so taken with Sellers' abilities that he kept expanding the movie's scenario to accommodate them, and he subsequently had Sellers play a Milquetoast U.S. president, a pragmatic British soldier, and a mutant German scientist in Dr. Strangelove: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964, an Oscar-nominated performance). After Kubrick, the director with whom Sellers fared best was Blake Edwards, for whom he played the indefatigably inept French detective Inspector Clouseau in the Pink Panther series (beginning with 1964's The Pink Panther and encompassing six films featuring Sellers, the last of which, 1982's Trail of the Pink Panther, Edwards assembled out of previously unseen footage). He was also memorable as a luckless Indian actor in Edwards' slapstick gagfest The Party (1968). When not in Edwards' movies, Sellers spent the late 1960s and early 1970s in faux-hip films of varying success, including What's New, Pussycat? (1965) and the James Bond spoof Casino Royale (1967). In 1979 he fulfilled a longtime ambition by playing Charlie Gardener, a human tabula rasa, in the film adaptation of Jerzy Kosinski's novel Being There; the role won Sellers a great deal of acclaim from critics and audiences alike, and an Oscar nomination. It was a welcome return to form for Sellers, who'd been squandering his talent of late in a string of (mostly) awful films on both sides of the Atlantic. Unfortunately, this turned out to be something of a last hurrah; hung by a weakened heart, he died the following year.

George C. Scott (18 October 1927, Wise, Virginia – 22 September 1999, Westlake Village, California, ruptured abdominal aortic aneurism) was the first actor ever to refuse an Academy Award (1970 – for Patton). "The (Academy Awards) ceremonies," he said, "are a two-hour meat parade, a public display with contrived suspense for economic reasons." His biography from Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia: An actor's actor, George C. Scott has carved a solid reputation as a charismatic screen performer, although the body of his work is not nearly as imposing as memory would have us believe. Coming to the theater after service in the Marines, Scott became a familiar figure on stage and TV in New York in the late 1950s. His first film was The Hanging Tree (1959), a Gary Cooper

March 192002 (V:9): Dr. Strangelove Or: How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964)

STANLEY KUBRICK (26 July 1928, New York, New York—7 March 1999, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, England), generally regarded as one of the greatest directors, made only 13 feature films. He so loathed the first of these (Fear and Desire 1953) that he withdrew it from circulation. The others are: Killer's Kiss 1955, The Killing 1956, Paths of Glory 1957, Spartacus 1960, Lolita 1962, Dr. Strangelove or: How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb 1964, 2001: A Space Odyssey 1968, A Clockwork Orange 1971, Barry Lyndon 1975, The Shining 1980, Full Metal Jacket 1987, and Eyes Wide Shut 1999. He produced and shared the screenwriting credit on most of his films. He also edited and photographed Killer's Kiss, Fear and Desire, and two of the three short documentaries he made before he turned to features. There's a story that Kubrick was so dissatisfied with the work cinematographer Russell Metty was doing on Spartacus, that he told Metty to just sit there while Kubrick did his job. Metty did as he was told—and won that year's Academy Award for cinematography. Kubrick also did much of the "documentary" footage in Dr. Strangelove. "A film," Kubrick said, "is - or should be - more like music than like fiction. It should be a progression of moods and feelings. The theme, what's behind the emotion, the meaning, all that comes later." Kubrick was nominated for 12 Academy Awards for best screenplay, director, or picture, but the only one he ever got was for Special Visual Effects in 2001.

TERRY SOUTHERN (1 May 1924, Alvarado, Texas – 29 October 1995, New York, New York) is best known as the novelist who wrote Candy (1968), but he also wrote other fiction and wrote or collaborated on the scripts of End of the Road (1970), Easy Rider (1969), Barbarella (1968), Casino Royale (1967), The Loved One (1965), and The Cincinnati Kid (1965).

GILBERT TAYLOR (12 April 1914, Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire, England) also shot Dracula (1979), the Israeli locations for Damien: Omen II (1978), Star Wars (1977), The Omen (1976), Frenzy (1972), Mabchet (1971), The Bedford Incident (1965), Repulsion (1965), Ferry Cross the Mersey (1965), A Hard Day's Night (1964), "The Avengers" (TV series,1961), plus several dozen films none of us has seen or, in all likelihood, will ever see.

