A VISION EXPRESSED THROUGH ADAPTATION:
STANLEY KUBRICK'S *LOLITA*, *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, AND *BARRY LYNDON*

Matthew K. Diedrich
University Undergraduate Fellow, 1986-1987
Texas A&M University
Department of English

APPROVED

Fellows Advisor: Claude L. Gibson

Honors Director: Laurie Canfield

ABSTRACT

Stanley Kubrick occupies an unusual position among modern filmmakers in that, even though he is known as a uniquely personal film artist, most of his films are essentially adaptations of literature. Yet Kubrick succeeds in imbuing these adaptations with his own personal artistic vision, which consists of a group of recurring themes and concerns and of the distanced, ironic tone through which they are expressed. Kubrick's central theme is the idea of man as an "ignoble savage"; that is, as an inherently evil being. Kubrick believes that man has based his social institutions on a false view of his own nature, and as a result those institutions will not perfect man, but destroy him. Only an acceptance of man's true nature can prevent the growth of corrupt societies such as those depicted in Kubrick's films. Besides the theme of the ignoble savage, Kubrick's films contain the recurring themes of deception and obsession with control. These themes are played against the detached and ironic tone that is Kubrick's trademark. Kubrick achieves this tone by denying the audience a realistic context and a set of realistic characters with whom to identify. He utilizes a mythic, artificial story structure and broadly drawn characters to distance the audience, then creates irony through the use of dialogue. Kubrick expresses his vision by making subtle changes in the works he adapts, changes which serve to alter the focus of the novel and place it more in line with Kubrick's world view. Thus, Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita becomes a social satire on the moral hypocrisy of modern America; Anthony Burgess' A Clockwork Orange becomes a bleak, cynical study

of human selfishness and political expediency; and William Makepeace Thackeray's Barry Lyndon becomes an indictment of the entire eighteenth-century social system. Each film is a new work of art which integrates the author's world view with Kubrick's own personal vision.

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INTRODUCTION

Stanley Kubrick occupies an unusual place among modern filmmakers. He has been called "the most important American filmmaker of the last two decades," and with good reason (Mast 432). Many of his films, most notably Dr. Strangelove and 2001: A Space Odyssey, are acknowledged classics of the cinema, while Kubrick himself has earned the reputation of a meticulous craftsman and auteur. He is one of the few film directors who can truly call his films "his": from the concept stage to the final editing stage, he oversees every facet of the production of his films. Each element, including the writing, set design, choice of music, choice of actors, lighting, and editing, bears his mark. Like many of history's great directors, he is the true "author" of his work, and as such possesses the right to place his name "above the title" (his latest film is being advertised as "Stanley Kubrick's" Full Metal Jacket). His works exhibit a consistent personal vision that identifies them as "pure Kubrick."

Yet despite this close association between the filmmaker and his films, there is one aspect of Kubrick's works which seems unusual for so noted a filmmaker: virtually all of them, including even the acknowledged classics, are adaptations. Every one of his projects since 1956 has been based on material from the literary medium. The Killing (1956) is based on the novel Clean Break by Lionel White; Paths of Glory (1958), on the novel by Humphrey Cobb; Spartacus (1960), on the novel by Howard Fast; Lolita (1962), on the novel by Vladimir Nabokov; Dr. Strangelove (1964), on the novel Red Alert by Peter George; 2001 (1968), on the short story "The

Sentinel" by Arthur C. Clarke; A Clockwork Orange (1971), on the novel by Anthony Burgess; Barry Lyndon (1975), on the novel by William Makepeace Thackeray; and The Shining (1980), on the novel by Stephen King. Only Kubrick's first two feature films, Fear and Desire (1953) and Killer's Kiss (1955), come from original screenplays.

How is it possible, then, for Kubrick to be recognized as one of the cinema's great creative masters? How is it possible, for example, for the published screenplay of A Clockwork Orange, which contains much of the language from Burgess' novel, to be entitled Stanley Kubrick's A Clockwork Orange? How does Kubrick succeed in investing what is essentially an adaptation with so much of his own creative insight and craft, so much of his own personal vision, that he is justified in calling the finished product "his own"?

This is the central question of the following study, an examination of the way in which Stanley Kubrick conveys his own artistic vision through the method of adaptation. This examination will consist of two parts: (1) a definition of Kubrick's vision of man, which consists of several recurring themes and the ironic, distanced tone through which they are expressed; and (2) a demonstration of that vision as it manifests itself in Kubrick's adaptations of Lolita, A Clockwork Orange, and Barry Lyndon, three recognized works of literature by recognized "literary" writers.

THE VISION

Kubrick's vision stems from the idea of man as an "ignoble savage." Mankind, according to Kubrick, is:

> ... irrational, brutal, weak, silly, unable to be objective about anything where his own interests are involved ... I'm interested in the brutal and violent nature of man because it's a true picture of him. And any attempt to create social institutions on a false view of the nature of man is probably doomed to failure.
>
> (qtd. in McGregor 1)

This view rejects the notion that man is at his most basic level a good, "pure" being who may be subject to corrupting outer forces. Kubrick sees man as inherently corrupt and essentially evil, and his films are in part an attempt to get beyond the false view of man's nature that he believes has dominated Western philosophy:

> One of the most dangerous fallacies which has influenced a great deal of political and philosophical thinking is that man is essentially good, and that it is society which makes him bad ... Rousseau transferred original sin from man to society, and this view has importantly contributed to what I believe has become a crucially incorrect premise on which to base moral and political philosophy.
>
> (qtd. in Weinraub 26)

Each of his films is a social critique, but not in the sense that social institutions alone are to blame for their failings. Man is to blame, precisely because he constructs those social institutions without acknowledging the true essence of his nature. "No philosophy based on an incorrect view of the nature of man is likely to produce social good," Kubrick says, and this belief manifests itself in his films either in the inability of society to control man's violent nature or in the dehumanization of man by an overly oppressive social structure (qtd. in Ciment 163). In other words, society for Kubrick either doesn't work at all or works too well. Sometimes, ironically enough, both things happen at the same time.

For example, the modern American society of Lolita is paradoxically both sexually corrupt and oppressively moralistic. Many of Ramsdale's most prominent citizens, such as the playwright Clare Quilty and John and Jean Farlow, engage in various perverse practices and infidelities (Quilty's sadomasochistic romps with Vivian Darkbloom, and John and Jean's obliquely hinted-at predilection for spouse-swapping); this despite the fact that they characterize themselves as "normal" (Quilty's word). Conversely, they also reveal themselves to be hypocritically moralistic toward other people (Jean's self-righteous horror when she discovers that her daughter Mona has stayed out late); this despite the fact that they see themselves as "broad-minded" (Jean's word). The conventions of the society forbid, however, the fulfillment of middle-aged Humbert Humbert's desire for the teenaged Lolita, for, as critic Tom Milne states, "if Humbert Humbert loves a minor, then, even though she technically seduced him, and even though he was not even her first lover, society must label him a criminal, a corrupter of youth" (69). Compounding the fact of society's hypocrisy is its inadequacy; for, in spite of the moral standard-waving practiced by those in authority, they never do discover the truth about Humbert. No one, except Charlotte Haze (Lolita's mother, who ironically dies in a car accident) finds out the extent of Humbert and Lolita's "relationship," and it is Humbert who, by killing his tormentor Quilty, "blows the whistle." In another of Kubrick's multiple ironies, Humbert falls precisely because of an obsessive and (as it turns out) unfounded fear of discovery and ostracism. Milne writes that "although society closes its ranks in disapproval of perverts like Humbert, in this case society is ignorant of his activities, and the trap which closes in on him is a product of his own mind" (72).

The futuristic British society of A Clockwork Orange also swings between extremes of inadequacy and oppressiveness. The central character, Alex, is a violent teenaged thug who beats, rapes, and terrorizes the citizenry with seeming impunity. The society appears incapable of defending its citizens against people like Alex. Yet when Alex finally is captured, the societal mechanism swings to the other side of the spectrum: a special behavioral conditioning technique makes Alex physically ill at the thought of violent and sexual acts. He becomes incapable of making a moral choice, a "clockwork orange" whose few human traits have been squashed by a governmental solution to crime that works too well. The men in control of the societal mechanism commit an act of cruelty as abhorrent as Alex's criminal acts, simply because they believe in man's fundamental goodness. They believe that Alex can be cured, but their "cure" reveals, not just the evil essence of Alex, but the evil essence of all men as well. "Humanity will be destroyed if the socio-psycho-bio-logists become the bureaucratic power," writes critic Neil D. Isaac of _A Clockwork Orange_'s paradoxical society. "But humanity will be destroyed, too, if orderly systems break down in anarchic free expression of wild young will" (127).

