In 1994 Dominick LaCapra observed that the Holocaust is “a more or less covert point of rupture between the modern and the postmodern.” The pressure along this faultline had been building ever since 1914. It was this rupture, between modern faith in reason and progress and the brute fact of genocide in the twentieth century, that “undershadowed” much of the cinema of Stanley Kubrick. Kubrick’s cinema, with its focus on the disruptive and the disturbing in human affairs, seems nonetheless marked by a strange absence of reference to the Holocaust. In 1962, Kubrick turned down an offer to make a film of Edward Lewis Wallant’s Holocaust novel *The Pawnbroker* (1961). But in 1975 he asked Isaac Bashevis Singer, in vain, to help him write a screenplay for a Holocaust film. In 1980, the year that saw the release of his film of Stephen King’s horror novel *The Shining* (1977), Kubrick sent writer Michael Herr a copy of Raul Hilberg’s *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961), describing the book as “monumental” [and] that, probably, what he most wanted to make was a film about the Holocaust, but good luck in putting all that into a two-hour movie.” Kubrick’s ambivalence here verges on contradiction (“probably…most wanted”), revealing not only his personal reservations about treating the subject of the Holocaust but also those concerning cinema’s ability to treat it (“film…movie”). Kubrick would go on, in the 1990s, to write a screenplay, “Aryan Papers,” on the subject. But he never made the screenplay into a film.

It is one argument of this essay, however, that Stanley Kubrick sublimated his feelings about the Holocaust into his films, and, in particular, into *The Shining*, along habitual didactic and aesthetic lines of indirection; as his screenwriting collaborator on *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), Frederic Raphael, observed out of frustration as well as admiration, “S.K. proceeds by indirection; who knows where, still less why?” This essay also argues that the effect of Kubrick’s indirection is an especially worthwhile way for viewers and readers of his films to contemplate the Holocaust. From conception to perception and beyond, Kubrick’s indirect discourse on the Holocaust has merit. This is because such indirection avoids problems with the artistic representation of mass extermination and makes for a rich postmodern space of useful, enlightening, and disillusioning contemplation and construction on the part of the viewer. Such indirection is largely postmodern in intent and effect, but its representation of the Holocaust per se serves the modern purpose of universalizing the problem of genocide rather than rendering it via direct visual and aural terms an expression of Jewish experience alone. In, as it were, burying the Jewish victim so deeply, *The Shining* foregrounds a discourse on murderous European imperialism in North America that can engage resentments in post-colonial regions of the world. Both Kubrick’s indirection and Kubrick’s generalization operate on levels of expression and genre that might appeal in particular to peoples and cultures in conflict with Israel over the West Bank and Palestinian statehood. It might also engage those in the Arab world and elsewhere exercised over perceived and actual political use of historical memory of the Holocaust as well as in conflict...
with the past and present of Western colonialism and Orientalism.

Kubrick’s own life spanned this dark rupture between modern and postmodern. As the Jewish Kubrick put it late in life, “Gentiles don’t know how to worry.” He was born in Manhattan in 1928 and grew up in the West Bronx. His father was a homeopathic physician who had changed his name from Jacob Kubrik to Jacques, or Jack, Kubrick. The family was descended from immigrants from eastern Galicia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; the Kubriks who stayed in Europe were wiped out in the Holocaust. Stanley grew up playing chess, reading, going to movies, and taking photographs. In 1942 he read Humphrey Cobb’s novel about the First World War, Paths of Glory, which he made into a film in collaboration with Kirk Douglas in 1957. After the Second World War Kubrick worked as a photographer for Look magazine, regularly attended screenings of European films at the Museum of Modern Art, and made a series of short documentary films. His first feature film, Fear and Desire, was released in 1953. It is a fable about war loosely and amateurishly based on Shakespeare’s The Tempest in which soldiers wander about in a mishmash of German, Italian, and American uniforms from the Second World War. Kubrick subsequently collaborated on “The German Lieutenant,” an unproduced screenplay about the Second World War. In 1958 he married a German actress who played the only German and only woman in Paths of Glory and who was the niece of Veit Harlan, the director of the infamously antisemitic film Jud Süss (1940), made in the Third Reich, about whom as well Kubrick wanted to make a film. He never made that film either, despite his later observation that he had “never seen a history of Nazi Germany I didn’t like.”

