

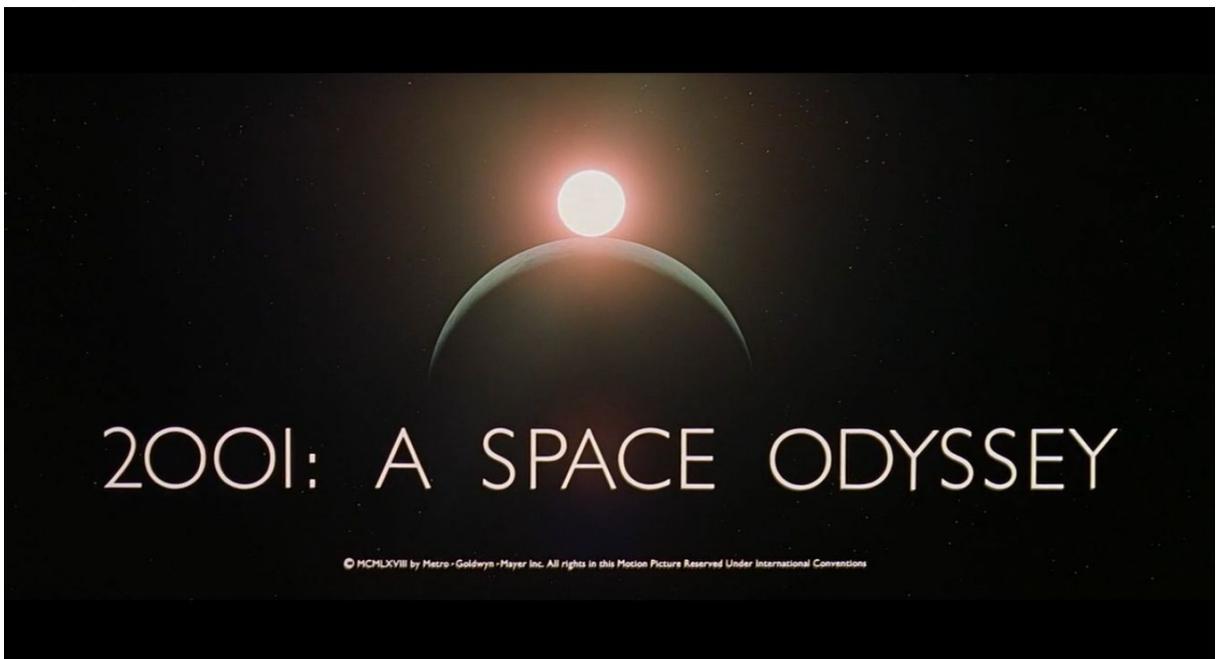
Odd planetary alignment analysis of 2001: A Space Odyssey

My attention has been caught by, what I call, planetary alignment scenes, while re-watching 2001: A Space Odyssey for the second time. I have decided to give it a try and write a short analysis of these scenes and also to see how powerful is the communication aspect of Kubrick's film is.

In the first picture (pic. 1) of a planetary alignment in Kubrick's 2001 we can see what may look like an "Earthrise". The camera is set above the moon and it shows the sun casting its rays upon the surface of what looks like Earth. After a few moments, the moon disappears from the picture completely and the full body of the sun rises above the Earth (pic. 2).



Pic 1



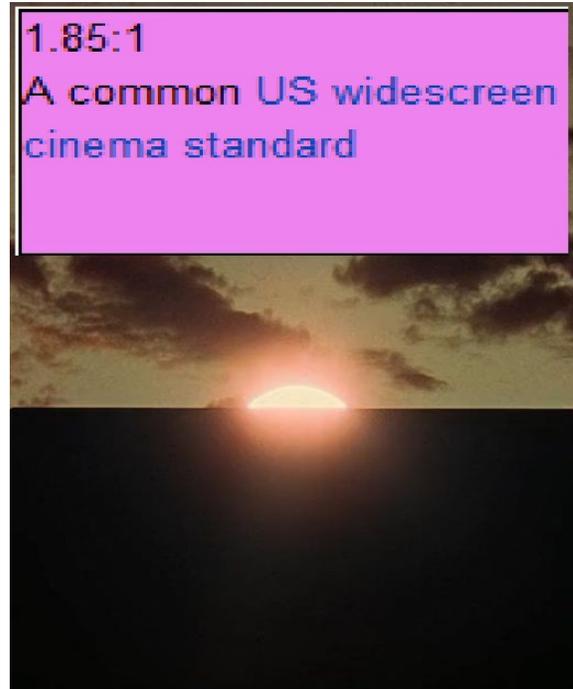
Pic 2

The second scene of an odd planetary alignment also includes the famous monolith, which Rob Ager regarded as a symbol of a cinema screen in his own analysis (pic. 3).