PETER SELLERS (Richard Henry Sellers, 8 September 1925, Southsea, Hampshire, England – 24 July 1980, London, England, heart attack) first came to public attention when he worked with Spike Milligan and Harry Secombe in BBC Radio's "The Goon Show" in the early 1950s. The Goons continued in tv and even made some films, including one of Bruce's favorite films: The Mukkinese Battle Horn. His bio in Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia, reads, in part: "In 1959 he won the British equivalent of the Oscar for his performance as a labor leader in I'm All Right Jack, starring in Richard Lester's very funny short-subject The Running, Jumping, and Standing-Still Film, then showed off his versatility by playing three roles in the hilarious satire The Mouse That Roared. Multiple role-playing is an honored tradition among British comic actors, and Sellers apotheosized that tradition while simultaneously bringing it up to date on the big screen. His one-role-only turns of the early 1960s are rather colorless compared with his multifaceted Clare Quilty in Stanley Kubrick's Lolita (1962). The director was reportedly..."
Western, in which he showed promise as a supporting player. In fact, he received a Best Supporting Actor nomination for his role as the prosecuting attorney in his second picture, Otto Preminger's _Anatomy of a Murder_ (also 1959). During that period Scott was riding high on Broadway in plays like 'Comes a Day' and _The Andersonville Trial,_ and making prominent guest appearances on television as well. He earned another Oscar nomination for his supporting performance in _The Hustler_ (1961), then costarred in _The List of Adrian Messenger_ (1963), _Dr. Strangelove_ (1964, a memorable turn as the gun ho Gen. Buck Turgidson), _The Yellow Rolls-Royce_ (also 1964), _The Bible_ (1966, as Abraham), and _Not With My Wife You Don't!_ (also 1966). He also received critical acclaim for his starring role in the New York-based TV series "East Side, West Side," which lasted just one season, 1963-64. He starred in _The Finian Flan Man_ (1967), as a rouguish con artist, and _Petulia_ (1966), as a recently divorced doctor, before taking on the role for which he's best remembered, the eccentric but brilliant General George S. Patton in _Patton_ (1970). His galvanizing performance in this sweeping and intelligent biopic won him an Academy Award, but ever since _The Hustler_ he'd opened disdained acting honors, and true to form, refused to accept the Oscar—the first actor ever to do so. Undeterred by this rebuff, Academy voters nominated him again the following year for his electrifying performance in Paddy Chayefsky's black comedy _The Hospital_ (1971). That same year he played a delightfully deranged man who thinks he is Sherlock Holmes in _They Might Be Giants_. He also starred in a TV production of Arthur Miller's _The Price,_ for which he won an Emmy—which, naturally, he refused. This was Scott's busiest and most fruitful period. He starred in _The New Centurions_ (1972), _Oklahoma Crude_ (a rare and welcome chance to play comedy), _The Day of the Dolphin_ (both 1973), _Bank Shot_ (1974, another comedy), _The Hindenburg_ (1975), _Islands in the Stream_ (1977), _Crossed Swords_ (1978, the Hollywood parody Movie Movie), and _The Changeling_ (1979). He was particularly effective in _Hardcore_ (also 1979), as a middle-aged, midwestern Calvinist drawn into the seedy world of urban decay while searching for his runaway daughter. He also directed two films in which he starred with his wife Trish Van Devere, _Rage_ (1972) and _The Savage Is Loose_ (1974), but neither was especially well received. Since the early 1980s, Scott has assumed roles in feature films only infrequently, with _The Formula_ (1980), _Taps_ (1981), _Firestarter_ (1984), and _The Exorcist III_ (1990) as his only significant efforts, but he has continued to be a busy TV actor in specials and long-form dramas.

Sterling Hayden said:

I have yet to invest the first dime because I don’t believe in unearned income. The question is inevitable: 'If you don’t believe in taking what you don’t earn, then how could you be reconciled to the astronomical figures [you make]?' I never was. Furthermore, I couldn’t stand the work.

"There’s nothing wrong with being an actor, if that’s what a man wants. But there’s everything wrong with achieving an exalted status simply because one photographs well and is able to handle dialogue.

On his films: Bastards, most of them, conceived in contempt of life and spewn out onto screens across the world with noxious ballyhoo; saying nothing, contemptuous of the truth, sullen, and lecherous.

On his flog with Communism: What did I care for labor? For racial discrimination? For civil liberties and the war between the classes? Oh, I cared in my own fashion. I cared just enough to embrace these things as props, flailing away night after night at semi-drunkened parties.

I wonder whether there has ever before been a man who bought a schooner and joined the Communist Party all on the same day.

I’m not a member of the Party. I’m not under the discipline or influence of the Party, not that I know of. What’s more, I never was, even when I was a member.