Kubrick, as Julian Rice has argued, was a modernist who believed in the power of art to call attention to the dangers of the world. But he also shared the deep distrust of Freud and others regarding human personality and society. He also shared with Freud, whose work inspired Kubrick for his entire life, a wary consciousness of the precarious position of Jews in a world boiling with religious, ethnic, social, and racial prejudice. Kubrick’s cinema, while didactic in modernist content and form, is, however, also postmodern in the playfulness of its “open narrative” and its interrogation of film genre and movie convention. In The Shining, for example, Kubrick produces a significant “alienation effect” by having the audience see Jack sneaking up on Wendy instead of focusing on Wendy to produce a scary and satisfying “startle reflex” in the audience. The effect is modern in that the audience is, or should be, reminded by the sabotaging of convention that they are watching a movie and that the real world of horror outside the movie theater requires thoughtful attention: That, in this case, the startled Wendy is one more victim of the violent male power structure represented by the film’s Overlook Hotel and by Jack, who has struck a low-rent Faustian bargain to serve the hotel’s ghostly masters. But the film is also postmodern in its vein of cruel humor and an ending that, like that of Dr. Strangelove (1964), seems to promise a horrific “return of the repressed.” In the end, the message—or the messenger—is more Lacanian than Freudian. Reason, convention, and language are not guides to improvement and knowledge, but rather acknowledgement of the Real that is beyond words, beyond thought, beyond desire, beyond hope, beyond consciousness, and lies over the precipice of the unconscious within the realm of the organism’s drive toward death as well as life.

Kubrick was a rigorous director, insisting upon control and final cut in all his films before and after a miserable experience with filling in as director of Spartacus (1960). Still, Kubrick as much “indirected” his films as directed them. The modern, didactic Kubrick wanted his audience to work to derive meaning; as he put it to Frederic Raphael, “You tell people what things mean, they don’t mean anything anymore.” But, at the same time, Kubrick was also channeling a postmodern emphasis on the “reader’s” reception of a film text and an active creation of meaning and so he fills the visual and aural spaces
of his films around the characters and story with details that indirectly carry meaning. Such “indirection” informed his insistence on many takes. Kubrick almost never used storyboards, preferring to have a scene work itself out over time on the set. Such laborious repetition allowed actors to explore expression and emotion in such a way as to discover effects within the setting of a scene that would manifest the ideas behind the film in ways not plotted out beforehand. Editing and scoring, all painstakingly carried out by Kubrick himself, would add or emphasize further levels of reference and meaning to the properties, words, and actions contained in the scenes.

Nowhere was such indirection so evident and artistically significant as when it came to the Holocaust, the epicenter of rupture between modern and postmodern. Because Kubrick’s was a consciousness preoccupied with the dangers of the ruptured and rupturing world, visual and aural spaces of “directed indirection” in his films carry great uncertainty and malevolence. While all of Kubrick’s films directly and consistently address violence, conflict, and evil, Kubrick’s references to the Holocaust and Nazi Germany reside exclusively in the spaces surrounding the stories and characters. This indirection was grounded in artistic and aesthetic concerns. In addition to his commitment to indirect discourse as a means of prompting reflection in the audience, Kubrick was, as we have noted, skeptical about the ability of film to portray the Holocaust. But he also found it personally difficult to deal with the subject. Kubrick almost never included Jewish characters in his films and regularly wrote them out of screenplays based on novels such as Paths of Glory, A Clockwork Orange (1971), Barry Lyndon (1975), and Eyes Wide Shut. Part of this had to do with Kubrick’s modernist focus on generic, universal human problems rather than on discrete groups. It also had to do with what he saw as a largely non-Jewish film audience; in this regard he was like the Jewish studio heads in the 1930s and 1940s who did not want to aggravate American antisemitism by focusing on Nazi persecution of the Jews. (See, for example, the indirect discourse in Warner’s Casablanca [1943] that consists merely of a Star of David on a balcony in the background of an early street scene of refugees being rounded up by Vichy police in French Morocco. Moreover, Kubrick’s own modernism and rationalism disposed him against religion in general. His own upbringing had been secular, and he did not have a bar mitzvah. Even his Holocaust screenplay is about a young Jewish boy in Poland who survives by masquerading as a Catholic, that is, a “non-Jew.” But as a Jew who knew “how to worry,” Kubrick was almost certainly also hesitant at some level(s) of consciousness to place Jews in his films’ environment of omnipresent threat. This was particularly the case due to one consistent, and postmodernist, theme in his cinema: the breakdown of highly rational systems at great human cost. The Fail-Safe system and the Doomsday Machine in Dr. Strangelove, the computer HAL in 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), and the Ludovico Treatment in A Clockwork Orange all become menacing. It must have struck the modern but mordant Kubrick that the Nazis “Final Solution of the Jewish Problem” was not a “rational” system gone wrong but one gone “horribly right” at the horrible expense of the Jews. Of course the modern system designed to murder Jews works perfectly! Gentiles don’t know how to worry indeed. Finally, Kubrick was hardly alone in drawing another conclusion from the Holocaust: that it was a frightful mystery of irrational evil, which, in rupturing not just the modern world, had thrown the nature and existence of civilization and of God into shatteringly dark question.

