

Kubrick first of these
two films, 2001,



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Kubrick Lives The theory of authorship as applied to film directors is a subject that is argued extensively throughout the film world. The auteur theory was first introduced in the French film journal Cahiers du Cinema. Andrew Sarris who suggested that there are a group of filmmakers who fit into this category brought the theory to America.

It states that in order for a director to be considered an auteur, there must be a consistency of style and theme across a number of films. Very few contemporary filmmakers fit into this category. One filmmaker, however, expanded his filmography over four and a half decades, and created a consistent theme and style. That director was Stanley Kubrick. Kubrick was known as a very stylistic filmmaker, so a lot can be said about his film style.

His use of music, however, remains the most prominent aspect of Kubrick's film style, especially as his career progressed. He was a master at using music to evoke feelings and create tension and confusion. The two most prominent examples of the power of music occur in *A Clockwork Orange*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

The first of these two films, *2001*, was created like a symphony. It had an overture at the beginning, a musical intermission, and an epilogue at the end. The classical work of Richard Strauss, "Also Spach Zarathustra", supplies the most recognizable and moving main title theme of the film. The use of this music as well as other classical works including the frolicky "Blue Danube" by Johann Strauss gives the film a flowing quality that it wouldn't normally have. Most of the music is light in nature, which contradicts the mystery that is unfolding in space. The beautiful imagery is matched well

with the images and the editing to provide an incredible viewing experience. In *A Clockwork Orange*, Kubrick does virtually the same thing with music, only in a darker way.

In the film, Alex is given a treatment that will make him ill when confronted with violence or sex. Unfortunately for him, the films he is forced to watch are scored with Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony", which is Alex's favorite music. A sense of irony and empathy is created in that by Alex trying to take the easy way out, he is forced to give up the three things he loves most: sex, violence, and Beethoven.

His love of music backfires on him once again with his crooning of the song "Singin' in the Rain." In one of his violent attacks he sings that song throughout the scene. Ironically, this same victim brings him in later in a time of need. He gives himself away by singing in the bathtub. Both of these films use popular music in unconventional ways, and this can be traced to other Kubrick films as well. *Lolita* and *Dr. Strangelove* are the most noteworthy. Along with a distinctive style, Kubrick films tend to have some very definitive themes going on within them.

One of the most prominent themes is his treatment of the protagonist. In conventional filmmaking, the protagonist tends to be the "good guy". In Kubrick's films, however, the main characters (always male) tend to be not very likeable. This theme can be seen in virtually every Kubrick film. In *The Killing*, the ensemble cast of characters is planning a heist, each with their own agenda.

In *Lolita*, Humbert Humbert is an English “gentleman”, oh and also a pedophile. *A Clockwork Orange*'s Alex is a young, violent, uncaring product of society. The thing that Kubrick does, however, is play with the audience's morals and emotions.

He attempts, sometimes successfully, to get you to empathize and sympathize with these miscreants of society. We feel sorry at some point for poor Humbert as his Lolita, the love of his life, is taken away from him. And Alex, poor Alex, he is a victim of the system and is ruined by the unorthodox treatment. We eventually come to our senses, but for a brief moment or longer, we become victims of Kubrick's manipulative filmmaking power. Another theme that creates a thread throughout his body of work is the duality of self. Often, Kubrick's protagonists are faced with incredible conflicts within themselves.

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