

## Notes on *Eyes Wide Shut*, a film by Stanley Kubrick

*a shot-by-shot commentary of Part I of the film*

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[These notes progress shot-by-shot from the beginning of the film to the end of Part I. Also there are lists interrupting the scene-by-scene schema. Words in **bold** are extracts from the screenplay or list headings. Each film scene, numbered in **bold**, will be referred to using the text of the published screenplay. These notes by no means presume to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject at hand.]

**[Note to readers 2003: These notes were compiled after seven viewings of EWS in the cinema in a three week period upon its first release in the U.K. on 10 September 1999. I saw EWS in the cinema (on, oh so very luckily, "one of the largest screens in Europe", so the movie theatre advertised) on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> of September, and on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October. I used the published script and a near-photographic recollection of the film. Nothing has been rewritten or added following the release of the video and DVD—and this is unfortunate because I have more to say on the subject, having by now seen the film round about one hundred times. (While reading these Notes over I had to hold myself back almost violently in places from adding new thoughts. I didn't want to add anything because I feared a snowball effect of getting enmeshed all over again and thereby losing months of my life in rewrites.) It frustrates me that these notes are incomplete but I can't find the time at present to revise them and continue to completion. (I can already hear the jokes: maybe I've spent too much time watching the film!) I hope that the reader of this document will retain the knowledge that this is indeed a series of notes—my first impressions of the film that was still in the cinema at the time this was written—and not by any means a finished work, not by any means the concentrated outcome of a long process of thinking. I began this document following my fourth viewing. Eyes Wide Shut was still on the cinema screens in its first run when this document reached its end. By November Eyes Wide Shut had reached the end of its U.K. run. I remember distinctly that I went through a period of mild mourning when Eyes Wide Shut finally disappeared from U.K. screens. These Notes, which comprise a commentary only up to the fade-out of Part I, came to a premature end primarily because I lost stamina. It was obvious to me at the time that if I continued to write these Notes, proceeding shot by shot, line by line, scene by scene, until I reached the end of the film, I would produce a book-length study of at least 250,000 words (these Notes on Part I alone come to 53,000 words), and that this endeavour would take at least another two, three months of solid work. So I shrugged, took a breath, rubbed my aching back muscles, and turned aside to other responsibilities. At the time I consoled myself with the thought, "It's all in my head, why do I have to put it on paper?" I realise now that to put these Notes on hiatus was a grievous error: let it be a lesson: one should finish what one starts! Reading this document over these four years later I writhe in agony that I fail to mention this, that and the other thing; but anyone who knows Kubrick's work intimately knows that it takes a while for the films to sink in. In some cases a long while—and I mean ten years or more. I might as well state the obvious at the outset: Eyes Wide Shut is among the greatest films I have seen, but of course it is not to be taken in isolation—I must have watched 2001: A Space Odyssey and Barry Lyndon and The Shining more than a hundred times each, and A Clockwork Orange and Full Metal Jacket close to that amount. By 1999 I had lived with Kubrick's work for close to twenty years and was perfectly primed for the release of Eyes Wide Shut. At the time when I was being bewitched and spellbound by Kubrick's final film on the cinema screens, I felt I had no choice but to embark on this project, I had to do it—it was an act of well-nigh religious consequences for me: can the reader understand this? Writing these Notes was a heartfelt commemoration of the artist Kubrick's role in the development of my own sensibilities. I was paying my respect to the master. That I halted my labours following the completion of an analysis of Part I didn't feel like quitting so much as taking a breather. It was the sensible thing, I thought at the time. To do Eyes Wide Shut proper justice I believed I needed breathing space to gather energy anew. The last few pages of these Notes offer evidence that by the end of my labours I was flagging in energy.**

*One more thing. I want to point out that fast upon the release of the DVD I discovered that some of the powerful effects of EWS' visuals were greatly lessened on DVD—proving to me that in some cases there is no substitute for seeing the film as it was originally meant to be seen: on the big screen. If someone only knows EWS from the compromise of DVD or video, he or she will have had a much lesser experience of the film. This point cannot be overstated.]*

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## Notes

### Theme Music

Dmitri Shostakovich, "Waltz 2" from *Jazz Suite* (1938). The waltz, a dance in 3/4 time, as a genre came into its own in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Among the most recognizable waltzes are those of the Viennese composers, including Strauss, father and son (e.g. "The Blue Danube"). Shostakovich's waltz is a twentieth century waltz, it's a modern treatment of an antique style. From the standpoint of today, the waltz as a genre is a memory of an old order, a defunct world view. As such, the waltz is rich with nostalgia for a past time.