So Nazis, Jews, and the Holocaust lurk in Kubrick’s films indirectly. They do so because Kubrick constructed his films in this way. They would have to, in any case, since that which is most repressed is that which is most threatening and must find expression somehow. And they “will out” as well, because words, texts, and images have meanings and associations embedded in them by culture and history over which an artist has little or no control. Thus the color palette of The Shin-
ing is increasingly dominated by yellow, a historically loaded choice with regard to Jews. There is a scene in *Spartacus*, another Kirk Douglas vehicle and one marked by a strong collective Jewish consciousness, in which one scene “suggests documentary description of blood spattering Heinrich Himmler as he watched the...shooting of Jews.” There is thus both agency in Kubrick’s oeuvre and also discourse beyond intention in the text of his films. There is, finally, history that flowed through Kubrick’s own experience from childhood on that influenced his psyche and his work. Thus the German Luger pistol that plays an incongruously narrative and metonymic role in Kubrick’s first New York City drama, *Killer’s Kiss* (1953), one shot reproducing almost exactly a shot from the wartime American film *Hotel Berlin* (1945). In *Killer’s Kiss* there is also a shot of mannequins stacked on shelves that recalls photographs of the concentration camps from 1945. Along these same dark lines, the ending of Kubrick’s black comedy *Dr. Strangelove* is the blackest possible analogue to the Nazi Final Solution as a system “gone horribly right.” For in this film the end of the world in a nuclear holocaust is not the end of the world even though it is the end of the movie. Kubrick leaves the viewer with a second ending. The nuclear destruction of the world by the Doomsday Machine is just the means, a penultimate “Final Solution”, to the ends of a new Master Race to take over the earth. Dr. Strangelove, scientific advisor to the American president and once upon a time advisor to Hitler, has a plan (“It would not be difficult, Mein Führer!...I’m sorry, Mr. President.”), according to which a computer will select a group of people on the basis of “youth, health, sexual fertility, intelligence, and a cross, section of necessary skills” to live in mineshafts, a recourse actually proposed by American nuclear strategist Herman Kahn, until the radiation blanketing the earth has dissipated. The last spoken lines of the film are Strangelove’s as he toddles from his wheelchair: “I have plan...Mein Führer, I can walk!” The screen does not fade to black, but cuts to hydrogen bombs detonating and World War II chanteuse Vera Lynn singing “We’ll Meet Again.” While the song lyrics, like those of “When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again” accompanying B-52s attacking Russia, have a tragically ironic quality given the destruction of the entire world, they also communicate a deeper dread, as, only in a Kubrick film: The Nazis will be back, words which end *Hotel Berlin*. Or, rather, Nazis abide. In Lacanian terms, these are men who love war and destruction out of their own organism’s death drive that makes them both desire and fear in every woman they meet (again) the “one woman” who dominated their infancy. As with the ending to *The Shining*, evil survives and echoes the despairing words of Adorno and Horkheimer: “In the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men [sic] from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant.”

So it is no surprise that Kubrick continued searching for a book on which to base a film about the Holocaust. In the early 1980s he asked Raul Hilberg for a suggestion, but he did not like the book Hilberg suggested, the diary of the Jewish leader of the Warsaw Ghetto forced by the Germans to select ghetto residents for deportation to Treblinka and who committed suicide after signing the order to deport the children from the ghetto orphanage run by Janusz Korczak. Instead, in the 1990s Kubrick decided to make a film of Louis Begley’s novelized memoir, *Wartime Lies* (1991). As a boy, the Jewish Begley survived the war in Poland by being hidden as a Catholic under the care of “Aunt” Tania. The story is one of physical survival, since the result for Begley was the loss of childhood, loss of identity, and loss of innocence. “Janek” even adopts the defense mechanism of identification with the aggressor in admiring the hard, efficient, and apparently invincible German Wehrmacht and SS when exterminating bedbugs: “I could be a hunter and an aggressor like SS units destroying partisans in the forest, or, very soon, rebellious Jews in the ghetto of Warsaw.” Kubrick must also have been struck by the fact that Begley’s
family came from the same part of Galicia (now Ukraine) as his own ancestors. Kubrick started production work on the film, worked alone on the screenplay, and finally shelved the project on the grounds that Steven Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List*, which came out in 1994, had beaten him to the punch.

