KUBRICK'S TOTAL CINEMA

PHILOSOPHICAL THEMES AND FORMAL QUALITIES

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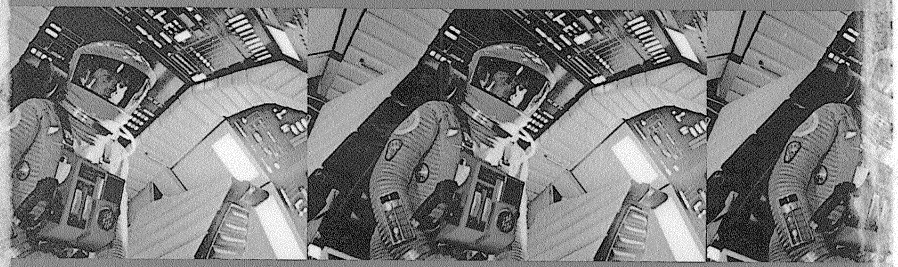

BLOOMSBURY

This is but a sample of the 46 instances that Chion finds in the screenplay. He interprets this parroting in a number of ways, the most significant one for a reading of the film as dream is that it alters the sense of time: "we no longer know when this game of echoes began, and who said what first."[4] These suspended phrases hold up the action, put the drama to sleep, allow for a kind of hypnogogic waywardness to direct the scene into a dreamy timelessness and ambiguity. At the same time, as we have observed before, these repetitions reveal speech in all its opacity and materiality.

Another means by which this is accomplished is through pastiche. We hear it in Bill's bedside manner, Nick's "good guy" greeting ("How the hell are you buuuuudyyy?"), Milich's immigrant English ("It's starting to fall down, too fast. I lost in two weeks a lot of hair"), and Red Cloak's inquisitorial diction ("That IS unfortunate"). The most elaborate pastiche can be heard in Sandor's attempted seduction of Alice:

Szavost: My name is Sandor Szavost. I'm Hungarian.
Alice: My name is Alice Harford. I'm American.
. . .
Szavost: Delighted to meet you, Alice. Did you ever read the Latin poet Ovid on *The Art of Love*?
. . .
Szavost: Don't you think one of the charms of marriage is that it makes deception a necessity for both parties?

This is the "Hungarian lover" who lives only in the movies, with his pronounced accent and "sophistication." The conversation, in any case, lasts too long: It is one of those elaborately suspended moments of temptation and indecision found in dreams. Speech in all these instances is "cited" as much as it is spoken. This is not to say that it is "unreal" so much as it is impersonal and archetypal.

Kubrick *disables* cinematic speech and strips it of its pretensions of intimacy, transparency, and authenticity. This is not a matter of representing hypocrisy or deceit, or of an intentional act of disguise. It is rather a revelation of language's artificiality, conventionality and its inevitable inauthenticity. This disabling of speech awakens a sense of uneasiness or suspicion, allowing for deeper, but less articulate, forms of illumination. When speech loses its authority as a conveyance of motive and meaning, it can be folded into the total poiesis of cinema.

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Poiesis

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Ezra Pound was refashioning poetry to make it capable of dealing with the modern world. In breaking with the decorum and metrical regularity of late romantic verse, Pound asserted that vibrant poetry was a simultaneous expression of three media: logopoeia (the play of words), melopoeia (the play of music or rhythm), and phanopoeia (the play of the image).[1] While Pound could only *write* his *Cantos*, film directors were inventing a fully realized *poiesis* thanks to the new media of the photographic image, recorded music, and dialog. By mid-century, few directors were really interested in this kind of realization of cinema as poiesis. Most were interested in theatrical or narrative application of the new medium. Others saw the possibility of something quite different—a poiesis of image, music, and word: among these are Welles, Kurosawa, Antonioni, and Kubrick.

In coming to an understanding of what Kubrick means by the "illumination" (and what I have called a cinema cogitans) to which his cinema aspires, we have traced a number of themes and the characteristic ways in which he uses light, time, music, and speech. Now we can turn to an appreciation of their combined effects which serve to occupy the audience's sensorium with a fictive world. Ideally, it is a kind of "out of body experience." Kubrick more than any other director I know has found ways to detach the sensorium from local data streams and replace them with his own characteristic poiesis. The primary task is one of fascination: The film has to keep the customer in his seat by subjecting him to an alternate reality that he finds more compelling than the realities in the lobby and the worlds beyond. This fascination is poetic in nature: that is to say, it is the result of a manipulation of media that puts him in a state of anticipation and leaves him in a state of slightly bewildered satisfaction.

In attempting to make the best "horror" film ever made, Kubrick took the genre and reinvented it: As we have seen, he remade the banalities of suburban culture in the seventies and revealed their most ghastly and frightening potentials. If

German expressionism drew cinematic *horror* out of the chiaroscuro metaphysics of gothic literature and art, Kubrick's *The Shining* drew it out of the spectral golds, oranges, and reds discovered and transmitted by "color" television. Yet Kubrick's task was to make of this banal palette something beautiful—just as beautiful as *Barry Lyndon*, but without once showing us anything particularly beautiful.

Kubrick was able, with Diane Johnson, to extricate from Stephen King's novel *The Shining* the scenario for one of his strangest and least interpretable works. He saw past the clutter and tedium of King's prose to its fundamental mythos: The hero Jack Torrance is a man who has been dislodged from eternity into time. His mythic quest for return is motivated by this sense of temporal malaise and spiritual alienation. His interest in literature and writing fiction manifest his search for a way beyond the temporality that has imprisoned him in a loveless marriage and burdened him with a son who possesses the faculty he is lacking: what King calls "shining," the psychic power of illumination or vision that transcends time and space.

His son Danny's powers expand and spread to his father and his mother once they have removed themselves to the vast and remote Overlook Hotel. As Jack is drawn more and more into the hotel's past, the nature of his quest becomes apparent to him: He must murder his son and his wife so that he can escape from his temporal confinement into the eternal or timeless psychic space of the hotel. While his wife Wendy and his son Danny are the twin monsters who confine him to a cursed existence, Jack is, from their point of view, the monster who has confined them in a haunted house and threatens to murder and consume them. Beneath the cheery and banal colors of seventies' America, a hideous mythic struggle is joined for the boon of shining or illumination—the power to see beyond the tedium of time and then to take up residence there. Despite all their differences, the theme of *The Shining*, like *2001*, is a gradually realized quest for timelessness.

