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# Between two gazes: Kubrick's alienating aesthetic

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Between Two Gazes:  
Kubrick's Alienating Aesthetic

By  
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
of the degree of

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at

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*greet me with banners and balloons,  
and my hard drive smashed to pieces.*

*Nothing left for me to save,  
when I write my master's thesis.*

—John K. Samson<sup>1</sup>

For Mom, Dad, Cody, and Meagan, who never fully understood what I was writing about or why, but wholeheartedly supported my endeavor anyways.

And for Vovó and Vovô. Thunder Bay was a good choice. Thanks for all the opportunities you gave us and for your continuing inspiration.

---

<sup>1</sup> John K. Samson, “When I Write My Master’s Thesis,” *Lyrics and Poems: 1997-2012* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2012), 99.

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## Introduction

In his explanation of *2001: A Space Odyssey*'s concluding "Stargate" sequence, Stanley Kubrick privileges its psychological and affective aspects, stating that "[the concluding sequence's] meaning has to be found on a sort of psychological level rather than in a specific literal interpretation" (qtd. in Grant 81-82). Expanded beyond this film and into Kubrick's corpus altogether, his films largely display an emphasis on the psychological impacts they have over spectators. More specifically, Kubrick's films have been described as cold cinematic texts that resist emotional engagement (Kolker, "Rage for Order" 60; Freer 114). Consider *2001*'s Stargate sequence—in which a series of chromatic images appear onscreen at random with no obvious narrative purpose or explanation—as exemplary of the emotional estrangement underlying Kubrick's films. Conventional narrative cinema provides clear-cut narratives that allow *méconnaissance* (or misrecognition) to occur in the cinema, during which spectators immerse themselves into the film's narrative verisimilitude; but Kubrick's films resist this by thwarting such expectations—as is evident in the convoluted Stargate sequence—to create an alienating aesthetic unique to the Kubrickian corpus. Psychologically, Kubrick's cinema alienates spectators from identifying with his narratives, which consequently thwarts emotional identification from spectators. In order to theorize this trend from a psychoanalytical perspective, I explore the convergence of two conflicting Lacanian film theories—an earlier version which resists *méconnaissance* and the latter version which alternatively requests that theorists use misrecognition to observe moments when their immersion is disrupted—occurring throughout Kubrick's films. There is a marked discordance between conventional narrative structures and Kubrick's deconstruction of them, one which shall be explored in this thesis to illustrate the various ways in which Kubrick's alienating aesthetic is manifested, particularly in *A Clockwork Orange*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Examples of this discordance occur in numerous scenes throughout Kubrick's corpus.

For instance, James Naremore uses the opening sequence in *Full Metal Jacket* to demonstrate how repulsive sound-images are used to incite laughter. In particular, “shit” is a term often used by Sargent Hartman (R. Lee Emery) in his first meeting with the Marine Corp’s troops in training. Hartman first refers to the trainees as “pieces of shit” and insults a particular trainee, Cowboy (Arliss Howard), stating: “I didn’t know they stacked shit that high... It looks to me like the best part of you ran down the crack of your mama’s ass and ended up as a brown stain on the mattress.” This image’s repulsiveness is narrated by Hartman with such comical certainty and intensity that his insults generate laughter and disgust simultaneously (12). In turn, Hartman’s intentions remain uncertain. Is he a caricature of the conventional drill sergeant depicted in war films? Or is he meant to be taken seriously? Whatever the case, the sequence aims to maintain a “convincing picture of military life while at the same time making us cringe and laugh uncontrollably, feeling uncertain about the film’s ultimate purpose” (13). What Naremore describes here is an alienating experience for spectators as they are left to contemplate Hartman’s character and ultimately distance themselves from misrecognition with the film.

*Full Metal Jacket*’s opening sequence highlights a simultaneous immersion and distancing that exemplifies Kubrick’s alienating aesthetic through destabilizing audience expectations. In the case of *Full Metal Jacket*’s opening sequence, Kubrick plays with the spectator’s preconceptions regarding the conventional drill sergeant as a strict disciplinarian. Naremore indicates that films like Richard Brooks’ *Take the High Ground* (1953) include the clichéd drill sergeant who is intense as well as emotionally and physically harassing. In such films, spectators identify these conventions and easily immerse themselves into the text as the director has given a clear indication of the character’s purpose without any need for spectators to interpret the drill sergeant’s intentions (12). In contrast, Hartman’s uncertain position as comedian or disciplinarian estranges spectators to the point that narrative verisimilitude is subverted and spectators disengage from narrative immersion to contemplate his character. The

scene illustrates a gaze of its own, one aimed at audiences for the purpose of destabilizing their expectations and reminding them that they are in the midst of a screening. Whereas the conventional narrative cinematic experience causes spectators to misrecognize themselves in the text, Kubrick's films resist misrecognition by returning the gaze to the audience through subversive film sequences. Kubrick's ability to subvert misrecognition demonstrates a two-way affective discourse that relies on the audience's ability to recognize out-of-place elements, such as Hartman's uncertain characterization.

Affect theory illustrates how Kubrick's films are two-sided affective experiences that rely on the spectators' expectations that they can misrecognize themselves in films, and his films' unsettling sounds and images that disallow misrecognition in order to produce his alienating style. To best understand this duality, two Lacanian film theories will be examined to illustrate how these conflicting approaches build on spectatorial assumptions and then alienate them from a full immersion in Kubrick's films. The first approach, exemplified by theorists like Christian Metz and Laura Mulvey, is the first generation Lacanian film theorists' belief that critics should resist misrecognition in order to identify the discourse being interpellated by spectators; the second, exemplified by Joan Copjec and Slavoj Žižek, is the second generation's belief that critics should immerse themselves in order to identify unusual moments which rupture misrecognition. Whereas first generation Lacanian film theory focuses on the spectator's misrecognition and gaze, second generation theorists conversely focus on how images contain the gaze and return it to spectators. Incorporating both Lacanian readings leads to an examination of how these conflicting gazes converge in Kubrick's cinema and mark the absence of a single, controlling gaze emanating from either the subject or object; instead, the two gazes build on each other's affects. I call the convergence of these gazes the Kubrickian gaze, which is reciprocally deployed between spectator-subject and filmic-object. The Kubrickian gaze is best illustrated in *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) as it uses Brechtian performances that continually remind audiences



they are spectating, *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999) because of its unreliable male subject, Bill Hartford (Tom Cruise), who acts as an object and subject throughout the film; and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) because of its cyborg figures', the monoliths and HAL, ability to immerse and alienate spectators by their ambiguous, yet intriguing, phenomenologies.

Before delving into a chapter breakdown concerning these films and their distinct alienating characteristics, this introduction contextualizes the theoretical framework which underlies Kubrick's alienating aesthetic. I provide an explication of the two Lacanian film theories with a particular focus on their conflicting notions of the gaze from theorists such as Copjec, Metz, and Žižek. After illustrating that both theories converge and illustrate a two-way dialogue between each gaze, I explain affect theory as defined by Sara Ahmed, Ben Highmore, as well as Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg to illustrate the tension resulting from the spectators' inability misrecognize themselves in Kubrick's films. Before all of this, however, I begin with a succinct and general survey of the criticisms which have, in different ways, illustrated Kubrick's alienating style, whether through Kubrick's perfectionist mise-en-scene as Robert Kolker suggests (59), or the dissonance between Kubrick's violent images and use of classical music in films like *A Clockwork Orange* (Höyng 163).

To define Kubrick's cinematic style is a complex and nuanced undertaking, but as a point of departure, Ian Freer identifies the generic "Kubrickian" style as follows: it "delivers a cool, intellectual thrill to the most human and emotional subject matter" (114). Numerous critics provide interpretations for Kubrick's alienating style. For instance, Robert Kolker contextualizes Kubrick's corpus in relation to his eccentric and private lifestyle, which is evidenced in his neatly crafted, "boxed-in" shots that often position humans "as minor participants within a larger visual spectacle" ("Rage for Order" 59). Kolker also argues that Kubrick uses numerous takes in order to "break down his actors' resistance and bring them to the appropriate pitch where they [are] no longer themselves, no longer characters, no longer acting,

but instead a conduit for what [he, as] director, [wants] to see performed onscreen” (56). In other words, Kubrick’s shots aim to combine signifiers in order to produce a certain affect over the audience, much like T. S. Eliot’s concept of the objective correlative, which is a "set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula for that particular emotion" (56).

Consider, for instance, Shelly Duvall’s acting style in *The Shining*’s (1980) bathroom scene in which Jack Torrance (Jack Nicholson) viscosly axes his way through the bathroom door while Duvall’s character, Wendy, screams in horror. Wendy’s hysterical state results from a copious amount of takes Kubrick obsessively made Duvall shoot, all while antagonizing her for her ostensibly lacklustre attempts. Here, Kubrick was meticulous in his need for the perfect shot, for the perfect emotion to be conveyed for the scene’s overall emotional effect (57). Thus, this criticism focuses primarily on the semiotics of Kubrick’s mise-en-scene, how the “cold” onscreen images correlate with the director’s personality, and how these images affect spectators.

Kubrick’s cold style cannot be limited to a semiological analysis of Kubrick’s mise-en-scene, since he often integrates these images alongside conflicting sounds. Focusing on Kubrick’s use of music, Peter Höyng argues that films like *A Clockwork Orange* use exalted symphonic musical scores to contradict the film’s violent subject-matter. *A Clockwork Orange* depicts its protagonist, Alex (Malcolm McDowell), as a youth obsessed with and inspired by Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*, which is considered uplifting because of its jovial movements like “Ode to Joy.” However, Alex is depicted as an aggressive character whose violent acts are at odds with his musical taste (Höyng 163). A similar example of this can be found in *Dr. Strangelove*’s (1964) concluding sequence, in which nuclear bombs are deployed in various locales to the sounds of Vera Lynn’s Second World War track “We’ll Meet Again.” While Lynn’s eponymous lyrics optimistically allude to the possibility of soldiers returning home, the film’s contemporaneous images of destruction unsettlingly suggest otherwise. This compelling montage of destruction evokes dread while the track’s soothing lyrics simultaneously and

meagrely evoke optimism to produce two discordant emotions. These dissonances between music and images are quite jarring in films like *A Clockwork Orange* and *Dr. Strangelove* as they work to estrange the audience by evoking conflicting emotions that work to alienate spectators from their immersion in the narrative.

Kubrick's cinematic estrangement is further evident in analyses of Kubrick's subject matter and audience expectations. For instance, Tom Kreider notes that Kubrick's critics expected his last film, *Eye's Wide Shut*, to be a highly sexualized account of Bill (Tom Cruise) and Alice Hartford's (Nicole Kidman) marital and extramarital affairs. However, what ensued was a film that "flouted genre expectations" and left critics feeling alienated from their presumptions of the film (41). Instead, the film focuses its attention on Bill's anxieties regarding his wife's emotional infidelity after she confesses her strong infatuation for a young naval officer during one of their earlier vacations. This leads him to wander New York City and enter into several potential sexual encounters like the masquerade orgy. Once again, this extrapolation posits a dissonance between audience expectations and how Kubrick's films ignore these expectations. Instead, contrary to audience expectations, Cruise and Kidman's sexual roles are minimal and Cruise's character only passively observes sexual acts without actually partaking in them. Thus, what links each of these assessments is the acknowledgement that Kubrick's cinematic style destabilizes the emotional conventions that audiences typically experience in the cinema. As previously stated, the generic Kubrickian style is defined as "cool and intellectual," but the intricacies of this style are manifested through the affective gap between audience expectations and what Kubrick presents onscreen. This affective gap is best understood through Lacanian film theory.

First generation Lacanian theorists, such as Metz and Mulvey, argue that films shape the audience's subjectivity by duping spectators into believing they have a controlling gaze over their images. Thus, this illusion allows spectators to interpellate certain ideologies more easily

(McGowan 4). Conversely, second generation Lacanian film theorists, such as Todd McGowan, Žižek, and Copjec, candidly utilize Lacan's definition of the gaze as "something [which] slips, passes, is transmitted, from stage to stage and is to some degree always eluded in it" (Lacan *Four* 73). In other words, the gaze exists outside of the subject and is embodied in images within the Symbolic Order, including cinema. This gaze is experienced when the film reveals that "we are literally called into the picture, and [are] represented here as caught" (92). McGowan argues that this gaze prompts an encounter with the real, since it forces spectators out of their subconscious, uncritical state and into a realization of their subjectivity as audience members (16). While early Lacanian film theorists argue that critics should remain critical and distant from cinematic immersion, McGowan asks that critics immerse themselves in films in order to identify moments when the gaze ruptures their immersion (15). Although many of Kubrick's films precede the split between early and later Lacanian film theorists, his films lend themselves to analyses from both camps. The conventional narrative film seeks to immerse the audience; however, while Kubrick's films are narratives, various critics, such as Robert Kolker and James Naremore, insist that they seek to emotionally alienate the audience from the story. Understood this way, the Kubrickian narrative appears purposely deceptive, a device utilized only to draw spectators in while simultaneously distancing them through deployments of the gaze. Consequently, the Kubrickian gaze reveals a point of rupture between the cinematic immersion rebuked by first generation Lacanian theorists and endorsed by the second generation, and serves as a traumatic encounter with the Real that further alienates his audience.

Lacan describes the mirror stage as a process of identification, when the child first sees its image reflected and subsequently has a controlling gaze over that image. For the first time the child sees itself as an image outside of itself, as an accumulation of numerous body parts that form a whole image (Lacan "The Mirror Stage" 76). The child feels masterful over its image and this false sense of unity continues throughout its life. In Lacanian terms, this sense of unity is

known as the “Imaginary Order” and it is what provides an “illusion of completeness in both ourselves and in what we perceive” (McGowan 2-3). What, in fact, subverts this illusory completeness is our place in what Lacan labels the “Symbolic Order”—the actual world in which we reside, which is split and divided by various signifiers that deny the possibility of completeness. Regardless of the Symbolic Order’s inherent splitting, we falsely identify with our mirrored image that only deceptively appears whole in a process Lacan identifies as “méconnaissance.” The very words we use are part of a larger symbolic structure which seeks to categorize everything as separate objects from ourselves to which cinema is a complex signifier that—although symbolic—creates the illusion of mastery and unity while being viewed.

Extending this theory into the cinematic experience, first generation Lacanian theorists like Metz claim that narrative cinema surrogates the Mirror Stage experience. Metz applies Lacan’s “Mirror Phase” to notions of immersion and misrecognition in the cinema. According to him, films are exhibitionist because they are knowingly created to be viewed by audiences and have them immersed into the film. At the same time, however, films resist exhibitionism through narrative, as it is through story that the film attempts to withhold the discursive reality that occurs during a screening. In other words, the fact that these cinematic fictions are spatially and temporally distanced from the audience is overlooked because narrative overshadows the ongoing reality in the cinema (93-94). Metz states that cinematic misrecognition is like, and yet unlike, Lacan’s mirror stage because “[the spectator’s] own image does not appear on the screen; the primary identification is no longer constructed around a subject-object, but around a pure, all seeing and invisible subject, the vanishing point of the monocular perspective which cinema has taken over from painting” (97). Metz notes that while not all films are good, all spectators go to the cinema with the hopes of immersing themselves in a film; thus, the structure of cinematic spectatorship is seen as good, regardless of the fact that many films are not (6-7). According to Metz, ideology is inherently transmitted between the screen to the spectator and film critics

should endeavor to determine how films psychologically shape audiences in similar ways. He claims that critics must remain distanced from immersion and keep themselves situated in the Symbolic Order to pinpoint the discourse of a film (14-15). Using this approach, Mulvey is one such critic who identifies an underlying patriarchal ideology in narrative cinema as she posits that women on screen are passive characters who entertain the male gaze through their to-be-looked-at-ness (436).