The eighteenth-century society of _Barry Lyndon_ is Kubrick's ultimate expression of a structure that, in an effort to suppress the primal side of man, succeeds at too great a cost. Man in _Barry Lyndon_ becomes as much of a dehumanized automaton as Alex does in _A Clockwork Orange_. Hans Feldmann writes in "Kubrick and His Discontents":

> That the forms and institutions of Western civilization deny the Alex in every man, and therefore can only deform the social man as he seeks to express his essential self through them, is the central theme of _Barry Lyndon_. (17)

Every aspect of the aristocratic society in _Barry Lyndon_ is carefully ritualized so as to channel man's baser urges: rigidly rule-oriented duels decide disputes, wars are fought with consideration for the rules of "fair play," and social gatherings become ceremonial and drained of all spontaneity. Into this milieu comes Redmond Barry, an _arriviste_ whose innate human vitality is directly opposed to the forms of society. Whenever this vitality manifests itself, the result for Redmond is social ostracism, isolation, and, finally, destruction. The society destroys Barry for the sake of the status quo, yet never recognizes that in this destruction lies the evidence of the society's own evils.

Robert Phillip Kolker, in his book _A Cinema of Loneliness_, characterizes Kubrick as an anti-humanist:

> He sees men ... mechanistically, as determined by their

> world, sometimes by their passions ... always by the rituals and structures they set up for themselves. Forgetting that they have set these structures up and have control over them, they allow the structures to control them. ... Kubrick perceives individuals and groups assuming a helpless and inferior position with respect to an order they themselves have created. (77)

This order, based on a false belief in the perfectability of man, will inevitably fall prey to the excesses demonstrated in the past, present, and future societies of Barry Lyndon, Lolita, and A Clockwork Orange.

What, then, can man do to reverse this trend in society? The answer, clearly, is to seek self-knowledge. Feldmann writes: "It is not that Kubrick is suggesting the instinctual man be permitted unrestricted expression of himself, but that man recognize and acknowledge the savage in himself and develop cultural forms based upon the frank acceptance of that acknowledgement" (19). Ken Moskowitz also sees this as the solution to the dilemmas posed by Kubrick's presentations of society. "All that is missing is self-knowledge," he writes, "an awareness of the persistence of the core of savagery in man" (44). In this light, one may categorize Kubrick's entire body of work as an effort to invest his audience with self-awareness.

The storylines of Kubrick's films follow a consistent model in the way they present his philosophy. Each film revolves around an individual (Humbert Humbert, Alex, Redmond Barry) who is in some way different from the rest of society and who, because of this difference, comes into conflict with society. Wallace Coyle summarizes Kubrick's story structure in these terms:

> ... all of his feature length films have dealt with the confrontation of alienated man with a society or system that he can only partially understand, accept, or control. Some of the major themes in his films have been concerned with the working out of this confrontation to some sort of resolution either in the destruction, defeat, or death of individuals at the hands of the system or social forces. (12)

Kubrick's films inevitably end with the defeat of the central character; his characters "have either yielded to or become functions of their environment, or do emotional and physical battle with it and are subdued" (Kolker 138). This defeat occurs because, as Milne states, "the mechanism of human nature, operating within the structure of society, creates a vicious circle which can permit no other solution" (69). Thus Humbert Humbert, a European in love with his stepdaughter, challenges the established morality of modern America and ends up dying of heart disease in prison while awaiting trial for murder; Alex indulges his primal nature in a spree of rapes and beatings, becomes a helpless victim of violence because of the government's conditioning program, and ends up with his libido restored but in the service of the government that tried to destroy him; and Redmond Barry, an Irish peasant, rises to the level of a gentleman in English society but then, because of his humanity, ends up crippled and penniless. The societal mechanism is supposed to help man, but in Kubrick's films it succeeds only in destroying him.

If mankind's lack of self-knowledge manifests itself in the destructive might of social institutions, it is also revealed in the weaknesses of Kubrick's anti-heroes. Humbert, Alex, and Redmond are neither "all good" nor "all bad"; while they clearly do not deserve the brutal treatment society gives them, they are certainly far from completely noble. Their failures stem from their own lack of self-knowledge. As has already been pointed out, Humbert in Lolita falls into a trap of his own making; he is "destroyed by his own conviction that his irresistible urges render him a social outcast" (Bawden 398). There are two men at war in Humbert: the natural man who gives in to his passions, and the society-made man who is horrified by his actions. Humbert fails to come to terms with these two sides of himself and, as a result, plunges into madness and murder. Alex in A Clockwork Orange appears to have learned nothing from his dehumanizing experience: he willingly gives himself up into the hands of a government that needs him only for purposes of political expediency. As critic Stephen Mamber points out, "it is certainly open to question as to whether Alex's return to free will at the end liberates him from a clockwork orange state or instead returns him to yet another form of it" (49). Redmond Barry "wishes to enter the world of grand society and is rendered impotent by its formal rituals, rituals which are unable to accommodate his vitality" (Kolker 125). Barry's tragedy, according to Feldmann, "is that, in seeking to achieve the expression of himself ... he submits to all the values and life-forms of his culture" (17). Yet Barry fails to realize that his own human vitality will not be able to coexist peacefully with the rigid standards of society. Blinded by his ambition, he fails to take into account this essential vitality, and so, when it expresses itself, Barry falls out of favor. Kubrick himself has pointed out this lack of self-knowledge which contributes to Barry's ruin:

> Barry is naive and uneducated. He is driven by a relentless ambition for wealth and social position. This proves to be an unfortunate combination of qualities ... (and) after his successful struggle to achieve wealth and social position, Barry proves to be badly unsuited to this role. He has clawed his way into a gilded cage, and once inside his life goes really bad. (qtd. in Ciment 172, 174)

Man as inherently evil; society as incapable of social good; the individual as victim of his own self-ignorance: these are the central aspects of Kubrick's thematic vision.

Kubrick's works contain several "lesser" themes which relate to and expand upon his central theme of human corruption. The theme of deception, for example, runs throughout Kubrick's films. As has been shown, mankind, in failing to recognize and acknowledge his evil nature, is practicing the ultimate form of self-deception. His inability to distinguish between the mask and the reality manifests itself in the many deceptions and disguises present in Kubrick's films. In Lolita, for instance, Humbert Humbert practices a deception upon an entire society by putting on the mask of the loving stepfather. Humbert plays at being a willing husband to Charlotte only to get closer to Lolita, and later puts on a mask of calm European urbanity to hide his growing obsession and madness from curious neighbors. Quilty, of course, epitomizes the theme of deception. In his efforts to spirit Lolita away from Humbert, Quilty successfully deceives the hero (with the aid of Peter Sellers' skill at impersonation) into believing first that he is a policeman, then a German-bred high school psychologist, and finally a local departmental clerk conducting a "survey"---all forms of the very social authorities that Humbert is desperately trying to avoid. In a sense, Humbert is the deceiver deceived; as Pauline Kael has noted, he "has it coming ... because, in order to conceal his sexual predilections, he has put on the most obsequious and mealy-minded of masks" (206).

Deception and disguise also play a major role in A Clockwork Orange. When Alex and his "droogs" invade the writer F. Alexander's home and rape his wife, they are wearing garish, hideous masks (Alex's has a phallic nose) to conceal their identities. Alex also disguises himself during the episode in which he kills the Cat Lady. In prison, Alex deceives the chaplain into believing that Alex's interest in the Bible is purely spiritual, and later, after Alex is freed but still under the influence of the Ludovico treatment, F. Alexander deceives Alex into believing that he has only Alex's interests at heart. This deception reveals itself to be such when Alexander engineers Alex's suicide attempt (by forcing Alex to listen to music, which he has also been conditioned against) in order to discredit the present government and bring his own party to power.

In Barry Lyndon, the central deception is carried out by Redmond Barry himself. In order to rise in society, he must literally change identities (he changes his name to "Barry Lyndon" after his wedding to Lady Lyndon) as well as hide his vitality and naivete beneath a facade of decorum and order. "Redmond always finds it necessary," writes Mark Crispin Miller, "to wear a mask in order to win acceptance, and yet no real intimacy is possible as long as the mask fulfills its mediating function" (1374). The one episode in which the mask falls off (Barry's public beating of his stepson Bullingdon) results in the denial of his long sought-after peerage, and is the first in a chain of events leading to Barry's ultimate downfall. The other members of society, like Barry, wear "masks": their faces grotesquely made-up and powdered, they play-act at being civilized because they wrongly believe this to be a method of perfecting humanity. These multiple deceptions create not a perfect world but, as Miller writes, "a sense of solitude and bereavement. Characters are isolated from one another in their decorative groups and self-conscious poses" (1363-1364).