On acting: You don’t need talent to star in a motion picture. All you need is some intelligence AND the ability to work freely in front of the lens. Why do I always freeze? I went through the war. I jumped out of forty-foot dragger with six machine guns and a top speed of six knots. Bombers. I played kick-the-can with E-boats when all we had was a lousy eight-millimeter. Why do I always freeze? I went through the war. I jumped out of forty-foot dragger with six machine guns and a top speed of six knots. Why do I always freeze? I went through the war. I jumped out of forty-foot dragger with six machine guns and a top speed of six knots. Why do I always freeze? I went through the war. I jumped out of forty-foot dragger with six machine guns and a top speed of six knots. Why do I always freeze? I went through the war. I jumped out of forty-foot dragger with six machine guns and a top speed of six knots. Why do I always freeze? I went through the war. I jumped out of forty-foot dragger with six machine guns and a top speed of six knots. Why do I always freeze? I went through the war.

Billy Wilder on Stanley Kubrick (from Conversations with Wilder)

[Kubrick] has never made a bad picture. Each picture he trumps the trump.

The first half of _Full Metal Jacket_ was the best picture I ever saw. Where the guy sits on the toilet and blows his head off? Terrific. Then he lost himself with the girl guerilla. The second half, down a little. It’s still a wonderful picture. You know, if he does a thing, he really does it. But this is... this is a career to discuss. Every picture, he trumps the trump. These are all pictures any director would be proud to be associated with, much less make. At a picture like _The Bicycle Thief_ [1947], you forget that this is your profession. You just get lost in the picture.

CC: What did you think of Dr. Strangelove [1964]?
At the age of 17 Kubrick was hired by Look as a staff photographer. During his 4 years there he enrolled as a nonmatriculated student at Columbia and attended screenings at MOMA. "I was aware that I didn’t know anything about making films, but I believed I couldn’t make them any worse than the majority of films I was seeing. Bad films gave me the courage to try making a movie."

Beginning his study of Kubrick, Alexander Walker wrote that "only a few directors possess a conceptual talent—that is, a talent to crystallize every film they make into a cinematic concept. It transcends the need to find a good story. An absorbing story. . . . It is the talent to construct a form that will exhibit the maker’s vision in an unexpected way. It is this conceptual talent that most distinguishes Stanley Kubrick."

Kubrick’s next three films [after Lolita], made with ever increasing deliberation and secrecy, comprise a trilogy on humanity in the technological age. It begins with Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1963), scripted by Kubrick, Terry Southern, and Peter George from the latter’s novel Red Alert. Originally conceived as a “serious treatment of the problem of accidental war,” like the novel, it modulated into satire when Kubrick found the theme too blackly absurd to be treated in any other way.

Nuclear catastrophe is unleashed by Air Force General Jack D. Ripper, who believes that his sexual impotence is due to a Communist conspiracy to pollute “his precious bodily fluids.” Despite the efforts of a decent but ineffectual President to placate the Russians, despite all the technical fail-safe procedures and mechanisms, lunacy triumphs and Major “Kink” Kong (Slim Pickens) gleefully rides his great phallic bomb to the apocalypse.

Slim Pickens, Sterling Hayden as the impotent Ripper, George C. Scott as the virile Pentagon hulk Turgidson: they are all mad, and the maddest of all is Dr. Strangelove himself, a former Nazi scientist now employed by the Pentagon, a paraplegic with dark glasses and a mechanical arm constantly snapping into uncontrollable Sieg Heils. He is marvelously realized by Peter Sellers, who also plays a clipped RAF group captain and the President of the United States. [Orson Welles in 1964 remarked that “amongst the younger generation, Kubrick is a giant.”]

---

**Adrian Turner, Kubrick entry in World Film Directors V. II, Ed. John Wakeman, The H.H. Wilson Co. NY 1988:**

This irony—that the sexual neuroses of two militarists should be at the heart of the holocaust—is only the first of the disparities that Dr. Strangelove points up between the smallness of the cause and the enormity of the result.

As the crisis grows, the scene expands—into the Pentagon War room. This is one of the most functional and imaginative sets ever designed for film. It was created by Ken Adam, a German-born architecture student, whose designs for other movies did much to create the larger-than-life feelings of the James Bond films. It is no accident, therefore, that we see shades of Fritz Lang’s work, especially Metropolis, in this cavernous design.

[Turgidson] urges all-out war, figuring out the possible megadeaths like a lip-smacking computer. “I’m not saying we wouldn’t get our hair mussed. I am saying only ten to twenty million people killed, tops, depending on the breaks.” The speech, says Kubrick, is almost a précis of what has been published in military journals, even to euphemisms, not unlike “hair musing,” for human casualties. It would be difficult, and dramatically redundant, Kubrick observes, to try to top the statistical and linguistic inhumanity of nuclear strategists.