Shostakovich's waltz has two subjects. First subject is as it were at walking pace, regulating the rhythm of the pace of the film, and the pace of Dr. Bill Harford's everyday life. First subject is a rhythm that is controlled, stately even, but it is also wistful, having a subtle downcast suggestion to its melodic line. Second subject is lush with a lively soaring yearnsome melody which is passionate, but still within measure: it is feeling that is contained within the boundaries of logic. Taken as a whole, the waltz has the feel of a clockwork mechanism, something cyclical and everlasting.

The theme music is heard three times in the film. (1.) Opening credits. (2.) The montage of Bill and Alice's quotidian life (scenes **20 - 30**) following the party-at-Ziegler's sequence. (3.) End credits.

The theme music is, in scene **3**, revealed as playing from Bill and Alice's stereo in their bedroom; Shostakovich is their personal musical selection for the evening. The Harfords' musical taste (Shostakovich) cannot be faulted, but neither is it surprising. In England (and taking England as representative as the West) in the latter half of the twentieth century, including the last decade of the century, the Russian Dmitri Shostakovich has been among the most performed of twentieth century composers. The *Jazz Suite* is one of Shostakovich's minor works.

### [The Viennese Connection

The novel that EWS has been "inspired by", *Traumnovelle* (Dream Story) by Arthur Schnitzler, takes place in 1890s Vienna.

Consider:

1. The waltz as a genre came into its own in late eighteenth century Vienna.
2. Beethoven's opera *Fidelio* was commissioned by the Theater an der Wein in Vienna and had its premiere there in 1805.
3. The sonata ("Sonata Cafe") as a musical form reached its greatest development in what is called the Viennese classical sonata (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven).
4. The name "Domino" (the prostitute who is HIV-positive). A "domino" is a type of masquerade costume that consists of a hooded cloak and half-mask, and was at its height of popularity in the Europe of the late eighteenth century. In *Traumnovelle*, the characters on which Bill and Alice are based both wear dominoes to a ball, as recalled in the first chapter of the book.
5. It was in Vienna where Mozart died in December 1791. At his death he left unfinished the composition he was working on at the time, his "Requiem". Mozart's "Requiem" is distinctly audible as Bill enters Sharky's (**121**).
6. The "end of the century" time-period of *Traumnovelle* relates to the end of century/millennium time-period of EWS. This is stressed by the number visible in scene **125 Int. Morgue - Hospital - Night**: Nineteen. The number, seen as "19", in two shots, in the morgue, is the number on the body drawer directly above that of Amanda Curran's. The number 19 has an eerie prominence in the shot where Bill leans in toward the face of the dead Amanda Curran. The number 19 on the body drawer in the morgue resonates, it has a melancholy feel: 19: the death of the 1900s, the extreme end of the twentieth century.]

### OPENING CREDITS

are white on black. Black is the darkest possible colour and white is the lightest possible colour. Neither can be produced by mixing other pigments. "Black and white used together create the greatest tonal contrast with maximum legibility and economy of means." (Wong, *Principles of Color Design*, p. 26) *Every scene of EWS uses the six hues of the spectrum*, with colour (tone), value (contrast), and chroma (saturation) manipulated accordingly. EWS is fascinated with the rainbow. The opening (and closing) credits being black and white—the two exterior poles of the rainbow (so to say)—is thus a colour scheme eminently suitable to frame the film.

### STRUCTURE OF EWS

Is in three parts, or acts, demarcated by two (the only two) fade outs.

The reel-time of the film is (roughly) a continuous sixty hours.

The narrative can be broadly characterized as consisting of twenty-five “blocks”. Part I consists of three blocks, Part II of eight blocks, and Part III of fourteen blocks. [See Structure Chart.]

Part I occurs at night; Part II, (the next) morning to night; Part III, (the next) morning to night to morning/day.