But the elements of *Wartime Lies* that attracted Kubrick also at some levels of consciousness repelled him. Kubrick too admired the technical capacities of the Germans with whom he worked and the German machines, like the Adler typewriters, he used. And his fascination with the history of Nazi Germany, while emblematic of other personal and familial tensions and contradictions, to a certain significant extent represented the same sort of defensive identification with the aggressor that marked young Begley’s life. This is why Kubrick often includes German characters in his films, for they can inhabit and represent a world of omnipresent threat and violence in a way Jews for the Jewish Kubrick cannot. Even Begley’s book about wartime Poland does not take place in the ghettos and camps, but rather in the world of Germans and Poles. This is reflected in the title Kubrick gave his screenplay, “Aryan Papers,” which were the official documents that allowed a Jew to live as a non-Jew in Nazi-occupied Poland and documented all the lies that made Begley’s life what it was and remained. Still, all this was not protection enough. Working alone on the screenplay, never once contacting Begley, took an emotional toll on Kubrick; his wife Christiane recalls that never had she seen Stanley as depressed as during the time he was working on “Aryan Papers.” He was therefore more and more distracted by plans for another film based on the legend of Pinocchio, which would be made after Kubrick’s death by Steven Spielberg. Even Kubrick’s claim that Spielberg’s Holocaust film had pre-empted his own suggests relief at not having to make his own. This must have been the case because Kubrick told Hilberg that Spielberg had not made the right film, later remarking to Frederic Raphael: “The Holocaust is about six million people who get killed. *Schindler’s List* was about six hundred who don’t.”

Kubrick’s reduction of the number of Jews Schindler saved (actually around 1,100) serves not only alliterative emphasis. His reversal of tense in placing the Holocaust in the present and Spielberg’s film in the past speaks to a hierarchy of concerns and conflicts coursing through Kubrick’s life and work. Kubrick once again contacted Hilberg about a source for a film, but again, nothing came of it.

There is one element of Begley’s story, however, that points not only to the film about the Holocaust Kubrick did not make but one(s) he had made already. This is the trope in *Wartime Lies* of a child discovering a dangerous world. This, too, must have attracted Kubrick to the novel since there is an arc in Kubrick’s films from 1960 to 1980 that displays the same trope. This arc was prefigured during the 1950s in Kubrick’s own passion for Stefan Zweig’s novella *The Burning Secret* (1914), in which a young boy is mute witness to his mother’s marital infidelity. Kubrick at this time also more than likely saw Vittorio De Sica’s film on the same subject, *The Children Are Watching Us* (1943), since it screened at the Museum of Modern Art April 21-24 and June 9-11, 1955, before Kubrick moved to Los Angeles late that summer. The first film in the arc is *Lolita* (1962), which has its own peculiar dynamic in that the young girl in the story (twelve years old in Vladimir Nabokov’s novel and fifteen in the film) is sexually aggressive (a “nymphet”) and not at all traditionally “innocent.” But she is objectified and violated by writer Claire Quilty and Professor Humbert Humbert. In *Dr. Strangelove*, which too has its own perverse dynamic, the world is literally destroyed by adult males and then, for what it is worth, inherited by their Strangelovian Master Race offspring. *2001* also ends with the destruction of the world but in the form of the Star Child, who has evolved beyond the cold, violent humans raised from apes to space travelers. *A Clockwork Orange* reverses the ostensible evolutionary optimism of *2001* in the form of fifteen-year-old thug Alexander DeLarge. But here too youth is victimized by adult male authority. Through the behaviorist
Ludovico Treatment, Alex is “cured” of his urges to sex and “ultra-violence,” but this only makes him a victim of all those whom he has abused in the past. Moreover, unlike the novel by Anthony Burgess, Kubrick’s film ends not with the maturation of Alex into responsible family man but with restoration of Alex’s predatory instincts in service to a fascist government. And in Barry Lyndon, a young, ambitious, and selfish Irish upstart is destroyed by an aristocratic society of the late eighteenth century that itself is facing historical eclipse via guillotine.

