a manner radically at odds with the conventions of mainstream cinema, was able to engage a diverse audience primed to believe in, and to embrace, the possibility of fundamental personal, cultural and social change.

There is no space here to outline the complex developments in American society across the 1960s which prepared *2001*'s audiences in this way, but I can at least give an example of how one might study the deep resonances between this film and the culture in which its

audiences were immersed. Towards the end of his comprehensive study *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening*, the religious scholar and cultural historian Robert S. Ellwood discusses *2001* as a 'Sixties parable', a cultural artifact which articulates many of the underlying concerns of, and shifting trends in, American culture during this period. It is worth quoting him at length:

2001 touched all corners of the decade's conundrums. It celebrated the wonder of science while suggesting the parricidal possibilities of its progeny. But also, in line with the subjective visionary side of the Sixties, it made the universe not only an astronomical but also a spiritual wonderland; an infinity not only of mind-boggling beauty, potency, and distances, but also of transformative possibilities for us its children, and even death did not finally limit its power. The Sixties dream of true human transformation remains alive in this end-of-the-decade film, but it seems now that it will not happen merely in the secular city nor in the 'real time' of the lunar mission, but that ultimate transfiguration will require some movement outside the circles of ordinary space and time altogether, followed by the return of a wise child; all this effectively removes it to the realm of timeless myth.¹⁴¹

In the context of Ellwood's broader argument about the centrality of religion and spirituality in 60s America, *2001* is thus seen to resonate both with people's active engagement with the reality of technological, cultural, social and political change, and with their desire to transcend such external reality altogether and focus instead on 'personal salvation'.¹⁴²

Ellwood acknowledges that *2001* resonated with 'the counterculture's dream of speeding up spiritual evolution by the use of psychedelics', yet his study makes it clear that, whereas the counterculture was only a small part of 60s America, the decade's 'dream of true human transformation' affected just about everybody.¹⁴³ The success of *2001* depended on audiences sharing this dream, not on their consumption of drugs. Indeed, none of the many letters to Kubrick which I examined mentions that the correspondent



took drugs or witnessed drug consumption elsewhere in the cinema auditorium. Furthermore, based partly on the themes identified in MGM's official announcement of Kubrick's science-fiction project in February 1965, the film was marketed as both an epic and a highly topical film, a scientifically accurate and educational, spectacular and uplifting space adventure for the whole family. Impressive box-office results as well as the rarity of letters complaining about misleading advertising suggest that for the vast majority of the audience, the film succeeded precisely on those terms – that is, as a variant of mainstream entertainment, and not as a countercultural alternative to it.

2001: A Space Odyssey was first released on 70mm in only eleven cinemas around the world, starting with a world premiere in Washington, DC, on 2 April 1968, followed by premieres in New York and Los Angeles over the next two days, and then in Boston, Detroit, Houston, London, Tokyo, Osaka, Sidney and Johannesburg.¹⁴⁴ It was reported that MGM launched the film with 'the most extensive in-depth advertising, publicity and promotion campaign in its history', and that its immediate box-office success was

The original poster

so impressive that early reports suggested it might eventually even rival the two biggest hits in MGM history: *Dr Zhivago* (released in 1965, but still playing in 1968) and *Gone with the Wind* (originally released in 1939, yet on a hugely successful re-release in 1967/8).¹⁴⁵ As a roadshow, *2001* performed very well throughout 1968. It had an exceptionally large number of advance ticket sales before it was released, and by the end of the year, it had earned \$8.5 million in rentals from only 125 cinemas, and came eleventh in *Variety's* list of the top-grossing films of 1968.¹⁴⁶ Once the film went on general release in 1969, on 35mm at regular prices in a large number of cinemas all over the United States, it was able to reach those audiences who had not previously had a chance to buy tickets for it, and both these new audiences and some members of the original audience who came back to see the film again (and again) turned *2001* into a major hit. By the end of 1969, it had added \$6 million to its rentals.¹⁴⁷

Taking into account the broad spectrum of people who wrote so positively to Kubrick about *2001* in the months after its release



and the fact that roadshows had traditionally appealed to all-encompassing family audiences,¹⁴⁸ we can conclude that across 1968 and 1969 the film succeeded with most audience segments, rather than depending solely, or mainly, on the repeat attendance of youthful fans (who, in any case, were reported to have stayed away from 35mm screenings in 1969).¹⁴⁹ However, early on, the trade press began to focus its reporting on the presence of young people in the audience for 70mm screenings of *2001*, on their special interest in the Star Gate sequence and their allegedly widespread consumption of hallucinogenic drugs during screenings.¹⁵⁰ It is, I think, mainly in response to such reporting – rather than in response to actual audience research – that MGM eventually introduced a more psychedelic marketing campaign (with the tagline ‘The Ultimate Trip’), but this only happened for the film’s 70mm re-launch in April 1970, by which time *2001* had already been playing in cinemas for two years.¹⁵¹ Thus, irrespective of its close association with youth and the counterculture, *2001* was a massive hit with mainstream audiences.

It also was well received by critics, except for a small number of leading New York reviewers whose work is often cited in support of arguments about the film’s initial critical rejection. In fact, *Variety* reported in June 1968 that ‘almost all out-of-town and foreign reviews have been excellent while those in N[ew] Y[ork] were generally downbeat’.¹⁵² Even in New York, there appears to have been a largely positive reception which escaped notice, because good reviews were overshadowed by the attacks of a few high-profile critics. A fifteen-year-old fan of the film was so concerned about the lack of appreciation in some quarters of the critical community that, as he wrote to Kubrick, he kept ‘a record of reviews that *2001* has received, mostly from New York publications. I am happy to announce that 33 are excellent, which is much more than the reviews that were not so good.’¹⁵³

Despite this largely positive reception, when the annual ten-best lists were compiled at the end of 1968 and awards were handed out

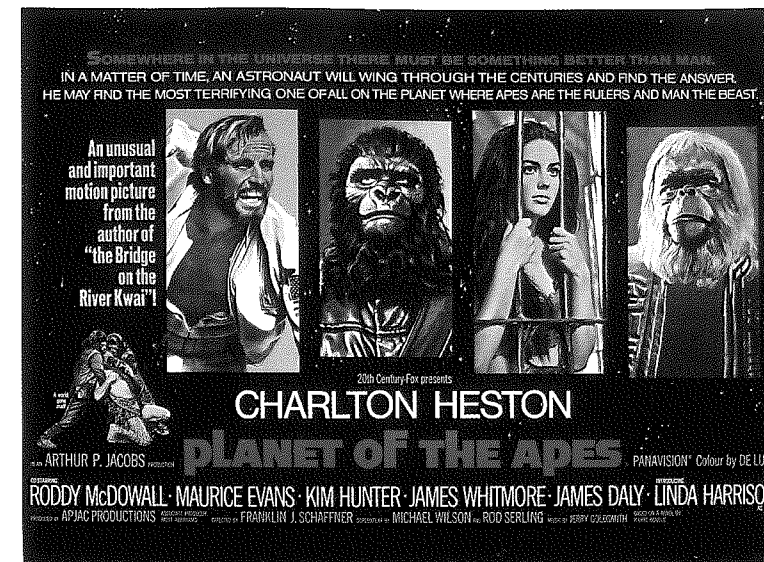
at the beginning of 1969, there was as yet no critical consensus about the truly outstanding quality of *2001*. The film was listed as one of the ten best English-language films of 1968 by the National Board of Review.¹⁵⁴ Yet, the *New York Times* did not include *2001* among its top ten, and it received no awards from the National Society of Film Critics, the New York Film Critics, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, the Writers Guild of America or the Directors Guild.¹⁵⁵ While the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences nominated the film in four categories (including Best Director and Screenplay), it only won the Special Visual Effects Oscar.¹⁵⁶ It was not until the beginning of 1970, when various publications tried to determine the best films of the 1960s, that *2001* began to be recognised widely as an all-time masterpiece. While it did not appear in *Time*’s top ten list for the decade or the top ten selection made by film-makers in a *Los Angeles Times* poll, it was voted the eighth best movie (foreign or American) of the 1960s by readers of the *Los Angeles Times*.¹⁵⁷