Of the two-dozen or so transitions from scene to scene, all but five follow the scheme: interior to exterior to interior (otherwise written as int.-ext.-int.). Importantly, (only) five transitions in EWS follow the scheme: interior-interior. [See Structure Chart, and below.]

There are thirteen dissolves in EWS. (Five in the party-at-Ziegler’s sequence (into **5**, into **6**, into **7**, into **10**; and into **11**); leaving the Death Room w/Marion scene (**41**); Alice watching TV in **49** dissolves to Domino kissing Bill; four at Somerton (into **77**, into **81**, into **82**, into **83**); Bill entering his bedroom in **88**; Bill entering his bedroom in **131**. Most of them serve conceptual functions, linking together separate thematic elements to suggest correspondence or irony.)

Though it is a role much smaller in screen-time than the character of Bill Harford, the character of Alice Harford dominates the structuration of EWS. Alice is the subject of the first shot of the film. Alice is given the last line and the last look in the last shot of the film. It is at a CU of Alice, revealing her mercurial thoughts as expressed in her face, where occurs the fade-out of Part I. The fade-out of Part II comes after Alice’s revelation of her weird dream in which she mocks her husband with cutting laughter. Bill is the first character seen at the beginnings of both Part II and Part III, but as it happens the beginnings of Part II and III are very much less dynamic and dramatic than what happens as Part I and Part II end. EWS is weighted toward Alice. To recap, and taking EWS as a whole, *it is Alice who is seen first and last, and who is the predominant character at the ends of Part I and Part II and Part III*. By virtue of her integral placement at highly significant structural points of the film, the character of Alice, though of smaller screen-time than Bill, has just as strong a presence in EWS as the character of Bill.

EWS features the “happiest”, most “up-beat” ending of any Kubrick film?

The published screenplay has 134 scenes (**1 - 134**).

### **[The fade-outs (and the one final black-out)]**

There are two fade-outs in the film, one closing Part I and one closing Part II.

The fade-outs are engineered with great deftness for maximum atmosphere.

Consider these two points:

1. The onscreen images seem to hang in the darkness, as darkness on darkness, before everything onscreen is completely obscured. (Such as Alice’s eyes in the first fade-out, and Bill and Alice’s bodies in the second.) The fading image seems to hang on for as long as it can before obscuration. The dark shapes on the black field seen just before total obscuration is fascinating to behold.<sup>1</sup>

2. In the second fade-out, the subtle sounds that accompany the shot (subtle rustling sounds of Alice’s hands caressing Bill’s clothes) perdure quietly into the darkness until total obscuration.

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<sup>1</sup> Footnote, 2010: This is one of the times in which I may have been “seeing things” back in 1999. I do not see this effect on the dvd.

As for the black-out (following the final shot of EWS), which is the only black-out in the film, what is immediately interesting is that the sound of the ambient surroundings, the bustle and murmur of the shoppers moving through the toy store, drains away completely directly preceding the black-out. All sound fades out, and only then does the image jump to black.]

### [The five int.-int. transitions

*In EWS, virtually every transition from interior scene to interior scene has interpolated between the two a shot (or shots) of an exterior, namely, a New York street.* This editing procedure (int.-ext.-int.) contributes to the rhythm of the unfolding of EWS.

Five transitions, however, are abrupt: they are interior-interior, with the fourth of the five being an innovation in the transition-structuration of the film.

The five interior-interior transitions, in order of their occurrence:

1. **18. Ziegler's Ballroom - Night** (Alice kisses her finger and places it on the Hungarian Sandor Szavost's lips) *cuts to* **19. Bill and Alice's apt - bedroom - Night** (Alice and Bill doubled in the mirror, kissing, "Baby Did a Bad Bad Thing" heard on the soundtrack).

2. **86. Marble Hall - Somerton - Night** (the character "Red Cloak" tells Bill: "Go!") *cuts to* **87. Int. Bill and Alice's apt - front hallway - Night** (Bill enters quietly, carrying bag with costume which he proceeds to hide).

3. **105. Int. Bill and Alice's apt - dining room/kitchen - Night** (the highly charged moment when Alice smiles at Bill while Bill remembers (in Alice's voice-over) her dream revelation (from end of Part II) *cuts to* **106. Int. Reception Area - Bill's surgery - Night** (no-one in the shot; the camera is looking for Bill who is in his office behind a closed door).