Opening and credits

The opening scene of *The Shining* is a case in point. We can say simply enough that we see a Volkswagen Bug moving on an empty highway along mountain passes on a sunny day. Later we realize that we have witnessed Jack Torrance driving to a job interview at the Overlook Hotel for the post of winter caretaker. It could easily have been dispensed with, but it is an appropriate scene to run the credits, since it gives us the setting and the dominant theme of isolation without the distractions of dialog. As we quickly assimilate the plot factum along with

the title, the director, and so forth, we realize that the camera is tracking the Volkswagen from the sky. On a second viewing, we may feel that the camera and helicopter tracking the car have introduced another theme: the double. And yet at first, the point of view seems in search of an object: It skims above a mountain lake and a forested island. Only then does it spot the yellow Volkswagen, as if this transcendent and menacing visual consciousness has settled on its proper subject. Our dawning recognition of the theme of the double is deepened when we see, once again, how the tracking shot is suddenly interrupted when it fails to take the turn with the car and continues its flight over a pristine mountain lake: It seems to have gone off the tracks or, perhaps, returned momentarily to its original focus. So along with the theme of doubling, we witness a surprising digression. The film is in effect assisting us in a fascinated tracking of Jack's journey into madness: Do we follow him all the way or veer off?

But the airborne vision registers more than the road and the Volkswagen and the themes of doubling and digression: The mountains, the lakes, and the trees are captured with a peculiar kind of light. It might be early morning, but the light has already gained a powerful capacity for illumination: The shadows of the fir trees seem to fall in all directions, as if the point of view is fixed but not real. This half-realized sense is encouraged by the credits—in a weird aqua lettering—that are scrolling upward, reminding us that we are watching the beginning of a movie. More importantly, it is suggested by the plangent tones of the score—the *Dies Irae* derived from medieval church music and adapted by many classical and modern composers. If we do not recognize the music, we feel a profound foreboding; if we do, we know that it portends the immanent vengeance of God on sinners—as the supervisory camera position has already implied. It may also sound another, typically Kubrickian, grace note: the ironic undercutting of a theme too clearly in evidence. The "days of wrath" will not be those of a righteous God but of an insane Dad in an empty resort hotel. Mixed into this gothic tonality is the evocation of Native American chants and percussive rhythms, pointing ahead to the revelation of the Hotel's displacement and pollution of an Indian burial ground. So, two quite different kinds of vengeance are announced.

The interview

Now, suddenly without music, the first scene unfolds under a cloud, as it were. The aftereffect of the *Dies Irae* and the surrealistic Native American chants is hard to define: It is as if they have cast a sonic shadow on the scene. We feel, if we do not

know, that this absence of music amounts to dissimulation or disguise—and the advent of empty speech. As if to stress this feeling, the first scene is announced by a screen card: "The Interview." While it prepares us for the cards to follow, this initial gloss seems odd, on first consideration, because it appears to be so unnecessary. In a film that will leave much unexplained, this kind of gratuitous assistance has an ironic overtone, especially since the interview that follows is so painfully recognizable: the awkwardness, the forced intimacy, the evident dissimulation, the eagerness for contact. The irony derives from how much is overstated and how much is concealed: It is cramped yet busy, cluttered but rigorously symmetrical. The office is lit by the soft glare of a window and two large rectangular fluorescent ceiling lights. While the lighting is clearly visible in the frame, its illumination is less apparent than real. Concealment in *The Shining*, as I have already suggested, has less to do with darkness than the unilluminating nature of light itself.

The exclusively Middle American décor mirrors the attempts at jocularity and instant intimacy: This is a code everyone knows and, besides, who would not want to participate in it? When Jack enters the office and introduces himself, Ullman replies: "Hey, Jaaaaaack," with the same intonation Nick Nightingale uses when he greets his old friend Bill Harford: "How the hell are you buuuuudyyy." The tonalities of interlocutors, whether old friends or strangers, echo one another: The effaced coin of common parlance is exchanged in a kind of silence.

> Jack: Do you mind if I ask why you do that [close the hotel for the winter]? It seems to me that the skiing up here would be fantastic.

Here Jack's attempt to introduce a sense of his own leisure activities, despite the low-level job he is applying for, is answered by Ullman's turning the word "fantastic" around.

> Ullman: . . . the winters can be fantastically cruel, and the basic idea is to . . . to cope with the very costly damage and depreciation which can occur. And this consists mainly of running the boiler, heating different parts of the hotel on a daily rotating basis, repairing damage as it occurs and doing repairs, so that the elements can't get a foothold.

While Jack pretends to rise to the level of a guest at the hotel rather than accepting the fact that he is applying to be its caretaker, Ullman wants to steer the conversation to the threats and dangers—and the duties Jack would have to assume. This is the first pulse of the motive that will direct Jack's desire to take possession of the Overlook.

Despite the "affable" nature of their conversation, the scene works to suggest and conceal a few things. First, Mr Ullman's sexuality here and on Closing Day seems slightly at odds with the Middle Manager ethos he otherwise conveys: His hair style, clothing, and remarks about "Navaho and Apache motifs" in the Overlook sound a mid-seventies' note of gayness which, in turn, suggests more concealed potentials. Second, Bill Watson is a nearly silent and an uncanny element in the scene, as if he were a double, a figure of Jack's own concealed nature. The setting and dialog, then, are carefully established to form a contrasting context for Ullman's revelation. Ullman invokes Bill in a curious way before telling Jack about the murders committed by Grady, a previous caretaker: "Before I turn you over to Bill, there's one other thing I think we should talk about." Once Jack has taken in the news and allayed Ullman's concerns, he is taken away by Bill Watson for his tour of the hotel—and his first experience of its labyrinthine design and his double (Bill).