Two years later, a general consensus about the film’s status as one of the best films ever made seemed to have been reached. A panel of film producers and critics put together by the University of Southern California ranked *2001* tenth in its list of ‘the most significant movies in American cinema history ... which gave new concepts and advanced the art and technique of filmmaking’.¹⁵⁸ At the same time, in *Sight & Sound*’s 1972 survey of international critical opinion, *2001* was included among the twenty-five best films ever made.¹⁵⁹ By the early 1970s, *2001* had also become one of the highest-grossing films ever at the American box office. The 70mm re-release in 1970, together with continuing 35mm screenings that year, and further re-releases of the film in 1971 and 1972 added more millions to its already impressive tally, so that by the end of 1972 it had passed the \$20 million mark and was ranked among the twenty highest-grossing films of all time in the United States, its level of commercial success thus matching its level of critical recognition as one of the all-time greats.¹⁶⁰

8 Influence

2001's most far-reaching contribution to American – and also to world – culture arguably lies in the fact that it both inspired the making, and prepared the ground for the success, of two movies that in 1977 marked an important turning point in Hollywood's operations: George Lucas's *Star Wars* and Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. As we have already seen, before the mid-1960s, no science-fiction movie, with the exception of a few Disney comedies and adventures about advanced technologies, had been ranked towards the top of the annual box-office charts in the United States, yet, with the help of several re-releases, 2001 eventually became the second-biggest hit of all films originally released in 1968.¹⁶¹ It was joined at number seven in the consolidated chart by the epic adventure *Planet of the Apes*, which had been released a few weeks before 2001 in February 1968 and earned \$15 million in rentals. The film combined space travel and an encounter with what initially appear to be extra-terrestrial intelligent beings with a critique of racial and species relations (between different kinds of ape and human beings) in an alternative society that nevertheless mirrors contemporary America in key respects, and with the final revelation that all this is in fact taking place on Earth in the distant future after nuclear war has destroyed human civilisation.¹⁶²

This double success encouraged Hollywood to invest heavily in science fiction, yet rather than focusing on space travel and encounters with extra-terrestrials, the vast majority of science-fiction productions during the next few years were critical explorations of future human societies on Earth, dealing with the impact of overpopulation, technologically enhanced political oppression, the aftermath of nuclear war, etc.¹⁶³ Several of these films focused on relations between humans and other earthly species (as in the four



Planet of the Apes sequels released by 1973), or between humans and machines (as in *Westworld*, 1973, and *The Stepford Wives*, 1975). With the exception of two Disney comedies about the relationship between humans and a sentient Volkswagen beetle – *The Love Bug* (\$23m, 2nd/1969) and *Herbie Rides Again* (\$17m, 10th/1974) – and of Stanley Kubrick's follow-up to 2001, *A Clockwork Orange* (\$17m, 7th/1971), none of Hollywood's many science-fiction productions made it into the annual top ten in the United States before 1977.¹⁶⁴ But in that year, the two most successful films at the American box office were *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters*, the former breaking all existing box-office records.

Lucas and Spielberg have acknowledged the formative influence of 2001 on their work.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, when George Lucas first talked about his second science-fiction project in 1974 (he had previously made the experimental, dystopian *THX 1138*, 1971), he initially referenced Flash Gordon and then described the planned film as '2001 meets James Bond, outer space and space ships flying in it'.¹⁶⁶

Both Lucas and Spielberg had grown up with science-fiction novels, comic strips, films, movie serials and television series, and Spielberg had been particularly fond of Arthur C. Clarke's work.¹⁶⁷

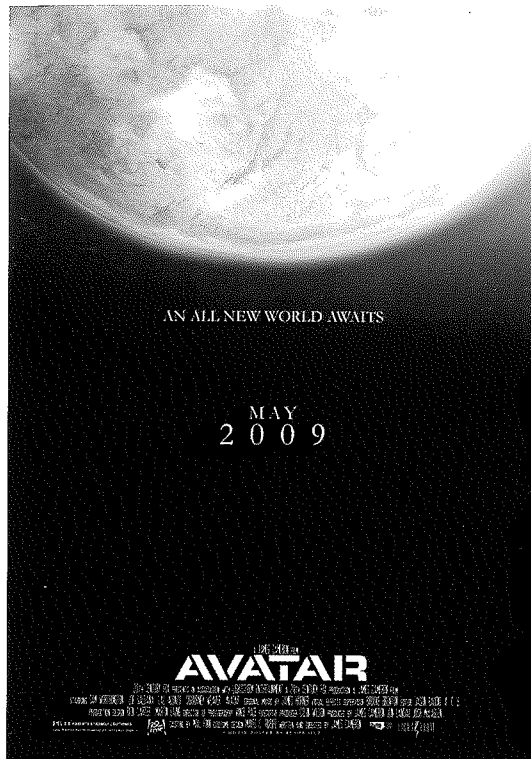
When, following the release of *Jaws* in 1975, Spielberg focused all his energies on a film about UFOs and a climactic encounter with intelligent extra-terrestrial beings, *2001* was, in thematic terms, the most important cinematic reference point for such a project, and also the benchmark for achievements in the art of special effects, which is why Spielberg hired the effects specialist Douglas Trumbull, who was most famous for his work on *2001*. In different ways, both *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters* built on *2001*'s depiction of spacecraft and space travel, its epic scope and focus on events that have the power to change the direction of history, its exploration of the relationship between humans and aliens, and its spiritual, even religious sense that there are higher, superhuman powers ('the Force', angelic beings inhabiting the heavens) at work in the universe, which may enable us to be reborn (as a Jedi knight or one of the elect who ascends to heaven).

In the wake of the success of *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters*, there has been a significant change in Hollywood's hit patterns.



Many of its biggest hits, both in the United States and abroad, have been science-fiction films.¹⁶⁸ These include a few Earth-bound dystopias, typically dealing with a confrontation between humans and their machines – as in the *Terminator* and *Matrix* films (since 1984 and 1999 respectively) – and films featuring more highly evolved or genetically modified humans, as in the *X-Men* and *Spider-Man* films (since 2000 and 2002 respectively). Yet, the biggest science-fiction hits have been space adventures, and films about encounters with alien life forms (or alien machines) on Earth. These range from the five *Star Wars* sequels and prequels (since 1980) and *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), to the *Transformers* films (since 2007).