4. **129. Ziegler's Billiard Room - Night** (the final conversation between Bill and Ziegler, ending with Ziegler: "But you know that, don't you?") *cuts to* **130. Bill and Alice's apt - bedroom - Night** (Close up of Bill's mask on his pillow). This is the most innovative transition in EWS, because the final bedroom scene is the only scene in the film introduced via synecdoche, part-for-whole (the mask being a part of the bedroom). The scene location (bedroom of apt.) is introduced via the CU of the mask: again, this is the only such synecdochial setting-up done in EWS. Every other scene is introduced with a shot wide enough to establish the setting, wide enough to reveal much more space than the CU of the mask.

(Beginning a scene with a CU of an object reminds of the style of *Barry Lyndon*, for example in the third scene of the film, which begins with a CU of a putto from which a slow zoom-out comes to reveal Barry and Nora at table playing cards.)

5. **133. Bill and Alice's apt - living room- Morning** (The morning after Bill's told Alice "Everything?") *cuts to* **134. Toy Store - Day** (final scene in EWS).

The transition as noted in number 2 above, **96. Int. Marble Hall - Somerton - Night to 97. Int. Bill and Alice's apt. - front hallway - Night** is a highly interesting one. What is interesting specifically is what is not shown. That is to say, following his ejection from the Masked Ball, Bill would have found his way back to Manhattan in the back of the cab that had brought him to Somerton in the first place. Bill's expression and demeanour as he sat in the back of the darkened cab would have been a highly charged one, expressive of puzzlement, torment, fear, enchantment, relief—full of emotional turmoil. The scene, not seen, could have been a powerfully atmospheric one (akin to Bill in the cab, having his first vision of Alice with the Naval Officer, in 34). But Kubrick withholds this specific glimpse of Bill. It could be supposed that a lesser director might not have withheld such an evocative scene, but would have considered it a necessary connecting tissue between Somerton and Bill's apt. *As it stands, the transition, which is an abrupt one,*

*serves to keep the pacing of EWS as efficient as possible.* In addition, the direct juxtaposition between the Masked Ball and Bill and Alice's apt. suggests a thematic relationship between the two.]

**[General introductory technical points**

1. The *editing* might well be the best of any Kubrick film. (Pace and variety of the geometry of shot composition, two different and highly important avenues of inquiry, would have to be explicated.) The juxtaposition of the patterning of shots is often striking. That way Kubrick has of cutting to a character posed dynamically, on an emotional cusp, is forceful, thrilling. (Particularly scene **33**, Alice's Naval Officer monologue and Bill's reactions; also particularly, scene **129**, Bill's conversation with Ziegler.)

2. The *sound* is excellently subtle, so subtle it might be mistaken as less excellent than it is. Consider the sounds of these examples:

a. The sound of Alice using the toilet paper in (**3**).

b. In (**33**), the Naval Officer revelation scene, Alice stroking and hitting her leg with her hand; also the subtle rustling of her nightdress.

c. In (**39**), the bedroom of the dead Lou Nathanson, Marion hits her necklace of black beads and rubies, making it rattle.

d. **Footsteps** (consider the relationship):

i. Bill walking down the hallway toward the bedroom of the dead Lou Nathanson (**38**).

ii. The Mysterious Woman (who "redeems" Bill) being lead away along the balcony by the Bird-Mask Man (**86**).

iii. the uncanny clarity of the footsteps of the bald stocky Stalker in tan overcoat crossing the intersection of Wren and Miller Streets (**118**).

e. The subtle sound of characters swallowing their own saliva:

i. Marion (**39**).

ii. Alice (looking distraught in living room, with cigarette, the morning after Bill tells her "everything") (**133**).

f. The wet kiss between Domino and Bill (**50**).

g. In (**64**), the inner costume room of Rainbow Fashions, the sounds of the ambient city street are, for the first time at the location, completely blocked out, and the soundscape becomes hollow, a bit flat, in a sort of stasis. (For a split second, as Bill and Milich enter in, it is one of the quietest moments in the film. One of the other quietest moments in EWS is the final split second of the film.)