A second important theme of Kubrick's work is the obsessive desire for control that most of his characters display. Indeed, Michel Ciment, in his book Kubrick, calls this "one of the major obsessions of Kubrick's films---the desire for absolute power over people and things and its inevitable correlative, the terror of losing control" (122). This theme manifests itself not only in society's attempts to control the individual, but also in the individual's attempts to control his situation. Humbert, Alex, and Barry all appear to be in control of their situations at first. Humbert manipulates his wife Charlotte so that he can get closer to her daughter, then manipulates Lolita into a hotel bed. Alex terrorizes the city with impunity, exerts power over his droogs and, later, while in prison, convinces the authorities to select him for the Ludovico treatment so that he can get out of prison. Barry utilizes his cunning and charm to seduce Lady Lyndon into marriage. Yet in all cases this control is short-lived. It is Lolita, not Humbert, who does the seducing and who, with Quilty, subtly manipulates Humbert so that she may escape him. Alex falls victim to his own droogs and, after the Ludovico treatment, finds out that he is more of a prisoner than ever. Barry, unable to maintain the charade under which he operates, loses his fortune almost as rapidly as he gained it. Control by the individual over his environment proves to be illusory. In Kubrick's films, according to Kubrick scholar Gene D. Phillips, "the best-laid plans often go awry. ... Human error and chance insinuate themselves into the most well-organized endeavors to frustrate their implementation and final success" (176). Alexander Walker, in Stanley Kubrick Directs, writes:

> All perfect plans are only as foolproof as the people who execute them. ... It is characteristic of Kubrick that, while one part of him pays intellectual tribute to the rationally constructed master plan, another part reserves the skeptic's right to anticipate human imperfections or the laws of chance that militate against its success. (63)

Kubrick's central characters are never foolproof. Nor is the society which tries to "help" them, and nor are many of Kubrick's supporting characters. Quilty serves as a perfect example: he succeeds in stealing Lolita away from Humbert but cannot prevent Humbert from killing him. Both men see their master plans fall apart, and for both the result is death.

The corrupt nature of man and his social structures, the use of deceptions and disguises, and the obsession with control and its loss are the major themes of Kubrick's films. Kubrick places the undercurrents of futility and despair conveyed by these themes against a detached and highly ironic tone. This tone comprises another important part of Kubrick's artistic vision.

Kubrick's films exhibit an unusual detachment, a distanced perspective, which has received a great deal of attention from film critics and scholars. Coyle, for instance, writes, "In Kubrick's satiric vision, he often places his characters in a dilemma and then stands back to allow the viewer to watch the outcome unencumbered by editorial comment" (12). Kolker, in discussing the world Kubrick creates in his films, says the director "distances himself from it, observes it, peoples it often with wretched human beings, but refuses to become involved with their wretchedness" (76). Barry Lyndon in particular, Kolker feels, is "a film that insists its audience remain distant and contemplative, observant and barely involved" (123). Norman Kagan, in The Cinema of Stanley Kubrick, says Kubrick's films are characterized by "intellectual detachment, a disinterested concern with ideas and form over dramatic content" (8). But it is Jean-Pierre Coursodon who, in American Directors, best described Kubrick's detached style when he wrote:

> If an extraterrestrial, sent to gather data on the ways of mankind, decided after some observing to stay among

> us and take up movie making, his films, one suspects, might resemble Stanley Kubrick's. Kubrick's detachment is the most chillingly consistent in film history. (182)

The reason for this detachment is clear. Kubrick does not intend his films to be emotional entertainments; rather, he sees them as case studies, as objective observations of the follies of mankind. The detached style suits a filmmaker whose cinema is primarily one of ideas, not emotions. Bernard F. Dick contends that in *Barry Lyndon*, for instance, Kubrick's "emotional noninvolvement" reflects the fact that he is "more interested in the characters as embodiments of their age than in the characters as human beings" (76). The same may be said for *Lolita* and *A Clockwork Orange*.

Coupled with this detachment is a penetrating sense of irony. "Irony," writes Coursodon, "coming in all shades from mild to bitter, sly to biting---seems to be not just his favorite but his only mode of response to the foibles of the human race" (182). Gerald Mast says "Kubrick's great cinematic gift" is the ability to find "the perfect ironic tone---part horror, part humor, a mixture of burlesque and Grand Guignol" (433). Kubrick's irony and detachment go hand-in-hand, each contributing to the effect of the other: while the intellectual distance allows the viewer to perceive the ironies more clearly, the ironies also enable the viewer to remain aloof from the characters and situations. Speaking of the violent content of *A Clockwork Orange*, Robert Boyers notes that the film's "dominant tonal mode is an irony that distances both the filmmaker and his audience and allows for a resilience we did not think we could manage in the face of multiple horrors" (2).

How, then, does Kubrick achieve this emotionally detached and ironic tone? The key lies in thwarting the audience's emotional involvement, in forcing the audience to share his aloof perspective. As Stephen Mamber writes in his review of A Clockwork Orange, "audience identification (rather than just interest) depends upon two factors---a realistic context and a character one either agrees with or aspires to be" (56). Kubrick creates detachment and irony by denying the audience both a realistic context and a set of realistic characters with whom to identify.

One of the ways that Kubrick denies a realistic context is by placing his stories within a simple, direct, and symmetrical, hence almost mythic, structural framework. The movement of each film adheres to a well-defined two- or three-part structure in which the events of one part mirror and often invert the events of another. The viewer becomes witness not to a "realistic" series of events, but to a logically constructed narrative design which draws upon the structure of the fable or myth for its affective force. This leads a critic like Vincent Canby to remark, in his review of Barry Lyndon, that the emotions evoked by the film "are not necessarily those evoked by identification with characters but by the final logical structure that governs the completed work" (17). It also leads Kubrick himself to comment, with respect to A Clockwork Orange, that "the structure of the story is very much like a fairy tale inasmuch as it depends for much of its charm and many of its strong effects on coincidence, and in the symmetry of its plot" (qtd. in Houston (KC) 43).

This symmetry is present in the rise-fall structure of Lolita.

The film begins with Humbert's murder of Quilty, the lowest point in his downfall, then flashes back four years to his first meeting with Lolita. By enclosing the film's events within this flashback structure, Kubrick is immediately letting the viewer know where the events are leading. The logical progression toward Humbert's downfall is now inescapable. Event no longer simply follows event; each event now becomes a link in an inexorable chain which will, the viewer knows, come full circle by the film's conclusion.

The division between the "rise" and "fall" sections of Humbert's story is very clearly drawn. It occurs after Humbert's first night with Lolita, the goal which up to this point has been the film's sole focus. After he sleeps with her, Humbert reveals to Lolita that her mother has died in a car accident. Lolita's plaintive cries of "Promise you'll never leave me" are exactly what Humbert wants to hear: he is assured of being able to spend the rest of his life with Lolita, without Charlotte's or apparently anyone else's interference. Clearly, Humbert is at the height of his good fortune. Kubrick punctuates the end of this scene with a long fade to black.

After this fade Humbert's fortunes progressively decline. He argues frequently with Lolita; he receives unnerving visits from curious authority figures (most of whom are Quilty in disguise); his health begins to fail; he loses Lolita to Quilty; he finds her, after a three-year search, only to lose her forever; and finally, in despair, he murders Quilty. Just as the events in part one all contributed to Humbert's rise, the events in part two contribute to his fall. In addition, several events in part two mirror and simultaneously invert events in part one: Humbert's stunned expression at his first sight of Lolita, a slim, bikini-clad beauty, is repeated in part two when he rediscovers her after three years, now a pregnant, matronly housewife; the loud arguments between Lolita and her domineering mother in part one become loud arguments between Lolita and her "father" in part two; Charlotte's attempts to keep Lolita away from "boys" by uprooting her (she sends her to summer camp) fail just as completely as Humbert's efforts to do the same (he takes her on a cross-country road trip); and, of course, the murder scene at the beginning of the film is repeated at the end (in abbreviated form). These structural symmetries contribute to a sense of unreality.

Structural symmetries also abound in A Clockwork Orange. The narrative is neatly split into three parts (Alex's activities before capture, during imprisonment, and after release) of approxiamately 45 minutes each. Part one consists of a series of violent episodes in which Alex and his droogs brutalize the citizenry. Part two consists of Alex's imprisonment and the process by which he is "cured" of his violent and sexual urges. Part three again consists of a series of violent episodes in which Alex's victims return to brutalize him. In part one he attacks an old tramp, the writer F. Alexander, and his own droogs; in part two he is attacked, one by one, by the same tramp, by Alexander, and by his droogs. Just as Humbert Humbert changes from controller to controlled in Lolita, Alex changes from victimizer to victim. And, in another echo of Lolita's circular structure, Alex, like Humbert, is in the same position at the end of the film as he was at the beginning: "cured" a second time, again for politically expedient purposes, he reverts to his primal, violent state. As Mamber has pointed out, the fact that Alex is back where he started is evidenced by his reply to the Minister of the Interior's question of "Do I make myself clear?" The reply echoes the one he gave to the social worker Deltoid in part one: "As an unmuddied lake ... As clear as an azure sky of deepest summer" (50).