Cut into Jack's interview are several other interviews back in Boulder at the Torrance apartment: between Danny and Tony, "the little boy who lives in his mouth," between the doctor and Danny, following his vision of the murdered twins at the Overlook and the blood pouring from its elevator doors, and between the doctor and Wendy. These "interviews" put the initial job interview between Jack and Mr Ullman into a context of inquisition and concealment, of a doubling of doubles. The doctor wants to find out how Danny had once dislocated his shoulder, while Wendy does her best to conceal or explain the abuse away. Considered as a whole, then, "The Interview" can be seen as an exploration of the interiority of the Torrance family conducted at the same time in different places.

Kubrick delves into this visionary world through the bathroom mirror into which Danny looks as he questions Tony: Boy and image are both visible at first, but Kubrick moves the camera slowly into the image until the boy disappears and only his double remains. We then see what the reversed "image" is seeing: the closed doors of two elevators in the lobby at the Overlook Hotel. Outer elevator doors, of course, protect people from falling into the elevator shaft, the abyss, as it were, inside the hotel. As such, the doors are images of repression, but they do not serve their purpose: Torrents of blood pour through and, at the end of the vision, engulf the lobby and Tony's vantage point.

The vision is, in this sense, about itself: It dramatizes its own penetration of the abyss. This penetrating vision is amplified by a rising chord from Penderecki's

Awakening of Jacob: The swelling and rising blood is mirrored by the emergence of the *Dream*. Cut into the shot of the twin doors are Grady's twin daughters, holding hands and looking placidly at Tony and the audience from a hotel corridor. An allusion or an homage to "Identical Twins" by Diane Arbus (whom Kubrick knew from his days as a *Look* photographer), the image establishes an objective correlative for the doublings of identity and reality throughout the film. After cutting back to the bloody lobby, Kubrick presents "Danny"—no longer as a mirror image—mouth agape in horror at the vision: Here Kubrick alludes to the stills of David Bowman as he travels through the star-gate in *2001*. Subject and object, viewer and vision are doubled by allusions. Kubrick ends the vision by allowing the blood to swallow up the frame with darkness. After a few seconds, we hear a woman's voice ("Now hold your eye still so I can see") and then see a doctor peering into Danny's eye with a scope—hoping to find a clue to the vision. This opening into the texture of filmic reality takes less than a minute and manages to compress the critical themes and images of the whole film. It is a discrete instance of "shining"—linking image and music—that becomes contagious as the film proceeds and the time frame narrows and deepens. In the end, the film itself seems to have absorbed its inexplicable vision.

The maze

These epistemological complexities assume spatial representation in the hedge maze outside the hotel and the figurative maze of the hotel itself. The film is devoted to vistas of long corridors and turns from one corridor to the next. The mazes represent the complexity of past and present and of the real and the visionary and, in the end, suggest the brain itself with its endless circuitry. The maze or labyrinth, from another point of view, transforms space into time. Ullman warns Wendy: "I wouldn't go in there unless I had an hour to spare to find my way out." When, in the end, Danny leads Jack into the snowy hedge maze and then retraces his steps in the snow by walking backwards, Jack is trapped: The maze acts as a conduit to death and beyond into timelessness—or perhaps less portentously an infinite riddle, an aporia.

If the hotel is a figurative maze, the hedge maze outside is its literal double: the two mirror one another. But there is also the map outside the hedge and the model inside the hotel. Together, then, we have four mazes: the maze itself, a metaphorical maze, the map of a maze, and the model of a maze. Taken all together, this would seem to be a kind of postmodern allegory, in the spirit of Borges and Jean Baudrillard.

Indeed, Thomas Allen Nelson has made of the maze or labyrinth the symbol of Kubrick's "aesthetics of contingency."[2] But Kubrick did not have a fixed epistemological stance: He may have recognized much of what theorists call simulation and contingency but he remained exploratory, a weird combination of theorist and visionary, of existentialist and spiritual seeker. *The Shining* is not an attempt to demonstrate the purely psychological origins of supernatural notions: It is a recognition that we can never finally know, one way or another. The maze is not an allegory, then, but a symbol: a way of approaching matters that cannot finally be known.

The maze scene begins with Jack, his typewriter abandoned, his page blank, playing handball in the Overlook lounge. The typewriter's keys conceal the novel he wants to write, but he is unwilling to throw himself into the maze of letters and words. His game of handball is a perfectly specular activity: He throws and he catches. Meanwhile, Wendy and Danny are running outside toward the maze. They ignore the map and walk inside. As they enter, we hear the Adagio—sometimes called a "night-piece"—from Bartok's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*: It is eerie, tentative, and exploratory, but it will be punctuated by an unexpected spike from the xylophone and later by a powerful crescendo, both seeming to declare decision, recognition, and certainty. The Steadicam tracks them from behind and in front as they casually wander into the labyrinth, chatting happily. They come to a dead end, but instead of being frustrated, they turn back good-naturedly. While Jack is overwrought and nearly at wit's end at the task of writing he has assumed, they have thrown themselves into the abyss without hesitation. Cutting back to the lobby, Kubrick presents a brutal contrast: Jack throws the ball down forcefully, timed to Bartok's crescendo. He then wanders toward the model of the Overlook maze: With a sudden indifference and composure, he looks down into the model and, mysteriously enough, seems to see, from a great height, his wife and son as they reach the center. It is as if he is viewing his family from a divine perspective.

The cut from Jack's point of view as he ponders the model to the subsequent, nearly celestial, perspective of the maze itself cannot be located: Kubrick has abridged the gap between model and reality, Jack's limited point of view and a divine one, which alludes to the opening tracking shot of the Volkswagen as it wends its way through the Rockies. This shift in perspective suggests Jack's megalomania and the origin of his mission of vengeance: He sees his family

from the point of view of the avenging God we are warned of in the opening credits. Leaving Jack behind, the elevated perspective closes in on mother and son as they walk contentedly at the center of the labyrinth. And now Bartok's night-piece rises to its second, percussive crescendo, as the scene and section end with the card for the next time frame: Tuesday.