This trope of a child discovering a dangerous world is most clearly evident in Kubrick’s horror film The Shining: in the film it is a world shaped and scarred by history. In King’s novel, the Overlook Hotel is a house of horrors literally as well as figuratively, inhabited by the ghosts of powerful men who had clawed their way to the top and continued to claw at each other, and their women, once there. These are the masters of a new empire, King imagining a postwar party at the hotel on August 29, 1945 lit by “glowing Japanese lanterns” and celebrating America “as the colossus of the world.” Kubrick’s shifts the temporal focus of America’s ghostly past to the interwar era, 1919 in an early treatment, with the film ending on a photograph of partygoers dated July 4, 1921. As Bill Blakemore points out in Rodney Ascher’s “subjective documentary” Room 237 (2012), Kubrick also adds a visual and aural subtext about Anglo-American imperial decimation of Native Americans, associating this historical tragedy with white male victimization of child (Jack’s son Danny), female (wife Wendy), and African-American (a “nigger cook”) in the film narrative. That the deep historical dimensions of The Shining on the subject of persecution and genocide also include the tragedy of the Jews of Europe is evident in two later films that reference The Shining. Martin Scorsese’s Shutter Island (2010) “presents the Ashcliffe Hospital in a similar way to the Overlook Hotel” and represents the protagonist’s memories of the liberation of Dachau in music and number combinations used in The Shining. Barton Fink (1991) by the Coen brothers even more clearly pays homage to The Shining. The dark Art Deco Hotel Earle in Los Angeles recalls the Overlook as a tomb of danger and murder. Jewish screenwriter Fink is given a novel titled Nebuchadnezzar about the Assyrian king who, according to the Bible (Daniel 3:19), burned three Jewish governors in a fiery furnace heated “seven times more than it was wont to be heated.” Insurance salesman Charlie Meadows is serial murderer Karl Mundt, who emerges from an elevator that breathes smoke and fire, pursues a detective down an endless fiery hotel corridor screaming “I’ll show you the life of the mind” over and over, and finally shoots the detective in the forehead with a laconic “Heil Hitler.”

Kubrick’s film of King’s novel also recalls Thomas Mann’s The Magic Mountain (1924) and Franz Kafka’s The Castle (1922). Like the Hotel Berghof in Mann’s novel and the castle in Kafka’s, the Overlook Hotel symbolizes temporal power. Both Kafka and Mann used their settings to symbolize the decline of European civilization to and through the First World War. The Gentle Mann held out hope for the triumph of reason over power and prejudice (including antisemitism), while the Jewish Kafka posits a fundamentally grotesque world of inherent evil and horror. Kafka was Kubrick’s favorite writer and since, unlike Mann as well as Kafka, Kubrick was working after not just the First but also the Second World War, the view of the world from his fictional mountaintop had to factor in a new scale of historical horror with the Holocaust at its bottom. Using the horror genre called upon Kubrick to employ his usual indirection that had the advantage of mitigating or eliminating entirely the danger of trivialization of genuine earthly horror. This choice also reflected the 1970s decade in which horror films were achieving both popular and even artistic success. Carolyn Picart and David Frank have argued that the genre of horror deals inherently with issues central to the Holocaust, such as representation of monsters and their victims, that can effect in an audience mimetic and artistic working through of trauma. Nathan Abrams contends that the many horror films made by Jewish
directors in the late 1960s and 1970s represent a consciousness and negotiation of increasing popular, scholarly, and artistic interest at the time in Hitler, Nazi Germany, and the Holocaust. These same dynamics were manifest in the trend since at least Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960), and including King’s *The Shining*, in placing horror in fiction and film not in the dark, private spaces of the Gothic “haunted house” but in the brightly lit Kafkaesque spaces of contemporary family, public, and commercial life and activity.