Barry Lyndon represents Kubrick's clearest attempt to deny a realistic context through story structure. The two parts of the familiar rise-fall pattern are this time expressly stated as such: part one begins with a title which reads, "By What Means Redmond Barry Acquired the Style and Title of Barry Lyndon," and part two begins with a title which reads, "Containing an Account of the Misfortunes and Disasters Which Befell Barry Lyndon." In _Barry Lyndon_, according to critic Alan Spiegel, Kubrick

> ... constructs a shape that is a model of unity, symmetry, and abstract formal relationship ... in which the major sequences in one part duplicate, reverse, and finally harmonize comparable sequences in the other---producing at the close an overall effect of minor variants within a major aesthetic stasis. (201)

These comparable sequences include the following: Barry's boxing match with a bully which earns him the respect of his fellow British soldiers (part one), and the fight with Bullingdon that earns him the status of social outcast (part two); the death of Barry's friend and father figure, Captain Grogan (part one), and the death of Barry's son Bryan (part two); Barry's duel with Captain Quin at the beginning, which he wins (or so it seems), and his duel with Bullingdon at the end, which he loses; Barry's dependency on his mother at the beginning and his return to dependency at the end. As Spiegel points out, "Events reproduce themselves, and the second time around, they are not only mirrored, but reversed" (201). Such plot construction denies the audience the opportunity to view the film's events in a realistic context.

Kubrick also tends to avoid realism in his presentation of characters. Many of his characters, because of the way they are portrayed and the unconscious irony of many of their statements, tend to become less "real" characters than pieces of Kubrick's grand design. In Kolker's words, "The Kubrick community is cold, as cold as Kubrick's own observation of it. There is rarely any feeling expressed, other than antagonism, and certainly no integration" (79). Almost all the performances in Kubrick's films lean toward caricature, and this is clearly the way Kubrick wants it. "The motive in their depiction is not versimilitude but the imaginative grasp of some more basic essence," writes Boyers (3). The characters (usually with the exception of the central character) are "types," broadly drawn members of society whose main function is to contrast with the three-dimensionality of Kubrick's anti-heroes.

Thus, in Lolita, Shelley Winters' Charlotte Haze represents not so much a flesh-and-blood individual as she does a typical member of the decadent American society. "She is a satire on nearly every aspect of middle-class pomposity and absurdity," writes Kagan, "blind culture worship ... parent-child competition ... sexual hypocrisy ... elegant homemaking ... materialism and possessiveness" (107). Sue Lyon, as Lolita, gives a shallow performance that is perfectly in accordance with the shallowness of her character. Kubrick is trying to show the viewer that the real Lolita, as compared with the Lolita of Humbert's fantasy, is nothing special. She is an empty-headed, heartless, typical American teenager, as is evidenced by her reaction to Humbert's reading of Poe ("Well, I think it's a little corny, to tell you the truth"), her bland farewell to Humbert as she leaves for summer camp ("Well, I guess this is goodbye"), her reaction to seeing a dead animal in the road ("Boy, that's terrible"), her insensitivity to Humbert's rapidly declining health ("I'm sick and tired of hearing about your moans and groans"), and, especially, her final farewell to a brokenhearted Humbert as he rushes off to kill Quilty ("Hey, well, listen, let's keep in touch, huh?").

Peter Sellers' Quilty, in particular, represents the type of characterization associated with Kubrick's vision. He is almost literally a shadow (often photographed with low-key lighting), a mysterious presence who, in fact, appears in disguise more frequently than he appears as himself. As Michel Ciment and others have pointed out, Quilty is perhaps the most symbolic figure in the film. "In Lolita's satirical travelogue of America," Ciment writes, "Quilty is a linking threat, a pursuing shadow, the spy of a society that hunts witches but whose own corruption surpasses that of its victims" (92). Quilty also acts as Humbert's double, fulfilling the same role of manipulator in the second half that Humbert fulfilled in the first. And all of his disguises are caricaturistic representations of social authority---the typical German psychologist, the friendly, "normal" cop: each of these "incarnates the conformising forces of America" (Durgnat 35). Quilty, then, exemplifies the character as a broadly-drawn symbol rather than a human being.

In _A Clockwork Orange_, every character is broadly and symbolically drawn. "All the people in _A Clockwork Orange_, aggressors and victims alike, are merely caricatures, cardboard targets for Kubrick's satire," writes Craig McGregor in a _New York Times_ review (13). "There is very little distance between attackers and victims, which seems fair enough in light of the reversals in the third part of the film," Mamber claims. "Kubrick ... sees violence everywhere, and if there are no purely innocent victims, there are no completely evil villains" (56). Indeed, the victims themselves "are all in some degree grotesques," according to Boyers, "that is to say, caricaturistic representations of familiar human types in whom particular features have been overdrawn" (3). F. Alexander, as portrayed by Patrick Magee, exemplifies this approach to character. He is first seen in part one as a somewhat stiff and ultimately foolish character ("Well, I suppose you'd better let him in"), but in part three, when Alex becomes his "houseguest," he turns into a raging lunatic, hilariously barking commands to Alex at dinner ("_Try_ the wine!") while plotting revenge. The unrealistic nature of Alexander's characterization also manifests itself in the fact that he (like Quilty in _Lolita_) is Alex's "double." Ciment suggests that Alexander is a symbolic reflection of Alex, noting the similarities in their names, his facial resemblance to Beethoven (whose music Alex adores), and his doorbell, which chimes the opening notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (92). Such a presentation of character thwarts audience identification and, consequently, fosters audience detachment.

Characters in Barry Lyndon, as indicated above, serve more as representations of their age than as human beings. Barry's rivals, for instance, are as caricatured as F. Alexander: Captain Quin, with his prancing and strutting, his vocal tone of inflated superiority, and his ludicrous stare ("Leonard Rossiter is encouraged to take the character well over the top of any 'naturalistic' performance" (Houston (BL) 78)), and Sir Charles Lyndon, with his decrepit gait and loud, shrieking voice (he, like Alexander, is wheelchair-bound). Other characters are so stiff and quiet that they virtually blend in with the painterly surroundings. This is especially true in the case of Lady Lyndon. Critic William Wolf writes: "Marisa Berenson, as the beautiful, sad, exploited countess, further enhances the aloof, distant style through her sensitive, virtually silent performing" (26). Even Barry, as portrayed by the "sufficiently bland and pliable" Ryan O'Neal, is a cipher (Wolf 26). In Spiegel's words:

> ... a final judgment of his character becomes tentative, and ultimately, I think, superfluous. The director has thoroughly neutralized his hero's identity to create neither a rogue nor an innocent, but a human shape that approaches the conditions of an artifact. (202)

Characterization is thus one of the major methods by which Kubrick achieves his distanced, ironic tone.

Kubrick also utilizes ironic dialogue to distance the viewer from the characters. Coyle notes that "Kubrick's films are often characterized by the ironies between what a character is saying and what the audience is seeing on the screen at the same time" (13). The audience often knows what the character does not: this places the audience in a position superior to that of the character and provides Kubrick's tone with much of its effectiveness. Unconsciously spoken ironies permeate Lolita in particular. Charlotte's dialogue is frequently full of ironies which she, as a representative of the pretentious American middle class, does not even notice. During Charlotte's first encounter with Humbert, as she shows him around her house, we (and Humbert) see a sex-starved, inanely chattering matron who is looking for a husband as well as a boarder. Her dialogue reveals that she has no idea that Humbert finds her merely amusing. "Culturally, we're a very advanced group," she says of Ramsdale society, "with lots of good Anglo-Dutch and Anglo-Scotch stock ... and we're very progressive intellectually!" "That was immediately apparent," Humbert replies drily. When Humbert decides to rent a room after seeing Lolita sunbathing in Charlotte's garden, Charlotte asks, "What was the deciding factor? Was it the view?" Humbert's answer: "I think it was your cherry pies." Just as Charlotte is oblivious to Humbert's fascination with Lolita, so is she blind to Quilty's designs on her daughter. Responding to his apparently innocent queries about Lolita, Charlotte tells Quilty, "Wednesday she's going to have a cavity filled by your uncle Ivor." The viewer immediately suspects that it will not be "uncle Ivor" who does the "filling." Even after Humbert and Charlotte are married, the unsuspecting housewife remains oblivious: "I know that our love is sacred," she tells Humbert as he secretly writes about

Lolita in his diary.

Other characters exhibit a similar unawareness of irony. Jean Farlow, trying to comfort the "grieving" Humbert after Charlotte's death, utters what is perhaps the film's most colossally ironic statement. "Try to think of your poor little Lolita, all alone in the world!" she pleads. "You _must_ live for _her_ sake!" Lolita herself is often unconscious of the ironies in her own statements. After learning of her mother's death, Lolita tells Humbert, "Everything's changed. Everything used to be so, I don't know---_normal_" ---this _after_ sleeping with him a few hours earlier. And, when she meets Humbert for the last time, even though Humbert is clearly exhibiting signs of his physical and mental deterioration (and in fact has a gun in his coat pocket), Lolita greets him by saying, "Gee, you're looking wonderful! ... I was beginning to think maybe you were sore or something." Such a lack of awareness creates a distance between character and spectator, which is precisely the effect Kubrick intends to create.