From a thematic point of view, much is accomplished in this scene: We witness a powerful contrast between the ways that Jack and his family address the maze, the challenges of life, and the labyrinth of the mind. From the point of view of pure cinema, something subtler is accomplished: The juxtaposition of conceptual, simulated, and actual mazes is amplified by the Bartok Adagio, which moves from an errant eeriness to sudden explosions of apparent decisiveness. The music critic Alex Ross describes the effect this way:

> The glistening nocturnal mood of the movement, with its glissandos and trills, is broken by a large, frightening crescendo in which celesta, harp, and piano flit wildly up and down their range while the strings pile on dissonances in four-note groups.[3]

If Wendy and Danny are content to wander happily to the center, Jack's choleric and frustrated moods presage a violent percussion and penetration.

In order to activate and explore the figure of the maze, Kubrick employed Garret Brown and his recently invented Steadicam—a device that allows the cameraman to track his subject with enormous freedom and flexibility—especially the low tracking shots of Danny in the corridors. Brown uses an arresting phrase to describe the Steadicam's function: It can "penetrate space."[4] To "penetrate space" is a way of saying that the camera's eye can see "beyond" the surface of space represented by dolly or fixed shots and discover what lies within and beyond it. It is a way of making the camera shine.

When Danny sees the twins the third time, he has been driving his Big Wheel tricycle through the hotel corridors. In a service wing corridor, the tracking is distant and at the level of the child. We are listening to Penderecki's *De Natura Sonoris I* which, inspired by Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, seems to present a parallel account of the nature of sound to Lucretius's account of nature. As we have seen already, Kubrick's use of contemporary classical music is always in relationship to uncanny or sublime experience. There is, here too, a linkage between atonal music and anomalous experience: As an aspect of Kubrick's cinema, it aurally explores the abyssal, vanishing point that the tracking shot discovers in the dimly lit corridor. When Danny turns right, the camera loses him for a few seconds: If there is a subject element to this tracking, one would say that it is reluctant or discrete, perhaps ambivalent. But it catches up in the next corridor, passing doors and housekeeping carts, now tracking closely and from a higher angle. This must be the staff wing: It prepares us for the vision of the caretaker's twins in their old-fashioned party dresses. When Danny turns left and suddenly stops, the tracking shot, just behind and above his head, discovers the girls standing at the end of the hall, holding hands. Cutting back and forth between the girls and Danny's frightened face, Kubrick gives us a sense of Danny's fearful moment in time and the girls' cold and fixed timelessness.

As they greet him ("Hello, Danny. Come and play with us"), Kubrick splices several still shots of the girls' axed bodies sprawled on floor, the walls smeared with blood. Within his vision, then, Danny sees the girls in timeless and temporal frames. As the visions of the girls alternate, they qualify the nature of their invitation to come and play: "Forever and ever and ever." The chilling image is complemented by their studied and cold upper-class English accents. (We may wonder why they should be English girls. Ullman had told Jack that the caretaker who murdered his daughters was Charles Grady, a "completely normal individual," presumably an American. But Danny knows nothing of this and sees and hears for himself. Ironically enough, however, during Jack's moment of shining in the Gold Room, he is advised by an English waiter, who calls himself Delbert Grady and explains that his daughters are "somewhere about" the hotel. This would suggest that the Overlook's spectral aspect is not fixed, but is seen differently in different instances of shining. It would appear that Danny's vision has somehow influenced Jack's.)

Covering his eyes and then slowly uncovering them, he sees the empty, bloodless hallway. The movement from history into eternity is accomplished through the movement into the maze and the penetration of space. Danny's constant cycling through the Hotel acts, in other words, as a conjuring against the illusion of time as a fixed and linear dimension: Against his own wishes, he is drawn into its horrifying past and its potential repetition in the future. In his fear, Danny may recall Mr Halloran's commentary on shining ("It's just like pictures in a book. It isn't real"), but *The Shining* leaves us with a less conclusive view.

The Gold Room

We see with Jack the Gold Room in three scenes in three different manifestations: (1) disenchanted, when it is being cleaned on Closing Day; (2) enchanted, when Jack conjures the bartender Lloyd after a fight with Wendy; and (3) in

its full glory, during a ball from the twenties, after another fight with Wendy. The ballroom is the *locus amoenus* of the Overlook: It is here that Jack fully realizes his awakened sense of what was once the world of the fathers, the age of patriarchy in its fullest and most confident expression. Here a man can malign his wife to a sympathetic bartender; here his "credit is fine" and his "money's no good." These are the "orders from the house." But this sweet spot can only be entered because Jack's rage has awakened his abilities to shine. Like Danny's vision of the twins, Jack's vision is mediated and promoted by his penetrations of space, his marching through the corridors of the hotel and, correspondingly of his own mind or brain: at the center of the maze is the timeless, the Golden, place.

While Danny rides his Big Wheel into intersections of space and time and of shining, Jack's furious prowling of the hotel's labyrinth provides him with a point of entry. As he turns the corner of the corridor leading to the Gold Room, we enter with him into an atmospheric, yellow or golden light provided by the chandeliers and we hear the violent and disarticulated sounds of Penderecki's *De natura sonoris #2*. As so often in the film, the corridor suggests a vanishing point that prepares us for another collapse of space and time. Yet this imagery and music would hardly suggest that Jack is about to discover solace. Tracking Jack from the front, Kubrick draws him to the entrance, where photographs on a placard announce a seventies-style guitarist: Inside it is a quite different temporality. Once he has entered and flicked the switches, the sconces, table lamps, and bar lights illumine the golden ceiling and transform the room. The bar, with its lit counter and shelves, has a nearly hieratic look, awaiting only the magical invocation of a bartender and an array of liquors. As Jack sits down at the bar, the Penderecki tapers off, and we hear only the sound of wind. Once Jack has made his Faustian bargain for a drink ("My god damn soul, just a glass of beer"), Lloyd the bartender appears—a classical and appropriately hieratic minister and confessor—in formal attire from the twenties.

The time shift is reflected in a shift in Jack's speech: a new-found jocularity expressed as a pastiche of male buddy talk from the old days:

> Jack: That's swell. I like you, Lloyd. I always liked you. You were always the best of them. Best goddamned bartender from Timbuctoo to Portland Maine—Portland Oregon for that matter.