Since 1977, then, Hollywood's success and impact both at home and abroad has had a lot to do with the big themes and spectacular attractions of science fiction. While traditionally, these themes and attractions had been marginal to Hollywood's operations, the success of *2001* in the late 1960s and early 1970s (together with that of *Planet of the Apes*) inspired film-makers and studio executives to invest much



Very early ad for *Avatar* (the release date was later changed from May to December 2009)

more of their creativity and money in high-profile science-fiction productions, and starting with *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters*, this investment generated unprecedented returns, most notably for *Avatar* (2009), a film made by 2001 fan James Cameron. Across Hollywood's science-fiction hits, we find an emphasis not only on the perfection of special effects first achieved by 2001, but also on the film's main themes: space travel, encounters with extra-terrestrial intelligence, human evolution, the relationship between humans and machines. Through the mediation of *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters*, 2001 has thus helped Hollywood to increase its global impact precisely by asking questions about future threats and opportunities for all of humanity.¹⁶⁹

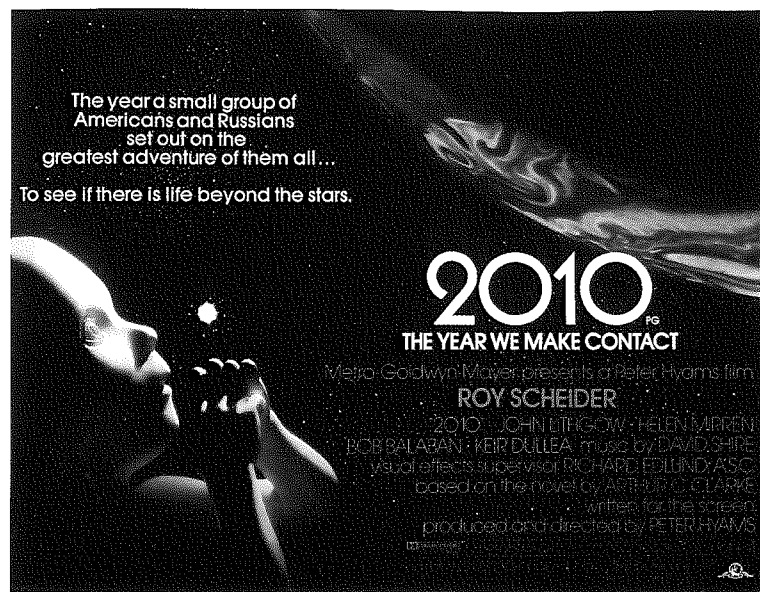
Conclusion

The ending is hopeful:

You can tell your children of the day when everyone looked up and realised that we are only tenants of this world. We have been given a new lease and a warning from the landlord.

These words are spoken by Dr Heywood Floyd, addressing his son on Earth from a spaceship returning home from Jupiter, a planet which has just been transformed into a new sun by the extra-terrestrial intelligence controlling the monoliths. The words are accompanied by images from all around the Earth, and when the voice-over ends, the film shifts to space and then to Jupiter's moon Europa, which the new sun transforms from an iceball into a watery, green paradise, in the middle of which stands a monolith, aligned with one of Europa's two suns to the accompaniment of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. This is the conclusion of Peter Hyams's film *2010* (1984), which he wrote, directed and produced in close collaboration with Arthur C. Clarke, who had written the novel *2010: Odyssey Two* on which the film was based.¹⁷⁰ The novel was a sequel to *2001: A Space Odyssey* and had been published in 1982, becoming one of the ten bestselling American novels of the year.¹⁷¹ Hyams's film earned \$20 million in rentals and was among the twenty highest-grossing films of the year in the United States.¹⁷²

Clarke's novel tells of a joint Russian–American mission to recover the spaceship *Discovery* in the year 2010, and to solve its mysteries. The mission reveals that Bowman is now an immaterial entity, who returns from wherever the monolith took him to explode a nuclear bomb orbiting Earth (an event already depicted at the end of the first novel), and to communicate the intentions of the alien



intelligence to the reawakened Hal and to humanity at large. Rapidly replicating monoliths are used by the aliens to transform Jupiter into a sun which will, in the distant future, allow intelligent life to emerge on Europa, thus repeating the process the monoliths had initiated on Earth by manipulating hominids millions of years ago. To protect the evolutionary process on Jupiter's moon, the aliens send a warning via Bowman and Hal: 'All these worlds are yours – except Europa. Attempt no landings there.'¹⁷³ Implicit in this command is a warning, namely that the extra-terrestrials will monitor humanity's actions and are prepared to punish it, should their command be disobeyed. Thus, the sequel's optimistic depiction of life-enhancing aliens is haunted, as it was in the original novel, by a much darker vision of a potentially devastating alien threat.

Hyams's film, however, focuses on the threat of nuclear war, which is barely mentioned in Clarke's *2010*. The film starts with the United States and the Soviet Union on the brink of war, then shows

how superpower rivalry and the beginnings of actual fighting on Earth affect the interaction between American and Russian members of the recovery mission, and concludes with the end of hostilities brought about by the appearance of a new sun and by the aliens' admonition (added to the text of the final message in the novel): 'Use [these worlds] together. Use them in peace.'

Thus reversing Kubrick's decision, in the final stages of making *2001: A Space Odyssey*, to remove the nuclear threat so central to the film's previous development and still so prominent in Clarke's original novel, Hyams's sequel returns us to the very beginnings of Kubrick and Clarke's joint science-fiction project in 1964. Their point of departure was the fear of humanity's imminent self-destruction through nuclear war (so shockingly and hilariously depicted in *Dr Strangelove* and so central to Kubrick's personal outlook) and the hope – shared by Kubrick, Clarke and other science-fiction authors, by UFOlogists and SETI researchers – that space exploration and contact with extra-terrestrial intelligence may help humankind to avoid this fate. The extensive use of voice-overs in Hyams's film also reminds us of the momentousness of the drastic last-minute decisions Kubrick made about the final shape of his film, removing its voice-overs and much else, so that *2001* could become as opaque and mysterious and stimulating as the monoliths at the centre of its story. Thus, instead of merely telling a story about the transformation of hominids and humans, the film acquired transformative power over its audience.

As a filmic monolith, *2001* was enthusiastically received by its initial audiences in the United States, so enthusiastically indeed that it became one of the biggest hits of all time up to this point. The main reason for this response was, it seems, the fact that its story about the birth and rebirth of humanity and its very willingness to leave the conventions of mainstream cinema behind interacted productively with the firm belief, shared by many people at this particular historical moment, in the possibility of fundamental personal, cultural and social change. As a result, many Americans –

approximating a cross-section of society, rather than being limited to countercultural youth – were profoundly affected by *2001*, experiencing it as a personally transformative experience, and also seeing it, approvingly, as an indication of, and contribution to, wider cultural and social transformations. While the nuclear threat which had been the starting point for this project was only a very minor theme in the film's reception (people who had read the novel sometimes commented on it), Kubrick and Clarke's attempt to counter expectations of imminent nuclear war with a hopeful vision of the future succeeded beyond all expectations.

Since the late 1960s, Kubrick's film, with few exceptions well received by critics right from the start, has garnered ever more critical acclaim. In the process, its cultural status has shifted, away from the realm of profoundly affective popular entertainment, available to each and everyone, into the more rarefied realm of high art. Most critical commentary has interpreted *2001* as a rather pessimistic statement about humanity's past, present and future. The film's huge popular success in the late 1960s, fuelled by a tremendous optimism, has been forgotten, to the point where the most vivid image of its original impact we have now is that of a drug-addled hippie being taken on a psychedelic ride by the movie.