The manipulation of story structure and of characterization are only two of the methods Kubrick employs to create the ironic, detached tone which is his trademark (others include such cinematic techniques as mise-en-scene, camera movement, voice-over narration, and music selection, each of which could be a subject for further research). This tone, when matched with the dominant themes Kubrick wishes to express, creates a fully integrated, completely personal artistic vision unlike that of any other _auteur_ in film history. That he expresses this vision through the adaptation of literature is remarkable, and _how_ he accomplishes this is the subject of the next section.

THE ADAPTATIONS

The art of adaptation is hardly new to the cinema. Even some of the earliest film classics (such as Birth of a Nation) freely and frequently utilized literature as a source for stories. Today over half of all commercial films are adaptations of literature (Andrew 98). Generally, the popular measure of quality for such films is "fidelity" to the original work. Such a critical viewpoint often results in "a chorus of complaints from the author, the critics, and the reader-viewers alike that the film version has butchered the novel" (Madsen 253). Most film scholars, however, find the question of fidelity superfluous. Neil D. Isaac, for instance, writes:

> The issue of faithfulness is a false one in any discussion of a movie based on a novel. It is a red herring with which reviewers can odiferously color odious comparisons. Faithful to what, anyway? To a story line---when the narrative media are so different as to preclude use of the same tense or point of view or tones ...? To characters---when the very epistemology of perceiving them are (sic) necessarily different? To details---when even the most scrupulous itemization cannot mask or distract from inevitable distinctions? (124)

In circles where fidelity has ceased to be an overriding concern, critics frequently distinguish between "types" of adaptations. Morris Beja, in Film and Literature, identifies two basic approaches to adaptation: preservation of the original's "integrity," in which the novel "should not be tampered with and should in fact be uppermost in the adapter's mind," and a second, less narrow approach, in which it is "proper and in fact necessary to adapt the original work freely, in order to create---in the different medium that is now being employed---a new, different work of art with its own integrity" (82). In his book *The Novel and the Cinema*, Geoffrey Wagner distinguishes among three categories of adaptation: "transposition," in which "a novel is directly given on the screen" (222); "commentary," in which "an original is ... altered in some respect," the result being a "re-emphasis or restructure" (223); and "analogy", in which a considerable departure occurs, such as shifting the setting of a story to another time period (226-227). Donald F. Larsson also distinguishes among three "responses" to literature by those who adapt it: "a desire to 'reproduce' the text"; "a more or less significant alteration to the work to fit the adaptor's own artistic purposes"; and "a conscious effort to criticize, subvert, undercut or deconstruct the novel itself" (74). In his description of the second response, Larsson writes that the adaptors try to

> ... make the work faithful to *themselves*, to recast it and adapt it to conform to their own obsessions and personal visions. Obviously, this form of adaptation is employed most fully by those directors whose identifiable body of works and continuing themes and concerns label them as *auteurs*. (76-77)

It is in this category of adaptation, which corresponds to both Wagner's "commentary" category and Beja's second approach, that one may place the works of Stanley Kubrick.

Kubrick exemplifies the approach to adaptation endorsed by Bela Balazs in his Theory of the Film:

> If ... the artist is a true artist and not a botcher, ... (he) may use the existing work of art merely as raw material, regard it from the specific angle of his own art form as if it were raw reality, and pay no attention to the form once already given to the material. (263)

This "raw material" approach manifests itself in Kubrick's choices of what works to adapt. He does not seek out novels that correspond precisely to his vision of mankind, but rather chooses works in which there may be only a slight correlation (after all, one could hardly say that Stephen King's world view in The Shining corresponds to Kubrick's, or that Arthur C. Clarke's "The Sentinel" fosters an image of man as an ignoble savage). Kubrick then reshapes the work, constructing through a series of changes a new work of art that illustrates his own view of the world. Hans Feldmann offers what is probably the most clearcut characterization of Kubrick as an adaptor:

> Kubrick is not at all interested in faithfully reproducing another artist's interpretation of life. He has his own reading of life and he feels free to alter arbitrarily another artist's work in order to express his vision, his interpretation of his age. (12)

While Kubrick's alterations, as will be shown, are hardly "arbitrary," Feldmann's statement does provide a perceptive summary of the director's approach to adaptation. Kubrick does indeed express his own vision through adaptation, and by analyzing the alterations he makes in Lolita, A Clockwork Orange, and Barry Lyndon, one may be better equipped to perceive how this act is accomplished.

I. Lolita

When it was first published in 1955, Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita created a sensation with its taboo-breaking story of a man obsessed with a 12-year-old "nymphet." Since then it has gained recognition as one of the true literary classics of the twentieth century. Kubrick's 1962 adaptation was released while the book was still in its "sensation" phase, however, and as such was eagerly anticipated and heavily publicized.

The novel takes the form of a memoir written in prison by Humbert Humbert. All the reader knows at the outset is that Humbert is in prison: we do not know the reason for his imprisonment or the nature of the "moral leprosy" which the foreword's imaginary psychiatrist attributes to him (Nabokov 7). In Part One of the novel Humbert recounts his teenage romance with Annabel Leigh, a young girl who died of typhus before she and Humbert could consummate their affair. This unrequited love, according to Humbert, gave rise to his passion for prepubescent girls (whom Humbert labels "nymphets"). In later life, he marries a childlike woman named Valeria; the marriage ends in divorce, and Humbert, after a few visits to the sanitarium, moves to America and decides to settle in Ramsdale, New Hampshire. He rents a room from the widow Charlotte Haze after spotting her daughter, Lolita, and recognizing in her the nymphet of his dreams. He immediately undertakes a plot to satisfy his obsession. In order to get closer to Lolita he marries

Charlotte, who unwittingly thwarts his plan by sending the girl to summer camp. Then, in an ironic twist of fate, Charlotte discovers the truth behind Humbert's affections but is killed when, rushing out into the street after the discovery, she is struck by a car. Humbert retrieves Lolita from camp under the pretense that her mother is ill. They spend an evening at a hotel where, ironically, it is Lolita who seduces Humbert into a sexual encounter. The next day he tells her that her mother is dead; she elects to remain with him because, as Humbert himself notes, "she had absolutely nowhere else to go" (130).

Part Two begins with an account of Humbert and Lolita's long motor journey across America. After a year of this activity they settle in the college town of Beardsley, where Humbert receives a teaching position. Humbert continues to enjoy a sexual relationship with his stepdaughter, but gradually Lolita becomes disenchanted. Partly to avoid prying neighbors and partly to strengthen his hold on the girl, Humbert takes Lolita on another road trip. At one point during the trip, Lolita is hospitalized with a sudden "illness"; she subsequently vanishes. Humbert searches for her and her abductor for three years, during which he slips deeper and deeper into madness. For a brief time he conducts an affair with a woman named Rita, but leaves her when he receives a letter from Lolita asking for money. He discovers after tracking her down that Lolita is now married, penniless, and pregnant, but her husband is not the man she ran away with three years earlier. That man, Lolita reveals, is Clare Quilty, a decadent playwright with whom she had been involved before she met Humbert, and who had been tracking the two of them ever since their first night together in the hotel. After escaping from Humbert, Lolita spent only a brief time with Quilty, whose decadent tastes eventually proved too much for her. Seeing her again after such a long time, Humbert realizes that what masqueraded as a lust for nymphets is really a true love for Lolita. She refuses to leave her husband, however, and Humbert, overwhelmed by sadness and remorse, departs on a search for Quilty. Eventually he tracks down the writer and murders him. Lolita later dies in childbirth.

"What makes all of this something more than either a case study of sexual perversion or pornographic titillation," writes Donald E. Morton in Vladimir Nabokov, "is the truly shocking fact that Humbert Humbert is a genius who, through the power of his artistry, actually persuades the reader that his memoir is a love story" (66). Nabokov's extremely complicated and often ambiguous prose style creates a work that is many things at once, as is evidenced by the variety of interpretations it has received over the years. It is, as Lionel Trilling has persuasively argued, a love story, in which "a man in the grip of an obsessional lust and a girl of twelve make the ideal couple for a story about love written in our time" (99). Kubrick himself advocates this interpretation:

> The literary ground rules for a love story are such that it must end in either death or separation of the lovers and it must never be possible for the lovers to be permanently united. It is also essential that the relationship must shock society or their families. The lovers must be ostracized. It is very difficult to construct a modern

> story which would believably adhere to these rules. In this respect I think it is correct to say that Lolita may be one of the few modern love stories.
>
> (qtd. in Walker 28)

The novel may also be viewed as "the anatomy of an obsession" (Maddox 67). Humbert's story is the story of a man trying to come to grips with a fantasy that perhaps can be briefly realized, but not maintained. As L.L. Lee points out, "it is only through knowing the actual girl that he grows out of his sickness" (118). Other critics, like Walter Allen, see the novel as "the satire of a cosmopolitan European in the presence of a civilisation which even as he falls in love with it, he finds wildly improbable" (108).