Along with this shift into ironized speech, Jack's expressions and bodily movements become suddenly mannered and motivated by some notion of another self and time, when men speaking to other men behaved with a stylized intimacy and concern, far from the interference of women:

Lloyd:	How are things going, Mr. Torrance?
Jack:	Things could be better, Lloyd. Things could be a whole lot better.
Lloyd:	I hope it's nothing serious.
Jack:	No, nothing serious.
Jack:	Just a little problem with the . . . old sperm bank upstairs.
. . .	
Jack:	Nothing that I can't handle though, Lloyd. Thanks.
Lloyd:	Women! Can't live with 'em. Can't live without 'em!

The scene, in fact, becomes a parody of man talk from the cinema of the forties, as Jack's unconscious mind struggles to find an adequate voice for the alien temporality he has broached. This scene ends, appropriately, when Wendy bursts in—the bartender, the liquor, and the time itself suddenly disappear.

In the third scene, the Gold Room is fully realized, like a film within a film, a parallel cinematic world. After Wendy has argued that they must leave the hotel in order to save Danny, Jack flies into another rage. In the elevator lobby, he sees scattered balloons and hears the faint strains of big band music—Jack Hylton and his Orchestra playing "Masquerade." When he enters the smoky hallway leading to the ballroom, we hear a band playing "Midnight, the Stars and You." He enters and sees that the Gold Room is filled with revelers in twenties' attire. The Maître d' greets him by name. Completely at home as he is in this scene, Jack is attired in a ragged red jacket and jeans. No matter. Jack's return to this moment in time is mediated, not by the violent exertions of Penderecki's *De natura sonoris*, but by Art Bowlly's haunting, romantic phrasing:

> Midnight, with the stars and you;
> Midnight, and a rendezvous.
> Your eyes held a message tender,
> Saying, "I surrender all my love to you."
>
> Midnight brought us sweet romance,
> I know all my whole life through
> I'll be remembering you,
> Whatever else I do,
> Midnight with the stars and you.

The contrast in musical scoring emphasizes the shift from a traumatic breakthrough into time and a sense of nostalgic familiarity and return—not only

to his true home, but also to his true duties. Welcomed back by Lloyd with the formulaic "What'll it be," Jack is soon handed off to his next counselor, the waiter Delbert Grady. As Grady ministers to his soiled jacket in the men's room, Jack is reminded of his deepest memory.

Jack: Mr. Grady, you were the caretaker here. I recognize you. I saw your picture in the newspapers. You, eh . . . chopped your wife and daughters up into little bits, and eh . . . and you blew your brains out.

Grady: That's strange, sir. I don't have any recollection of that at all.

Jack: Mr. Grady, you were the caretaker here.

Grady: I'm sorry to differ with you, sir, but you are the caretaker. You have always been the caretaker, I should know, sir. I've always been here.

Jack soon learns that he must "correct" his wife and son, if he wants to find his way back to the one good place—the Gold Room at the center of the maze.

Death by amazement

We may wonder if Jack's aides and advisors in the temporal creases of the Overlook are urging him to kill his family, to "correct" them for challenging patriarchy or to bring them along with him—like a Pharaoh or Sumerian King who has his court slaughtered—to the next world. Does Jack act as an avenger or a redeemer, a murderer or a sacrificial priest? The point remains, however, that whatever his motives, he fails: He manages his own death by misadventure and, presumably, returns to the timeless phantasmagoria of the Overlook Hotel. All of Danny's frightening moments of shining are not precognitive but retrospective warnings. In the end, Danny becomes the master of the maze, while his father becomes its sacrificial victim.

The concluding scene in the hedge maze reverses the earlier scene and fully exhibits its Oedipal themes. Now Jack is pursuing Danny in the maze and Wendy is searching for him inside the hotel. In the crisp clarity of the first scene, mother and son find their way easily into the center and then out. In the last scene, the maze is filled with snow and lit only by the low glare of lighting tucked into the hedges. In consequence of his improvisations on the Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf, Jack is now howling like a wolf. Limping,—axe in hand, Jack has passed beyond his human character to a mythic archetype of the murderous or castrating father. We realize soon enough that Danny has learned the layout of

the maze the first time with his mother and effectively leads his father into it with the intention of leaving him there to die. Following the idyllic band music of the Gold Room, Jack's murderous, lupine pursuit of his son returns us to the atonal paroxysms of Penderecki, this time from his *Utrenja*. The low tracking shots of Danny and Jack emphasize the boy's perspective and the useless illumination of the hedge and its baffling pattern. Danny moves through it with assurance while Jack pursues him with increasing impatience and frustration.

Kubrick cuts back and forth between the maze and the hotel, contrasting the mother's loving search for her son and the father's homicidal pursuit. But instead of finding her son, she penetrates even deeper into the maze of the Overlook's perverse and criminal past. She sees a man in a pig costume fellating a guest in a dinner jacket and then encounters another party guest, drink in hand, with a split skull, who remarks: "Wonderful party!" She sees the cob-webbed Colorado room with skeletal guests, and finally the blood-emitting elevator that Danny saw in his first vision in the bathroom mirror in Boulder. In these intercut visions of figurative and literal mazes, Kubrick removes every bit of a familial and domestic repression: The family is now facing the abyss of timeless and terrifying mythical archetypes.

Kubrick seems to be playing with a rhyming theme of his crew's tracking shots and tracks of Jack and Danny in the snowy maze. The crew must leave none, Danny must leave his own clearly enough to find his way out, and Jack must try to distinguish between his own tracks and those of his son both to find him and to find his own way out. Tracking and trickery intermingle here. Danny, who has been studying the Roadrunner cartoons on television, turns his trickster's powers on his father, the way the roadrunner does with the coyote. Having penetrated the center of the maze, he steps backward into his footprints in the snow, jumps to the side, brushes the snow, and hides behind the hedge. Amazed by the disappearance of Danny and his tracks, Jack blunders about, dazed and confused, knocking into the hedge walls, howling in pain and frustration. His son follows his own tracks out of the maze and greets his mother with a kiss on her mouth. After they drive away in Halloran's Snow Cat, the camera tracks Jack's errant, pointless movements—and then cuts to a close up in the morning light of Jack's frozen features.