By Metz's logic, there is a discursive element to narrative films, since their production is still largely guided by socio-economic realities. For instance, Hollywood produces films under a capitalist framework which rely on good, approachable stories to reproduce ticket sales in the future (7-9). Even Kubrick, a director notorious for rebelling against censorship after *A Clockwork Orange* was given an X-rating in Britain for the excessive violence he refused to dilute, fell victim to Hollywood's emphasis for profit over artistry (Staiger 38). Following his death in 1999, his final film, *Eyes Wide Shut*, was edited posthumously with computer generated images to cover up scenes of sexual intercourse during the masquerade sequence. The scenes were deemed too risqué for an R rating, and so cloaked men were artificially placed over images of penetrative sex to avoid the NC 17 rating that would limit the film's audience and hurt its profitability. In his review of the film, Roger Ebert argued that the censorship was unnecessary since the film was already unapologetically adult in its themes and subject matter (pars 10-11). Profitability overshadows Kubrick's own vision of the film and alters what he, as director, originally wanted the audience to gaze upon. In some ways, the Kubrickian gaze is subverted by this editing, since penetrative sex—an inclusion which would have further stained the image—is excluded to naturalize immersion by following conventional censorship. This instance indicates that Kubrick's films, although often progressive in their subject matter, are often guided by ideologies which seek to immerse as many spectators as possible without the risk of distancing them through overtly explicit sexual images. Such a notion aligns with the early Lacanian

theorists' belief that distancing oneself from immersion allows subjects to identify these underlying ideologies and how they govern misrecognition in narrative cinema.

Conversely, second generation theorists reject the notion that the gaze exists in the subject, since early Lacanian film theories overemphasize the subject's mastery over the film's images (McGowan 11). For Joan Copjec, for instance, early Lacanian film theory overtly adopts facets of Foucault's panopticism, since it focuses on how spectators master images that are filmed for the sake of being looked at (54). Copjec argues that "film theory performed a kind of 'Foucauldization' of Lacanian theory," since it focuses on understanding power relations between the spectator's gaze and the film being watched (56). Copjec explains that Lacan has reconceptualised the gaze since writing "The Mirror Stage;" rather than acting as a means of scopophilic control and identification, the gaze exists beyond the screen of representation. Spectators falsely believe that there is a reality beyond the screen, which allows them to misrecognize themselves in the text, but it is through the gaze that this illusion becomes evident to the spectator (68). Copjec's discovery that early Lacanian film theory was overtly Foucauldian seems to bastardize its pragmatism for second generation theorists; yet, the theory serves a valuable purpose in film studies, especially when considering Kubrick's films, as it suggests a tension—or interaction—between the audience and the cinematic screen. A combination of Lacanian and Foucauldian ideas does not make the theory obsolete; instead, an intersection of these conflicting approaches is the underpinning of Kubrick's alienating style.

From a similar perspective to Copjec's, Žižek applies Lacan's notion of the gaze-as-stain to illustrate how images can disorient spectators and implicate them into the film by reminding them of their position as voyeurs. Žižek, in his discussion of Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights* (1931), describes the Lacanian gaze as follows: it is a "point [in the film] where 'I see nothing', a

point which ‘makes no sense’, i.e., which functions as the picture’s stain—this is the point from which the very picture returns the gaze, looks back at me” (18). Žižek understands the stain as “spoiling” the image, as it works to disturb the audience’s immersion by forcing them to identify the image’s message (10). In Kubrick’s films, stains are implicitly identified in many of the aforementioned criticisms about his various dissonances. Take, for instance, *Full Metal Jacket*’s concluding scene as an example; the scene depicts a platoon of soldiers walking through Vietnam’s devastated landscape. By chanting the “Mickey Mouse March,” there is a marked discord between the brutality of the surroundings and the diegetic score which accompanies the images. To an extent, the chant spoils the scene, not in the sense that the scene’s quality is ruined by its inclusion, but with regards to its affective displacement. Up to this point, the film is an unrelenting criticism of war and its dehumanizing effects on the human condition (chiefly evidenced in the harsh training camp which seeks to condition Private Pyle for war, but inversely develops his insanity and eventual suicide). Thus, the concluding scene situates the Disney song in an oddly appropriate context. Whereas the song signifies infantile amusement, the soldiers’ march signifies something much more brutal. The “Mickey Mouse March” acts as a stain which ruptures the scene and consequently depicts two realities: the brutality of war, and the soldiers’ apparent disregard of their brutality. This scene calls the audience into the picture, alienates them from cinematic immersion, and accentuates the film’s thematic message because of the discord between what they see and what they hear from the film’s militaristic characters.

My explication of these two distinct, yet related, Lacanian film theories serves to ground my discussion concerning Kubrick’s alienating style from a psychoanalytical perspective. The reason I discuss both in detail is because Kubrick’s style incorporates facets of both theories and it is their intersection which ultimately constitutes the Kubrickian gaze and his “cool,



intellectual” style. In his explanation of cool, alienating cinematic moments, McGowan states that the gaze is the moment in a film where the spectator has a traumatic encounter with the real. This traumatic encounter occurs when ideologies in the Symbolic Order intersect and ultimately reveal an absence; the encounter serves as a point where certain ideologies reveal themselves as constructions with no essentialist origin (16). Thus, the ideological conflict underlying Kubrick’s films is the very split between Lacanian film theory and its competing conceptions of cinematic immersion. To better immerse spectators, Kubrick’s films were all produced under the Hollywood system and they include narratives, and may seem to abide to Metz’s model of conventional capitalist cinema (8-9). However, critics like Höyng, Naremore, and Kreider point out that there are characteristics to his films that emotionally alienate the audience, whether it is through audio-visual dissonance, grotesque semiotics, or disparities between the film’s subject matter and theme. Kubrick’s narrative structures deceptively invite spectators to immerse themselves in his films, yet incorporates stains which distance the audience from misrecognition. It is as though narrative is there only to deceive. Thus, the stains in Kubrick’s films keep audiences at bay, presenting his films as alienating experiences rather than as narrative escapism. This assertion may seem to overtly support McGowan’s idea that the gaze exists in the film and is used to call spectators into the image; however, the Kubrickian gaze is used to remind spectators of their emotional distance.

As an example of the Kubrickian gaze, consider Kubrick’s 1962 adaptation of Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita* and how it complicates narrative conventions and the scopophilic desires as conceptualized by Mulvey. Because of the scandalous novel, most contemporary spectators would have been aware of the narrative’s unconventional relationship between the middle-aged man, Humber Humbert (James Mason), and the teenager, Lolita (Sue Lyon). Kubrick maintains

the conventions of active-male/passive-female spectatorship while simultaneously using Lolita's age as a stain. The film depicts Humbert's search for a place of residence before beginning his professorship at Beardsley College. Charlotte Haze (Shelley Winters) offers to rent a room in her household, which Humbert refuses, until he meets Lolita. The problem is that Humbert is a middle-aged man and Lolita is Charlotte's teenage daughter. Humbert thus accepts the room in order to remain in Lolita's company and to hopefully arouse her affections towards him. Eventually, Lolita professes her love to Humbert and they decide to live together, overcoming various obstacles in their relationship along the way. This succinct summary illustrates a fairly basic romantic plot that is conventional to narrative cinema. As unconventional as their age gap is, Humbert remains as the conventionally active male subject with whom spectators identify. Kubrick also presents Lolita as the sexualized object to be looked at. Lolita is introduced to the audience in her bikini while sunbathing on the lawn; her entire body is exposed for Humbert's and the (male) spectator's scopophilic pleasure. Mulvey argues that such voyeuristic images are conventional to cinema by asserting that women "play to and signify male desire" (436), but Kubrick complicates this through the film's controversial subject matter. Yet, this stain is not solely a fictional construct; at the time of *Lolita*'s 1962 release, Sue Lyon was a sixteen year old actress, which adds to the stain's authenticity as her transgressive exhibitionism is avowed by her real-life age. There is an underlying tension between the audience's desire to immerse themselves in the romantic narrative and gaze upon Lolita's beauty without consequence, but Kubrick's film stares back through the inclusion of a stain which takes the form of an underage exhibitionist.

In order to conceptualize the Kubrickian gaze's reciprocity, affect theory provides a valuable means of addressing the relationship between the audience and how they contribute

to their own viewing experience. Ben Highmore states that the study of aesthetics is often conflated with art theory but is actually “concerned with material experiences, with the way the sensual world greets the sensate body, and the affective forces that are generated in such meetings” (121). Artworks, including films, have thus become exemplary to affect studies, even though aesthetics does not often acknowledge its wider endeavor to comprehend the more mundane affects in our day-to-day lives (122). For Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, “affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness: in the capacities to act and be acted upon” (1). This statement is immediately applicable to cinema’s socioeconomic structure. As Metz argues, spectators go to the cinema to immerse themselves in a story and misrecognize themselves in the film’s ostensible reality. In order to reproduce this affect, and the profits that accompany it, filmmakers and studios strive to produce films which conceal its discursive procedures (8-9). Ideally, these films should contain stories which create the illusion that the film is a fictional reality that the spectators can misrecognize themselves in. Thus, audiences create their expectations for misrecognition and, therefore, narrative cinema’s conventions are largely defined by the spectators who pay to experience them.

The desire for cinematic immersion is the result of capitalism’s collective evaluation of narrative cinema, which has defined it as a “happy object”; as Sara Ahmed argues, “to be affected by something is to evaluate that thing. Evaluations are expressed in how bodies turn toward things. To give value to things is to shape what is near us” (31). For capitalist societies, narrative cinema is part of a collective “bodily horizon,” which Ahmed defines as the proximity of objects that generate certain affects, although we tend to occupy this horizon with objects we find pleasurable (32). Thus, spectators enter the cinema with the presumption that films are happy objects that exist as social goods. This is not to suggest that we enter the cinema with the

assumption that all films are good or good for us. Instead, it is the possibility of immersion and the rituals in movie-going that underlie cinematic spectatorship which produce this happiness; the film's quality is an afterthought (Metz 6-7). When Kubrick destabilizes the conventions of cinematic immersion, there is an affective gap between audience expectations and what is presented to them. For Ahmed, objects with this gap are "affect aliens" (37). Drawing on Ahmed's concepts to read Kubrick's cinema renders his films as affectively alien, not necessarily because his films make spectators unhappy, but because they alienate the audience's preconceptions regarding immersion and misrecognition.

However, McGowan interprets Kubrick's cold style as being framed by fantasy and he states that "fantasy proper has nothing to do with affect" (43). McGowan defines fantasy as "an imaginary scenario that fills in the gaps within ideology," and it "is above all the creation of possibility out of impossibility" (23-24). Thus, McGowan's extrapolations suggest that fantasy is merely political, since it constructs fictional scenarios which encompass various ideological connotations. McGowan goes on to make a convincing argument that Kubrick's films aim to depict authoritative characters exercising power and their resulting enjoyment of that power (44). However, McGowan falsely conceptualizes affect in his examination of Kubrick. He claims that "affect indicates distance from fantasy," and fails to acknowledge that distance serves an affectively alienating purpose in Kubrick's cinema (44). Although Ahmed is not writing about Kubrick's films, her discussion of affect aliens, as previously suggested, is applicable. She argues: "the gap between the affective value of an object and how we experience an object can involve a range of affects, which are directed by the modes of explanation we offer to fill these gaps" (37). Thus, alienation and distance are part of this range of affects and are evident in Kubrick's use of stunts.

A useful example is McGowan's discussion of the setting in *Paths of Glory* (1957).

McGowan suggests that the film illustrates the gaze through General Broulard (Adolphe Menjou) and General Mireau's (George Macready) enjoyment of their power in the film's introduction.

The sequence takes place in a luxurious chateau. According to McGowan,

everything in the chateau has the look of nobility, [such as the chandeliers and paintings], and in fact, Broulard's opening remarks focus solely on the décor.... Mireau's understated response—"I try to create a pleasant environment in which to work"—only serves to highlight the fact that this is much more than a "pleasant environment." Simply from the setting itself, *Paths of Glory* makes it clear that Mireau enjoys his role as a commanding officer too much, that he derives a surplus enjoyment from his symbolic position of power. (48)

Just prior to this scene, however, the film displays the outside of Mireau's chateau, which is equally elegant, but coupled with voiceover narration that highlights important contextual information regarding trench warfare and the First World War. While the film visually connotes a scene of opulence, the voiceover narration suggests otherwise. The narrator describes the war as follows: "the front was stabilized and shortly afterwards developed into a continuous line of heavily fortified trenches zigzagging their way 500 miles from the English Channel to the Swiss frontier. After two grisly years of trench warfare the battle lines had changed very little. Successful attacks were measured in hundreds of yards and paid for in lives by hundreds of thousands." The narration critically signifies the war's dreadful conditions and unnecessary death. The scene operates as an alienating stain which creates a distance between what is seen and what is heard. Thus, contrary to what McGowan argues, distance and alienation are affective experiences which underlie Kubrick's fantasies and shape the spectatorial responses to them.

My examination of Kubrick's alienating style focuses on close analyses of three particular films: *A Clockwork Orange*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. I begin my examination with *A Clockwork Orange* because of its Brechtian performances. In this context, performance refers to the ways in which characters act out violence, gender roles, and conditioning in alienating contexts throughout the film. Bertolt Brecht conceptualizes the "alienation effect" as an acting style in which actors perform "in such a way that the audience [is] hindered from simply identifying itself with the characters in the play [or film]" (91). However, I reconceptualize Brecht's theory as the "alienation affect" in order to accommodate the expectations spectators carry with them during the film's screening and how these expectations allow for the film's performances to alienate them. For instance, in the rundown *Derelict Casino*, a woman is sexually assaulted by a gang of men while on a theatre stage. The ways in which the woman sways back and forth on stage alludes to a dance sequence, but this occurs while men contradictorily perform violence against her. The two performances conflict to alienate the spectator through discordant performances occurring simultaneously. In this chapter, the Brechtian performances—once recognized for their ability resist misrecognition—are stains which characterize Kubrick's alienating aesthetic in this film.

In the second chapter, I examine *Eyes Wide Shut* by discussing the gaze and how characters often stare into the camera lens as a symbolic means of destabilizing the spectator's ability to misrecognize him/herself with the film's male subject. Instead, spectators attain a liminal position as both subjects and objects while viewing *Eyes Wide Shut*, and this liminality is symbolized in Bill Hartford's unreliable position as both active male subject and, at times, passive object to be looked at. For instance, confused by his wife's revelation of unfaithful desire, Bill wanders the New York City streets and eventually ends up in a masquerade orgy

following a bizarre string of events. Many questions about the masquerade remain unclear, such as who the masked participants are. However, in the absence of Bill's knowledge, the orgy's participants identify Bill as an intruder and surround him with their gazes. By doing so, the film privileges the gazes of other characters. This muddles what Bill sees and makes him appear less authoritative as the film's male subject. The result is an opaque narrative that ultimately subverts Bill's position as reliable subject and alienates spectators from having a clear understanding of what he sees during his night out. *Eyes Wide Shut* manifests its alienating style through the explicit gaze that is returned to the audience, which also acts as a stain. This reciprocal gaze—although a stain on its own—also symbolizes the film's ambiguities regarding spectatorial misrecognition by continually forcing the gaze upon spectators and reminding them that they are objectified as viewers while simultaneously following the film's unreliable subject.

In the third and final chapter, I examine *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In this film, I focus on HAL (Douglas Rain) and the monoliths' liminal positions as artificial intelligence and their relation to the cinematic structure. Much like traditional cinema integrates the stillness of shots and gives them life by feeding them through a projector, HAL and the monoliths are similarly positioned between the conflicting identities of organic and inorganic subjects. Understood this way, the two figures become stains and symbols of the cinematic style which returns the gaze and alienates all those who try to misrecognize themselves within it. For example, when a team of researchers approach a monolith on the moon, they are initially infatuated by its mysteriousness, but are surprised to have their infatuation shift to discomfort after the monolith produces a loud screech. Similarly, HAL embodies the narrative of technological advancement that pervades the film as it is mechanistic while simultaneously having human qualities. Dr. David Bowman (Keir Dullea) and Dr. Frank Poole (Gary Lockwood) attempt to understand

HAL's humanity, but are alienated from any meaningful understanding as to how it possesses such human characteristics. Following HAL's lobotomy, the film contains no more dialogue and shifts its attention on providing spectators with a purely affective experience in the film's concluding "stargate" sequence. The information that the monolith provides at the film's end is beyond humanity's grasp and the audience is alienated from any pragmatic understanding of its meaning.

Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to interpretively designate what constitutes Kubrick's cold, intellectual style through an appraisal of stains that appear in these films. The purpose is not to solely determine instances where Kubrick presents the gaze to his audience and destabilize their immersion temporarily. Instead, I aim to illustrate that these stains are recurring and they not only alienate the audience, but characters within the films as well. In doing so, I intend to illustrate that these alienating stains permeate the narrative and are symptomatic of a larger, all-encompassing facet of Kubrick's style: that is, cinema which recognizes audience expectations only for the purpose of alienating them.



### The Alienation Affect in *A Clockwork Orange*

*A Clockwork Orange* manifests Kubrick's alienating style through its various conduits for performativity, which include violence and conditioning. When Alex is conditioned by the Ludovico technique, he is psychologically forced to perform civility, whereas he previously performed violence freely. This violence—particularly misogynistic violence—is associated with the alienating gender stereotypes propagated throughout the film; female milk dispensers depict women in exposed and patriarchally pleasing positions in the Korova Milk Bar, and the middle-aged Cat Lady's room is adorned with grotesque images of the female nude body. What links these gender stereotypes to violence is their ability to construct ostensibly pleasing and punishable women for the male characters, who then use their violence to perform hyper-masculinity in homosocial interactions. Violence becomes associated with evil and masculinity—characteristics that are unconventional to the male subject typically depicted in narrative cinema—but conditioning forces civil performativity in a way that subverts free will, thereby making the performance alienating. Each of these performances allude to Bertolt Brecht's theory on the "alienation effect" in acting, in which actors use a cold, disinterested acting style to distance the audience from identifying with their character (91). Whereas Brecht's theory of alienation projects an effect from the actor to the audience based on his/her disinterested style, Kubrick's film relies on a reciprocal play between expectations in the cinematic experience to create an "alienation affect." *A Clockwork Orange* combines horrific images of violence, misogyny, and conditioning alongside uplifting music, various highbrow and lowbrow artworks, and bright lighting, all of which are sympathetically narrated by the film's antihero protagonist, Alex de Large (Malcolm McDowell). Staging a rape scene alongside Gene Kelly's "Singing in the Rain" certainly does not reinforce any cinematic clichés; instead, such

scenes act to alienate audiences from their cinematic immersion.

It is no mistake that the film situates much of its focus on the cinematic conditioning segments that Alex undergoes. The film's emphasis on the Ludovico Treatment creates a self-reflexive deconstruction of the ways in which spectators identify with onscreen images. Alex's drug induced nausea prompts his disgust to the intradiegetic onscreen images, which suggests that an external source of effect plays into Alex's reception of the films. Alex's treatment parallels the spectator's affect while watching the film, especially being repulsed by the film's misogynistic violence framed with pleasing elements like music and visual aesthetics. By framing violence this way, Kubrick takes advantage of the diminishing censorship standards that followed the Production Code's removal in 1966. Not only does Kubrick portray violence more explicitly, he also positions this violence in subversive contexts that deter spectators from misrecognition. The male gaze is equally subverted when Alex views films during the Ludovico Treatment and is converted from an active male subject to a passive object to be scrutinized by the scientists as they observe his agony and then observe his civil performance following the treatment. The discord between *A Clockwork Orange's* violence and the audience's reaction builds on spectatorial assumptions regarding the weakening censorship during the film's release and the male gaze in order to produce an alienation affect that is part of Kubrick's alienating and codified style.

In order to conceptualize *Clockwork's* alienating performances, it is fruitful to draw on Brecht's advocacy for an acting style which rejects performative immersion so that actors seem distanced from their dialogue and presentation. In his observations on Chinese acting, Brecht states that

the performer's self-observation, an artful and artistic act of self-alienation, stopped the

spectator from losing himself in the character completely... to the point of giving up his own identity. Yet the spectator's empathy was not entirely rejected. The audience identifies itself with the actor as being an observer, and accordingly develops his attitude of observing or looking on. (93)

By forcing spectators to observe, they are incapable of identification because of their inability to reconcile their positions as observers and viewers; instead, they are always aware that they are spectating a performance (91). Broadly understood, Kubrick's *Clockwork* presents aspects of Brecht's alienation theory in Alex's reflexivity. In a more literal sense, Alex—in recurring voiceovers which articulate his own observations regarding his and the State's actions—occupies a position of the reflexive performer whose actions and observations contradict what is typically advocated for in a protagonist. Robert Kolker best describes him as follows: "Alex... is a highly articulate, sensitive, and perceptive young man who... makes brutality not merely a way of life, but an expression of life" ("Oranges, Dogs and Ultra-Violence" 166). This succinct description illustrates a character who resists conventional heroics. His violence is directed at innocent victims, and yet the film's focus on his subjectivity suggests that spectators should empathize with the brutality he experiences after the Ludovico treatment even after spectators have cringed at his previous brutal acts. However, these observations are not directly applicable to a discussion of acting as Brecht originally conceives of the alienation effect. McDowall is not creating any dissonance between his acting and his character's actions. In fact, McDowall plays his role so well that the film's contemporary critic, Pauline Kael, angrily states that McDowall exuberantly portrays Alex as someone "more alive than anybody else in the movie, and younger and more attractive" (135). Instead, alienation arises solely from the fictional character's own emotional and performative discord, which occurs following Alex's treatment as he is only

physiologically distanced from performing violence. But in order to understand how performative alienation operates in Kubrick's film, it is important to understand Brecht's theory in relation to affect theory.

As previously discussed, affect theory postulates that reciprocal encounters build upon each other to create affect. In contrast, rather than producing an affect, Brecht's theory asserts that a cold, disinterested acting style can emanate effects from the actor to the viewer. In-between-ness is the quintessential facet of affect theory as "affect is integral to a body's perpetual becoming (always becoming otherwise, however subtly, than what it already is), pulled beyond its seeming surface- boundedness by way of its relation to the forces of encounter" (Seigworth and Gregg 3). Brecht's approach to acting assumes that audiences are given an effect via the performer's self-awareness and disinterest; in other words, it is a unilateral system of expression which denies access to the encounters of others. Alternatively, the alienation affect recognizes the inescapable interplay of boundaries which occur during all encounters. It is an approach which not only questions the text's production of alienating effects, but also the audience's experiences. Of course, such an approach entails an examination of spectatorial responses, which can only partially be known. Because of this, in-depth analysis serves as the best means—although admittedly not an absolute method— of grasping what spectators experience during the film's screening. In order to do so, this chapter centres on censorship, gender roles, and the male gaze as the foundational conventions that the performance of violence, gender, and conditioning flouts in *A Clockwork Orange*. In doing so, I argue the alienation affect is symptomatic of the Kubrickian style, which recognizes audience expectations for the purpose of alienating them.

When discussing the alienation affect in Kubrick's rendition of *A Clockwork Orange*,

“alienation” may seem like a suspect term for a film which seeks to show violence from an original text that muddles its depiction of violence. Anthony Burgess’ *A Clockwork Orange* uses “nadsat” (an opaque combination of Russian and Anglo-American etymology that the teen characters’ use as slang) to convey graphic scenes indirectly. Blake Morrison states that “in the novel, the rapes, attacks and knifings of Alex and his gang are partly veiled by language: as the author explained, ‘to tolchock a chelloveck in the kishkas does not sound as bad as booting a man in the guts’” (xviii). Both texts are about violence; however, Kolker distinguishes Kubrick’s rendition as being a film, and ultimately

film is a medium that *shows* things. If the director is concerned with the instinct of one human being to destroy another, this destruction must be depicted, and no longer can a film maker cut away from a person who is being beaten and shot; he must show him getting hurt, show the blood spatter and the wound open up.... But the audience is inevitably going to be seduced by the film’s visuals, excited by the action and the bloodshed, and perhaps lose sight of the film makers serious intent. (“Oranges, Dogs and Ultra-Violence” 162)

Kolker’s emphasis on showing may seem to contradict any assertion that Kubrick’s film prompts an alienating experience, since violence is explicitly directed at the audience. However, it is not solely in the visuals that affect is conveyed to spectators. Many factors play into the film’s violent affect, including mise-en-scene and sound. In his 1972 review of the film, Jackson Burgess asserts that films were beginning to cater to audience expectations and images of pain and wickedness were the most visceral for an “emotionally malleable” audience (33). Kubrick builds on this malleability by presenting explicit images of violence, and he is not shy to depict bloodshed or nudity in sequences like the “Singing in the Rain” rape scene or Alex’s bloody nose

being broken during a police interrogation.

In fact, many of the film's contemporaneous reviews indicate the critics' revulsion while watching the film, which alludes to their experiences of watching as alienating. For instance, disgusted by its supposed attempts to desensitize viewers from violence, Kael states that the film's horrors are undermined by its "style of estrangement, [which includes:] gloating close-ups, bright, hard-edge, third degree lighting, and abnormally loud voices" (137). Thus, the compelling *mise-en-scene* works to alienate spectators from the horrors they should be experiencing on a visceral level. In many ways, such a stylistic choice is reminiscent of *2001*'s use of experience to compel audiences towards the film while its opaque narrative works to alienate spectators from it. In a similar vein of contemporaneous criticism, Jackson Burgess states that the film's "stylization shifts your attention... away from the simple reality of a rape or a murder and focuses it upon the quality of feeling: cold, mindless, brutality" (35). Thus, what links these two critical reviews is their obvious emphasis on the discord between depictions of violence and their stylization, a distinctly alienating quality.

However, from a different critical perspective, Vincent Canby implicitly specifies the film's alienating discordances by admiring the film's deployment of violence alongside conflicting musical and artistic references. Canby states that the film contains "a lot of aimless violence—the exercise of aimless choice—but it is as formally structured as the music of Alex's 'lovely lovely Ludwig Van,' which inspires in Alex sado-masochistic dreams of hangings, volcanic eruptions and other disasters" (44). Thus, Canby's claim resembles Kael and Burgess' assertions that the film depicts seemingly aimless and unmotivated violence, but his is distinguished by its consideration of the musical undertones which help to structure the film's alienation affect. It is along this vein of analysis that violence must first be examined as a

performative act that relies on a plethora of activities to produce an alienating affect in its audience.

When considered alongside the film's musical score, *A Clockwork Orange* contextualizes violence in two divergent cultural categories: highbrow and lowbrow art. Many of the film's most heated criticisms focus on its position as an exploitation film. For instance, Kael wonders why Kubrick feels the need to depict the woman (Shirley Jaffe) in the Derelict Casino being stripped and attacked onstage by Billy Boy's gang. Through a voiceover, Alex is introduced to this scene as it is occurring, but its inclusion of nudity and violence is geared towards the pleasures of voyeuristic spectators, thereby making it exploitative (138). This scene characterizes the use of lowbrow art, as it is a sequence aimed at satiating more ostensibly brutal desires. In this particular scene, upon a theatre stage, the woman defends against her attackers in a way that resembles a dance sequence. The teens grasp at her body and hold her arms and legs down in a brutal manner as they strip her, and yet her frontal body is almost completely exposed for her movements to be gazed upon. At the mercy of Billy Boy's gang, she manages to temporarily withhold their advance in a way that causes her body to shift and sway in a somewhat rhythmic fashion. Although the nudity may appeal to sadomasochistic pleasures, her ostensible performance alongside Rossini's "The Thieving Magpie" seems far more highbrow. Artistic contexts are muddled in this sequence and it is one which builds on Kubrick's use of classical music to help situate his film in a more modernist tradition of highbrow art (Gabbard and Sharma 93). The interplay between violence and classical music continues throughout the film, most memorable during the Cat Lady's rape, Billy Boy and Alex's gang battle, Alex's conditioning sessions, and Dim and Georgie's attack on Alex following the Ludovico technique. However, to fully understand this interplay, auteur theory as well as Peter Rabinowitz and Jay Reise's theory

on musical experience need to be examined.

Rabinowitz and Reise as well as Andrew Sarris provide analogous theories concerning the connotative processes of music and cinema, respectively, and each helps to illuminate the alienating affects underlying the co-operation and confrontation between music and violence in *A Clockwork Orange*. Sarris likens auteur theory to three concentric circles that position directors in specific circles depending on their authorial involvement. The outer circle is technique, which consists of the director's knowledge of lighting, cinematography, and is essential for any filmmaker; the following circle is described as "personal style," which can be identified by analyzing a filmmaker's corpus to assess recurring technical facets in their mise-en-scene; the innermost circle is labeled as "interior meaning" and in order to identify meaning in a film, a critic must assess how a director works against the original material in order to construct his/her own meaning (43). For Rabinowitz and Reise, three musical layers similarly structure a listener's auditory experience. Firstly, music consists of "technical attributes," or the raw materials of music, with characteristics such as pitch and timbre; the second layer is entitled the "attributive level" which are the "culturally determined interpretive conventions that assign meanings to the actual sounds;" the final layer is the "synthetic component," which is a reciprocal interpretive process in which listeners associate sound with various discourses to create specific experiences (qtd. in Rabinowitz 115-116). Thus, each theory's innermost layers are clearly associated with affect theory and how texts use the in-between-ness of art and interpretation to produce affect. The synthetic component is characterized as a process where a listener "applies particular sounds at hand in order to come up with a particular experience" (Rabinowitz and Reise qtd. in Rabinowitz 116), whereas interior meaning arises "from the tension between a director's personality and his material" (Sarris 43).



Considered alongside these theories, Kubrick's infamous rape scene between Alex's gang and the Alexanders creates interior meaning through the tensions between the film and the original material. This scene is absent from the original novel; thus, it is a mark of Kubrick's authorship in his script. Perhaps this reaffirms Kolker's aforementioned assertion that Kubrick's ultimate aim is to show violence and satiate a spectatorial desire to see blood and sex on the screen which the novel muddled through its use of opaque language ("Oranges, Dogs and Ultra-Violence" 162). Stylistically, the scene upholds Kubrick's recurring traits: the Alexanders' household is brightly lit, with high-key lighting used to accentuate the white background and make Mrs. Alexander's (Adrienne Corri) red one-piece suit stand out even more in Kubrick's already colorful use of Technicolor. While Mrs. Alexander is being held down, the camera is situated lower to the ground and depicts Mrs. Alexander from an angle which subjectively positions the spectator with Mr. Alexander (Patrick Magee), thus experiencing her rape from his perspective. The focus shifts from Mrs. Alexander to her husband, making the viewer take on the point-of-view of the man. He faces the horror of emasculation as he is forced to watch without being able to act. The audience experiences and shares his trauma. The scene's cinematography thus affirms the film's criticisms as being a misogynistic text overtly concerned with masculinity. Mrs. Alexander remains the object of the gaze, just as many other women in the film are, according to Margaret DeRosia (63).

Yet, Alex's "Singing in the Rain" performance works as another layer of performativity which alienates spectators by recontextualizing the song's synthetic component. MGM's *Singing in the Rain* (Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen) is a family friendly musical set during the height of Hollywood's studio system in which Don Lockwood (Gene Kelly) falls in love with Kathy Selden (Debbie Reynolds), and joyfully sings the titular track amidst a rain storm. Of course,

Alex's "Singing in the Rain" portrayal is situated in a discordant context where its originally light-hearted and upbeat lyrics about finding love are placed amidst a tense moment where Alex violently seizes "love" at Mrs. Alexander's expense. However, the film's reference to Kelly's original performance goes beyond the obvious assertion that the music does not emotionally align with the concurrent act being depicted. Instead, discourses of censorship permeate the music's synthetic component in a film that largely rejects censorship, thereby creating an alienating experience.