A great many critics, however, view Lolita as more correctly a parody, and a complex one at that. Lee writes that "parody encloses, contains, and shares with what it is mocking; and Lolita is a parody of the biography, of the picaresque form, and of the whole mythic quest" (123). Thomas R. Frosch, in "Parody and Authenticity in Lolita," interprets the novel as a parody of its romantic predecessors and, at the same time, as an updating of them. He suggests:

> In relation to romance, parody acts in Lolita in a defensive and proleptic way. It doesn't criticize the romance mode, although it criticizes Humbert; it renders romance acceptable by anticipating our mockery and beating us to the draw. ... I am suggesting, then, that Lolita can only be a love story through being a parody of love stories.
>
> (182)

In _Lolita_, humor and pathos occupy the same space. Nabokov's prose creates in the reader a mixture of laughter, sadness, and ambivalence. These multiple reactions are a tribute to the astounding depth, the near-infinite complexity, of Nabokov's novel.

How, then, does Kubrick approach such a novel: a work so complicated that it seems absolutely unfilmable? How, for instance, can Kubrick cope with Nabokov's extremely dense prose style, which is so inextricably linked to the novel's ideas? Kubrick provides the answer to this question in a short essay written during the filming of _Lolita_:

> People have asked me how it is possible to make a film out of _Lolita_ when so much of the quality of the book depends on Nabokov's prose style. But to take the prose style as any more than just a part of a great book is simply misunderstanding just what a great book is. Of course, the quality of the writing is one of the elements that make a novel great. But this quality is a result of the quality of the writer's obsession with his subject, with a theme and a concept and a view of life and an understanding of character. Style is what an artist uses to fascinate the beholder in order to convey to him his feelings and emotions and thoughts. These are what have to be dramatised, not the style. The dramatising has to find a style of its own, as it will do if it really grasps the content. And in doing this it will bring out another side of that structure which has gone into the novel. (14)

Duplication of the author's style is therefore not important to Kubrick. Yet neither, at least to some degree, is duplication of the author's ideas. In his version of Lolita, Kubrick makes several changes which place the emphasis on the social and satirical elements of Nabokov's novel. Kubrick's film does away with many of the aspects which give rise to multiple interpretations of the novel, and in so doing reduces it not to a love story, a parody of a love story, or a study of obsession, but to a potent social satire that is in perfect keeping with Kubrick's artistic vision.

Some of Kubrick's changes are made mainly for the sake of length: the deletion of Humbert's past relationships with Annabel and Valeria, as well as his formulation of the theory of nymphets; of the first cross-country trek undertaken by Humbert and Lolita after the death of Charlotte; and of Humbert's three-year search for Lolita and his relationship with Rita. These deletions have the effect, in terms of screen time, of placing the emphasis on Part One rather than Part Two of the novel. Other changes, such as the removal of sexual episodes and the change in Lolita's age (she is a well-developed teenager instead of a twelve-year-old), were made to appease the Legion of Decency.

Aside from these, the most obvious difference between Kubrick's Lolita and Nabokov's is the placement of Quilty's murder at the beginning instead of the end of the film. This significant alteration of the text affects the film in several ways. For one, since the audience immediately knows how the film will end, a sense of inevitability, of characters trapped in an inescapable chain of events, develops. As Alexander Walker points out, Kubrick exchanges "the suspense of waiting for fate to overtake Quilty for the suspense of waiting, in the book, for Humbert Humbert to bed down Lolita. This gives Quilty a much greater role in the film than in the book" (75). In the novel, Quilty is present only between the lines; in the film he appears throughout, always commenting on society's hypocrisy through his disguises and feeding Humbert's fear through his constant pursuit of the anti-hero. He becomes "an immediate, tangible presence ... teasing and terrifying Humbert into destroying him" (Milne 69).

Even more importantly, this opening scene sets the tone of black comedy through which Kubrick filters the events of the novel. The bizarre ping-pong game which Humbert and Quilty play "like two civilized senators," combined with Quilty's incongruously funny responses to Humbert's threats ("That's a durlin' little gun you got there"; "I want to die like a champion"), creates "a mood of brilliantly organized black comedy, happening in a world that is realistic enough to contain terror, pain, and death, yet fantastic enough to surprise and amuse" (Walker 74). This tone pervades the rest of the film; in the novel, it is present but not pervasive.

In order to intensify the degree of social satire in the film, Kubrick departs significantly from Nabokov's characterizations. Charlotte, for example, is much more broadly drawn in the film than in the novel, becoming the chief element of Kubrick's satirical attack. Daniel DeVries, author of The Films of Stanley Kubrick, describes the difference between the two Charlottes in these terms:

> In the novel, seen through Humbert's eyes, Charlotte is a pretentious, "cultured," middle-class dolt, with "quite

> simple not unattractive features of a type that may be defined as a weak solution of Marlene Dietrich." Shelley Winters' film Charlotte is a burlesque of the original---an incredible culture-vulture, chairman of a Great Books Committee, a connoisseur of reproductions, crass and forward as a suitor, schmaltzy and possessive as a wife, and proud of being part of a "culturally ... very advanced group." (28)

She is completely oblivious to Humbert's obsession (not noticing, for example, the lingering goodnight kiss Lolita gives Humbert while he and Charlotte play chess), full of contradictions (allowing Lolita to stay out late one night, ordering her to stay away from boys the next), and, like many other members of Kubrick's society, morally corrupt (swearing to Humbert that she'll never marry again in preservation of the late Mr. Haze's memory, then begging him to "take me in your arms," all practically within the same breath). Oppressively moralistic, blind to reality, hypocritical and corrupt---Kubrick's Charlotte clearly symbolizes the American society as a whole.

Even Humbert, to a degree, has been changed. The novel's Humbert is obsessed and deteriorating, yet always quick-witted, verbally inventive, and energetic. James Mason's Humbert, however, is less clearly an active agent and more of a victim of society. "The reader is literally inside Humbert's burning, on-the-edge-of-madness mind, delighting in his wicked masquerade," writes Norman Kagan. "In contrast, James Mason underplays his role, making Humbert always desperate and often pathetic, despite his urbane voice and unshakable smile" (105). Especially in the early sections of the film, Humbert is more of a humble professor, a befuddled European confronting American suburbia, than a keen, imaginative manipulator. As a result, according to Raymond Durgnat, "our timid nymphetophile is more sinned against than sinning" (35).

What, then, is the net effect of all these changes? As mentioned above, Part One is emphasized over Part Two: the portrait of society is emphasized over the portrait of love and guilt which is the thrust of the novel's second half. Lolita becomes, in Coyle's words, a treatment of "the satiric dimensions of small-town American life" (20). The changes also emphasize the socially taboo aspect of Humbert's obsession as reflected in his all-encompassing fear of discovery. Milne writes that "what Kubrick was after was not an evocation of Humbert's sensuous joy in his nymphet, but of his obsessive fear of what his tabooed love will bring" (69). Gene D. Phillips concurs; he writes that the film centers on Humbert's efforts "to possess Lolita and at the same time preserve an air of surface propriety in his relationship with her" (89). The ignobility of man manifests itself in society's failure to deal with Humbert's obsession and in Humbert's failure to understand himself in terms of the obsession. Through a series of careful changes, Kubrick is able to alter the emphasis of Nabokov's novel so that it conforms more closely to his own vision.

II. A Clockwork Orange

Anthony Burgess' 1962 novel A Clockwork Orange is, like Lolita, a first-person narrative told in an idiosyncratic and highly complex style. The novel concerns the adventures of a teenaged gang leader named Alex, who lives in a near-future London. To tell Alex's story, Burgess invented a teen argot called "Nadsat," a blend of baby talk ("eggiwegs" for "eggs"), clever puns ("sinny" for "cinema"), and words with Russian roots ("horrorshow," from the Russian "khoroshov," for "good"). This language permeates the novel; its translation requires constant attention from the reader, who must rely on context for meaning. Because of this stylistic complexity, _A Clockwork Orange_, like _Lolita_, was for several years considered unfilmable. Kubrick's adaptation did not appear until 1971, nearly a decade after the novel's original release.

The novel's plot unfolds in this fashion: In a near-totalitarian English society of the future, Alex and his three "droogs" spend their evenings committing random acts of "ultraviolence" against the citizenry. In the course of one night they beat up an elderly bibliophile and break into the house of the writer F. Alexander, whose wife Alex rapes. Afterward, Alex goes home and listens to the Ninth Symphony of Ludwig van Beethoven, whose music provides inspiration for his murderous fantasies. Later he lures two ten-year-old girls to his room and rapes them.