The only – and rather indirect – reminder of the fact that *2001* was once at the very centre of American popular culture is the spate of science-fiction blockbusters with which Hollywood has come to dominate box-office charts around the world since the release of *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* in 1977. As we have seen, *2001* directly inspired Lucas and Spielberg and countless other science-fiction film-makers, and, more generally, it prepared the ground for studio executives to look for huge profits, and for cinema audiences to look for profound experiences, in this previously marginal genre. While it is all too easy to use *2001* as a critical stick with which to beat more recent science-fiction cinema, I want to highlight instead important continuities. Much like *2001* originally did in the late 1960s, the majority of the most popular science-fiction

films since the late 1970s have been successful with all-encompassing family audiences,¹⁷⁴ and most of them have achieved this by dealing with questions of global import and, quite frequently, by playing heavily on mythic and religious resonances. In the light of the terrifying threats and devastating destruction that the characters in most of these films are dealing with so capably, it would appear that the basis for the films' success is an underlying sense of hope, just as it was in the case of *2001*. Such hope is, I would think – and it is a thought Kubrick and Clarke seemed to have shared – an enormously valuable resource.

Acknowledgments

The initial archival research for this project in the United States at the beginning of the new millennium was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board. In addition, I would like to thank staff at the Stanley Kubrick Archive in the Archive and Special Collections Centre at the University of the Arts London for all their help. Thanks also to Lee Grieveson, Rebecca Barden and Joseph Garncarz for their comments on the manuscript.

Notes

- 1** The beginnings of this debate are documented in two volumes which, among other things, reprint a large number of reviews and letters written to Kubrick by regular cinemagoers (the latter appear only in the first of these volumes): Jerome Agel (ed.), *The Making of Kubrick's 2001* (New York: Signet, 1970), and Stephanie Schwam (ed.), *The Making of 2001: A Space Odyssey* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000).
- 2** See, for example, several letters printed in Agel, *The Making of Kubrick's 2001*, pp. 178–80, 182–3, 188–9. Cp. Peter Krämer, 'Dear Mr Kubrick': Audience Responses to 2001: A Space Odyssey in the Late 1960s', *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, vol. 6 no. 2 (November 2009), <www.participations.org/Volume%206/Issue%202/special/kramer.htm>.
- 3** See, for example, the recent analyses of 2001 in Gary D. Rhodes (ed.), *Stanley Kubrick: Essays on His Films and Legacy* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008); James Naremore, *On Kubrick* (London: BFI, 2007), pp. 137–53; Geoffrey Cocks, James Diedrick and Glenn Perusek (eds), *Depth of Field: Stanley Kubrick, Film, and the Uses of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); and Robert Kolker (ed.), *Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey: New Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- 4** See, for example, Jason Sperb, *The Kubrick Façade: Faces and Voices in the Films of Stanley Kubrick* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2006), pp. 85, 92–3.
- 5** Annotated proofs of Jeremy Bernstein's article 'Chain Reaction' (to be published in the *New Yorker*, 26 July 1968), in folder SK/12/6/14/2/9 in the Stanley Kubrick Archive (SKA), University of the Arts London.
- 6** Arthur C. Clarke, *The Lost Worlds of 2001* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972), p. 239, emphasis in the original.
- 7** In addition to countless interpretations, there have also been several studies of the film's production, notably Piers Bizony, *2001: Filming the Future* (London: Aurum, 2000).
- 8** Ian Christie, 'The Rules of the Game', *Sight & Sound*, September 2002, pp. 24–7.
- 9** *Ibid.*
- 10** The film is currently ranked 88th; 'Top 250 movies as voted by our users', <www.imdb.com/chart/top>, accessed 15 June 2009.
- 11** See <[www/geocities.com/aaronbcaldwell/dimscan.html](http://www.geocities.com/aaronbcaldwell/dimscan.html)>, and <connect.afi.com/DocServer/100Movies.pdf?docID=301>, both accessed 15 June 2009.
- 12** See, for example, R. Barton Palmer, '2001: The Critical Reception and the Generation Gap', in Kolker, *Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey*, pp. 13–27.
- 13** By 1975, the novel had sold 2.3 million copies in the United States; Alice Payne Hackett and James Henry Burke, *80 Years of Best Sellers, 1895–1975* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1977), p. 18.
- 14** Arthur C. Clarke, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (London: Legend Books, 1990), p. 23. This edition includes the original 'Foreword' by Clarke and Stanley Kubrick, a 1989 essay by Clarke entitled 'Back to 2001' and two of Clarke's short stories which served as inspirations for 2001: A Space Odyssey.

- 15 Ibid., p. 23.
 16 Ibid., pp. 29, 36.
 17 Ibid., pp. 47–8.
 18 Ibid., p. 236.
 19 Ibid., pp. 51–4.
 20 Ibid., p. 93.
 21 Ibid., p. 96.
 22 Ibid., pp. 106, 173.
 23 Ibid., pp. 199–201.
 24 Ibid., pp. 223, 232.
 25 Ibid., pp. 235–6.
 26 Ibid., p. 236.
 27 Ibid., p. 236.
 28 Ibid., p. 46.
 29 Ibid., pp. 199, 201.
 30 Ibid., p. 224.
 31 Kubrick to Clarke, 31 March 1964, folder SK/12/8/1/65, SKA.
 32 These collaborations are not always adequately reflected in the writing credits for Kubrick's films. In some of them, Kubrick's name is missing, while in others the names of his collaborators have been omitted. For detailed accounts of Kubrick's early career, see Peter Krämer, 'The Making of an Independent Filmmaker: Stanley Kubrick and Post-War Hollywood', unpublished paper presented at 'American Independent Cinema: Past, Present and Future', Liverpool, May 2009; and Vincent LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick: A Biography* (London: Faber, 1998), pp. 19–251.
 33 *Dr Strangelove* screenplay dated 31 August 1962, no author listed, contained in the 'Vertical Files' of the Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), Beverly Hills; cp. scripts contained in folder SK/11/1/1, SKA;

- also cp. the novelisation of the film: Peter George, *Dr Strangelove, Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, first published in 1963).
 34 *Dr Strangelove* screenplay dated 31 August 1962, p. 2.
 35 Ibid., p. 141.
 36 A letter Roger Caras wrote to Clarke on 17 February 1964 suggests that Kubrick was already well into the preparations for the new project by then; SK/12/8/1/13, SKA. Cp. Neil McAleer, *Odyssey: The Authorised Biography by Arthur C. Clarke* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1992), p. 190. Alexander Walker has stated that during a visit to Kubrick's New York apartment in the late 1950s, he realised that the film-maker was studying Japanese science-fiction films and was probably thinking even then about 'a film about Outer Space'; Alexander Walker, 'It's Only a Movie, Ingrid': *Encounters On and Off Screen* (London: Headline, 1988), p. 268.
 37 Cp. Steven J. Dick, *Life on Other Worlds: The 20th-Century Extraterrestrial Life Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Ch. 4.
 38 Cp. Randall Fitzgerald, *Cosmic Test Tube: Extraterrestrial Contact, Theories and Evidence* (Los Angeles: Moon Lake Media, 1998), pp. 96–114; Brenda Denzler, *The Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 8–19, 36–55; Dick, *Life on Other Worlds*, pp. 138–50.
 39 Dick, *Life on Other Worlds*, pp. 201–11; Keay Davidson, *Carl Sagan: A Life* (New York: John Wiley, 1999), pp. 124–8.