In order to recognise the song's synthetic components, Stephen Prince's examination on ultraviolence illuminates the attitudes and laws that surrounded censorship prior to Kubrick's use of "Singing in the Rain." *A Clockwork Orange* was produced at a time when the laws on censorship were progressively diminishing in response to more liberal cultural attitudes that coincided with many of the youth movements of the period, such as the Civil Rights movement (6). Janet Staigner notes that Hollywood also had a stake in alleviating censorship because of its increasing competition from television sets—which were becoming the preferred entertainment for families—and from award-winning foreign films which dealt with more sexually explicit subject matter (40). Therefore, in 1966 the Motion Picture Association of America removed the seemingly outdated Production Code which had regulated cinematic censorship since 1930. The Production Code was highly influenced by Catholic doctrine and "aimed to enforce a strict morality and healthy mindedness in the movies" in order to limit any violent effects the movies may have (Prince 3). Once films like Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* (1969) began to depict ultraviolence explicitly, Kubrick took liberties to depict violence in freshly visceral ways. However, Kubrick's use of "Singing in the Rain" simultaneously resists visceral engagement; while the rape scene's violence and dark

humour represent Hollywood's newfound explicitness, "Singing in the Rain" plainly alludes to a more conservative era when censorship regulated onscreen violence. Two cinematic contexts are situated in the same sequence to offputtingly displace violence through a nostalgic allusion to the family-friendly studio system era.

This stark juxtaposition contributes to the scene's interior meaning as it alienates spectators by subverting the conventionally visceral experience of violent films. "Visceral" is a vague term as it connotes a range of heightened emotional responses, including disgust and pleasure. However, whatever emotion is experienced, Kubrick muddles the experience by using a musical stain in the rape scene. Since interior meaning is defined by the extent to which a director works against his/her source material, the rape scene presents one instance where Kubrick works not only against his source material, but another cinematic text and its own interior meaning. There is a marked tension between several performances occurring in this single scene: Alex's sadomasochistic rape performance, his haunting rendition of "Singing in the Rain" and Kubrick's authorial mark which maintains his style while borrowing subject matter from another film. These tensions produce the stain in this sequence and it disengages spectatorial immersion at the height of the film's violent subject matter; as much as one may be disgusted or compelled by the violence, the simultaneous referral to *Singing in the Rain* situates the spectator in a distancing cinematic experience. The scene produces an alienation affect through the interplay between the film's performances and the spectators' preconceptions regarding the music and its unconventional contextualization. Yet, these observations only account for this scene's interior meaning regarding violence; the film's depiction of gender roles is equally alienating.

Gender stereotypes and sexually provocative art cooperate to produce additional stains

that occupy and largely define engendered, but grotesque, spaces in the film. The artworks in the Korova Milk Bar and the Cat Lady's exercise room illustrate the conflicting female gender roles depicted in the film. As James Naremore argues, Kubrick's films arouse emotions of laughter and disgust by fusing animate and inanimate images to produce grotesque scenes and the "comic feeling depends... on the way the human body is reduced to a clattering stick figure or mechanical object" (9). In his review of the film, Robert Hughes describes the Milk Bar as a space adorned with "alienating" décor with sexual designs to creatively reimagine practical objects, such as tables and drink dispensers. Hughes further asserts that Kubrick depicts a world where art serves no moral purpose aside from what art means for individuals (131-32). If so, the Korova Milk Bar's use of stylized furniture is obviously telling of a grotesque misogyny, which is later reinforced by Alex and his droogs' violent encounters with women. As the camera pans backwards from Alex's face in the film's introduction, the Korova Milk Bar exposes a world where women are revered literally as objects, ones who are sexually depicted with their legs and breasts exposed for man's enjoyment. Such misogyny is further reinforced by the drink dispensers which illustrate women on their knees and their hands held behind their backs by handcuffs. These "sculptures" depict a patriarchally defined woman who is passive and subordinate; in this instance, these dispensers literally incite male pleasure through their ability to provide drug-laced milk to male customers. Although the furniture is strikingly misogynistic, Naremore's definition of the grotesque suggests that this scene produces conflicting emotions from spectators. The female body is depicted in ways that are both shocking and comedic in their liminal position between animate and inanimate, which subsequently elicits feelings of estrangement from the audience.

The Cat Lady's exercise room presents another unconventional—and equally

alienating—gender stereotype that is subverted through artwork. When the Cat Lady (Miriam Karlin) is introduced while stretching, her groin is illustrated beneath a one-piece exercise outfit as she spreads her legs in front of the camera. Such sexual openness aligns with the milk dispensers' prominent frontal nudity in the Korova Milk Bar, but her age, high pitch voice, numerous cats, and lack of skin exposure mark her as an undesirable woman outside the patriarchal ideal. The room's décor analogously depicts sexual organs grotesquely and equates them to her gendered position outside of the patriarchal threshold. Most notably, a phallic glass sculpture near the room's entrance is described by the woman as a "very important work of art," which she pleads Alex not to destroy. The room's paintings are equally sexual, but depict women exposing their genitals and masturbating in order to illustrate the Cat Lady's ostensibly promiscuous taste. Whereas the Korova Milk Bar's artwork depicts women as chained down and passive, the Cat Lady's portraits depict sexually liberated women and phallic imagery to suggest that their sexuality is unchained. Yet, her sexually liberated identity maintains the grotesque facets underlying the film by associating her death with sexual imagery. Following a battle in which Alex uses the phallic artwork and the Cat Lady a bust of Beethoven, Alex finishes his victim off by driving the phallic sculpture into the woman's face. In this sequence, Kubrick superimposes the Cat Lady's mouth with her paintings' depictions of a woman's genitalia and mouth. The interplay between these three images propagates grotesque emotions because it integrates the animate Cat Lady alongside the inanimate images that coincide with her murder. This scene is humorous because of Alex's ironic use of the Cat Lady's phallic artwork and the cartoonish superimposition; however, the scene's violence also inherently makes it horrific.

It is not only female gender roles that are inherently alienating in this film, as DeRosia argues that masculinity is defined by a tension between heterosexual desire and homosocial

performativity. DeRosia reads the film as an exploration of masculinity in a predominantly homosocial space. DeRosia claims that moments of male-on-male violence are eroticized more so than the heterosexual encounters. For instance, the battle between Alex and his droogs and Billy Boy's gang is a much more choreographed and stylized instance of violence than the heterosexual sequences, such as Alex's daydream where he mud wrestles with a woman at the film's conclusion. Instead, heterosexual violence is more of a diversion and fulfills certain anxieties about a man's standing in the homosocial space (64). Thus, the film illustrates the sadomasochistic performances of men for the purpose of asserting their position in the homosocial world of gang violence; heterosexual encounters serve the purpose of attaining masculine dominance by subordinating women (82). DeRosia's argument indicates masculinity is in fact a performance amongst men.

Violence is not the only means of subverting masculine performance as Alex's participation in the Ludovico Technique perpetuates further tensions between gender and gazing. DeRosia posits that Alex's position as a cinematic spectator in the film's diegesis presents an issue regarding subjectivity. In narrative cinema, Mulvey states that men conventionally occupy the position as subject as they are active in pursuing a specific end, whereas women are objects to be looked upon and are usually passive ("Visual Pleasure" 437). Evidenced by his continual dialogue with the audience—particularly with his recurring communiqué "oh my brothers"—Alex is a conventional male subject who guides the film's narrative and with whom the audience identifies. However, his position as spectator during the Ludovico technique also depicts him as the object of the audience's gaze. Alex identifies with the intradiegetic film's subject matter while contemporaneously being the extradiegetic film's subject. Alex's resulting passivity as a prisoner and his agonized screams during the screenings displaces his previously macho

personality; he is emasculated during the screening and becomes an object of the scientists' gaze. Spectators simultaneously identify with Alex as a subject while gazing upon him as an object of study in order to "deconstruct the safe distinctions between audience and image" (DeRosia 75). Thus, whereas narrative cinema conventionally separates image and audience by providing a subject and a feminine object to vicariously gaze upon, *A Clockwork Orange* destabilizes these conventional processes by situating all of these identities in its protagonist at a reflexive moment of gazing.

The Ludovico Technique also allows Kubrick to incorporate self-reflexive films which allude to *Clockwork's* earlier alienating sequences. Both the film and novel suggest that cinema has the potential to effect audiences through its realism and consequent ability to emotionally connect spectators with images. In the novel, Alex likens his dreams to a participatory cinematic experience where "you walk into it and be part of it" (Burgess 83). In the film, as well as the novel, Alex states: "it's funny how the colours of like the real world only seem really real when you viddy them on the screen" (77). The Ludovico Technique plainly alludes to Alex's earlier violence with sequences that depict a gang dressed as Alex's droogs repeatedly punching a man in a business suit and taking turns raping a woman. Much like Alex's earlier rape sequence to the sounds of "Singing in the Rain," the Ludovico film includes a stark dissonance between the images and soundtrack as it depicts scenes from World War II, including images of Adolf Hitler alongside Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Beethoven's Ninth is introduced in a similarly discordant manner as Beethoven's Romantic symphony is contextualized as an escapist track for Alex. While listening to Beethoven's Ninth, Kubrick cuts between close-ups of an ecstatic Alex and his imaginings of explosions, vampires, and a young girl being hanged. Thus, the Ludovico film is not the first instance where Beethoven is presented in an alienating manner;

the Ludovico Technique is unique because of the discordant reaction it incites from Alex after being externally manipulated.

Alex's self-reflexive spectatorial position demonstrates an alienation affect that relies on external actions affecting his reception of the film. By injecting a nausea and terror inducing drug, which the film vaguely names serum 114, Alex responds to cinematic images in a manner that is obviously alienating from his previous encounters with violence. Of course, this is artificially constructed through the serum, but it mimics the film's own playfulness with preconceptions on the gaze, censorship and gender roles. Kubrick makes Alex's previous inclinations towards violence known to deliberately alienate them during his treatment. Alex's newfound response to violence, which is a performance regulated through State manipulation, serves as a stain to *Clockwork*'s audience as it portrays emotional responses to scenes that were previously depicted to them. What is so shocking is not the violence itself; it is how it is contextualized and Alex's response that builds on the horrors of experiencing the familiar in unknown, alienating ways. It is a metatextual encounter between Alex and the audience that further deconstructs the links between spectator and image because the associations Alex makes with the films are constructed by external factors that only artificially link the films' effects with his reactions.

The Ludovico Technique's affects result in Alex's performative pacifism that builds on the spectator's alienating and self-reflexive encounter with Alex gazing upon images. Following the treatment, Alex's nonviolent encounters subvert his free will by imposing physiological limitations on his actions. He is literally forced to perform on a stage in front of a crowd in which the Minister (Anthony Sharp) and prison chaplain (Godfrey Quigley) observe his "cure." In this sequence, Alex is unable to attack against a performing instigator (John Clive) who attacks Alex



and forces him to lick the bottom of his shoe. Alex is then presented with a naked woman (Virginia Weatherell) whose breasts he cannot touch because the action incites feelings of disgust triggered by his conditioning. He is, as the Minister states, “impelled towards the good by paradoxically being impelled towards evil.” The binary tensions that occupy Alex’s performance are made quite clear here. Alex’s behaviour is an alienating spectacle in which cinematic images have artificially constructed and shaped a human’s actions. Following the demonstration, the prison chaplain insists that free will is the only means of judging civility as it is a natural moral performance. However, the Minister insists that free will is not a concern and that good behaviour—no matter how it is achieved—should only be considered by the State. The Minister’s statement alludes to Metz’s assertions regarding ideology in cinema; as Metz suggests, cinema allows for misrecognition in order for ideology to freely shape subjectivity during a screening (14-15). In Alex’s case, the Ludovico films have a clear ideology which seeks to repress free will through physiological manipulation. The interplay between external effects and cinematic effects creates a tension between free will and the State’s determinism which produces an alienation affect in Alex.

The Minister’s statement also illustrates the State’s need to perform a specific image, which influences Alex’s own inability to freely perform violence as he used to. The State’s need to control violence is depicted as a propagandistic means of promoting their party. This is evidenced during Alex’s conditioned performance when an advisor notifies the Minister that “our necks are out a long way on this one,” implying the need to perform for a political victory. Alex continues to be attacked in society by older, homeless individuals, and surprisingly by his old droogs, Dim (Warren Clarke) and Georgie (James Marcus), who use their newfound authority as policemen to attack Alex in an isolated woodland. All of these events further

propagate the tension between Alex's need to do good because of his evil disposition, but his performance does not end after the State removes the conditioning and "cures" Alex. Following Mr. Alexander's vengeful attempt to incite Alex's suicide by playing Beethoven's Ninth, the Minister approaches Alex in the hospital with a proposition. The film has just cut between newspaper headlines, such as "Government is murderer" and "Storm over 'Crime Cure' Boy," which indicate that Alex's suicide attempt prompted an adverse public response to the State's draconian methods. In order to alleviate such an image, the Minister states that the two can be friends and in doing so all of Alex's medical expenses will be paid and he will be given a good job in exchange for Alex declaring this friendship to the media. As DeRosia argues, Alex is being forced to perform once again, not through conditioning, but through a cooperative performance with the State. His cure exists only so long as the government favors his "cure" and he can perform a friendship with them (81). Both need to perform and their reliance to each other illustrates the reciprocal in-between-ness that characterizes affect. However, the tension has been transferred from good and evil to a tension between the State's authority and Alex's subordination. Alex's freedom is paradoxically shaped by his subservience to the State's needs, which is an equally alienating affect between the boundaries of State and individual.

Therefore, Kubrick focuses *A Clockwork Orange's* alienating aesthetic in its various conduits for performativity that each contain their own tensions. Violence is constructed as an alienating encounter between images and art, whether theatrical or musical. Gender roles are equally defined by the film's gendered spaces that are occupied with grotesque artworks that construct alienating definitions of femininity. Masculinity is treated as a similarly alienating performance since the film relies on tensions between performing heterosexual acts in order to satisfy hierarchies in the homosocial realm. Conditioning serves as a final performance linked to

cinema which positions Alex and the State in codependent roles that require specific performances. Yet, these performances occupy tensions between conflicting ideals, such as good/evil and freedom/subordination, that produce an alienation affect. The film exploits these performances as a means of self-reflexively commenting on Kubrick's own alienating aesthetic, which he performs by constructing his film's script and mise-en-scène. Once understood this way, the performances reveal themselves as stains which—as Žižek defines as the moment when the film returns the gaze to spectators—remind viewers of the two-way, affective discourse occurring in that moment (18). Kubrick's cinematic performance analogously builds on tensions between audience expectations and onscreen images and the resulting cinematic stains produce an alienation affect in spectators that mirrors those occurring throughout the film. Many distinct performances exist in Kubrick's corpus, but Kubrick's reciprocal gaze is one such performance that needs to be examined further. This reciprocal gaze symbolically structures *Eyes Wide Shut's* ambiguous subjectivity as evidenced in its protagonist, Bill Hartford.

Reconfiguring the Gaze in *Eyes Wide Shut*

The “Kubrick glare” appears throughout Kubrick’s corpus in an explicit attempt to destabilize the spectators’ voyeuristic control over the films’ images. Ian Freer labels Kubrick’s most stylized reciprocal gaze “the Kubrick glare,” which he describes as “a close-up of a character, often in emotional freefall, with the head tilted slightly down but the eyes looking straight down the barrel of the camera lens” (117). For example, *A Clockwork Orange* is introduced with Alex’s downward glare directly into the camera lens. According to DeRosia, “although Alex returns the camera’s gaze, the first shot introduces a tension between the two looks, a point of disjunction that the film will repeatedly disavow in an effort to sustain Alex’s narrative authority” (66-67). Yet, this tension goes beyond the camera lens and interrogates the audience’s expectation he/she has voyeuristic control over the image. Other examples of the Kubrick glare are found in Private Pyle’s (Vincent D’Onofrio) sinister glare while on a toilet seat following his descent into madness and eventual suicide in *Full Metal Jacket*; Jack Torrance’s (Jack Nicholson) equally sinister glare while he overlooks the miniature version of the maze that Wendy and Danny are contemporaneously exploring as he descends into a murderous rage in *The Shining*; and in “HAL’s final moments in *2001*,” which depict his unsettling human pleas for forgiveness as his emotional downfall (Freer 117). Each of these glares occur at unsettling moments when spectators identify with the characters’ complex and villainous subjectivities. Similarly, in *Eyes Wide Shut*, Bill Hartford (Tom Cruise) uses the glare while in the backseat of a taxi after his wife reveals she considered infidelity with a young naval officer during one of their previous vacations. The film cuts between his glare and Bill imagining his wife having an affair with a naval officer. The glare acts as a reciprocal gaze at a moment when Bill is descending into an obsessive madness over his wife and her revelation of unfaithful desire. This is not to suggest

that the Kubrick glare is the only reciprocal gaze appearing throughout the film; rather, I am suggesting it is the one which provides the most insight into Bill's declining emotional state.