One night during a robbery, Alex beats an old woman to death with a bust of Beethoven; he is then betrayed by his droogs and captured by the police. While in prison he learns of a government-sponsored experimental treatment which allows criminals to be set free. Delighted, Alex volunteers and soon falls into the hands of a group of behavioral psychologists. For two weeks he is forced to watch, while drugged, films depicting graphic sex and violence.

The treatment renders him physically ill whenever he tries to vent his primal aggressions (and, in an unintended side-effect, whenever he tries to listen to Beethoven). Set free, he is helpless to ward off the vengeful attacks of the same bibliophile, the same droogs, and finally, F. Alexander. The writer turns out to be a political subversive. Given the opportunity to discredit the current government and achieve personal revenge at the same time, he forces Alex to listen to Beethoven until the youth attempts suicide by leaping out of an upper-story window.

When Alex revives in the hospital, he discovers that his old aggressions have been restored: the government, in the face of massive negative publicity, has cured Alex of his "cure." The novel ends with a visit from the Minister of the Interior, who offers Alex a job in exchange for "helping us." As Alex once again listens to the "glorious Ninth," he tells the reader:

> ... I could viddy myself very clear running and running on like very light and mysterious nogas, carving the whole litso of the creeching world with my cutthroat britva. ... I was cured all right. (169)

Many critics have interpreted Burgess' novel as a parable which examines the Christian paradox of free will within the framework of a cautionary tale about behavioral conditioning and governmental control. "The premise implied by the odd title," writes Alexander Walker, "is that it is far better for an individual to possess free will, even if it is exclusively the will to sin, than for him to be made over into a clockwork paradigm of virtue" (41). The government, in physically conditioning Alex against his "bad" urges, denies him the freedom to choose between good and evil. Jean E. Kennard points out that "Burgess, whose vision of a free Alex horrified us, makes it clear that he considers a conditioned Alex worse. He is now merely a thing" (135). Even though Alex, once cured, clearly chooses evil, "we must accept it," writes David Denby, "if we really believe in free choice. Thus Burgess makes his case for a voluntary ethics in a way that is morally heroic and extremely demanding, especially since it's obvious that Alex will never 'choose' anything but destruction" (101). Burgess himself endorses this interpretation of his novel. In "Juice from a Clockwork Orange," he writes:

> Take the story as a kind of moral parable, and you won't go far wrong. Alex is a very nasty young man, and he deserves to be punished, but to rid him of the capacity of choosing between good and evil is the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which---so we're told---there's no forgiveness. (53)

Burgess also contends that just because Alex "has not yet made the better choice does not mean that he will never do it" (CM 198).

The paradox inherent in the novel is intensified by Burgess' presentation of the world within which his moral lesson unfolds. The government is concerned only with political expediency, the opposition party (represented by Alexander) is different in name only, the vast majority of the public is a conforming mass, and the only individual with rebellious spirit is totally committed to evil. "The world of the novel," writes Samuel Coale in Anthony Burgess, "is so totally mechanized, controlled, and dehumanized that the only reality seems to be that of coercion and power" (93-94).

Such a vision of the world, according to Lars Hartveit, "springs from awareness of the ultimately evil nature of man and human society, in keeping with the orthodox Christian view" (118). Susan Rice summarizes Burgess' world view in these terms:

> Burgess is making an emotional plea for resistance to political dominion. Paradoxically, Burgess takes a dim view of Man's nature---which is something to be reckoned but not tampered with. Burgess' double-mindedness---free choice must prevail/ man's nature is perverse---results in a hero-less and ambivalent cautionary tale. (40)

It is clear from the above interpretation of the novel that Burgess and Kubrick are on similar wavelengths. Burgess' novel evokes a pessimistic view of man much like that of Kubrick, and his resistance to governmental authority is very much in keeping with Kubrick's distrust of social institutions. Perhaps this is why Kubrick, in his film version, adheres more strictly than usual to the storyline of the original. Only one event---the absurdly formalized question-and-answer session conducted by the chief guard upon Alex's entry into prison ("Any venereal disease?")---is solely Kubrick's creation. By and large, the rest of the film follows Burgess' plot to the letter.

Several subtle changes are worth noting, however, for the difference they make in the separation of Kubrick's vision from Burgess'. For instance, the book-lover who, in the novel, is Alex's first victim, becomes a drunken old drifter in the film. The Cat Lady whom Alex kills in the novel is an elderly woman; in the film, Kubrick transforms her into a snobbish, middle-aged health nut who collects pornographic art. Finally, the two young girls Alex rapes become, in the film, the two young women with whom he enjoys high-speed sex. Rice asserts that such alterations are "indicative of the kind of changes Kubrick works that subtly shift our sympathies away from the victims" (41). While one may argue that Burgess also allows the reader little sympathy for Alex's victims, the fact remains that part of the effect of these changes is an increase in sympathy for _Alex_. Samuel Coale, among others, has noted that Kubrick's version of Alex is far more sympathetic than Burgess' (95). The casting of Malcolm McDowell, a handsome, articulate, and energetic performer, in the role of Alex contributes to this perception (especially when the other actors, particularly Patrick Magee, are downright ugly). In addition, Alex's violent acts are heavily stylized (with slow motion and rapid cutting), while the acts against him are much less so (through the use of long, stationary takes and a subjective camera). And the viewer cannot help sharing in Alex's final "triumph," especially when the Minister is forced to spoon-feed him as, incapacitated by his body cast, he defiantly smacks his lips and opens his mouth wide in anticipation of the next morsel.

What is the overall effect of such changes? Basically, it is the creation of a satiric vision even more pessimistic than Burgess'. Burgess displays grim concern over the future of man, while Kubrick displays outright cynicism. DeVries writes in his study of _A Clockwork Orange_:

> To choose between good and evil there must be some good

> to choose, and Kubrick takes great pains to make every character in the film so ridiculous, so thoroughly unattractive, that the audience can't possibly sympathize with them. ... every man is an ignoble savage and every action selfishly motivated. In this context, Alex is the most attractive character since he is the only one who is truly alive. (59)

DeVries goes on to say that Alex's choice in the film is between "banal, stupid, half-hearted evil and flourishing, thorough, spectacular evil" (59). As a result, according to critic Jay Cocks, Kubrick's film "posits a world somehow gone berserk, in which there are no real alternatives, only degrees of madness" (80).

The implications of this are significant in terms of the final vision the film puts forward. "In the apparent defense of free will," Coale writes, "(Kubrick) has declared it an illusion" (97). In _The Novel and the Cinema_, Geoffrey Wagner classes _A Clockwork Orange_ as a "commentary," saying "there is a totally different approach to the nature of evil evident in writer and director. In Kubrick's film it is hard to find an ethos, so that the sense of Alex's choice is lost" (308). Kubrick's aims are thus, in Wagner's view, less profound and more sociopolitical than those of Burgess (313). The final scene exemplifies this idea. Whereas in the novel Alex's deal with the Minister is an ironic statement of the unfortunate consequences of the need for free will, in the film it is a commentary on the kind of selfishness practiced by Kubrick's ignoble savages: Alex uses the Minister, and the Minister uses Alex. The scene is doubly ironic because Alex, even at the end, remains a pawn of the government which he once rebelled against.

A Clockwork Orange represents Kubrick's darkest vision of man's fate. The future, Kubrick is suggesting, offers no possibility for redemption because there is no true "good" to be found in it. It is a bleak, nihilistic prediction of what will happen to man if he allows his present social structure to continue unabated. Without self-knowledge, Kubrick seems to say, all men will eventually become clockwork oranges.

III. Barry Lyndon

Barry Lyndon is one of Kubrick's most powerful statements of his personal vision and his most radical departure from the original text. First published in 1844, the novel concerns the exploits of an Irish rogue who rises in society by deceit and loses his position because of his wanton cruelty. Barry, like Humbert and Alex, tells his own story, in a style full of energy, wit, and bravado. Again, the style of the novel plays an important role: Thackeray uses it to expose the title character's hypocrisy, turning this proposed memoir of a great man into the unwitting self-indictment of a truly vile character. This ironic aspect of the novel is probably what attracted Kubrick to it.

Like Humbert in Lolita, Barry writes his memoir in prison (this time, debtor's prison) and, again like Humbert, will soon die there (this time of delirium tremens). When his story begins, Barry Lyndon is Redmond Barry, a young Irish peasant in love with his cousin Nora. When Redmond apparently kills Nora's fiance, Captain John Quin, in a duel, he is forced to flee to Dublin, join the British army, and enter the Seven Years' War. He learns too late that Quin is still very much alive, the duel having been a hoax. Redmond eventually deserts the army by stealing a wounded officer's uniform, but is captured by the Prussian army and again forced to fight. After the war, the Prussian government orders Redmond to spy on the Chevalier de Balibari, a notorious gambler who turns out to be his long-lost uncle. The Chevalier and Redmond join forces and through a clever ruse manage to escape the Prussians.