- 40 It is worth noting that by the time Kubrick wrote to Clarke in 1964, earlier speculations about possible intelligent life on other planets in our solar system, notably Mars, had been rejected by most scientists, yet the American and Soviet space programmes nevertheless included plans for exploration of the planets, and in the early 1960s unmanned probes were sent to Mars and Venus. Cp. Dick, *Life on Other Worlds*, Ch. 2.
 41 Lyn Tornabene, 'The Bomb and Stanley Kubrick', *Cosmopolitan*, November 1963, pp. 15–16.
 42 P. D. Smith, *Doomsday Men: The Real Dr Strangelove and the Dream of the Superweapon* (London: Penguin, 2007), pp. xvii–xviii, 17–24.
 43 Kubrick to Irvin Doress, 31 March 1964, SK/12/8/1/65, SKA.
 44 Stanley Kubrick, 'How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Cinema', *Films and Filming*, June 1963, p. 12.
 45 Interview with Roger Caras cited in McAleer, *Odyssey*, pp. 190–1.
 46 McAleer, *Odyssey*, pp. 58–62; Michael Allen, *Live from the Moon: Film, Television and the Space Race* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), pp. 55–9.
 47 McAleer, *Odyssey*, p. 63.
 48 Ibid., pp. 11, 31.
 49 Cp. Edward James, 'Arthur C. Clarke', in David Seed (ed.), *A Companion to Science Fiction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 431–40.
 50 McAleer, *Odyssey*, p. 176.
 51 Ibid., pp. 86, 164–9, 177–8, 189.
 52 Clarke to Kubrick, 8 April 1964, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA.

- 53 Clarke to the editor of *Scientific American*, 23 March 1964, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA.
 54 Clarke to Kubrick, 9 April 1964, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA.
 55 Arthur C. Clarke, 'The World of the Communications Satellite', *Astronautics and Aeronautics*, February 1964, p. 45.
 56 Clarke to Kubrick, 9 April 1964, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA; McAleer, *Odyssey*, pp. 192–3.
 57 Clarke to Kubrick, 9 April 1964, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA.
 58 'The Sentinel', reprinted in Clarke, 2001, pp. 245, 248.
 59 Ibid., p. 248.
 60 Ibid., p. 249.
 61 Ibid., pp. 249–50.
 62 Arthur C. Clarke, *Childhood's End* (New York: Del Rey, 1990, originally published in 1954), pp. 18, 35, 45.
 63 Ibid., p. 61.
 64 Ibid., pp. 55, 63.
 65 Ibid., p. 169.
 66 Ibid., p. 129.
 67 For detailed accounts of the Clarke–Kubrick collaboration, see McAleer, *Odyssey*, pp. 190–211; Arthur C. Clarke, 'Back to 2001', in Clarke, 2001, pp. 9–18; Clarke, *The Lost Worlds of 2001*; Arthur C. Clarke, 'Son of Dr Strangelove', in Clarke, *Report on Planet Three and Other Speculations* (London: Corgi, 1973), pp. 244–55; LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick*, pp. 256–310. Also cp. Agel, *The Making of Kubrick's 2001*; Schwam, *The Making of 2001*; and Bizony, 2001.
 68 These drafts can be found in folders SK/12/1/1/2–4, SKA.
 69 'Project: Space – First Draft Outline', SK/12/1/1/1; this folder contains only

selected chapters, some of which are individually dated (in mid-July).

The quotations are on pp. 2–3 of Chapter 4.

70 Clarke, *The Lost Worlds of 2001*, p. 33.

71 Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke, *Journey Beyond the Stars. A Film Story*; copies of this can be found in folder SK/12/1/1/3, SKA, and in box 3503, folder 2426, of the Turner/MGM Script Collection, AMPAS. The latter also contains a MGM 'Reader's Report' dated 15 February 1965 and referring to the above 'film story', which therefore must have been written and submitted earlier, although the stamp on the *Journey Beyond the Stars* manuscript inexplicably gives the date 23 August 1965. According to Clarke's personal 'log', he completed the first draft of *Journey Beyond the Stars* on 24 December 1964; Clarke, *The Lost Worlds of 2001*, p. 35.

72 Clarke, *The Lost Worlds of 2001*, p. 50; Clarke, 'Encounter in the Dawn', in Clarke, 2001, p. 266.

73 Clarke, *The Lost Worlds of 2001*, p. 32.

74 Kubrick and Clarke, *Journey Beyond the Stars*, p. 73.

75 *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 131.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 251.

77 'Reader's Report', probably authored by M. Silverstein, box 3503, folder 2426, Turner/MGM Script Collection; McAleer, *Odyssey*, p. 201; LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick*, p. 269.

78 Cobbett Steinberg, *Film Facts* (New York: Facts on File, 1980), p. 50.

79 See Lawrence Cohn, 'All-Time Film Rental Champs', *Variety*, 10 May 1993, pp. C76–106, 108; and Steinberg, *Film Facts*, pp. 21–5. From now on, unless

referenced otherwise, figures on rental income given in this essay are taken from Cohn's alphabetical listing.

80 A facsimile of this can be found in Bizony, 2001, pp. 10–11.

81 Judging by a later statement by MGM president Robert O'Brien, Kubrick was also regarded as a fiscally responsible film-maker: 'Kubrick represents a most unusual combination of qualities: artistic ability, management ability, and a sense of coherence. And, not least, a splendid sense of economy'; quoted in Hollis Alpert, 'Happiness is a Filmmaker in London', *Saturday Review*, 25 December 1965, p. 10.

82 Cp. Krämer, 'The Making of an Independent Filmmaker'.

83 'All-Time Top Film Grossers', *Variety*, 7 January 1965, p. 38. *Variety* later adjusted the rentals figure for *Spartacus* to \$11m; Cohn, 'All-Time Film Rental Champs', p. C102.

84 Derek Elley (ed.), *Variety Movie Guide 2000* (New York: Perigee, 2000), p. 798.

85 Steinberg, *Film Facts*, pp. 177, 291.

86 LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick*, pp. 192, 223, 245.

87 The initial rentals figure was \$4.5m, but *Variety* later adjusted it to \$3.7m. I have derived the film's ranking from the unpublished annual charts that Sheldon Hall compiled from the alphabetical listing of the rental income of all films earning \$3m or more in Cohn, 'All-Time Film Rental Champs'.

88 Elley, *Variety Movie Guide 2000*, p. 237; Steinberg, *Film Facts*, pp. 174, 269, 313.

89 On the history of Cinerama, see John Belton, *Widescreen Cinema* (Cambridge,

MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), Ch. 5.

90 For this and subsequent rankings in the annual charts, see Peter Krämer, *The New Hollywood: From Bonnie and Clyde to Star Wars* (London: Wallflower Press, 2005), pp. 111–14.

91 Cp. Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, Ch. 4.

92 Cp. Vivian Sobchak, "'Surge and Splendor": A Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic', *Representations*, vol. 29 (1990), pp. 24–49.

93 Krämer, *The New Hollywood*, pp. 21–8, 111–14.

94 Interestingly, *The Bible: In the Beginning ...* was already in production at the time of MGM's press release for *Journey Beyond the Stars*. Upon its release in 1966, *Variety* described it as '[t]he world's oldest story – the origins of mankind, as told in the Book of Genesis'; Elley, *Variety Movie Guide 2000*, p. 72. The prehistoric part of Kubrick and Clarke's 'film story' approached the same topic – the origins of humankind – from a different perspective. *The Bible* became the second-biggest hit of all films released in 1966.

95 Stephen Powers, David J. Rothman and Stanley Rothman, *Hollywood's America: Social and Political Themes in Motion Pictures* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), pp. 131–2.

96 Sheldon Hall, *Hard Ticket Giants: Hollywood Blockbusters in the Widescreen Era*, two volumes, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of East Anglia, 1999, volume 1, p. 282.