h. In (**73**), Bill's point-of-view (from the inside of the taxi) of the gates of Somerton as the taxi coasts slowly past, the sound of the taxi's engine has a strange undercurrent to it, a palpably ominous sound interweaving with the more usual car engine sound. This is especially subtle.

i. A startled Bill's breathing can be heard in the pause just before the Mysterious Woman is lead away along the balcony by the Bird Masked Man at Somerton (86).

j. The soft, low-key, and dreamlike sounds that are heard as Bill enters his apartment upon returning from the Masked Ball at Somerton (87). (Including the muffled sound of passing cars that fades up only as Bill approaches and passes the windows to the right.)

k. As mentioned above, the subtle, gentle sounds of Alice stroking Bill which can still be heard just as the (second) fade-out achieves total obscuration (88).

l. The wonderfully deft manner in which Kubrick employs sound when there are transitions from interior to exterior. Most times when there is a cut to an **exterior - city street**, the ambient mix of automotive-sounds and general city hum are first heard *quietly*, are at low volume, and only a split second later are louder sounds then heard. (This point relates to pace and rhythm of EWS.)

m. The clear sound of Ziegler "pinging" his scotch glass with his finger in his billiard room (129).

n. The two weird (and unwritable) noises that come from two characters:

i. the guttural sound, from deep in her throat, emitted by Marion, right before she lets out an "I love you" to Bill (39).

ii. the flippant plosive Ziegler uses to punctuate in line "End of story!" in (129).

o. The sound of Alice stubbing out her cigarette in (133).

p. The cadence of the dialogue exchange between Bill and Marion, though all words are spoken, has the feel of a song, of a sonata, between two instruments. (For example, certain words of Marion's repeatedly falling on the same mellow tone, in the manner of a song, for example in the line, "My boyfriend Carl is making some calls and, umm, he'll be coming over soon. I think you've met Carl here a few times?") (39).

q. The sound of a clock ticking:

i. in the death room with Marion (39).

ii. in Ziegler's billiard room (129).

3. To speak of *cinematography* would take up too much space just here, and would demand entering into a series of related avenues of inquiry (colour, camera placement, camera movement, framing, editing) that are of the highest importance. Suffice to say at this point that Kubrick's use of the camera is as determined and acute as in the greatest of films. The epithets proficient and expert fall short of describing Kubrick's art: it is genius. (But to explicate this point would necessitate a shot-by-shot analysis of the film from start to finish.) In EWS Kubrick's lensing is glorious; is, in a word, sublime. In EWS Kubrick is, in the most powerful sense possible of this expression, *at the top of his form*.

Let a few examples, at this point only cursorily discussed, serve as an introduction to the cinematography of EWS.

Deep focus is employed throughout the film to marvellous, intensely exquisite effect. For an obvious striking example, one thinks of the pointillistic curtain of lights decorating the walls at Ziegler's party (such as in 10). And because a deep focus shot is not an accurate representation of

ordinary eyesight, insofar as in ordinary eyesight the whole field of vision can never be in complete focus at all points, the deep focus in EWS can at times produce a strange, uncanny effect, such as the spooky shot of the Stalker standing rigid on the street corner under the streetsigns in scene **119**. Alternately, there are a series of shots with a shallow depth of field, close to a dozen or so of them (very much fewer than the amount of deep focus shots, which dominate EWS), such as a CU of Marion in **39**, a CU of Bill in **60**, a CU of Sally in **116**, a few CUs of Bill in **129**; a CU of Alice in **133**, and CUs of Bill and Alice in **134**; these shallow depth of field shots feature a sharp foreground but an exceedingly blurred background. By virtue of the substantial amount of deep focus lensing in EWS, these shallow depth of field shots stand out and are highly evocative.

Kubrick also employs three times what can be called, for ease of description, a “shaky-cam”. That is, in three scenes of the film the camera becomes very noticeably unstable, and the framing becomes tremulant. The first is when Alice, in a marijuana high, has dropped to her knees on the floor of the bedroom and is laughing uncontrollably (**33**); the second is a zoom-in to a visibly disturbed Alice as she quickly sits up in bed in order to relate her weird dream to Bill, who has just arrived back home shell-shocked from the Masked Ball (**88**). The third instance is the quick pan from Bill’s stunned face to the mask resting on his purple pillow beside a sleeping Alice in **132**. In the first and third instance the shaky framing communicates the instability of the character’s lived (psychological) moment; in the second instance the shaky framing has a deft function to fulfil, which relates to the pacing of the film and which will not be explained just here.