Whereas the previous chapter assesses performances as cinematic stains which simultaneously implicate and distance spectators in *A Clockwork Orange*, my examination of *Eyes Wide Shut* in this chapter comments on the reflexivity of the gaze, which also recurs throughout Kubrick's corpus. In Kubrick's corpus, the reciprocal gaze is a character's explicit gaze into the camera lens which provokes a discourse between the audience and the cinematic image. Kubrick uses this gaze as one means of manifesting his alienating style in a visual trope, and its focus on the spectator makes it a concept that opposes Laura Mulvey's original notion of the gaze as a look that spectators project toward the screen to invoke voyeurism. In her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Mulvey indicates that cinema encodes women as objects to be looked at and men as the film's subjects with whom spectators identify with (436-37). To complicate this convention, *Eyes Wide Shut* depicts Bill Hartford as a liminal character whose male subjectivity is constantly questioned by the film's reciprocal gazes, which position him as the object to be looked at even as his actions move the narrative forward. What Bill sees is often faulty and leaves spectators questioning his reliability as an active male subject. Male subjectivity is further called into question during the masquerade sequence, which acts as an emasculating experience for Bill as his subjectivity is subverted by the orgy's participants' surveilling gazes, which identify Bill—and the viewer via his POV—as an impotent intruder. In doing so, Mulvey's conception of the gaze, which grants the audience the illusion of control, is subverted, making the film an alienating experience that mimics Bill's anxieties during his various sexual encounters. Bill's castration anxiety is also illustrated through his investigative gazing during the orgy sequence; the female body remains exposed for male pleasure and affirms

Mulvey's notions in a film that also subverts them. Thus, *Eyes Wide Shut* uses reciprocal gazing as a stain which subverts and caters to the spectator's illusion of mastery and this ambiguity affectively alienates him/her from any absolute voyeuristic control over the film's images.

As a theoretical axiom for this examination, Mulvey's theory on gazing proposes a one-sided, masterful vantage point of identification for spectators. Mulvey claims that narrative cinema provides spectators with the illusion of an isolated space where they can partake in voyeurism. Through her analysis of narrative cinema, Mulvey discovers an underlying patriarchal construction of women as objects to be looked at, whereas male characters function as active subjects who advance the story (436-37). For Mulvey, narrative cinema encodes films with exhibitionist female characters and active male characters for an implied middle-class, Caucasian, heterosexual male spectator. Considered this way, the gaze is conventionally attuned to man's pleasure, and women are filmed in order to be possessed by man's look. Since women are often inactive in these films, female spectators are also inadvertently forced to identify with male characters (438). From these extrapolations, Mulvey explains the gaze as a device which provides the male subject with an illusion of scopophilic control over the film's images. Thus, Mulvey's gaze is a unilateral device employed by spectators to have a voyeuristic mastery over the film's images.

But in order to understand how Kubrick reconfigures the gaze as a reciprocal device, it is necessary to first address Lacan's theory on Hans Holbein's painting, "The Ambassadors," in which he demonstrates how the gaze calls the subject into an image. The painting displays two men standing amidst artistic and scientific objects, but this painting is foregrounded by a mysterious and distorted object. Lacan notes that this object, at first, takes on no recognizable shape; however, when the subject tilts his/her head, or looks upon the image from a different

angle, he/she recognizes that the image is a distorted skull (*Four* 88). McGowan best elucidates the purpose of the gaze as calling a subject into a text; McGowan explains that

The skull says to the spectator “You think you are looking at the painting from a safe distance, but the painting sees you—takes into account your presence as a spectator.”

Hence, the existence of the gaze as a disruption (or a stain) in the picture—an objective gaze means that spectators never look on from a safe distance; they are in the picture in the form of this stain, implicated in the text itself. (7)

Whereas first generation Lacanian theorists like Mulvey understood the gaze as the subject’s tool for controlling cinematic objects, second generation theorists like Copjec and McGowan stress the importance of Lacan’s understanding of the gaze as embodied in the text. Reciprocal gazes, including the Kubrick glare, are *Eyes Wide Shut*’s symbolic skull; once they are understood as stains, they work to implicate spectators into the film. Consider, for example, an instance during the masquerade in which Bill meets one of the orgy’s participant’s gaze. The film takes up Bill’s first-person and has this gaze meet the participant’s. Not only is a first-person perspective given to spectators, but this perspective is acknowledged through the participant’s gaze into the camera lens. The cinematic screen’s frontier is destabilized through the spectator’s implication. At the same time, however, the reciprocal gazes throughout the film work to distance spectators from the text, suggesting that viewers are being acknowledged in an experience that conventionally allows them to be misrecognized in the text. The spectators’ inability to misrecognize themselves is further amplified by Bill’s unreliable subjectivity.

According to Hunter Vaughan, Bill is an unconventional male subject because of his passive roles throughout these sexual encounters. His wife’s imagined infidelity leads Bill to an encounter with a prostitute named Domino (Vinessa Shaw), and eventually to a masquerade

where the unidentified participants engage in promiscuous sexual intercourse. It is worth noting that Bill never actually sleeps with Domino after his wife phones him and amplifies his anxieties regarding her supposed infidelity. In fact, until Bill rejects her services, Domino is more active in pursuing Bill as an object for her financial gain. Bill remains passive when he asks Domino for her suggestions as to what sexual activities they should partake in and thus the active-male/passive-female roles are subverted in this scene. These roles are further subverted during the masquerade, as Bill never engages in intercourse with any of the women; instead, he simply observes the ongoing spectacle of heterosexual intercourse. Although watching is voyeuristic, his intrusion into the orgy and eventual discovery marks his scopophilia as impermissible by the secret society's members. Vaughan states that Bill's "investigative interests lead him to discover nothing save for his own meagerness, his own inability to reduce humans to objects and his impotence in an environment of such extreme sexualisation" (par 6). Instead, Vaughan argues, Bill's place in the orgy is non-participatory and he is at the mercy of the narrative's context; in other words, he is castrated as a male subject, thereby subverting the male gaze (par 4). Not only is his subjectivity bastardized, but Bill is also the object-to-be-looked-at as Tom Cruise is a male movie star with a hetero- and homosexual fan base (Vaughan par 6).

Vaughan also states that Bill's occupation as a doctor further works as a means of defetishizing the nude female body as his examinations are work-related and unassociated with a sexual gaze (par 5). This observation is true, but fails to acknowledge the spectator's assumed disinterest in the medical aspect of these bodily examinations. During an argument in their bedroom while smoking marijuana, Bill tells Alice that his female examinations are purely professional and asexual, at least for him. However, the images presented to spectators remain sexualized. Spectators are given access to Bill's professional work space and the women's nude



bodies are depicted for scopophilic their pleasures outside of the film's diegesis. Mulvey asserts that films generally combine "the gaze of the spectator and that of the male characters... without breaking narrative verisimilitude" (436-37). However, if spectators share Bill's professionalism, the purpose of his gaze is discordant with the spectators' scopophilia as they typically have no medical interest in the nude bodies they witness, which subverts their connectivity with the subject.

Vaughan's observations of the film suggest that Mulvey's original conceptions of the gaze are subverted through Kubrick's deployment of various gazes that strip the male subject of his power. Vaughan identifies the film's unique subversion of the gaze as the "poly-gaze," since the film "fetishes female and male stars,... [and] the subjective point-of-view and third-person glance... are thrown from all sides and at all people. Employing both critically-analyzed methods" (par 9). Of course, Vaughan is not the first to reconsider the scope of Mulvey's initial theory of the gaze as a patriarchal means of subjectivity and identification. For example, bell hooks illustrates the ways in which Mulvey overlooks white supremacy in the gaze and that narrative cinema is conventionally defined by a "white" aesthetic that positions coloured characters as "others" (72-73). However, Vaughan's poly-gaze is a significant reconfiguration of Mulvey's concept because it addresses the possibility of an affective reciprocal engagement between the spectators and the characters.

When reconsidered in light of Vaughan's observations, the reciprocal gazes throughout *Eyes Wide Shut* muddle the film's subjectivity and position it as a liminal space where spectators are alienated from having control over images which are conventionally given voyeuristic appeal. *Eyes Wide Shut* estranges spectators through the ways they are guided through sexual investigations without a conventional male subject. The recurring reciprocal gazes serve to

remind spectators of this gap, as if to suggest that the characters' acknowledge the spectator's presence and call them into the text as first-person participants. An example of this occurs following the film's introductory Christmas party that Bill and Alice attend. In this sequence Alice is presented naked in front of a mirror as she removes her earrings. Bill approaches her from behind and begins to kiss her as they both glance into the mirror, but as the camera slowly zooms towards them, its focus is not on the characters themselves but on their reflection in the mirror. The camera provides a close-up shot of Alice's reaction to their intimacy and as she removes her glasses she glances into the mirror so as to examine her own reaction to Bill's affection. This scene suggests that Alice engages with the image of their intimacy more than the act itself, which causes the audience to identify with a female object's point-of-view more than with the male protagonist's. Moreover, although Alice glances at her reflection, the camera's focus creates an illusion that she is staring into the camera lens and thereby returning the gaze to the audience (Carnicke 24). These images provide an erotic spectacle that Alice and the audience rely on for their scopophilic pleasures. It suggests that there is a shared voyeuristic encounter between Alice and the audience in order to implicate spectators into the erotic spectacle, rather than spectate the image from a distance.

The mirror's significance is particularly relevant to Lacan's notions regarding "the mirror stage" and identification. The mirror stage's reflection provides the illusion of mastery and connection with that image that is sustained throughout an individual's life ("Mirror Stage" 76). Although Lacan originally describes the mirror stage as a process of identification when an infant first sees his/her image reflected, Alice glances into the mirror in order to identify with her concurrent sexual experience. However, this scene surrogates the experience and distributes the illusions of mastery between Alice and the spectator. The cinematic screen separating spectators

from the film becomes transparent when it alludes to the mirror. Rather than acting as a boundary, the cinematic screen is equated to a reflective surface that returns the gaze to those looking at it. Alice's reciprocal gaze amplifies the scopophilic pleasures which are to be experienced through the film's erotic images, but it also negates subjectivity to any particular gaze since the film acknowledges the spectators presence and shares the voyeuristic allure with Alice.

As another example, Bill provides an enigmatic gaze to the audience while he discusses Alice's previous fantasy of infidelity. As they smoke marijuana, Bill and Alice discuss the Christmas party they attended the night before and how the gentleman Alice danced with wished to sleep with her. Bill tells her that this is understandable because of Alice's beauty, but this statement angers Alice and leads her into an argument regarding Bill's occupation as a doctor and the women he regularly sees naked. Alice subsequently discusses her infatuation with a young naval officer whom she glanced at while they vacationed in Cape Cod. Their conversation cuts between Alice seated in the room's corner and Bill sitting on the bed across the room. Whereas Bill is shown solely from a more intimate close-up perspective that engages the spectator with Bill's reciprocal gaze, Alice is shown from either a medium shot that allows more of the background to be shown, or a medium close-up shot that angles her face away from the camera lens. Indeed, Alice's relationship to the spectator is less intimate in this sequence, but Bill's gaze is ambiguous because, according to Sharon Marie Carnicke, Cruise's "object of attention" remains ambiguous in this sequence.

Carnicke uses Lee Strasberg's objects of attention concept as a means of assessing Cruise and Kidman's varying acting styles in this scene. Strasburg teaches actors "to focus on the objects of attention in order to direct the viewer's eye to the character's priorities" which are

usually an actor's partners (qtd. in Carnicke 25). Carnicke argues that Kidman always reacts to her circumstances in naturalistic ways; for instance, her speech slows down while drunk at the Christmas party, and her excessive laughter is prompted by the marijuana she smokes, all of which contribute to her emotional authenticity (24-25). Conversely, Carnicke labels Cruise's acting as "Brechtian" because he purposely underacts in this scene to create an ambiguous affect over the audience. With the exception of his subtle eye movements, Cruise remains still and passive throughout the scene as he silently processes Alice's story about the naval officer. While the audience knows that Kidman engages with Bill as her object of attention, Cruise's "silent mobility suggests a lack of affective engagement in the circumstances that impinge upon him" (24), and "Cruise's actual object of attention remains in question.... Perhaps he attends to the suppression of his own emotions more than to Alice" (28). As discussed in the previous chapter, Brecht's model of acting immediately implies a reflective and alienating experience emanating from the actor to the audience (93). However, Cruise's gaze once again implicates spectators into the screen, but his enigmatic object of attention creates an alienating encounter with the spectator. Although diegetically aimed at his wife, Bill's glance toward the camera lens suggests that the film coerces the audience into engaging with his reflective gaze. The scene therefore combines the audience and Alice as the objects of his gaze. Whereas Alice's aforementioned reciprocal gaze invites spectators to share in voyeurism, Cruise's uncertain gaze acts as an ambiguous encounter with the audience that further muddles his dependability as a male subject.

However, while Cruise's objects of attention are not always as ambiguous throughout the film, they continue to estrange the audience because of his character's inability to accurately convey reality to the audience. For example, while browsing a costume shop for a masquerade outfit after business hours, the shop owner, Milich (Rade Zerbedzija), finds his teenaged

daughter suggestively frolicking with two older men, all of whom are in their underwear and wear makeup. Milich is infuriated and makes insulting statements by calling her a “whore” and “depraved creature.” In order to protect herself, Milich’s daughter (Leelee Sobieski) runs behind Bill and places her hand around him. Upon releasing him and leaving the room, Bill turns to meet her gaze as the camera begins to focus on her prepubescent body, exposed to be looked at, which is estranging in itself given her age. When Bill returns the costume the following day, the two older men who were with Milich’s daughter appear again (in business suits this time), but are conversely treated as respected customers as though nothing has happened. Milich wishes them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Bill expresses his confusion by telling Milich: “last night you were going to call the police.” Milich responds by telling Bill that they “have come to a new arrangement,” and suggestively pimps his daughter, telling him: “if the good doctor should ever want anything again... it needn’t be a costume” as he grasps his daughter.

The contextual differences in these sequences are staggering, and although Bill engages with Milich’s daughter as an obvious object of attention, her position as either sheltered daughter or prostitute cannot be conveyed clearly to the audience. Ambiguity arises because of Bill’s inability to guide the narrative conventionally; his perceptions of the previous night may have been faulty, or perhaps the strange circumstances are a result of Milich illicitly commodifying his daughter. For Amy Ransom, “the bizarre and episodic nature of Bill’s late-night peripatetics through Greenwich Village, a site easily recognized as one of social and sexual transgression, reveals the scenes’ function as a figurative dream sequence [all of which] manifest Bill’s own anxieties about himself and his sexuality” (33). Perhaps Bill’s figurative dream-like state mobilizes his libidinal desires and shapes his initial encounter with Milich’s daughter. What he initially sees may be tainted by his subconscious anxieties regarding his marriage, which cause

him to perceive Milich's daughter as a potential, albeit tabooed, conduit for his sexual frustration. Whatever the case, Bill is inactive when driving the narrative forward and is unreliable when the film exhibits bizarre and inexplicable circumstances which he cannot account for.