97 On roadshows, see Hall, *Hard Ticket Giants*; and Hall, 'Tall Revenue Features: The Genealogy of the Modern

Blockbuster', in Steve Neale (ed.), *Genre and Contemporary Hollywood* (London: BFI, 2002), pp. 11–26.

98 J. P. Telotte, *Disney TV* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), Ch. 3; Randy Lieberman, 'The Collier's and Disney Series', in Frederick I. Ordway III and Randy Lieberman (eds), *Blueprint for Space: Science Fiction to Science Fact* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992), pp. 135–46. From the 1954/5 season to the 1956/7 season, *Disneyland* had at no. 6, no. 4 and no. 14 in the annual ratings charts. Alex McNeil, *Total Television* (New York: Penguin, 1996), pp. 1145–6.

99 William E. Burrows, *This New Ocean: The Story of the First Space Age* (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), p. 330.

100 *Ibid.*, Chs. 6–11.

101 Allen, *Live from the Moon*, Ch. 5.

102 Burrows, *This New Ocean*, p. 380.

103 Cp. A. H. Weiler, 'Beyond the Blue Horizon', *New York Times*, 21 February 1965, p. X9.

104 MGM Production Records cited in Robert Sklar, 'Stanley Kubrick and the American Film Industry', *Current Research in Film*, vol. 4 (1988), p. 118.

105 Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke, 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, screenplay dated 6 July 1965; copies of this can be found in the general Script Collection, AMPAS; in box 3503, folder 2427, Turner/MGM Script Collection, AMPAS; and in folder SK/12/1/2/1, SKA. Information on the production of 2001 in this paragraph and the next one is taken from a range of sources: document on 'main unit shooting', 5 January 1968, SK/12/9/1/5/11, SKA;

LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick*, pp. 269–311; McAleer, *Odyssey*, pp. 201–20; Clarke, *The Lost Worlds of 2001*, pp. 36–49, 124–7, 188–91; Clarke, 'Back to 2001', pp. 13–14; Dan Richter, *Moonwatcher's Memoir: A Diary of 2001: A Space Odyssey* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2002); Anthony Frewin (ed.), *Are We Alone? The Stanley Kubrick Extraterrestrial-Intelligence Interviews* (London: Elliott and Thompson, 2005), pp. 9–30. Also cp. Bizony, 2001; Agel, *The Making of Kubrick's 2001*; and Schwam, *The Making of 2001*.

106 See, for example, the novel drafts printed in Clarke, *The Lost Worlds of 2001*.

107 Cp. Naremore, *On Kubrick*, pp. 140–41.

108 Kubrick and Clarke, 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, screenplay dated 6 July 1965, p. 26.

109 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

111 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

112 *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 108.

113 Kubrick to Clarke, 31 March 1964, SK/12/8/1/12, SKA.

114 Clarke to Kubrick, 24 August 1965, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA.

115 Clarke to Kubrick, 12 October 1965, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA.

116 Clarke and Kubrick, 2001: *A Space Odyssey* script, December 1965.

While the script as a whole has no date, individual pages are dated, none later than 14 December; the script was 'rec'd', that is received, by MGM on 3 January 1966. Copies of this can be found in folder SK/12/1/2/2, SKA; in folder CTR no. 1637, Performing Arts

Research Centre (PARC), New York Public Library; and in the Turner/MGM Script Collection, AMPAS. Shooting started on 17 December 1965.

117 Clarke and Kubrick, 2001: *A Space Odyssey* script, February 1966, SK/12/1/2/5, SKA. While the script as a whole has no date, individual pages are dated, none later than 25 February 1966.

118 Kubrick to Clarke, 7 March 1966, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA.

119 Clarke to Kubrick, 25 August 1965, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA.

120 This is a handwritten note on Clarke's letter.

121 Kubrick to Clarke, 11 April 1966, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA; emphasis in the original.

122 Kubrick to Clarke, 23 November 1967, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA.

123 Clarke to Kubrick, 25 November 1967, SK/12/8/1/11, SKA.

124 See, for example, narration concerning Hal, 22 January 1968, SK/12/8/1/46, SKA.

125 Cp. Kubrick to North, 26 January 1968, and North to Kubrick, 29 January 1968, SK/12/8/1/50, SKA.

126 Richter, *Moonwatcher's Memoir*, pp. 136–8.

127 William Kloman, 'In 2001, Will Love Be a Seven-Letter Word?', *New York Times*, 14 April 1968, Section D, p. 15; Joseph Gelmis, 'Kubrick's Message Is Nonverbal', *Newsday*, 4 June 1968, Section A, pp. 3–5; Charlie Kohler, 'Stanley Kubrick Raps', *The East Village Eye*, August 1968, pp. 30, 84–6, reprinted in Schwam, *The Making of 2001*, pp. 245–57; Eric Nordern, 'Playboy

Interview: Stanley Kubrick', *Playboy*, September 1968, reprinted in Gene D. Phillips, *Stanley Kubrick: Interviews* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), pp. 47–74; Maurice Rapf, 'A Talk with Stanley Kubrick about 2001', *Action: The Magazine of the Directors Guild of America*, January–February 1969, pp. 16–18, reprinted in Phillips, *Stanley Kubrick: Interviews*, pp. 75–9; Joseph Gelmis, *The Film Director as Superstar* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 293–316, reprinted in Phillips, *Stanley Kubrick: Interviews*, pp. 80–104.

128 As previously noted, Kubrick made several minor changes after the film's first screenings, which were attended by only a few thousand people, including many critics. These changes included a number of cuts (adding up to about nineteen minutes), the insertion of a shot of the monolith into the scene where Moon-Watcher gets the idea that bones can be used as weapons, and the addition of the two titles 'Jupiter Mission: 18 Months Later' and 'Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite'. See 'Kubrick Trims "2001" by 19 Min[ute]s, Adds Titles to Frame Sequences', *Variety*, 17 April 1968, unpaginated clipping in folder SK/12/6/1/4, SKA; Michel Chion, *Kubrick's Cinema Odyssey* (London: BFI, 2001), pp. 22–3; LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick*, pp. 310–11.

129 All timings are taken from the American DVD of 2001: *A Space Odyssey* in Warner Bros.' 2007 Stanley Kubrick box set in its 'Directors Series'.

This DVD version runs the film at 24 frames per second, which is the same speed as that of theatrical projection.

By contrast, the British DVD of 2001 in Warner Bros.' 2001 'Stanley Kubrick Collection' converts the film to 25 frames per second, and its version of the film is therefore shorter by one 25th of the running time. For information on this and on the conventions of theatrical presentation (regarding the entrance and exit of audiences as well as the opening and closing of curtains while music was playing), I thank Sheldon Hall. I present the length of particular sections of the film with approximate figures because it is often debatable exactly where – that is, with which shot or at which point within a shot – each section begins and ends; cp. Chion, *Kubrick's Cinema Odyssey*, p. 185. Information on the film music is taken from David W. Patterson, 'Music, Structure and Metaphor in Stanley Kubrick's 2001: *A Space Odyssey*', *American Music*, vol. 22 no. 3 (Fall 2004), pp. 444–74.

130 The word 'odyssey' and the provenance of the title of the musical piece by Strauss can easily be understood as an encouragement to delve into the history of western culture so as to identify deeply resonant and highly complex interpretive frameworks for the film, notably Homer's epic and Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical treatise *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Cp. Leonard F. Wheat, *Kubrick's 2001: A Triple Allegory* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000). I should add that the amount of critical commentary on 2001, and the range of analytical and interpretive approaches applied to it, is truly impressive, comprising dozens of

journal essays and book chapters, plus several books. Variants of much of what I offer in my own discussion of the film can probably be found in previous analyses, yet I have made no attempt to reference all such precursors, or to explain in detail how my own account differs from existing ones, because this would take up a considerable percentage of the available space in a short volume such as this.