There are two other, less obvious instances of tremulous camera movement which could be set under the heading of “shaky-cam”. (1.) The camera repositioning its framing of Alice and Bill when Alice sits up in bed beside Bill in scene **33**. (2.) The camera tracking from Bill having considered the dead Lou Nathanson to Bill sitting down in a chair beside Marion (in **39**).

There is one very fast (but stable) zoom in EWS which is utilized to stunning effect: the quick zoom-in to the Mysterious Woman, standing on the balcony of the Marble Hall of Somerton, commanding for the proceedings against Bill to “Stop!” (**86**)

Interestingly, in at least two shots of EWS Kubrick allows light-reflections on the camera lens to emphasize the mediation of the camera lens. What is meant by “light-reflections” on the camera lens is either a doubling of a visible light source by its ghost, or an aura (arc-shaped or annular, for example) that is a reflection from a nearby light source. Films do not usually abide reflections on the lens because such a highlighting of the lensing might break the “willing suspension of disbelief”. With respect to Hollywood motion pictures, *the use of light-reflections which emphasize the presence of the camera lens is an unorthodox one*. The examples which follow identify both of the types of light-reflections as pointed out above. (1.) In scene **106**, the camera tracks across the darkened reception area of Bill’s surgery and comes to a stop facing the doorway leading to Bill’s office. In this shot colourful Christmas lights that are decorating the office are ghosted in the lens, and are situated directly over the doorway, behind which is Bill. This is a significant (conceptual) use of light-reflections on the lens. (2.) In **116**, when Bill is standing face to face with Sally in the kitchen of Domino’s apt., the camera lens captures a distinct and large white arc (a reflection on the lens from a nearby light source) which curves, points downward, across the lower half of Bill’s body; which looks like a white rainbow in fact, and which is sustained in the frame for at least ten seconds before the camera pans right as Bill and Sally sit at the table and the white arc vanishes. That this visible white arc is sustained for such a duration is an interesting directorial choice. *It recalls to mind Nuala’s line in 14, “Don’t you want to go where the rainbow ends?”*

Let two more examples suffice out of many to express Kubrick’s controlled use of cinematography in EWS.

a. The extraordinarily well-choreographed dance of Alice and Sandor Szavost in Ziegler’s ballroom (scenes **11**, **13**, **16**, and **18**). The dancing sequence can be described as *mellifluous* and *voluptuous*: The dexterous wheeling of the two dancers; the fascinatingly evocative interplay between Alice’s head and the background luminous decorations; the superiorly fluid steadicam



work achieving an optical illusion of the two dancers floating; the camera moving subtly in and out in time to the ballroom music; the sumptuous colour scheme;—Kubrick’s aesthetic here is artful, ingenious, expert, of the highest excellence: *it is a cinematic revelation*.

b. This example is more low-key than (a) and relates primarily to the relationship between camera placement and the disclosure of character. The location referred to is the bedroom in which Lou Nathanson, Marion’s father, lay dead (in **39** and **41**). In **39**, Bill enters into the bedroom, and (from the perspective of the spectator) the camera is to the right of the door. Alternately, in **41**, Carl enters into the bedroom, and this time the camera is to the left of the door. This difference between the camera placements is by no means an insignificant difference. The framing of the two shots are different, though both are focused on the doorway; and thereby different views of the room are seen specific to the framing of each shot; and what is revealed in each specific shot relates to the character entering through the doorway. That is, what is revealed in the camera framing relates intimately to the essential nature of the character therein. *Kubrick’s use of the camera is such that what is revealed in the frame with respect to character is often a visual shorthand relating to the psychology of the character.* (This specific example, of doubling/duality, relating to Bill/Carl, will be explained, including what is revealed in the two complementary shots, in more detail below.)