Bill's subjective unreliability reaches a pinnacle in the film's masquerade sequence when men and women's identities are cut off while he is observing a spectacle, which equates Bill to the position of cinematic spectator. Spectacle is manifested through the masquerade's ambiguity as a ceremonious event. The rituals performed suggest that the participants may be part of a cult, but the film never fully clarifies this opaque plot point. A dress code requires that all participants wear a mask, and while the majority of participants wear a black cloak, the color variations in these cloaks symbolize a conspicuous hierarchal system. The masquerade's leader dons a red cloak, walking stick, and censer. Surrounding the leader are several prostitutes who remove their cloaks and expose their bodies in nothing but black g-strings while keeping their faces behind masks. Of course, their lack of clothing objectifies the female bodies (more so as their identities are concealed) and caters to the scopophilic pleasures of the male participants and spectators. After the women's initial sexual exhibition, the leader approaches each woman and stomps the ground with his walking stick. His use of the censer particularly alludes to Catholic ceremonies where blessings are associated with incense. Aside from the pianist, Nick (Todd Field), who is blindfolded for security purposes and disallowed to spectate the event, Bill is the only identifiable character spectators associate with as he observes the masquerade's pseudo spiritualism. Indeed, Bill's confusion parallels that of the spectator; the unfolding events in the film's diegesis contemporaneously estrange Bill and the film's extradiegetic spectators. This point is made evident when the orgy begins and Bill wanders the rooms observing the hedonistic

activities. A close-up shot of Bill in his mask dissolves into several long takes that slowly track through the rooms and exhibit the sexual acts which occur in each. Bill is not seen in these shots, but the camera work suggests that the film takes on Bill's first-person point-of-view. Thus, spectators identify with Bill in a simultaneous process of estrangement that connects the audience to Bill's own visual observations of the orgy.

However, as much as the audience takes on Bill's subject position here, Mary Anne Doane argues that masquerade provides a feminine connectedness to a film's images by symbolically flaunting femininity. Doane discusses Freud's conceptualization of women as hieroglyphs; Freud states that women are like riddles who are "themselves the problem" and ostensibly beyond men's comprehension (qtd. in Doane 74). Instead, Doane considers hieroglyphs as an iconic sign which attaches the signifier to the signified more closely than phonetic language (75). Since cinema is composed of iconic images, Doane associates the cinematic image with femininity and women's closeness to it (77). She goes on to discuss women as being connected to the female body because whereas men fetishize the female's ostensible genital lack and become voyeurs, women connect with their "lack" naturally (78). According to H el ene Cixous, "more so than men who are coaxed toward social success, toward sublimation, women are body" (qtd. in Doane 79). In other words, the male gaze concerns mastering the image, but the female gaze interconnects women with the feminine image.

Doane then conceptualizes two forms of gendered identifications for women: the transvestite or the masquerade. To a greater extent than women, men are locked in their gender roles; male transvestites are considered farcical, but women can wear men's clothes and maintain their sexuality. For Doane, "the transvestite adopts the sexuality of the other—the woman becomes a man in order to attain the necessary distance from the image. Masquerade, on

the other hand, involves a realignment of femininity, the recovery, or more accurately, simulation, of the missing gap or distance” (82). The transvestite rejects her connectedness to the body through male apparel, but the masquerade conceals female identity and privileges the body. Vaughan claims that “whereas Doane views masquerade as responsible for masking the female identity, [*Eyes Wide Shut*] views it as the necessary distraction for the gaze so as to liberate the identity” (par 7). This distraction works to provide greater connectedness for spectators by neutralizing identity to the body, but Bill’s investigative first-person gaze simulates the voyeuristic distance that Mulvey originally articulates. Mulvey states that “the man controls the film fantasy and also arises as the representative of power” (437), but Bill’s inactivity and obliviousness during the orgy suggests that he has no power in a sequence that indulges in scopophilic fantasy. He does not master the sexual images, nor does he connect with them in his confusion. The combination of the point-of-view shot and masquerade generates an alienation affect because of the sequence’s use of feminine connectivity and masculine mastery in a simultaneous process. Although spectators see the fiction through Bill’s male gaze, it is the masquerade which conceptualizes his point-of-view as a female gaze, which further castrates Bill.

Yet, the masquerade’s participants also exhibit reciprocal gazes which meet the camera lens and amplify the spectator’s alienating position alongside Bill. At several moments during the blessing ritual, the camera cuts to groups of masked individuals facing the camera lens. Their eyes are not visible behind the masks, which completely neutralize their individual identities during the ceremony. However, as the masquerade’s pseudo-priest “blesses” the prostitutes, Bill makes eye contact with two participants on the grand foyer’s upper balcony. Of the two characters, only one makes direct eye contact with the lens since the other participant wears a



mask with sullen eyes holes that shadows any eye contact. Much like Bill and Alice's aforementioned reciprocal gazes, the participant's glare marks an alienating encounter between the image and the spectator. The masked character's observant eyes are widely open and stand out in the *mise-en-scene*, and his gaze shifts from the ritual to meet Bill's gaze. Subsequently, the spectator further identifies with Bill's unstable, castrated subject position which places him in a subservient position to the participant's unsettling glare. By recognizing Bill, the orgy's participants convey their authority over him throughout the sequence. The film privileges the indoctrinated members' gazes, since they have the ability to surveil and identify outsiders. Consequently, the spectator recognizes his/her position as an ignorant observer aimlessly following an opaque chain of events, and at best feeling as though he/she is intrusively peering into a secret society's furtive actions. When Bill is questioned about his membership, asked for a second password, and told to remove his mask, he is at the mercy of the participants' numerous gazes and made the object to be looked at. Whereas the masquerade begins as a furtive spectacle, this sentiment shifts when Bill becomes a spectacle of infiltration for the secret society. Once again, Bill is situated between active subjectivity and passive objectivity to alienate spectators from a conventional immersion into the film.

Interestingly, it is a sexualized female participant who ostensibly takes on a more active role than Bill when she saves him from the repercussions of his intrusion. During Bill's trial, she claims that she is willing to redeem Bill, but the film refrains from explaining the particulars of his redemption when the leader vaguely questions her as to whether she "understands what [she] is taking upon [herself] by doing this." Regardless of what this punishment may be, the scene positions the woman as an active participant with more control than the male subject. Mulvey defines narrative cinema's conventional passive female character as "an indispensable element of

spectacle... yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story-line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation” (436). However, this mysterious woman complicates Mulvey’s originally passive female object. Kubrick playfully depicts her subversive agency in this scene by exposing her naked body for male pleasure, but also gives her agency by having her save the film’s subject. During Bill’s trial, the film cuts to an image of her on the upper balcony as she intervenes in his punishment. The camera quickly zooms in for medium shot of her body, which presents her breasts frontally towards the camera as part of a spectacle. On a visual level, she is a conventional female object that invites erotic spectacle into the scene, but she is also taking an active role in the narrative by saving Bill to prolong his unreliable subjectivity. She is a liminal object because her conflicting role as an active spectacle, and Bill remains powerless and passive compared to her. However, her activeness is temporary. Later, when Bill’s patient, Victor Ziegler (Sydney Pollack), insists that the whole sequence was a sham, the secret society’s masculine dominance through their collective surveilling gaze is re-asserted.

But to assert that the masquerade and the mysterious woman solely subvert Mulvey’s notions would be overlooking Bill’s castration anxiety, which is diluted by the male subject demystifying her ostensible genital lack. Mulvey states that “the male unconscious has two avenues of escape from this castration anxiety: preoccupation with the re-enactment of the original trauma (investigating the woman...), counterbalanced by the... saving of the guilty object” (438). Bill affirms Mulvey’s first avenue of escape by observing the masquerade’s female participants. His dual position as subject/object places him in a castrated position and by investigating the masked women, he is diluting his own anxieties. Spectators are given his ocular perspective in order to “structure the film around a main controlling figure with whom the

spectator can identify” (437). However, as it has been shown, Bill is not the conventional controlling figure of narrative cinema, particularly during the masquerade sequence in which he is equally objectified by other gazes. Instead, it is the mysterious woman—whose body is equally sexualized—who saves the guilty object, Bill. Mulvey’s avenues of escape are equally portrayed in this sequence, but they exist in ways that both affirm and subvert the process. Femininity is given an active position through the mysterious woman’s actions, but Bill’s investigative subjectivity maintains her sexualisation. The scene produces ambiguity as to whether the film is seeking to immerse or distance spectators through the masquerade’s opaque depiction of the gaze and Bill’s place within it.

In order to explain the masquerade’s opacity, Victor confesses his participation in the masquerade, but his diction inscribes a discourse of surveillance highlighting the secret society’s mastery over Bill. Victor states that he “was at the house” and that he “saw everything that happened.” He guides the conversation by questioning Alex as to what he was doing at the house and begins to explain why men were following him the day following the party. Victor insists that the woman who supposedly sacrificed herself for Bill’s freedom was a prostitute who coincidentally overdosed the following day. The sacrifice was apparently a sham and most of what occurred was staged to scare Bill, but these assertions come from a side character who is potentially untrustworthy. This sequence is significant because it gives equal value to what Victor “saw,” and it muddles what Bill—and the spectators—saw at the masquerade. Victor confirms that his men were following Bill and that Nick was forcefully removed from his hotel room, but Nick’s safety and the prostitute’s cause of death remain uncertain. During the masquerade, identity is reduced to the body through the use of masks, but Victor’s assertions give the masquerade a new, albeit limited, identity through Victor’s alternative perspective.

Although it cannot be certain whether Victor was the masked character gazing at Bill on the mansion's balcony, Victor's revelations provide the only alternative means of reinterpreting Bill's reading of the evening.

Regardless of whose perceptions are correct, the purpose of their conflict is to illustrate that *Eyes Wide Shut* is a film dedicated to assessing the reciprocal gaze's affective consequences on subjectivity and spectatorship. The film incorporates Mulvey's original unilateral gaze for male pleasure in its introduction, during Bill's fantasies where he sees Alice making love to the naval officer, and his investigative gazing during the orgy. In the introductory scene, a long shot depicts Alice stripping before the camera to reveal her bare buttocks and accommodate the scopophilic pleasures of the male gaze. Tim Kreider argues that this shot is included to minimally satiate the audience's expectations that the film will be "sexy." Kreider notes that the film's contemporary critics were most concerned that the film was not sexy enough. Instead, "the title appears like a rebuke, telling us that we're not really seeing what we're staring at. In other words, *Eyes Wide Shut* is not going to be about sex" (41). Alternatively, the film almost exclusively centres its attention on instances where the gaze meets the spectator's in a subversive moment where the film explicitly addresses them and asserts its narrative dominance over them, much like Bill is at the mercy of the story he has little subjective control over.

Thus, it is no mistake that spectators follow Bill's unreliable subjectivity only to have his observations muddled the following day. Reciprocal gazing becomes a cinematic tool for alienating Bill and the film's spectators, but it also serves as a symptomatic indication of the film's ability to reconfigure and negotiate what Bill perceives. The film provides a subject for spectators to follow and immerse themselves into the film's mysterious plot, but the film's logic and conflicting perspectives operate to simultaneously distance spectators from a full

understanding of the film. Women are also objectified throughout the film, and the film privileges Bill's voyeuristic perspective in instances like the orgy and Bill's medical examinations, which suggests that the film also upholds the conventions of the male gaze. *Eyes Wide Shut* ambiguously depicts the male gaze as an immersive device while simultaneously subverting identification through Bill's status as an unreliable subject. The film neither fully supports nor rejects Mulvey's notion of the gaze, and the result is an alienation affect emanating from the reciprocal gazes recurring throughout the film. Thus, the film's paradoxical title reveals its meaning when understood in relation to these conflicting gazes. "Eyes Wide Shut" suggests that the film's hedonistic images provoke voyeurism that would typically be viewed from the safe distance between the spectator and the cinematic screen. However, as much as the term "wide" implies scopophilic excess towards what is being seen, the contradictory use of the term "shut" implies that their voyeurism is being denied, or at least subverted. During the masquerade, Bill's shift from observer to spectacle acts as a symbolic rejection of his voyeurism; they shut his previously open eyes by reconfiguring the gaze onto him.

*Eyes Wide Shut* was Kubrick's final film and it appropriately incorporates the Kubrick glare which recurred throughout his corpus and reappears in Bill's emotional downfall while in the taxi. Although it is not always used in the film, it is echoed through the film's numerous reciprocal gazes. Indeed, it is a film about gazing and one that, however unintentional, celebrates Kubrick's continual ability to return the gaze to his audience and alienate their expectations. However, while *Eyes Wide Shut* commentates on a recurring visual alienation affect throughout Kubrick's corpus, *2001: A Space Odyssey* focuses on alienating cyborg figures which return the gaze in order to reconsider the cinematic structure as an alienating spectacle.

Cyborgs and the Immersive Divide in *2001: A Space Odyssey*

The previous two chapters have focused on how Kubrick propagates his alienating style between his films and the spectators. *2001: A Space Odyssey* does not deviate from this trend, but the film also expands the scope of Kubrick's alienating style by commenting on the cinematic structure in general. By "cinematic structure," I refer specifically to Mulvey's conception of cinematic projection as a liminal position between stillness and movement (*Death 24x 19*). The stillness/movement binary conflates with similar binaries affiliated with cinema including its illusory presentation of life through its paradoxical use of inanimate photos. The animate/inanimate binary extends beyond Mulvey's conceptualization and lends itself to an analysis of *2001*'s cyborg characters, the monoliths and HAL, and how they are simultaneously compelling and estranging. In conjunction with these characters, the film incorporates visceral affective experiences for spectators while diminishing narrative clarity through minimalist dialogue and an opaque plot.

Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* is a film largely defined by a split between human visceral drives, and mechanical narrative detachment. The film appears to privilege visceral images (including the psychedelic Stargate scene in the film's concluding segment, "Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite") as a means of creating an enigmatic affective experience which prompts immersion in the film. Instead, Kubrick is more concerned with providing a strong visceral experience over narrative meaning, as evidenced in his assertion that the Stargate sequence's "meaning has to be found on a sort of visceral, psychological level rather than in a specific literal interpretation" (qtd. in Grant 81-82). Given Kubrick's statement, an examination into *2001*'s narrative may seem superfluous in a film explicitly dedicated to its affective experience, but the emphasis on experience at the expense of interpretive meaning underscores an intersection

reminiscent of the split between first and second generation Lacanian film theories underlying the Kurbickian corpus. Considered in this context, *2001: A Space Odyssey* integrates cinematic immersion through Kubrick's focus on visceral experience, while its opaque narrative destabilizes the audience's expectation that a film's narrative should be comprehensible (Grant 83). As previously discussed, it is this Lacanian theoretical split which causes Kubrick's films to inhabit such a liminal and reputedly cold position between cinematic immersion and distance. In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, no trope better signifies Kubrick's liminal style than the cyborg, as it too is symbolic of a liminal space between human and machine, as Donna Haraway defines in her seminal work on cyborgs (1). By examining the cyborg trope in relation to Kubrick's cold style, the monoliths and HAL (Douglas Rain) reveal themselves to be symbolic metaphors for the affectively cold cinematic style that Kubrick employs in his films. HAL and the monoliths are the most prominent examples of this trope, and the two symbolize Kubrick's cinematic style in their ability to immerse and simultaneously distance their diegetic spectators, as well as the audience.

To provide a theoretical context on the cinematic structure *2001* symbolically exhibits, Mulvey, in *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, argues that cinema is a liminal composition which consists of still photographs and the illusion of movement. Mulvey also considers the technological advancements of the 1990's as an axiom for her reflections on cinema's past. For instance, Mulvey illustrates that DVDs transformed the conventional movement/stillness model of projection by numerically encoding films onto discs, which allow spectators to pause a film and admire a still frame's mise-en-scene. Doing so highlights the still image's presence amidst the illusion of movement (21-22). Although Mulvey provides a retrospective observation of a classical cinema which predates numerical encoding, her

observations remain applicable to Kubrick's cinema as the vast majority of his films were constructed under the original projector/still-image structure. As the title implies, cinema combines stillness and movement to form a textual format constructed from two binary positions. However, cinema's perceptual movement is a mechanistic illusion created by still images moving through a projector at twenty-four frames per second (19). Mulvey then conflates stillness with death and movement with life, stating that "for all human and organic life, time marks the movement along a path to death, that is, to the stillness that represents the transformation of the animate into the inanimate" (31). Therefore, cinema is a liminal construct embodied by the inorganic illusion of movement propagated by the mechanistic use of a projector.