However, I would certainly recommend that readers also look at other critical writings about 2001, especially Michel Chion's magnificent study *Kubrick's Cinema Odyssey*.

131 According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the figurative meaning of 'dawn' is 'beginning, commencement, rise, first gleam or appearance'. As a verb, the meanings of 'dawn' include the following: 'Of ideas, facts, etc.: To begin to become evident to the mind; to begin to be understood, felt, or perceived'. This would seem to describe the key development in the prehistoric scenes of the film quite well.

132 Indeed, the introductory titles of the sequel to 2001, *2010* (1984), state explicitly that the discovery of the monolith on the Moon took place in 1999 and the Jupiter mission in 2001.

133 Letter in folder SK/12/4/8, SKA; emphasis in the original. The name of the author is known to me but to protect the anonymity of this and other correspondents, I will identify particular letters with reference to their date and the correspondents' home towns; here 16 July 1968, Rock Mill, Ohio.

134 For a detailed analysis of these letters, see Krämer, "Dear Mr Kubrick".

135 Letter dated 31 May 1968, Malibu, SK/12/8/4, SKA. The letter is printed in Agel, *The Making of Kubrick's 2001*, pp. 182–3. Agel does give the names of most of the correspondents.

136 Letter dated 15 April 1968, Fort Lee, New Jersey, SK/12/8/4, SKA; printed in Agel, *The Making of Kubrick's 2001*, pp. 186–7 (here the letter is listed as being from Leonia, New Jersey).

137 Letter dated 4 May 1968, Santa Monica, SK/12/8/4, SKA; printed in Agel, *The Making of Kubrick's 2001*, pp. 189–92.

138 *Ibid.*, p. 192.

139 Letter dated 14 June 1968, St Louis, Missouri, SK/12/8/4, SKA.

140 Letter dated 29 May 1968, San Bernardino, SK/12/8/4, SKA.

141 Robert S. Ellwood, *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening: American Religion Moving from Modern to Postmodern* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), p. 311.

142 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

143 *Ibid.*, p. 311.

144 "Odyssey" on Time; O'Brien Comes Home', *Film and Television Daily*, 27 March 1968, p. 1.

145 "Odyssey" on Time', p. 3; Charles McHarry's 'On the Town' column, *New York Daily News*, 25 March 1968, unpaginated clipping in folder SK/12/6/14/2/3, SKA; 'MGM's "2001" Takes Top N[ew] Y[ork] B[ox] O[ffice] Grosses', *Hollywood Reporter*, 15 April 1968, unpaginated clipping in SK/6/14/1, SKA; MGM press release dated 9 May 1968, SK/12/5/2/3, SKA

146 Steinberg, *Film Facts*, p. 26.

147 'All-Time Boxoffice Champs', *Variety*, 7 January 1970, p. 25.

148 Cp. Hall, 'Tall Revenue Features'.

149 "2001": In 35mm Version', *Variety*, 15 January 1969; unpaginated clipping in press clippings file on 2001: A Space Odyssey, PARC; 'Back to 70m [sic], Six-Track Stereo, 2001 Displays Fast Legs with Young Mob', *Variety*, 8 April 1970, p. 6.

150 'Kubrick's Sure "2001" to Click', *Variety*, 10 April 1968, pp. 5, 24; "2001" Draws Repeat and Recant Notices, Also a Quasi-Hippie Public', *Variety*, 15 May 1968, unpaginated clipping in folder SK/12/6/1/4, SKA; Stuart Byron, "Space": Box Office Moon-Shot', *Variety*, 29 January 1969, pp. 5, 19.

151 Jack Ano, 'New York Scene' column, *Film Bulletin*, 6 April 1970, p. 6.

152 "2001" Gathers a Famous Fans File; Kubrick Reviews, Except in N.Y., Good', *Variety*, 19 June 1968, p. 28.

153 Letter dated 19 June 1968, Flushing, New York, SK/12/8/4, SKA; printed in Agel, *The Making of Kubrick's 2001*, pp. 181–2.

154 Steinberg, *Film Facts*, p. 282.

155 *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 262, 269, 295, 314, 320.

156 Elley, *Variety Movie Guide 2000*, pp. 905–6.

157 Steinberg, *Film Facts*, pp. 145–6, 178.

158 *Ibid.*, pp. 186–7.

159 *Ibid.*, pp. 125–7.

160 'All-Time Boxoffice Champs', *Variety*, 3 January 1973, p. 30. The figure of \$27 million given in this chart was later corrected by *Variety* to \$20 million; 'Up-Dated All-Time Film Champs', *Variety*, 8 January 1975, p. 26.

With subsequent re-releases, the film eventually reached the figure of \$26 million reported in Cohn, 'All-Time Film Rental Champs'.

161 Cp. Krämer, *The New Hollywood*, pp. 106–7, 111–14.

162 Cp. Eric Greene, *Planet of the Apes as American Myth: Race, Politics, and Popular Culture* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998). The impact of *Planet of the Apes* and its sequels was considerable, as is evidenced, for example, by the high ratings the films received when they were first shown on American television in 1973. Three of them were seen by about a third of all households, and *Planet of the Apes* was among the ten top-rated movies ever shown on American television up to that point; Steinberg, *Film Facts*, pp. 32–3.

163 On Hollywood's science-fiction output during this period, see, for example, Craig Anderson, *Science Fiction Films of the Seventies* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1985). Among the few movies dealing with space travel, the biggest earners were *Barbarella* (1968), with rentals of \$6m, and *Marooned* (1969, \$4m), while *Silent Running* (1972), directed by Douglas Trumbull, who had worked on the special effects for 2001, earned less than \$3m; Cohn, 'All-Time Film Rental Champs'.

164 Cp. Krämer, *The New Hollywood*, pp. 107–9.

165 Cp. the documentary *Standing on the Shoulders of Kubrick: The Legacy of 2001*, which is on the 2001 DVD in the 2007 Warner Bros. Kubrick box set.

166 Larry Sturhahn, 'The Filming of *American Graffiti*', *Filmmakers Newsletter*,

March 1974, pp. 19–27, reprinted in Sally Kline (ed.), *George Lucas: Interviews* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), p. 32. Also see Stephen Farber, 'George Lucas: The Stinky Kid Hits the Big Time', *Film Quarterly*, vol. 27 no. 3 (Spring 1974), pp. 2–9, reprinted in Kline, *George Lucas: Interviews*, pp. 33–44.

167 Joseph McBride, *Steven Spielberg: A Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), pp. 79, 105, 121, 161, 263.

168 Cp. Peter Krämer, 'Hollywood and Its Global Audiences: A Comparative Study of the Biggest Box Office Hits in the US and Outside the US since the 1970s', in Richard Maltby, Daniel Biltereyst and Philippe Meers (eds), *The New Cinema History: Approaches and Case Studies* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming).

169 Cp. Peter Krämer, 'Welterfolg und Apokalypse: Überlegungen zur Transnationalität des zeitgenössischen Hollywood', in Ricarda Strobel and Andreas Jahn-Sudmann (eds), *Film transnational und transkulturell. Europäische und amerikanische Perspektiven* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2009), pp. 171–84.