The Shining ends as it begins, with a long tracking shot across the hotel lobby toward a wall, just past a placard for the Gold Room, hung with framed photographs. Throughout the film, we have seen that the walls of the Overlook are hung with dozens of such records of its celebrated history. Now, for the first time, the camera moves purposely toward one photograph in a group of 21,

ending with a close up of a crowd of July 4 revelers from the heady days of 1921. There, front and center, is the chief reveler—Jack Torrance, properly dressed for the occasion, a beatific smile on his face, as if for all time. Given the temporal warping, we can conclude either that Jack has *always* been in the photograph and its "time" or that he has just returned. Is the photograph a "factual" datum or is the audience itself now shining?

The artistic concerns of *The Shining* follow a parallel path, for in a sense any truly ambitious artist is seeking to escape from the banality of linear time into a realm of pure esthesis. If Jack Torrance wants to escape from such terminal existence, first through fiction writing and then through a mythic struggle with his merely generative powers, so Kubrick too wanted not only to make movies but to transcend the ordinary boundaries of what movies are supposed to be. His "obsessive" concerns for perfection and control, which no one would find odd in a poet, a painter, or a composer, manifest a nearly unique concern with what a film could be or mean. In one sense, Kubrick was taking a popular genre novel and turning it into a "blockbuster." In another sense, Kubrick was creating an esthetic realm beyond time, a masterpiece of cinematic poiesis drawn from a work of literary kitsch—elements of which persist, unfortunately, in the final cut.

To speak of this experience simply in terms of *story* or *scenario* ignores the deeper and stranger impact of imagery, music, dialog, and narration as they are woven into subjective experience. Cinematic poiesis seeks to flood the sensorium of its audience and displace its consciousness. The audience has paid money in the fervent hope that this will in fact occur: Each seat in the theater ideally becomes a kind of cinematic monad—a virtual realization of this poiesis. Yet a further complexity follows from the differing ways in which the eyes of the witness wander across the screen, the ears identify or recognize the music, the understanding detects irony or citation in narration or dialog. The ambiguity of cinematic poiesis may be limited or organized by plot and character, but its depth, resonance, and appeal are accomplished by these more ambiguous means that accomplish what Kubrick calls illumination. Kubrick is free to explore the reasons for Jack's escape from time through poiesis or "cinematic thinking"—a kind of meditation that is distributed among the media of film but is never presented in terms of a concept. The basic questions the film asks are these: What is time and how is "shining" related to it? But these questions can only be answered by its poiesis not its plot. The poiesis of *The Shining* haunts the sensorium with its alternate reality, bringing with it a different kind of thinking—as does *2001*, Kubrick's other distinctive affront to interpretation.

11

Transcendence

Homer's *Odyssey* has long inspired poets, artists, and philosophers. Porphyry, the neo-Platonic philosopher, saw in it the archetypal journey of the soul. From its home in the eternal realm, it journeys through the seas of time and space, resisting and then yielding to the lure of matter, but finally returning in triumph to its timeless home. This essential schema, described by Porphyry in "The Cave of the Nymphs," found expression in countless Gnostic forms in the Hellenic period and would be enshrined afterward in Christian metaphysics.[1] Dante, who did not know Homer's poem first-hand, made of Odysseus a figure of the rootless modern: His hero forsakes home because of an unrelenting desire for novelty and experience. In the modern era, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and Stanley Kubrick have taken up this ancient mythos and made it the frame of their greatest works. Joyce's Leopold Bloom is a little man, short on heroism but long on humanity, who journeys through Dublin one day in June without notable accomplishment. Pound's Odyssean persona in *The Cantos* journeys through the centuries and across the earth, witnessing and engaging the rise and decline of civilizations. The temporal scope of Stanley Kubrick's *2001* exceeded all of these: It would dramatize the origin and destiny of human intelligence.

Kubrick's *Odyssey* holds a unique place in the arc of his films: It alone maintains a largely un-ironic vision of the human enterprise. Imagined as a "mythic documentary," it relies on the audience's ability to assimilate and respond intuitively to the play of symbol and sound:

> I tried [Kubrick said in 1968] to create a *visual* experience, one that bypasses verbalized pigeonholing and directly penetrates the subconscious with an emotional and philosophical content . . . I intended the film to be an intensely subjective experience that reaches the viewer at an inner level of consciousness, just as music does . . . You're free to speculate as you wish about the philosophical and allegorical meaning of the film—and such speculation is one indication that it has succeeded in gripping the audience at a deep level.[2]

This esthetic license and trust in the audience are in service to an epic theme, the high point in Kubrick's canon, recalling the mythological and psychological styles and premises of modern humanists such as Joyce and C. G. Jung. Like Joyce, Kubrick would reinvent a perennial myth in modern terms; like Jung, he would rely on the capacity of the unconscious mind to respond to symbols and the conscious mind to turn those responses into a powerful experience, what the film posters called "the ultimate trip."

Kubrick did an enormous amount of research for *2001* in astronautics, anthropology, mythology, and psychology. In putting his story of space travel into a mythic context, he sought, like the modernists, to locate contemporary parallels to Homer's world. This meant transforming the science fiction genre into something quite different:

> It occurred to us that for the Greeks the vast stretches of the sea must have had the same sort of mystery and remoteness that space has for our generation, and that the far-flung islands Homer's wonderful characters visited were no less remote to them than the planets our spacemen will soon be landing on are to us.[3]

Following this premise, Kubrick and Clarke studied Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) in an attempt to open the symbolic material of the scenario to archetypal resonances.[4] Inspired as much by Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* as by Jung's works, Campbell attempted to create a universal and ahistorical grammar for the hero's journey. Setting out from an endangered home into the testing ground of a strange land, the hero endures various tests, overcomes a monstrous opponent—an aspect of his own fears—and thus gains a saving boon with which he returns homeward. One can recognize immediately how Dr David Bowman journeys far from home into a strange space, does battle with a monster, and returns homeward with—and as—a visionary boon. What makes Kubrick's film nearly unique is how it develops this heroic journey in powerfully implicit ways that are remarkably dependent on visual symbols and music. The relative absence of dramatic conventions works to activate archetypal symbols and stir a psychical movement toward a new synthesis of the conscious mind and its unconscious others—space, body, time, and origin. The film is a radical attempt to awaken a sense of human depth, distribution, timelessness, wholeness, and teleology. It was the perfect expression of the year 1968.