Pic 3

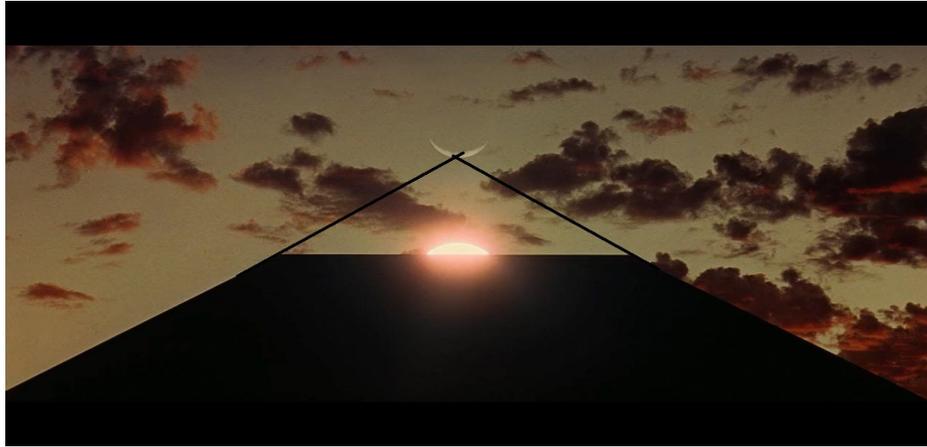
Agreeing with Ager's view, that Kubrick implied the monolith to be a cinema screen, in this particular picture we see that it covers most of the surface of the sun. One peculiar thing about this monolith is that it looks like it is being shown from below and it also represents a black trapezoid object. Now, at first I have tried eliminating the sloping angles of a trapezoid and the monolith appears to be like a 1.85:1 common cinema screen standard in the US (pic. 4, 4.5).



Pic 4, 4.5

This perfectly correlates with what Ager has discovered – the monolith looks like a cinema screen.

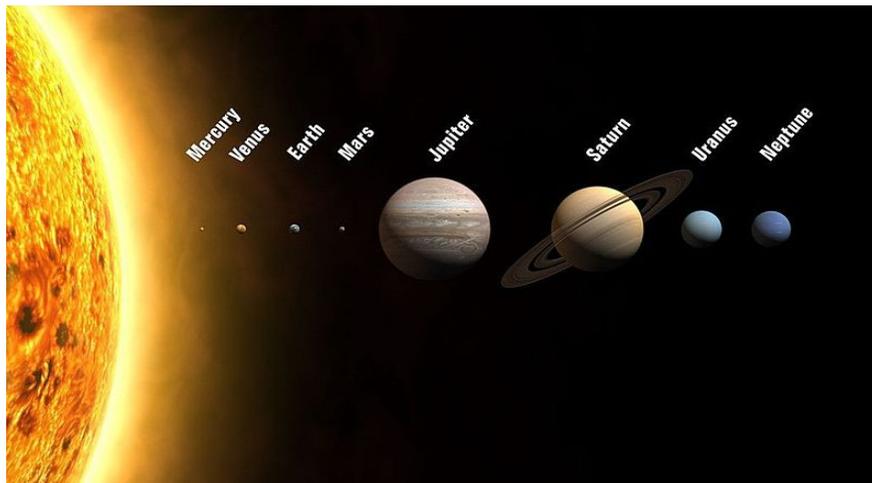
Lets assume for a moment that the sun is a symbol of light and the light is a symbol of knowledge (illuminated – enlightened etc.). What this picture shows us is precisely the lack of illumination, as only just a rim of the sun is visible peeking at us out of the top of the trapezoid monolith. Lets put all the conspiracy theories away and for the sake of curiosity, make this monolith look like a pyramid. Surprisingly enough, the lines match perfectly (pic. 5).



Pic 5

What is trying to be communicated here that there is a lack of enlightenment, as the sun is not even half visible.

The third planetary alignment scene is also a very interesting one. At first look, it might seem like a solar system (pic. 6),



Pic 6

but we only have 5 planet-like objects and a monolith in between them (pic. 6.5).



Pic 6.5

By giving it a better look, one can see earth at the bottom, instead of a sun and, assuming that Kubrick used solar system's model, what should follow next would be planet Mars and Jupiter afterward. For some reason, there are 3 more planet-like objects, but using a zoom tool revealed that those are just C letter shaped white objects instead (pic. 7).



Pic 7

It just does not look anything like other heavenly bodies at all. The monolith is placed in between the planets Mars and Jupiter, in mythology known as the God of War and the King of Gods. Has Kubrick wanted us to pay attention to the mythology (hence the name *Odyssey*), or the monolith in between Mars and Jupiter, or the lack of other heavenly bodies in the scene? There is something very odd about the lighting here as well. The earth is illuminated from above, Mars – from the front and the Jupiter from behind. But how is this possible if the only light source of the solar system is the sun? What Stanley Kubrick was trying to communicate here was probably the lack of truth towards the 60's space programs initiated by the US government. What I also find very interesting is the use of word *Odyssey* in the movie's and book's title. Was the space program just another epic of western civilization, captured on the screen, instead of a book, hence the monolith in between Mars and Jupiter? Return to the first couple of shots where the moon, the earth and the sun is visible. By the

time the movie title appears, moon disappears from the picture completely. Probably just a style choice.

The full body of a sun is only visible at the beginning of the film. It is the core element of this film, or rather, the strangeness and sometimes lack of it. The sun is a direct representation of enlightenment, or as it been shown, the lack of it. Using the idea of Mr Ager's about the monolith, it is quite easy to see the connections between all this odd lightning and planet alignment.