Kubrick, with his eagle eye for evil, was most interested while writing *The Shining* in the character of Jack, a teacher who wants to be a writer. But Danny is the youngest in a long cinematic line of Kubrick innocents discovering the same type of perilous “found world” of which Kubrick himself became aware as child and adolescent in the 1930s and 1940s. Jack has been hired to be the winter caretaker at the Overlook Hotel in the Colorado Rockies. He is enamored of the violent history of the Overlook and becomes the dutiful functionary who attempts to murder his wife and son on “orders from the house.” Danny has the ability “to shine,” to see into the past and future. The first demonstration of this awesome capacity occurs as Jack is phoning Wendy with the news that he has gotten the job of hotel caretaker. Screen left are red Avis (French for “warning”) car rental brochures on the front desk. At home, Danny envisions an ocean of blood pouring from a slowly opening elevator door, (figure 1) a revelation of the bloody past of the Overlook. That this shot, reprised several times in the film, is a Kubrickian symbol of the historical horrors of his century is communicated in aural and visual details of the sequence. On the soundtrack are the dark, mysterious strains of Penderecki’s *The Dream of Jacob* (1974), which also underscore Jack’s dream of murdering his family. Penderecki lived in Poland during the Second World War and devoted his musical career to themes of tolerance and intolerance, including his *Dies Irae* (1967), also known as the “Auschwitz Oratorio.” In the Bible, Jacob is renamed Israel and his sons are the ancestors of the twelve tribes. Kubrick had familial as well as artistic reasons to construct this into a film about horror in the human family, for “in twentieth-century Christian and Nazi Poland the descendants of Jacob, Israel’s father and Stanley’s, would awaken, not the like the biblical Jacob, to salvation, but to slaughter.”

Nazis dwell in the details of this sequence, for the number on the sweater Danny wears is 42 (figure 2), a metonym for the year (Stanley’s 14th) in which more Jews were murdered than in any other year of the Holocaust. In the scene immediately following, the victims themselves are, as argued in Ascher’s *Room 237*, embodied in the impossibly huge amount of luggage the Torrances have packed into their Volkswagen, perhaps also symbolizing the

![Figure 1](image1.png)

![Figure 2](image2.png)
dreadful “baggage” of German history and the psychological baggage carried by Jack Torrance. This luggage, piled in the hotel lobby, is shown in deep focus as a trio of young people passes in front it on their way out of the Overlook (figure 3). A lap dissolve, one of 27 in The Shining suggesting ghostly presence of human absence, slowly fades a group of four other young people in over the Torrances’ luggage (figure 4). This group is upstairs with their own stack of luggage, which they carry into the elevator screen right as the camera tracks left with the Torrances on a tour of the cavernous lounge that will become Jack’s “office.” Millions of Jews (along with their useless luggage) would be brought from all over Europe to Poland to be gassed and burned following a meeting of Nazi officials at Wannsee near Berlin on January 20, 1942. The resultant bureaucratic process, described in excru-
typewriter displays an eagle and the German word for eagle underscores the Overlook as a place, like the Chateau d’Aigle in *Paths of Glory*, of mighty, obscene power. Moreover, when we see Jack typing, the music on the soundtrack is similarly linked to the Nazi era; it is the “night music” from Bartók’s *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936). Bartók was a dedicated anti-Fascist and Kubrick twists the filmic and historical blade by prominently displaying in the credits that the recording is by Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic. Karajan was an ambitious young conductor in Austria who joined the Nazi party to advance his career, which included conducting for Hitler’s birthday and in Nazi-occupied Paris.

The darkly-freighted number 42 appears throughout *The Shining*. These small details not only because of the over-determined indirection that was part of Kubrick’s directorial style, but also because *The Shining*, even more than his other films, is informed by Freudian dream theory. According to Freud, the most dangerous and threatening material in a dream is the most repressed and so manifests itself in the smallest of signs and symbols. Wendy watches the wartime romance movie *Summer of ’42* (1971) on television, a license plate contains the number, and a news report mentions a $42 million dollar spending bill. After Danny faints following his vision of the overflowing elevator, Kubrick uses a series of shot-reverse shots between the boy and the pediatrician called by his mother to play a chilling game of historical peek-a-boo with the number: “the very next scene...foregrounds 42 by having it appear and disappear over the span of eight successive crosscut one-shots of Danny as he is being questioned by the doctor. In the first four close-ups, only the edge of the 2 on Danny’s right sleeve can be seen. Then in the fifth shot, almost the entire 42 appears, subsequently disappearing in the sixth shot (as Danny, referring to [his imaginary friend] Tony, says, ‘Because he hides’) and reappearing in shots seven and eight.”