With DVD's ability to freeze frames and fetishize still images, Mulvey identifies two types of spectators who use this newfound ability for various purposes: possessive and pensive spectators. The possessive spectator freezes the image to fetishize stillness and disrupt a film's fictive wholeness (171), whereas the pensive spectator freezes the image to reflect upon cinema's underlying stillness (195-96). When considering Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, pensive spectatorship is particularly pertinent to an examination of the film's cyborg figures because just as cinema combines symbols of life and death, cyborgs expand into the human threshold regardless of their inanimate status. In a pensive examination of *2001*, liminality is most evident in the organic/inorganic makeup of the film's cyborg characters. HAL and the monoliths are indeed the film's most interesting and enigmatic figures; in fact, numerous critics such as Robert Kolker, Michael Mateas, and Christopher Rowe have pointed out the fact that HAL has "more feelings than any of the human characters inhabiting the film" (Kolker, Introduction 9; Mateas 106; Rowe 44). Thus, these cyborgs are compelling figures which help to immerse spectators



within the film as captivating enigmas, but their enigmatic nature disrupts the narrative's clarity because of their opacity. For example, the film depicts monoliths on various locations throughout the universe, but their origin and fundamental purpose are not clearly explained to the spectator. By the film's end, spectators only know that their transmissions emanate from somewhere near Jupiter. Therefore, there is a marked dissonance between the spectator's immersion through compelling images and characters, and the cyborgs' ambiguities.

Harraway best defines the cyborg as a "hybrid between machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (149). For Harraway, the cyborg is "a creature in a post-gender world" as a sexless being that largely resists being defined under the strict binaries that often organize subjectivity; instead, "the relation between organism and machine has been a border war" to which the cyborg arises as the liminal figure of this battle (150). Harraway also writes of cyborgs as the "illegitimate offspring" of patriarchal, capitalist society which are incapable of autonomy because they are always constructed by humanity and can therefore only mimic humanity's desires (151). According to Harraway, the cyborg is a human construction, sculpted for humanity's purposes and under our influence. As previously stated, the cyborg equates to the cinematic structure in its liminal stillness/movement, death/life composition, and this association is further reinforced by cinema's inherent dependence on human creativity for its construction.

However, Kubrick presents the human-constructed cyborg, HAL, alongside alternative cyborgs, the monoliths, which appear to encompass a similar liminal position between human and machine, but which have a comprehensive influence over humanity and its evolution. Thus, Kubrick's film presents a reciprocal relationship between human and cyborg, with each capable of affecting the other. Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg note that affect theory often

examines the “interlacing of the human/nonhuman binary, their phenomenologies and post-phenomenologies of embodiment and a body’s capacity for extension,” including the “assemblages of the human/machine/inorganic [in fields] such as cybernetics” (2). In Kubrick’s film, the human/machine binary is not embodied solely in the monoliths phenomenologies, but can be identified by their extensions into the human condition. In his novel *2001: A Space Odyssey* (concurrently written during Kubrick’s production of the film), Arthur C. Clarke describes the monolith as an educational device which prompts the genesis of weaponry after a man-ape named Moon-Watcher realizes that a stone can be used as an extension for its own power (21). Human advancements are thus the result of a seemingly mechanistic figure which pushes humans into advanced, and increasingly violent, relationships with technology. Although HAL is constructed by humans, the film’s logic insists that machinery has a stake in humanity’s construction as well, further reinforcing their reciprocal relationship. Hence, Kubrick’s film is similarly constructed: mechanistic control is manifested by the compelling images which endorse a visceral and immersive engagement from the spectator, while the opaque narrative obligates spectators to think through the plot’s enigmas, thereby subverting narrative cinema’s conventions and displacing spectator’s from a simple understanding of the film’s plot.

In order to better understand the monoliths’ symbolic relationship to the cinematic structure, it is helpful to turn to Lacan’s ideas regarding the affectively ocular relationship humanity has with the enigmatic monoliths. Lacan states that “the relation between appearance and being... is not in the straight line but in the point of light—the point of irradiation, the play of light, fire, the source from which reflections pour forth. Light may travel in a straight line, but it is refracted, diffused, it floods, it fills—the eye is a sort of bowl—it flows over, too, it necessitates, around the ocular bowl, a whole series of organs, mechanisms, defences” (94). Two

lines are articulated here, one for vision and one for light. Light provides the Symbolic Order with a screen which subjects must encounter through their line of sight; the line of sight subsequently identifies an image from the point of light. The image and the screen are synonymous in that it is the meeting place between light and vision (*Four* 91). Two vantage points underlie ocular perception and suggest that our visual experiences with the world are affective in that they rely on each other to construe signifiers in the Symbolic Order. In many ways, Lacan's description of light and vision evoke cinema's discursive structure. Numerous still images are passed through a projector onto a screen, to which the screen reflects these images back to the audience for their vision to process and comprehend signifiers amidst the refractions of light.

When considering Lacan's insights regarding light and vision, Kubrick's monoliths can be conceptualized as symbolic cinematic structures which reflect light and affect the film's various diegetic spectators. In the film's introductory segment, "The Dawn of Man," the monolith is presented as an object of unknown wonder to a group of nomadic man-apes far predating homo sapiens. While the man-apes admire the monolith, the film cuts to a close up shot of the monolith, angled from the man-apes' upward looking point-of-view. The monolith foregrounds the image, but atop of the monolith the sun is depicted as the explicit source of light in the mise-en-scene. Coincidentally, much as Lacan discusses light as a refractory line dependent on reflection and configuration, the moon is included in the image's background, as a crescent shape reflection from the image's point of light. All of these images equate to cinema's technological reality; that is, light and reflection as quintessential to the cinematic experience. The foregrounded monolith takes up the majority of the image, its square, outwardly protruding shape bears an uncanny resemblance to the cinematic screen which is contemporaneously being

viewed upon by the audience. As Moon-Watcher advances humanity through his discovery of weaponry (demonstrated through his use of an animal bone as a club), the scene quickly and abruptly cuts to a shot of the protruding monolith and the sun. Kubrick's editing emphasizes the link between the monolith and Moon-Watcher's actions, as it is a cinematographic means of conveying the fact that Moon-Watcher's discovery is a result of the monolith's probing. This quick cut to the monolith expresses Kubrick's belief that cinema has an affective dimension to it, one which can provide the visceral experiences Kubrick was seeking to create in *2001* (qtd in Grant 81-82). While the man-apes initially respond with aggression and caution, their later engagement with the monolith illustrates a somewhat contradictory immersion with the cyborg figure, one founded on fear and amazement. Their fluctuating and contradictory reactions are discordant with each other and exhibit an alienation affect that is prompted by shifting feelings of immersion and distance to a single inanimate object.

The monolith is depicted as a spectacle to the film's primitive spectators, the man-apes, and their simultaneous feelings of awe and discomfort are correlative to the film's non-diegetic spectators. As the man-apes gather around the monolith, their reactive screams and mannerisms resemble their responses to an earlier confrontation with a band of rival man-apes seeking control of their watering hole. Thus, to the short-sighted, preconscious man-apes, the monolith is potentially as hostile as anything else and presents a possible threat to them. However, their initial screams and fear progressively dissipate into an explicit display of wonder and intrigue at the mysterious object. This becomes fully evident after they slowly approach the monolith and touch it in silence and admiration. Little do the man-apes know that "their minds [are] being probed, their bodies mapped, their reactions studied, their potentials evaluated" (Clarke 14). The man-apes' bewilderment towards the unknown monolith is intended to mirror the audience's

curiosity concerning the cyborg figure. Barry Keith Grant notes that Gyorgy Ligeti's accompanying score, "Aux Aetura," helps to create an uneasy and haunting sense of wonder, but he is less certain as to whether this music is diegetic as well (79-80). Irena Paulis notes that Kubrick's use of such tracks created an unsettling experience for the audience. Such an experience is in line with Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler's beliefs during the Classical Hollywood era that film music was overtly conventional and lacked artistic intrigue. However, Kubrick's film, albeit produced in a different era, resists these conventions (103). Kubrick's audio-visual dissonance is meant to distract the audience from the conventional Hollywood viewing experience, to which Ligeti's music serves to displace the spectator's emotions from the intriguing images onscreen (103). Thus, the man-apes' initial uneasiness and simultaneous sense of wonder accordingly correlate with the audience's viewing experience.

As the film progresses, Dr. Floyd's (William Sylvester) later encounter with the monolith is depicted as an equally distracting and emotionally alienating experience. In order to investigate a "Tycho Magnetic Anomaly One" (TMA 1), Dr. Floyd and a team of researchers travel to the moon only to discover that the anomaly is a monolith similar to film's earlier figure. While examining the monolith, Dr. Floyd reaches out to the monolith in a gesture reminiscent of Moon-Watcher's earlier encounter. However, although these two sequences appear similar, the entrancement/alienation pattern is reversed as it is after the researchers marvel at the monolith's spectacle that they are tortured by way of a discordant screech that disturbs the researchers, as well as the audience. Their discomfort is clearly illustrated as they grasp their helmets in an attempt to muffle the screeching sound emanating from the monolith. If there is any uncertainty as to whether Ligeti's score is purely nondiegetic or equally audible to the characters, the screeching sound serves as an explicit indication of the monolith's affective

control over spectators and the film's characters. Once again, the film cuts to the image of the monolith protruding outwards toward the sun, and the screech continues. In her interpretation of the screech, Marcia Landy states that "the sound disrupts and possibly diverts the spectator from the forgetfulness engendered by conventional cinematic forms" (94). The screech is discordant to a film which Kubrick claims to focus on visceral experience, thereby making the screech a subversive aspect of his film. Much like Kubrick's cold, alienating style, the monolith symbolizes the allure of Kubrick's cinema while maintaining its need to distance spectators at moments of intense immersion.

In both of these examples, the monoliths demonstrate an affective ability to control humans and shape humanity's future. As Grant points out, it is uncertain "whether the monoliths actually determine human evolution and history, or merely inspire, or just observe us" (80). Regardless of what these monoliths exactly do (although the novel suggests that the monoliths have a stake in probing and dispensing information into the man-apes' minds) (Clarke 15-16), there is a marked extension between the mechanistic monolith and human advancement; in other words, monoliths clearly affect humanity in Kubrick's film. The monoliths are quite enigmatic, which may subvert any assurance that they are indeed cyborgs, but Harraway insists that technological boundaries are "permeable between tool and myth, instrument and concept, historical systems of social relations historical anatomies of possible bodies, including objects of knowledge" (160). The monolith could ascribe itself to many of these binary identifications, but no single phenomenology can be identified for the monolith. All that is known is its ambiguous relationship to humanity. In "The Dawn of Man," the monolith affects humanity's development of weaponry and consciousness, which goes on to influence futuristic technology (signified through a graphic match between Moon-Watcher's airborne bone and a spacecraft) (Grant 77). In

“TMA 1,” humanity’s resulting evolution is ambiguous, but the following segment, “Jupiter Mission,” suggests that artificial intelligence is the monolith’s resulting affect over humanity. However, artificial intelligence is depicted as being shaped by humanity and capable of shaping and controlling human interests, further manifesting border confrontations between the human and machine thresholds.

Thus, HAL 9000 is the resulting cyborg figure of the film’s third segment, “Jupiter Mission,” because of its mechanistic body and intelligence and its conflicting display of agency and consciousness. HAL’s liminal position is one which more readily corresponds to Mulvey’s conceptions of the cinematic structure. Much like cinema provides the illusion of movement by processing still images through a projector, HAL manifests an illusion of human intelligence through integrating separate mechanistic capabilities. Michael Mateas notes that numerous microdomains of knowledge exist in AI research and that common-sense reasoning is necessary to create a machine as capable as HAL (107). Instead, AI systems typically focus on limited subproblems which they specialize in, such as facial recognition or chess playing (108). Mateas states that HAL presents a “powerful cinematic representation of AI precisely because he simultaneously demonstrates general intelligence while keeping visible the AI subproblems” (107). Thus, HAL is fragmented by smaller circuits of knowledge, which come together to form the illusion of humanity. Considered alongside the cinematic metaphor, HAL’s composition is one which equates to the stillness/movement binary that makes up cinema’s liminal illusion. Much like HAL is constructed from numerous subproblems to create the illusion of humanity, films are composed of numerous still shots to create the illusions of life and movement. The two bodies are interrelated and serve to provide commentary on Kubrick’s cold, alienating style.

HAL’s symbolic relationship to cinema is made particularly evident during his

“lobotomy” scene, which depicts various images synonymous with cinematic projection and lighting. In this scene, Dave Bowman (Keir Dullea) enters HAL’s logic memory centre in order to disconnect HAL’s higher thinking functions. The lobotomy scene also illustrates the most explicit evidence of HAL’s inorganic consciousness when it calmly implores Dave to stop, with statements such as: “I honestly think you ought to think things over,” and “I’m afraid, Dave.” As Dave enters the room, the circular door projects some white light from another room into the predominantly red-lit space and the metaphor is clearly organic, as Marcia Landy points out that HAL is the embodiment of a “computer brain” who acts as “the brain and nervous system of the ship” (95). Along the walls are numerous terminals with numbered sockets designated for HAL’s certain functions, such as the memory and logic terminals. As separate terminals exist to constitute HAL’s subjectivity, we are reminded again of HAL’s inorganic makeup. Yet, up to this point, he has been one of the most human-like characters. In keeping with this anatomical metaphor, HAL’s logic memory centre acts as the brain, whereas the various camera eyes appearing throughout the ship serve as sensory receptors for this brain. The logic memory centre evokes images of a projector. The room is linearly constructed with light seemingly emanating from all the walls. The white light emanating from the doorway brings to mind the light which projects onto a cinematic screen for the audience. When the camera cuts to a close-up of HAL’s camera eye, Dave’s reflection can clearly be seen because of the bright, circular light source that emanates from the doorway. The lens, the shape of the room, and the circular light source all evoke a space used for projection. In the film, this centre serves as the Cartesian space for HAL’s mind, one which has been constructed by humans for human ends. Similarly, the cinematic projector illuminates constructed texts onto a cinematic screen for human observation. These connections illuminate the dual relationship these cyborgs have to humans; that is, they are both



mechanisms constructed by and for humans, and in the case of Kubrick's cinema, the two can confront human expectations.

While aboard the *Discovery*, Drs. Bowman and Frank Poole (Gary Lockwood) observe HAL's personality in a manner similar to how earlier characters observe the monoliths. HAL's human voice and anxieties regarding the mission illustrate human aspects of its character. At the same time, it is built as a machine that is expected to mechanically identify issues with the spacecraft and follow human commands. When HAL reports an error with the ship's AE-35 unit, mission control later determines, under the evaluation of a twin 9000 unit, that the ship is in fact functioning properly. They assume that HAL, on the other hand, has made an error, which is depicted as an unfathomable occurrence. HAL's diagnosis is simple: it is a human error. This theory reaffirms an inherent view of mechanistic superiority previously established in the monolith sequences. In humanity's attempt to create the perfect cyborg, HAL's perfection as AI is the fundamental flaw of its character; HAL overtly transgresses the human threshold of the human/machine binary when it reveals its own anxieties regarding the mission. A paradox consequently arises which implies that achieving a harmoniously crafted human/machine is the culmination of cybernetics, while also potentially being its fundamental malfunction. HAL's success or failure is always interconnected with the humans who constructed it. During Dave and Frank's mutinous conversation in the EVA pod, both characters demonstrate confusion regarding HAL's status as a machine or human. As interesting as its malfunction may be, they fear it may jeopardize their safety. In connection with the film's characters' previous encounters with monoliths, fear and fascination permeate their observations of HAL. Just as the monoliths affect humans, HAL's mysteriousness arises from its extension beyond the machine threshold and into human identity.

