

BOOKS

BY ADAM-TROY CASTRO

AN EXPENSIVE YET INDISPENSABLE BOOK SHOWS HOW WE LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE STANLEY KUBRICK.



PATH OF GLORY: DIRECTOR STANLEY KUBRICK AND PRODUCTION DESIGNER TONY MASTERS PLAN THE "PROVERBIAL GOOD SCIENCE-FICTION MOVIE" INSIDE HAL'S LOGIC CENTER IN 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY.

THE STANLEY KUBRICK ARCHIVES IS A MONSTER: a book so massive it dominates any table it's opened on, so heavy it's sold in a carrying case with a handle, and such a treasure you won't notice that it retails for about twice as much as Kubrick's entire lifework on DVD. It's so filled with treasures on every page that the interview on CD and the actual strip of 70mm film sliced from Kubrick's personal copy of *2001*, included with every copy of the first edition, almost qualify as afterthoughts to the study of a filmmaker whose 13 feature films included a number of masterpieces, three among them candidates for the best science-fiction movies ever made.

Kubrick's widow, Christiane, let editor Alison Castle into the director's private files, which included not only production photos from every film he ever made, but also the various versions of each script, marked up to the point of near-illegibility as Kubrick carved screenplays the way he wanted them. The highlights

include Kubrick's original letter to Arthur C. Clarke, proposing collaboration on the "proverbial good science fiction movie" that would one day be released as *2001*. There are also pages from Kubrick's "fake" script from his war film *Paths of Glory*, promising a happy ending he had no intention of shooting, for the benefit of a studio that would have preferred the movie's doomed soldiers to survive. The making-of-essays covering the production of every film he ever made, and three planned at length that never came about in his lifetime, capture the drama and conflict that went into every major production.

The book begins with a lengthy early section of stills from each film; then moves on to production details and a wide variety of contemporary materials that include studio publicity, personal memoirs from those who knew him and a number of Kubrick's increasingly rare interviews. (He didn't much like being interviewed. He said, "There's always the problem of being misquoted, or, worse, being quoted exactly.") It's almost impossible to imagine any book on Kubrick ever being more exhaustive, more fascinating, or more personal. *The Stanley Kubrick Archives* is indispensable.

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH ALISON CASTLE, EDITOR OF THE STANLEY KUBRICK ARCHIVES

Stanley Kubrick, asked about the significance of *2001*, said: "It's not a message I ever intended to convey in words. *2001* is a non-verbal experience. ..." What would he have felt about this massive volume analyzing his work?

I suspect that he might have cringed a bit, especially at seeing so many pictures of himself, but ultimately, I believe he would feel honored by the book. Just because he refused to explain his work doesn't mean we must also deny ourselves the pleasure of analyzing it.

Why was Kubrick so drawn to SF and horror in a time when most mainstream directors avoided it?

Kubrick was willing to explore nearly any genre as long as he had a great story to tell, and he wasn't intimidated by the fact that SF wasn't considered a "serious" genre in the 1960s. In the case of *The Shining*, he was taken with King's novel and not discouraged by horror being largely considered a B-movie genre.

How do you think *A.I.* would have differed had Kubrick gotten the chance to complete it himself?

There's no easy answer, but Kubrick's version would not only have been different in plot—it would surely have been more stark and less sentimental.

What sort of SF do you think he would have given us in this post-millennial, post-9/11 world?

Living to see 9/11 as well as the worsening of environmental damage would perhaps have confirmed Kubrick's fear that man would bring about his own extinction. He wanted to explore the gripping philosophical issues surrounding this eventuality in *A.I.*, and I believe if he were to have made another science fiction film he might have been compelled to continue in the same vein.

What message should today's sci-fi filmmakers draw from Kubrick's films?

It would be going against Kubrick's philosophy for me to answer this question!



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