Redmond and the Chevalier then spend several years roaming Europe and gambling with the best of European aristocracy. During a visit to the Duchy of X-, Redmond hatches a villainous scheme to marry the wealthy Countess Ida. The plan, which involves blackmailing the countess' current fiance, backfires, however, resulting in a scandal and even a few deaths. Redmond and the Chevalier are again forced to flee, but not before Redmond has been introduced to the ways of evil manipulation.

Redmond then decides to woo the Countess of Lyndon, whose husband Charles is dying and whose lover, Lord George Poynings, is waiting in the wings. After Charles dies, Redmond utilizes every deceitful means available to force the widow to marry him. Lady Lyndon eventually succumbs to his constant badgering, and Redmond receives royal permission to change his name to Barry Lyndon.

After the wedding Barry's true colors begin to show. He cruelly, even violently, subjugates his wife, he brutalizes her son, the Viscount Bullingdon, and he wastes the Lyndon fortune in an effort to gain a peerage and secure his social position. After a public thrashing of Bullingdon, Barry loses the favor of his patrons and, consequently, loses the peerage as well. The family begins to fall apart: Bullingdon flees to America to fight in the Revolution, and Barry's young son Bryan suffers a mortal injury in a riding accident. On his deathbed, the boy asks his parents to be good to each other; Barry, in a characteristic denial of responsibility, says, "I wish ... (his mother) had enabled me to keep the counsel which the dying boy gave us" (283). One by one Barry's plots unravel until Lady Lyndon, with the help of Poynings, succeeds in escaping Barry and cornering him with the threat of arrest. Barry is forced to leave the country penniless.

The novel comes from the tradition of the picaresque: it is composed of a series of episodes depicting the travels and adventures of its rogue hero. Yet at the same time it is an ironic refutation of the heroic tradition. Every time Barry boasts of his heroism, the reader recognizes him as an egotistical, petty, and pathetic man. "As he progresses into crime and becomes an artist in debauchery," writes John W. Dodds in Thackeray: A Critical Portrait, "his narrative becomes the record of a heartless and depraved rascal who insists, nevertheless, that he has been mistreated by Fate and who defends his most atrocious rascalities with the bland air of one who simply does not know right from wrong" (73). Critics have praised Thackeray's sustained use of irony in the novel, his depiction of one man's moral disintegration, and his study of a corrupt eighteenth-century society. "Thackeray is particularly insistent on individual moral responsibility in Barry Lyndon because here he does in fact show how the character of his hero is shaped by social context and external experience," Ina Ferris writes in William

Makepeace Thackeray (19). Ferris adds that

> ... the condemnation of Redmond Barry involves not just one individual but a whole social code ... Barry is reared in a system that defines a gentleman by his blood and by his skill with a sword. By his time and in his shallow eyes, the code has degenerated into a matter of externals and confusion of means with ends. ... Transformation of moral or spiritual values into material manifestations characterizes the entire world of the novel. (20)

It is this social aspect of Thackeray's novel which Kubrick emphasizes in his film adaptation. The numerous alterations he makes serve to transform Barry Lyndon from a loosely structured indictment of an individual into a carefully structured indictment of an entire society.

This shift in emphasis is most evident in Kubrick's presentation of Barry himself. As portrayed by Ryan O'Neal, Barry is a naive, somewhat subdued young man; certainly not the vicious braggart of Thackeray's vision. As critic William K. Everson points out, "in the book Barry Lyndon talked far too much and in the film hardly at all" (121). This softening of Barry's character is further accomplished by the use of omniscient, third-person narration, as opposed to the first-person narration of the novel. In both film versions of Lolita and A Clockwork Orange, Kubrick retained the first-person viewpoint of the novels: James Mason periodically narrated Humbert's adventures in Lolita, and Malcolm McDowell provided Nadsat commentaries on the action in A Clockwork Orange. Here, however, Kubrick does away with the first-person viewpoint, and for a specific purpose: by employing an aloof, distant, and completely aware narrator, Kubrick is able to give the viewer the "big picture," placing the characters within a much broader context and transforming Barry into a victim, instead of a victimizer, of society.

Kubrick has also made a number of changes in the plot of Thackeray's novel. Certain scenes, for example, have been added. Of these the most important ones are the closing scenes, in which Bullingdon returns from exile and challenges Barry to a duel. In the novel Barry's fall occurs through a number of deceptions and complex intrigues; Kubrick opts for a much more dramatic climax, one that clearly leaves the viewer with an impression of Barry as the victim of a corrupt society. In the film, Barry and Bullingdon duel with pistols in an abandoned church. Bullingdon's first shot misfires; Barry, taking pity on him and displaying faith in Bullingdon's humanity, fires his shot into the ground. Bullingdon, however, refuses to accept his gesture of kindness: claiming that he has not received "satisfaction," he forces Barry to stand his ground for another shot. The bullet strikes Barry in the left leg, which must be amputated. In the next scene, the Lyndons' financial adviser Graham (a character invented by Kubrick) visits Barry at his sickbed and calmly delivers the terms of his exile. Next we see Barry on crutches, climbing into a coach, and then a final scene, in which Lady Lyndon hesitantly signs an agreed-upon annuity for Barry while Bullingdon, Graham, and the Reverend Runt hover over her. The effect is of an enclosed, ritualized society casting out one of its "undesirables" and returning to the status quo.

For Hans Feldmann, the concluding duel clearly illustrates the concept of man as ignoble savage. "The duel," he writes, "is the major social form which Kubrick uses to expose the false conception of human nature upon which Western civilization is structured" (18). It is a way of stifling the primal side of man, an attempt to ritualize violent urges without understanding them. The duel, in effect, is the eighteenth century's Ludovico treatment. That it succeeds only in destroying the human vitality represented by Barry is a condemnation of the society, not the character. "Thackeray is not objecting to the forms of civilization as much as he is objecting to man's abuse of those forms," Feldmann writes; hence the use of an anticlimactic ending in the novel (17). Kubrick, however, wants to drive home the point that societies based on a false view of man can only destroy the individual; his new ending accomplishes this task.

Equally important to this re-emphasis of Barry Lyndon are the scenes Kubrick has deleted from the novel. He removes the episode at the Duchy of X-, which illustrates Barry at his most cruelly opportunistic. He eliminates Barry's long and complex maneuvering of Lady Lyndon into marriage (opting instead for a short series of romantic interludes), as well as the scenes of Barry's brutality toward his wife. He compresses many of the picaresque episodes of Barry's journey, leaving out unnecessary intrigues and superfluous characters (like George Poynings). As a result, the film is more clearly structured on a rise-fall pattern. Only about one quarter of Thackeray's novel deals with Barry's married life, and only two chapters deal exclusively with his fall. The entire second half of Kubrick's film, however, is devoted to Barry's decline: the first half's series of picaresque episodes reveals itself to be, in effect, a lengthy introduction to the "main" story.

These changes, writes Michael Klein in "Narrative and Discourse in Kubrick's Modern Tragedy," "alter the proportion of the narrative, shifting our attention to scenes in which Barry is a victim and hence more sympathetic" (97-98). Kubrick does not want to portray Barry as an active manipulator; his changes, as Miller points out, "emphasize Barry's passivity: the film's hero seems incapable of the self-seeking ingenuity that inspires the career of Thackeray's Barry" (1363). What emerges from Kubrick's film, then, is "the portrait of a rather decent young man corrupted by a corrupt society, a man who learned the ways of that world too well and was fool enough to put his trust in the nobility of noblemen" (Crist 61). The film is as much about the dangers of society as is _A Clockwork Orange_. Like its predecessors, it depicts the destruction of an individual by the society established to perfect him. Barry Lyndon _can't_ be "perfected," however; nor can Alex or Humbert. They can only fall victim to a social structure which refuses to acknowledge and accommodate their essential imperfections.

CONCLUSION

Stanley Kubrick's films represent an effort to alert man to his inherently corrupt nature, for only by accepting and understanding this nature can man prevent the growth of societies like those depicted in _Lolita_, _A Clockwork Orange_, and _Barry Lyndon_. Kubrick's works present the viewer with a world of the past in which ritual, decorum, and ceremony have all but drained man of his vitality; a world of the present in which moral hypocrisy reigns supreme; and a world of the future in which the only choice is between violent animality and clockwork dehumanization. These films present a wholly integrated, wholly individual artistic vision, one that reshapes the world views of other artists in order to achieve its fullest expression. Stanley Kubrick is not an adaptor in the common sense of the word: he is not concerned with translating someone else's vision into a new medium. He _adopts_, rather than adapts, literary works, integrating them with his own perceptions of the world to create a totally new work of art. Kubrick is truly the "author" of his films: each one is a unique, unusual experience, even (indeed, especially) for the reader of the work he is adapting. When one sees a Kubrick film, one is certain that he is witnessing an expression of personal artistic vision from one of the true masters of the film medium.

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