Kubrick relied on the numinous power of two images that have come to be universally recognized symbols: the monolith and the astral fetus. In an interview

from 1970, Kubrick indicated that the monolith was "something of a Jungian archetype," that is to say, a universal psychic feature operating in all human beings that contributes to the collective unconscious.[5] These archetypes, Jung believed, are not themselves symbols; they are the universal and timeless psychic "potentials" that symbols can activate. Thus, the appearance of a woman's body to an infant can activate the mother archetype and its potentials are realized in a relationship of dependency and nurture.[6] Anthony Stevens has compared the archetypes to Levi-Strauss's "infrastructures" of human custom and Chomsky's "deep structure" of linguistic competence that directs speech performance. Jung's archetypes are an example of the rationalist tradition in Western thought that holds a largely ahistorical role for innate, collective, and unifying features of "human nature."[7] In linking his symbol with this heritage, Kubrick is suggesting that his film has a universal range of mythic significance.

Without disputing the influence of Freud, there is, nevertheless, a significant and pervasive Jungian element in Kubrick's films, by which I mean a dramatic interest in the emergence of buried or unconscious elements and the consequent attempt by the psyche to reconcile them to consciousness. Where Freud treated the expressions of the unconscious with a highly influential "hermeneutics of suspicion," Jung maintained that they offered the conscious mind the necessary elements for psychic wholeness. Crucial to this individuation, as Jung understands it, is the emergence of the psychic double, a manifestation of the conflict between the ideals of consciousness and the instincts of the unconscious. Among these polar features of identity, Jung argues, are the persona and the shadow. The persona is a mask that reflects an acceptance of social roles and functions; the shadow is the unseemly, obscene, or violent aspect of identity that is repressed and projected onto others. Each "compensates" for the partiality of the other and points to the need for either repression or individuation, the former acting simply to disguise the problem, the latter being the aim of Jungian analysis: the reconciliation of the conscious and the unconscious minds and the emergence of psychic wholeness.[8]

Kubrick's films provide an objective correlative for this psychological dynamic. We see versions of profound insight as well profound derangement—the emergence of the shadow—in the features of contorted faces: General Jack Ripper in *Dr. Strangelove* chomping his cigar and explaining his vision of the communist conspiracy; Private Pyle's lunatic expression as he prepares to kill Sergeant Hartman and himself in *Full Metal Jacket*; Jack Torrance's distorted and frozen expressions in *The Shining*; Dr Harford's twisted expressions as he broods

on his wife's sexual fantasies in *Eyes Wide Shut*. We also see actual masks: Johnny Clay donning his clown mask during the heist in *The Killing*; Alex wearing his "Pinocchio" mask during his assault on the writer's wife in *A Clockwork Orange*; the gorgeous and sinister carnival masks in *Eyes Wide Shut*.

According to James Naremore, these faces and masks are examples of an "aesthetics of the grotesque" that emerges with an unsettling realization of the unseemly, frightening, and absurd fact of embodiment, corporeality, violence, and libido.[9] For Naremore, the grotesque finds expression in complex masks, artificial and natural, fearful and ludicrous, that lead to an affective aporia. The viewer does not know whether to laugh or scream and is paralyzed by a nameless feeling between empathy and disgust.

In a Jungian context, the grotesque can be considered another way of describing the overdetermined affect that emerges when the shadow emerges from the persona, when the pretensions of human dignity yield to the facts of human bestiality. The masks, both literal and figurative, are, in effect, internal, instinctual masks that supplant the external and performed masks of social adaptation. Gnostic or paranoid certainty, redemptive vision or patriarchal rage—all are detached from social constructions of time, space, and the self, tapping into an older "self." We see this dynamic in the last panel of *2001*, "Beyond the Infinite," when Bowman's carefully maintained mask of professional detachment makes way for masks of terror and illumination. As he journeys through the star-gate, we see Bowman's professional face collapse into open-mouthed horror and bliss as he discovers the shadow-side of "reality" itself.

The Jungian thing

Aspects of Jung's archetypal vision and the theme of the double of the persona and the shadow are evident in Kubrick's very first film, *Fear and Desire*. In a letter from 1952 to his distributor Joseph Burstyn, Kubrick writes:

> Its structure: allegorical. Its conception: poetic. A drama of "man" lost in a hostile world—deprived of material and spiritual foundations—seeking his way to an understanding of himself . . . He is further imperiled on his Odyssey by an unseen but deadly enemy that surrounds him; but an enemy who, upon scrutiny, seems to be almost shaped from the same mold.[10]

The individual characters are representative of human types who must fathom the shadow aspect that emerges most radically during times of war. Their

"odyssey," then, consists of going from the world of civilized performance to the world of "the enemy" and then returning. While "behind enemy lines," the fundamental emotions of fear and desire are aroused and threaten their personae, but they also provide access to the shadow side.

Thrown behind enemy line into the mythic realm of tests and prodigies, Corby and Fletcher have discovered their shadows in the faces of the enemy. They escape by plane back to their own side, leaving Mac and Sidney behind. Later, as they await their comrades at the river, Corby says that they have "traveled too far from [their] own private boundaries" to be certain of anything anymore. Fletcher tells Corby that he wishes that he could still want what he wanted before. While the two men come to some insight about the meaning of their experiences, they see the raft floating toward them: Mac appears to be dead and Sidney is on all fours, apparently mad.