Given Kubrick’s meticulous shooting and editing of his films, it is unlikely that this is a simple continuity error, for “[t]he visual alternation draws attention to the number and...adds to the dreamlike quality of the scene in the distortion and repression characteristic of dreamwork.” Kubrick uses a different cinematic technique in a similar manner to draw out the same historical horror that lies latent within the manifest content of the narrative dreamwork of the film. This is a painting by Paul Peel, *After the Bath* (1890), of two little girls naked in front of a roaring fire in a large stone fireplace like that in the Colorado Lounge. *After the Bath* has long been popular kitsch, but its placement in *The Shining* creates the same critical, reflexive, and grotesque juxtaposition of cozy domesticity and historical horror as the same painting’s presence does in Atom Egoyan’s *Ararat* (2002), a film about memory of the Armenian Genocide in 1915 (figure 6). A print of the painting hangs on the wall of Jack and Wendy’s bedroom, but it is depicted in a deliberately indirect, subtle, and gradual way in the background of four shots in three separate scenes over the course of almost the entire film. The struggle to lift psychological and historical repression, denial, and amnesia is represented by progressing from a small part of the picture out of focus (behind Wendy and Jack) to a small part in focus (behind Danny and Jack) to the whole picture out of focus (behind Wendy and Jack) and (figure 7) the whole picture in focus (behind Danny and Wendy). This serial juxtaposition of flesh and fire radiates not (only) coziness and warmth but the mental image of ovens (doubling down on *The Shining*’s references to Hansel and Gretel), gas (showers, not baths), and the corpses of children.
The idea of using numbers, and even the particular number 42, as Kubrick does is not unique to him. In filming Nabokov’s Lolita (1955), Kubrick was aware of the repeated appearance in the novel of the number 42, addresses, highway and hotel room numbers, as signs for Humbert of the workings of malevolent fate. Kubrick used the number 242 as that of the hotel room in which Lolita and Humbert first have sex, an appropriate reference to Nabokov himself, who, after fleeing the Nazis in 1940, lived in hotel rooms all his life. It was also the case that Fritz Lang, whose work Kubrick admired, has Marlene Dietrich in Rancho Notorious (1952) refer the audience to 1942. It may also be that especially in the 1970s the number 42, apart from Douglas Adams and Monty Python, was becoming conscious and unconscious cultural shorthand for the Holocaust. Early in The Odessa File (1974), for example, 42 shows up both as the street address of a Holocaust survivor and in the tattooed number of an Auschwitz survivor. In The Shining the number 42 is also part of a temporal and thematic pattern of multiples, mirrors, and repetitions of the number 7, a number of significance and mystery in Western culture used both in King’s novel and in The Magic Mountain as well as extensively by Kubrick in Paths of Glory. The Overlook Hotel was built in 1907 (on the site of a Native American burial ground); the photograph at the end of the film depicting the July 4, 1921 party is one of 21 pictures (in three rows of seven) on a hotel wall; the hotel manager describes a triple murder that occurred at the Overlook in 1970; Room 237 (the product of whose numbers, changed from 217 in the novel, is 42) is the Bluebeard’s Closet of the Overlook Hotel; Jack’s liquor of choice is Jack Daniel’s Black Label No. 7; Jack drives his yellow Volkswagen (later, as Jack transitions from caretaker to murderer, a red Volkswagen is shown crushed under a jackknifed tractor-trailer) from Boulder to the Overlook in 3½ hours, a roundtrip of 7 hours; the town of Sidewinder is 25 (2+5) miles from the hotel; 6 cases of 7-Up are stacked in a kitchen corridors.

The particular, or potential, achievement of Kubrick in The Shining is the attempt at bridging the rupture between the modern and postmodern that culminated in, and reverberated from, the Holocaust. Kubrick’s indirection removes, or at least distances, the subject and its representation from the presentational and the performative sphere of horror film narrative. It thus establishes between the film as modern entertainment and/or education, as it were, cordon sanitaire in which there is space for the viewer/reader of the film to consider on the prosaic grounds of thought, personal reflection, ethical deliberation, and historical analysis the horrors of the real world. Thus the presentational/performative becomes the means to its own end as well to its ends. Kubrick’s indirection produces a hypertext for the viewer comprised of the director’s own views and methods along with space for its dynamic reception and reproduction. Kubrick’s play is in service to a realist and skeptical modernism that employs alienation effects to break the spell of the performance for the audience and thereby alert them to real world problems. But Kubrick’s play is also in service to an ironic and indeterminate postmodernism that doubts reason and rejects progress. While in King’s novel the Overlook Hotel burns down, in Kubrick’s film it remains standing, with Jack, as embodiment of its ironically and inappropriately named caretakers, frozen into its past, present, and future. The very end of the film, after white credits on a black screen have rolled and the play-out dance music (“Midnight with the Stars and You” [1932]) has concluded, is also illustrative of Kubrick’s
attempt, and failure?, to bridge the rupture. We are left with the sidewinding rattle of applause and hiss of conversation among a crowd of dancers. Perhaps Kubrick the realist constructed this as a reflexive representation of a film audience leaving the theater. If so, then the modernist Kubrick, or the modernist viewer of the film, might construct this as affirmation of the reality of discussion of the film’s meaning. But Kubrick the postmodernist, or the postmodernist reader of the film, would construct this as ironic, even cynical, because this literal tag end of the film comes when everyone has long since left the theater or turned off the DVD player. And here’s what I think: “At the very end of the film, the dance is over. The message is clear and, ironically and appropriately, unheard. We are that oblivious and complicit audience of applauding dancers on the cusp of Nazi power, in our century, the century of genocide.”34