---


[on set during filming a conversation with Dundy, Associate Producer Victor Lyndon and Ken Adam the art director] Adam: “Stanley’s been doing research on this film for two years now. He’s so steeped in his material that when we first met to discuss it his conversation was full of fail-safe points, gyro-headings, strobe markings, and CRM-114S—I didn’t know what he was talking about. You learn fast though. You have to, working with him. I like him. He’s a funny combination of coldness and hypersensitivity. He walked by my wife on the set the other day as if totally unaware of her existence and then rang her that evening to apologize. When he’s working, he just doesn’t take in anything else.

---

**from Richard Schickel, Schickel on Film. Wm. Morrow & Co. NY 1987 “Stanley Kubrick The Unbearable Brevity of Being”**

Kubrick’s virtuosity as a filmmaker, and the range of his subjects, have served to disguise his near-obssesive concern with these two matters—the brutal brevity of the individual’s span on earth and the indifference of the spheres to that span, whatever its length, whatever achievements are recorded over its course. His works, whatever their ostensible themes, must always be seen as acts of defiance against this tragic fate.

On both points he has been quite specific. Here, for example, is Kubrick on the subject of individual mortality: “Man is the only creature aware of his own mortality and is at the same time generally incapable of coming to grips with this awareness and all its implications. Millions of people thus, to a greater or lesser degree, experience emotional anxieties, tensions and unresolved conflicts that frequently express themselves in the form of neuroses and a general joylessness that permeates their lives with frustration and bitterness and increases as they grow older and see the grave yawning before them.” (This was, of course, the theme of the great, and greatly misunderstood Barry Lyndon, in which Kubrick time-traveled deeper into the past than he ever has into the future. . . .)

Dr. Strangelove is not to be read solely as a cautionary tale comically put, though it is surely a great comedy, one that we can see, two decades after its release, is going to hold up for a very long time. That is because it is a true black comedy, a comedy that proceeds from a bleak, but deeply felt, view of human nature and is not dependent for its best thrusts on its situation—the desperate attempt by the American high command to recall an atomic strike against the Soviet Union launched by a madman—or upon its satire of the already outmoded technology of the strike and the recall effort it details. What Kubrick is contemplating here are both the ironies of accident and the failure of rationalism to estimate the effects of chance on human endeavors and to build into its contingency planning compensation for these effects.

What he is saying in this film is that though man is sufficiently advanced to imagine a rational world and to build intricately rational systems for governing it, he has not progressed far enough in his evolution to rid himself of his irrational impulses or to rid society of those institutions and arrangements that are projections of that irrationalism.
No Buffalo Film Seminar next week (it’s UB spring break), but we’ll be back Tuesday, April 2, with Josef von Sternberg’s *The Blue Angel/Der Blaue Engel* 1930. This story of a professor out of his element was supposed to be silent star Emil Jannings’ showcase entry into the talkies, but Marlene Dietrich ran away with the show. Her performance as cabaret performer Lola Lola in this story of Weimar decadence made her an international star. Pauline Kael called it “one of the most frightening movies ever made.” This was originally released with German and English soundtracks. Most critics found the German version superior, because Jannings and Dietrich were both more comfortable in their native language. For many years, the only version available here was a shortened and badly subtitled print of the German version. We’ll be viewing a print released only a few months ago, which restores the film to its original length and has far better subtitles.

**Jazz Talk This Thursday**

Many American academics get all la-la and theory-gooey at the sound of certain French names: say "Baudrillard, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze" three times without stumbling and they’ll be sure you’re a smart and a decent person. French academics are far less interested in those guys than American empiricists, particularly Howard S. Becker, author of *Outsiders, Art Worlds*, and other books about the way people define, label, and locate themselves in their worlds. He’s also a fine jazz pianist. Becker will be lecturing at the Albright-Knox at 7:30 p.m. next Thursday night, March 21. The title of his talk is "Jazz Places." During or after the talk he’ll also play some music, with an upright bassist for company. The lecture/performance is free and open to the public. Highly recommended.

**Buffalo Report**

Another issue of *Buffalo Report*, the twice-monthly web newsletter, is online. The issue contains an update on Peace Bridge expansion activities, two magnificently absurd pages from Kaleida Health’s Hunter Group report, an architect’s models of what a rehabilitated Children’s Hospital might look like, a conversation between filmmaker Emile de Antonio and Bruce Jackson about one of Joe McCarthy’s favorite snitches, and more. The site also contains earlier articles on Buffalo’s health care crisis and an obit for Norman Mailer’s trophy convict. To take a look, go to http://buffaloreport.com.

**Email Diane engdc@acsu.buffalo.edu email Bruce bjackson@buffalo.edu**