In another war film, *Full Metal Jacket*, Kubrick explicitly explores the universalizing aspect of Jungian thought while squarely establishing a historical setting in the Vietnam War between 1967 and 1968. The recruits in boot camp lose their personae and their names and assume archetypal identities: Private Joker, Private Cowboy, Private Gomer Pyle, and so forth. Gustav Hasford, Michael Herr, and Kubrick transform the generic "boot camp to battlefield" war film into an exploration of what Private Joker calls "The duality of man, the Jungian thing." Joker is the narrator and focus of the film's exploration of the conflict between empathic and violent impulses in ordinary men who have been conditioned by violence and shame. A journalist and a soldier, Joker is an exaggerated version of Corby, a man both in and out of his social role, serious and unserious, an example of the Jungian trickster who constantly interferes with social decorum. Thus, he can do a mocking impression of John Wayne (the star of *The Green Berets*, a propaganda film on behalf of the US mission) and also produce, on the command of Sergeant Hartman, a horrifying "war face," filled with rage and commitment. Likewise, Private Pyle undergoes a transformation from sad sack to top marksman, from infantile bungler to graduated killer. As he prepares to kill Hartman and himself, his ordinarily goofy expression is eclipsed by a mugging look of grotesque joy, both ludicrous and terrifying. Joker comes fully to understand this duplicity: In South Vietnam, he wears a peace button on his body armor and the scrawled confession, "Born to Kill" on his helmet. Joker offers his thesis about the "duality of man" to an uncomprehending Colonel who responds with the cliché, "How about getting with the program?" Protocol requires that Joker bury his self-knowledge of the "Jungian thing" and assume the appropriate "persona," the public mask of the United States Marine Corps.

Michel Ciment has said that "the anima-animus, the 'Jungian shadow,' is totally integrated into [*Full Metal Jacket* and] made concrete."[11] Where the unification of the shadow with the persona may prevent violent projections onto others, the recognition by the male of his own *anima* can likewise prevent destructive projections onto females. According to Jung, the *anima* or feminine component of masculinity, like the shadow, is an unrecognized but necessary component of male psychic wholeness that must be evoked and accepted for individuation to occur. In the last scenes of the film, Joker accepts the task of "wasting" a wounded, female, Viet Cong sniper who has decimated his platoon. Although she wants to be put out of her misery, Joker's motives for acceding to her request are complex. Like Sidney in *Fear and Desire*, Joker's gallantry is the flip side of his barbarism: Killing her will reconstitute him in the eyes of the other Marines. Susan White has analyzed the "violent rejection of the female" in *Full Metal Jacket*, while stipulating that the sniper is a complex figure that is not separable from male Marine identity.[12] She represents the warrior ideal, but she also recalls the feminine aspect the men were shamed into rejecting during basic training. In a sense, then, Joker meets his double (as Corby did) and kills her, the female (or *anima*) aspect that his training has failed to eliminate. Having finally gotten with the program and banished his "ambivalence," Joker concludes his narrative by claiming: "I'm in a world of shit . . . yes. But I am alive. And I am not afraid."

Although Freudian elements may predominate, Jungian themes are also apparent in *The Shining*: The Overlook Hotel is in effect a metaphor of the collective unconscious. (Jung tells of a dream he had in 1912 of a house whose stairs took him from his own story down through previous centuries and finally "into the depths."[13]) Unable to write his novel, Jack Torrance descends into his unconscious and instinctual abysses, living out a real fiction of a haunted hotel and a mad caretaker. Through the influences of his psychic son Danny and the Hotel's active history, Jack's conscious identity is gradually eclipsed by another Jack, a kind of archetypal caretaker and resident in the Hotel.

A powerful and concise postulate, the "Jungian thing" also motivates *Eyes Wide Shut*, a film very much about the shadow side of marital and professional personae. Bill's night journey is a compressed and domesticated urban Odyssey that takes him from the illusory safeties of home through a series of dangerous tests and back. The day after, Bill repeats his Odyssey by the light of day and rationality, learning of all the dangers he escaped. He is, as a tabloid headline claims, "Lucky to be Alive." The "duality of man" is thus neatly outlined, each

from the contrasting point of the other. By the end of the film, "New York City" resembles a collective fiction behind which operates another city of inexhaustible erotic and violent potentials. When in the late scene in the billiard room, Victor Ziegler explains away Bill's romantic fantasies and tells him that he is "way out of [his] depth," a slow transformation occurs. Bill's chipper and smiling superficiality—his Tom Cruise face—is replaced by a twisted, petrified expression of frustration, rage, and shame.

In powerful contrast to the films just analyzed, *2001* comes close to being an explicitly successful individuation, a reconciliation and integration of the ego with its shadowy double, the cosmos itself. Jungian thought not only influenced its making but also provided a revealing way of interpreting it.

John Izod has argued that Jungian film criticism, in contrast to Freudian and Lacanian approaches, provides a more subtle means of appreciating the "fascination" of films that are "symbolic" rather than "symptomatic" in nature.[14] Freudian and Lacanian criticism, he claims, tends to place a nearly clerical barrier between the analytical mind of the critic and the richly various film experience of the "laity."[15] Freudian and Lacanian criticism seeks to discover and establish a traumatic symptomology, whether personal, cultural, or both, while Jungian analysis regards expressions of the unconscious as potentially leading to the harmonization of the psyche. Izod reads Kubrick's *Odyssey* in the context of Jung's book on UFOs and his late work on alchemy, which for Jung was a precursor, like Gnosticism, of his analytical psychology. He uses the latter work as a means of interpreting the transformative aspect of the monolith and the chromatic metamorphoses of Bowman's eye during his journey through the star-gate.[16] For Izod, the film is finally about the "encounter with the self" and the realization of the "God within."[17]

In fact, the film's relationship to Jung may be even closer than I have yet claimed. In his widely read memoir, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961), Jung relates two visions he had (as the result of a near-death experience in 1944) that seem to foreshadow Kubrick's central symbols in his *Odyssey*:

> It seemed to me that I was high in space. Far below I saw the globe of the earth, bathed in a gloriously blue light . . . Something new entered my field of vision. A short distance away I saw in space a tremendously dark block of stone, like a meteorite. It was about the size of my house, or even bigger. It was floating in space, and I myself was floating in space.
>
> Then I would come to myself and lie awake for about an hour, but in an utterly transformed state. It was as if I were in ecstasy. I felt as though I were floating in