Notes
1Dominick LaCapra, Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994), xi.
5Quoted in Herr, Kubrick, 53.
6208 AR-Z 239/59, Volume 2, 718, Volume 9, 3345, Bundesarchiv, Aussenstelle Ludwigsburg, Germany; Ship Arrivals, Reel T-504, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa; Elias Kubrik Petition for Naturalization, July 12, 1910, Hersh Kubrik, Petition for Naturalization, August 7, 1912, New York City Hall of Records (courtesy Vincent LoBrutto and Harriet Morrison).
8Department of Film Exhibitions, Boxes 2, 3 (1944-1955), Celeste Bartos International Film Study Center, Museum of Modern Art, New York City; Look Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
9Quoted in Anthony Frewin, “Writers, Writing, Reading,” in The Stanley Kubrick Archives, ed. Alison Castle (Cologne: Taschen, 2005), 518; Richard Adams and Stanley Kubrick, “The German Lieutenant: An Original Screenplay” (1956/57), Box 22, Folder 2, Department of Defense Film Collection, Special Collections, Georgetown University, Washington DC.
11Quoted in Raphael, Eyes Wide Open, 75.
20Quoted in Raphael, Eyes Wide Open, 107; Raul Hilberg, personal communication,
April 15, 1999; Christiane Kubrick, personal communication, November 20, 2002; Louis Begley, personal communication, November 4, 1996.

21“50 Years of Italian Cinema,” Museum of Modern Art, Box 3, Exh. 55, 59; John Baxter, Stanley Kubrick: A Biography (Carrol & Graf, 1997), 78.


29It can be argued that the number 42 also has particular resonance with issues of race in America, since it was the number worn by Jackie Robinson, who in 1947 broke the “color barrier” in Major League Baseball. In Kubrick’s film baseball is invoked by the bat that Wendy uses to protect herself against Jack and which, in forging a link to the Torrances’ New England origins and the historical Polish lineaments of the film’s score, bears the signature of the most famous Polish-American baseball player of the 1970s, Carl Yazstremski of the Boston Red Sox. King’s Red Sox reference is to Carlton Fisk.

30Cocks, Wolf at the Door, 232. The 16:9 aspect ratio of the blu-ray DVD (2007) of The Shining cuts off most of the number on Danny’s sleeve in this scene. This DVD also shifts the color palette of the film too far toward red. In one scene, of Danny playing in the hall outside Room 237, yellow is rendered pink, which subverts a gradual shift toward yellow in the film that has important narrative and historical meaning.

31Ibid.


34Cocks, Wolf at the Door, 256.

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Dr. Strangelove: Peter Sellers, George C. Scott, Columbia, (dir. Stanley Kubrick, USA, 1964)

Eyes Wide Shut: Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, Warner Bros., (dir. Stanley Kubrick, USA, 1999)

Fear and Desire: Frank Silvera, Kenneth Harp, (dir. Stanley Kubrick, USA, 1953)


Jud Süss: Ferdinand Marian, Kristina Söderbaum, Terra-Filmkunst, (dir. Veit Harlan, 1940)

Killer’s Kiss: Frank Silvera, Irene Kane, United Artists, (dir. Stanley Kubrick, USA, 1955)

Lolita: James Mason, Sue Lyon, MGM, (dir. Stanley Kubrick, USA, 1962)

The Odessa File: Jon Voight, Maximilian Schell, Columbia, (dir. Ronald Neame, United Kingdom, 1974)


Rancho Notorious: Marlene Dietrich, Arthur Kennedy, RKO, (dir. Fritz Lang, USA, 1952)


Schindler’s List: Liam Neeson, Ralph Fiennes, Universal, (dir. Steven Spielberg, USA, 1994)


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