170 Cp. Arthur C. Clarke and Peter Hyams, *The Odyssey File* (London: Panther, 1985). Intriguingly, Clarke acknowledged the rise of Hollywood's science-fiction blockbusters since the

late 1970s by referencing both *Star Wars* and *Alien* (1979) in his novel; Arthur C. Clarke, 2010: *Odyssey Two* (New York: Del Rey, 1982), pp. 117, 194. It is also worth noting that Clarke later wrote two more sequels: 2061: *Odyssey Three* (New York: Del Rey, 1987) and 3001: *The Final Odyssey* (London: Voyager, 1997). In addition, there are the three 'Time Odyssey' novels he wrote with Stephen Baxter: *Time's Eye* (London: Orion, 2004), *Sunstorm* (London: Orion, 2005) and *Firstborn* (London: Orion, 2008).

The authors' note in *Time's Eye* explains: 'This book, and the series which it opens, neither follows nor precedes the books of the earlier *Odyssey*, but is at right angles to them: not a sequel or prequel but an "orthoquel", taking similar premises in a different direction.'

171 Michael Cader (ed.), 2001 *People Entertainment Almanac* (New York: Cader Books, 2000), p. 305.

172 'Big Rental Films of 1984', *Variety*, 16 January 1985, p. 16.

173 Clarke, 2010, p. 320.

174 Cp. Peter Krämer, 'Would You Take Your Child to See This Film? The Cultural and Social Work of the Family-Adventure Movie', in Steve Neale and Murray Smith (eds), *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 294–311.

Credits

2001: A Space Odyssey
USA/1968

Directed by
Stanley Kubrick

Produced by
Stanley Kubrick

Screenplay by
Stanley Kubrick
Arthur C. Clarke

Director of Photography

Geoffrey Unsworth

Film Editor

Ray Lovejoy

Production Designed by

Tony Masters

Harry Lange

Ernest Archer

Music by

Aram Khachaturian

György Ligeti

Johann Strauss

Richard Strauss

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Production Company

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

presents

a Stanley Kubrick

production

a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

production and release

1st Assistant Director

Derek Cracknell

Special Photographic Effects Designed and Directed by

Stanley Kubrick

Special Photographic Effects Supervisors

Wally Veevers

Douglas Trumbull

Con Pederson

Tom Howard

Special Photographic Effects Unit

Colin J. Cantwell

Bruce Logan

Bryan Loftus

David Osborne

Frederick Martin

John Jack Malick

Additional Photography

John Alcott

Camera Operator

Kelvin Pike

Editorial Assistant

David De Wilde

Art Director

John Hoesli

Make-up

Stuart Freeborn

Wardrobe by

Hardy Amies

Soundtrack

Gayaneh ballet suite by

Aram Khachaturian,

performed by the

Leningrad Philharmonic

Orchestra, conductor:

Gennadi

Rozhdestvensky,

courtesy Deutsche

Grammophon;

Atmospheres by György

Ligeti, performed by the

Southwest German Radio

Orchestra, conductor:

Ernest Bour; *Lux aeterna*

by György Ligeti, performed by the Stuttgart Schola Cantorum, conductor: Clytus Gottwald; *Requiem* by György Ligeti, performed by the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, conductor: Francis Travis; *Blue Danube* waltz by Johann Strauss, performed by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conductor: Herbert von Karajan, courtesy Deutsche Grammophon; *Thus Spake Zarathustra* by Richard Strauss, performed (uncredited) by Wiener Philharmoniker, conductor: (uncredited) Herbert von Karajan; *Adventures* by György Ligeti (uncredited).

Sound Supervisor

A. W. Watkins

Sound Mixer

H. L. Bird

Chief Dubbing Mixer

J. B. Smith

Sound Editor

Winston Ryder

Scientific Consultant

Frederick I. Ordway III

CAST:

Keir Dullea

Mission Commander

David 'Dave' Bowman

Gary Lockwood
Astronaut Frank Poole

William Sylvester
Dr Heywood R. Floyd

Daniel Richter
moon-watcher

Leonard Rossiter
Dr Andrei Smyslov

Margaret Tyzack
Elena

Robert Beatty
Dr Ralph Halvorsen

Sean Sullivan
Dr Bill Michaels

Douglas Rain
voice of HAL 9000

Frank Miller
voice of mission
controller

Bill Weston
space-walker

Edward Bishop
Aries-1B lunar shuttle
captain

Glenn Beck
astronaut

Alan Gifford
Poole's father

Ann Gillis
Poole's mother

Edwina Carroll
Aries-1B stewardess

Penny Brahms
stewardess

Heather Downham
stewardess

Mike Lovell
astronaut

John Ashley

Jimmy Bell

David Charkham

Simon Davis

Jonathan Daw

Peter Delmar

Terry Duggan

David Fleetwood

Danny Grover

Brian Hawley

David Hines

Tony Jackson

John Jordan

Scott MacKee

Laurence Marchant

Darryl Paes

Joe Refalo

Andy Wallace

Bob Wilyman

Richard Wood
apes

Premiered in
Washington, DC, on
2 April 1968. Released in
the US by MGM Film
Company on 6 April 1968
at 141 minutes,
subsequently rated G by
the MPAA.

Released in the UK by
MGM Pictures Ltd on
10 May 1968, BBFC
certificate A,
subsequently rated U on
10 February 1969 for
general release.

In
Technicolor
Metrocolor
Filmed in
Super Panavision
Presented in
Cinerama
Released in both 35mm
and 70mm prints.
2.20:1/2.35:1
MPAA: 21197
Principal photography
from 17 December 1965
to 14 July 1966, mainly at
MGM British Studios Ltd
(Borehamwood,
England).

Credits compiled by
Julian Grainger

2001: A Space Odyssey

Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) is widely regarded as one of the best films ever made. It has been celebrated for its beauty and mystery, its realistic depiction of space travel and dazzling display of visual effects, the breathtaking scope of its story, which reaches across millions of years, and the thought-provoking depth of its meditation on evolution, technology and humanity's encounters with the unknown. *2001* has been described as the most expensive avant-garde movie ever made and as a psychedelic trip, a unique expression of the spirit of the 1960s and as a timeless masterpiece.

Peter Krämer's insightful study explores the complex origins of the film, the unique shape it took and the extraordinary impact it made on contemporary audiences. Drawing on new research in the Stanley Kubrick Archive at the University of the Arts London, Krämer challenges many of the widely-held assumptions about the film. He argues that *2001* was Kubrick's attempt to counter the deep pessimism of his previous film, *Dr Strangelove* (1964), which culminates in the explosion of a nuclear 'doomsday' device, with a more hopeful vision of humanity's future, facilitated by the intervention of mysterious extra-terrestrial artifacts.

This study traces the project's development from the first letter Kubrick wrote to his future collaborator Arthur C. Clarke in March 1964 all the way to the dramatic changes Kubrick made to the film shortly before its release by MGM in April 1968. Krämer shows that, despite – or, perhaps, because of – Kubrick's daring last-minute decision to turn the film itself into a mysterious artifact, *2001* was an instant success with both critics and general audiences, and has exerted enormous influence over Hollywood's output of science fiction movies ever since. The book argues that *2001* invites us to enjoy and contemplate its sounds and images over and over again, and, if we are so inclined, to take away from it an important message of hope.

PETER KRÄMER is a Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of East Anglia, UK. He has written and edited a number of books, including *Screen Acting* (1999), *The Silent Cinema Reader* (2004) and *The New Hollywood: From Bonnie and Clyde to Star Wars* (2005).



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