In some ways, HAL complicates an argument which suggests that Kubrick's films are cold texts with little concern for human emotion. This is because HAL's mechanistic personality may seem cold and operational, but its ability to integrate numerous subproblems as AI creates its illusory sense of humanity, which grasps the spectator's attention. As Robert Kolker suggests, "despite the fact that many critics use the word 'cold' when talking of [Kubrick's] films, they are in fact on fire with ideas" (Introduction 8). By this definition, it is possible to read HAL as an embodiment of Kubrick's ideas on cinema. HAL is easily the film's most fascinating character because of its conflicting mechanistic and human drives. As stated in the film, much is expected of HAL's AI, as it is a unit which can "reproduce, though some experts still prefer to use the word mimic, most of the activities of the human brain, and with incalculably greater speed and reliability." HAL's ability to calculate and reason is depicted as a cold, mechanistic process distant from human emotion. However, as HAL begins to express anxieties regarding the mission, HAL's character becomes an intriguing insight into technology and its potential to take on human characteristics. For instance, with the use of a fisheye lens, Kubrick privileges HAL's subjectivity by providing a point-of-view shot as it observes Dave's drawing. Susana Hayward indicates that point-of-view shots "affect the spectator-text relation whereby the spectator feels positioned alongside the character's subjectivity and so identifies with the character" (401).

Given Hayward's observations, HAL is given human characteristics through Kubrick's cinematography, a clear indication of his desire to make HAL a compelling mix between human and machine. This combination coincides with Dziga Vertov's notion of the "kino eye," which he uses to traverse the human boundary embody mechanistic qualities. The kino eye theory expounds that cameras provide humans with a new means of seeing the world they film.

The camera is an extension of what the human eye sees, but what it reproduces allows for editing to shape how and in what order images are presented to spectators. While commenting on the camera's cyborg characteristics, Vertov states: "I am kino-eye, I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you the world as only I can see it" (qtd. in Schuab par 9). HAL's resemblance to a mechanical eye further hints at its liminal status as a cyborg; however, in this instance, it is the machine that conversely appropriates human eyesight as a means of crossing into the human threshold. If coldness is a term used to describe Kubrick's cinema, HAL is the white hot "idea" that Kolker speaks of, as it is through HAL that spectators find a compelling and immersive character who is neither human or machine to contemplate during the film.

As compelling as HAL is, its actions simultaneously work to disorient the audience from their expectations of machinery and its ostensibly subordinate relationship with humanity, much like the film's narrative disorients audience expectations regarding conventional Hollywood narratives. As Grant argues, *2001: A Space Odyssey* is a film which seeks to diminish Hollywood's conventionally over-the-top depictions of heroism and sexualized characters; instead, these characters are sexless and dominated by androgynous technology. Kubrick avoids a star-studded cast that helped make some of his other films, including *Paths of Glory* (1957) and *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), successful so that they would not overshadow the film's psychedelic experience (78). Instead, the film often relies on affective experiences, such as the man-apes exaggerated sounds and gestures around the monolith, to convey their reactions to the audience. Similarly, Landy states that the "importance of affect is clearly conveyed in the focused and sensory-motor behaviour of the apes" (90). These sensory motor behaviours are meant to traverse the mechanistic bounds of conventional cinematic narration. Rather than words, actions are used as the principle means by which artificially moving images extend their affective reach

to the spectator and produce meaning. However, what makes this alienating is its break from the narrative clarity which typically shapes most Hollywood films. For example, spectators are not certain what the monoliths are, why HAL malfunctions, or what exactly occurs following Dr. Floyd's discordant encounter with the monolith; in other words, many questions are left unanswered. Yet, as Kubrick asserts, the film is not so much about narrative as it is about experience. Much like HAL's narrative of perfection and objectivity is thwarted in the film, Kubrick's emphasis on images and viewing experience destabilizes audience expectations for a classical film narrative.

In exchange for HAL's perfection following its lobotomy, the monolith resurges as a cinematic metaphor which reflects light for the purpose of conveying an affective experience to the audience. In this segment, the monolith foregrounds a vista depicting Jupiter across the bottom of the screen; the comparatively larger planet lies beneath a linear series of smaller planets. The listlessly spinning monolith is initially camouflaged by space's corresponding darkness. The monolith only becomes visible in its contact with Jupiter's light source. Following its revelation, Kubrick's psychedelic Stargate sequence begins as a chromatic display of lights and images. The planets' alignment is pertinent to this scene as it connotes an alignment which has, until this moment, been progressively unveiled by the film's cyborg characters. The monoliths introduce spectators to cyborgs which are beyond the comprehension and control of humanity. HAL is a cyborg character who only provides an illusory sense of control for humans through its ability to follow orders, but underlying its operational skills are its own goals to subvert human control. These affective cyborgs continually resist humanity's extension into the machine threshold, but the monoliths continually extend themselves into humanity's consciousness. Humans appear to have only reactionary control over cyborgs, as is evidenced

when Dave lobotomizes HAL upon realizing its “malfunction.” With human’s lack of control, *2001*’s filmic universe is thus predominantly regulated by cyborgs, and his own films evoke this cybernetic state of control over his spectators through the use of psychedelic special effects in the “stargate” sequence.

In terms of its immersive qualities, Kubrick’s stargate sequence is *2001: A Space Odyssey*’s climactic aesthetic as it relinquishes any need for narrative relevance in exchange for providing a purely visceral experience for the audience. As Christopher Rowe posits, “HAL 9000’s verbal regression to a state of infancy and eventual silence signals the film’s departure from logocentrism; indeed, apart from the pre-recorded message from Floyd, the computer’s words are the last spoken in the film” (46). Thus, the stargate sequence transitions to a purely affective experience for the audience in which Dave is a cipher for spectators (47). Whereas conventional narrative films may provide spectators with a relative sense of mastery over their viewing experience, the stargate sequence resists any meaningful interpretations relevant to the film’s opaque plot. Kubrick’s desire for a film which provides audiences with an experience is fulfilled, but it is an experience that grants control to the film itself. Kubrick depicts this journey through the stargate from Dave’s point-of-view; what the audience sees is an inexplicable pattern of colored lights advancing in the direction of the spectator. In this moment of experience, the film continually cuts to close-up images of Dave’s face as he simultaneously partakes in this visceral expedition. Thus, this point-of-view sequence is not intended to be directed solely at the spectator as it is a shared experience between the audience and Dave. These continual cuts work to remind viewers of their subjective position as spectators as it is not enough to simply allow spectators to completely misrecognize themselves in the images being presented. In order to remind audiences of their subjectivity, the film implicates viewers into the text through

psychedelic images, but also disrupts this experience by situating it along cinematic editing which reminds spectators that their experience is being regulated by a cybernetic filmic text.

The film's final sequence in the mysterious and brightly lit room provides an additional avant-garde experience which relinquishes the conventional constraints of time and space used in conventional cinema. During this sequence, the camera continually occupies Dave's subjective position through point-of-view shots which illustrate reflexive observations of his own aging. These shifts in age are abrupt and succinct, illustrating a complete disregard for the conventions of time utilized in most films. As Mario Falsetto argues, spectators are always introduced to older versions of Dave from a point-of-view of his younger self which "subverts the viewer's understanding of narrative space and time by violating such normally inviolable techniques as the conventional shot/reaction shot in order to convey a sense of Bowman's transcendent experience" (qtd. in Grant 80). Kubrick uses this sequence as a means of flouting audience expectations and taking control of their cinematic experience. The scene depicts an experience outside the parameters of what is deemed to be conventional. If spectators wish to partake in this avant-garde experience, they are dependent upon Kubrick's film and his experimental editing; thus, Kubrick's cinema has a paternal affective relationship over the audience through his ability to disorient a spectator's preconceptions of cinematic time and space.

Indeed, the final scene is remarkably telling of Kubrick's thoughts regarding the links between the monoliths, space, and cinematic experience. After the star child's conception following Dave's final glimpse into the monolith, the camera slowly tracks into the monolith's surface. As the cinematic screen is slowly consumed by the monolith's darkness, the film transitions to an image of outer space and earth, which the star child overlooks. The connections between these shots are revelatory of an inherent link between Kubrick's

examination of outer space and cinematic space. Just as the cybernetic monolith evokes a paternal role in advancing humanity, time, and the film's plot, its conflation to cinema suggests that spectators are the subordinates of the cybernetic text which regulates their contemporaneous experiences. The film's images draw spectators in by virtue of their unconventionality, but the unconventional narrative serves to disengage immersion through its opacity. Thus, the sequence's unconventionality works to paradoxically immerse and estrange spectators, which consequently produces an alienating experience for the audience.

Therefore, Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* is as much a futuristic exploration of humanity's place in outer space as it is an exploration of the spectator's position in the auditorium's cinematic space. The film conflates cinema's liminal edifice with its two cyborg figures, the monoliths and HAL, in order to reflectively depict humanity's affective relationship with machines containing human characteristics. For both the monoliths and HAL, their ability to extend into humanity's consciousness is symbolic of cinema's ability to produce affects of various kinds for the audience. In doing so, Kubrick manages to create a metatextual filmic experience that equates the characters' alienating association with cyborgs to the audience's cinematic immersion. The film's alienating affect is produced by a negotiation between viewer expectations and the film's compelling images and themes. While the narrative is opaque and perplexing, Kubrick's emphasis on experience and visceral scenes subverts the narrative estrangement to create a unique alienation affect characteristic of Kubrick's cold cinematic style.

## Conclusion

Kubrick's alienating aesthetic is best defined by his films' various stains which return the gaze and force spectators to engage with the texts in a process that resists misrecognition. What I conclude here is a far cry from my initial observations that I assumed would form the bulk of my argument at the outset of my research. Initially, I focused on Freer's notion of the "Kubrick glare" recurring throughout Kubrick's corpus and how these instances illustrate disruptions in misrecognition for the audience. However, these extrapolations posited a unilateral understanding of alienation that limited the scope of my argument because of their inability to account for audience expectations and cinematic conventions. While researching the two Lacanian psychoanalytical theories, their conflicting conceptions regarding the gaze and immersion provided me with an epiphany which indicated that films are often affective experiences that could be destabilized by the meeting of these conflicting gazes. Rather than a unilateral system of alienation, Kubrick's cinema opened up to me as an exchange between the spectators' vision and his filmic stains, an exchange which overrules their ability to misrecognize themselves in the texts. Consequently, the Kubrick glare carries far more significant connotations of alienation when it is considered as an interactive experience that relies on the conflicting gazes of two opposing Lacanian theories. My examinations advanced in scope because of my newfound understanding of stains, which indicated that the explicit Kubrick glare was not Kubrick's only means of returning the gaze to his audience. Now, not only are his films understood as alienating, as it is now evident that his films are affective in their ability to engage the audience and implicate spectators into their own process of alienation during a screening.

Following an analysis of *A Clockwork Orange*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, conflicts between the first and second generation Lacanian film theories have been



shown to manifest themselves through various stains. In the midst of these conflicting Lacanian film theories, Kubrick's cinema builds upon their underlying presence while simultaneously intersecting these theories in a way which disorients the spectator's engagement with his films. Kubrick's films cater to the cinematic immersion that second generation Lacanian film theorists, such as McGowan and Copjec, argue for in order to identify moments where the image returns the gaze to remind spectators of their concurrent viewing process. At the same time, however, his films distance spectators from this immersion as a means of alienating them from the conventional filmic experience altogether. It is as if Kubrick calls on the spectators' immersion for the sake of alienating them from misrecognizing themselves in his films. There is a pervasive sense of distance and immersion occurring simultaneously, which is what ultimately constitutes Kubrick's cold, alienating style. This exchange signifies a reciprocal discourse between the film and spectator and denies any single side from experiencing effects from the other; instead, Kubrick's films and the spectators each bring something into this cinematic transaction which makes the exchange an affective experience.

Of course, this thesis has focused most of its attention on a sample of Kubrick's films in order to conceptualize Kubrick's alienating style from an affective approach that incorporates two conflicting gazes. As a conduit for further exploration, this theory can be applied to further assess Kubrick's alienating style in his other films, and/or perhaps the films of other directors. Doing so will help to illustrate the fact that films can build on cinematic conventions to resituate them in alienating contexts in ways that reject unilateral effects in exchange for affective experiences. For instance, Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) depicts the film's protagonist, Travis Bickle (Robert DeNiro), living alone and feeling isolated as a taxi driver in New York City. After purchasing weapons, Bickle performs an imagined pseudo-macho encounter with

himself while looking in a mirror; he questions: “You talking to me?” and proceeds to aim his handgun at the mirror. He responds to the imagined and non-existent dialogue with “Then who the hell you talkin’ to?” and “I’m the only one here.” This discourse with the mirror’s reflection provides a reflexive instance where the character appears to engage with the camera lens, which illusorily extends to the audience. Of course, the discourse is between Travis and his own image, but understood from an affective approach, the exchange implicates spectators into an image where Travis’s isolated apartment is a shared space. Travis’s isolation and discussion with himself can be understood as a stain which returns the gaze to the audience, much like Kubrick’s films often do.

Or consider Quentin Tarantino’s *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), in which Mr. Blonde (Vic Vega) tortures police officer Marvin Nash (Kirk Baltz) to Stealers Wheel’s “Stuck in the Middle with You.” The song’s upbeat and vibrant melody is described as a type “bubble-gum pop” by the film’s diegetic radio DJ, but the events simultaneously occurring work against the music’s cheerfulness. Instead, Mr. Blonde removes the cop’s ear with a razor blade and coldly talks into it after it is dismembered. Blonde’s approach to the interrogation is clearly cold-hearted, but there is something darkly comedic about Tarantino’s sequence as well. Blonde dances to the music and slashes at the cop’s face with precision and satisfaction. His nonchalant interrogation approach *may* normalize the scene’s brutality for some spectators. The scene’s conflicting elements are certainly uncomfortable given its subject matter; thus, there is something shocking about it—which might suggest that it achieves a desired affect, rather than alienating spectators. However, the very act of shocking the audience is somewhat alienating as the horrors being depicted situate spectators in the mindset of a madman unconventionally. It is shock with a dark comedic twist which makes the scene alienating and horror is depicted in a way that provokes no

clear-cut affect. This audio-visual dissonance parallels many of the examples discussed in Kubrick's films as it combines uplifting music while simultaneously illustrating repulsive images; the scene can be described as grotesque, one which provokes disgust and laughter to propagate a stain.

Whether these scenes from *Reservoir Dogs* and *Taxi Driver* illustrate the same alienating and cold style in Kubrick's films is unknown and exceeds the scope of this thesis. These are merely preliminary observations which indicate instances of stains appearing in the films of other directors, which thereby propagate affective experiences between the audience and cinematic screen. Perhaps my label for this gaze—the Kubrickian gaze—limits the scope of potential analysis by virtue of its ties to a single director. However, this gaze can also be labelled as the “affective gaze,” characterized by a film's ability to engage the spectator and the film's conflicting gazes. Also, while the Kubrickian gaze incites and exemplifies Kubrick's cold, alienating style, the affective gaze's purpose is relative to the film and director and may demonstrate diverse and much different cinematic styles from Kubrick's own.

However, this thesis has focused on the reciprocal engagement between spectators and cinematic texts as a way of rethinking Kubrick's cold, alienating style. Whereas other theorists, such as Kolker and Naremore, suggest that Kubrick's films convey alienation effects from the images to the audience, my argument has illuminated the ways in which images alone do not constitute Kubrick's alienating style. Although theorists like Kreider, who argues that *Eyes Wide Shut* flaunted the audience's preconceived notions of the film, argue that Kubrick's films flaunt expectations, they do not address his alienating aesthetic as being an affective encounter. Thus, Kubrick's films are cold, intellectual thrills that require cinematic misrecognition for alienation to ensue, and it is these three films which have best framed a discussion of Kubrick's style.

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