Let the topic of the use of colour of EWS merely be broached just here. As has been mentioned already, *every scene of the film utilizes the six colours of the spectrum, with manipulations of hue, value and chroma, according to the nature of the specific location.* Colour in EWS often has a symbolic role to play, communicating visually, for example, a psychological aspect of a character. Most of EWS was filmed using existing light sources such as the lamps that are visible in the frame. The amount of light reflecting off a shape determines the colour and vividness of its hue; and as a result of EWS using low light levels a series of optical illusions relating to hue results. Depending on the amount of light and the angle of the camera, a shape can be here one shade and then there another shade. Herein is a list of the most noticeable examples:

a. In Ziegler’s bathroom in **17**, to the far left there is a smallish square (aftershave?) bottle on a shelf under a mirror. The first time the bottle becomes visible, near the beginning of the scene, the liquid inside is a distinctly high value chromatic blue. At the end of the scene, the camera angle having shifted, the liquid in the bottle, still on the left-hand side of the screen, now looks distinctly light green.

b. The wooden headboard of Bill and Alice’s bed in their bedroom changes shades according to the camera angle. In **33**, when Alice, resting on the red sheets of the bed, is taking a draw on the marijuana joint, the headboard by her head has a distinct reddish tinge to it. Alternatively, in the last shot of the same scene, when Bill is speaking on the phone, being told of the death of Lou Nathanson, the swathe of headboard seen behind him to the right of the frame looks noticeably purple. Later, in scene **88**, when, in the darkness of the early morning Alice relates to Bill her dream upon Bill’s return from the Masked Ball at Somerton, the portions of the headboard catching what light there is reveal what is probably closest to its ‘true’ colour: brown.

c. Also in Bill and Alice’s bedroom: in **33**, when the bathroom is first seen (behind Bill) it looks to be a beautifully chromatic blue. Then, when the camera shifts its angle, in the same shot, to frame Bill and Alice sitting upright close together on the bed, the bathroom has a distinct purple cast to it. Then the bathroom is seen in the original beautiful blue when Alice is framed standing in its doorway.

d. Also in Bill and Alice’s bedroom: in **88**, after Bill has returned to his bedroom following the Masked Ball, he prompts Alice, referring to her weird dream, “Why don’t you tell me the rest of it?” - and the curtains behind Bill, framing him at left and right, are not the red that they look in the daylight but are, in the half-darkness, distinctly purple. Moreover, in the same scene the four columns framing the dressing room, and the bedroom walls, are not the vivid yellow as in daylight but a low chromatic bone-white.

e. In the half-light of the night, the security gateway on the inside of the doorway of Rainbow Fashions looks unmistakably black (**63**). Yet in the light of the next morning the gateway’s true colour is revealed: it is a brightish red (**95**).

f. The doors of the refrigerated body drawers in the morgue have, when seen from afar, their true-to-life aluminium- or steel-silver colour. Seen closer up, in the shot when Bill bends toward the face of the dead Amanda Curran, the body drawer door directly overhead, the one numbered “19”, has the colour of opaque white (125).

4. The music cues are as precisely matched to the editing as in the other late Kubrick films, especially *The Shining*. The selections, each and all of them, those composed specifically for the film by Jocelyn Pook, or source music (music used in, but not composed specifically for, the film), have been chosen for maximum effect. For example, in the party-at-Ziegler’s sequence (scenes 7 to 19), each of the six selections (such as “I’m in the Mood for Love” and “Chanson D’Amour” and “I Only Have Eyes for You”) comments wryly on the onscreen action. (For more on music, see below.)

5. The *tone* of the film is an astonishingly adroit amalgamation of the dead-serious and the comic *interfused one with another*. The comic is in most scenes an undertone, palpable but sequestered within a more apparent sober filmic style. In EWS, the serious most frequently *conceals* or *eclipses* the comic, though both co-exist simultaneously. While the serious tone is foregrounded and is immediately disclosed, the comic tone, on the other hand, most of the time is less straightaway obvious and needs to be determined. What is comic often requires a bit of distance between the spectator and the film to be recognized, while what is serious necessitates no such distance. Fascinatingly, the dead-serious and the absurdly comic in EWS are not only simultaneous but *concordant*. To recognize the comic, the spectator often needs a sudden epiphanous shift in the way of apprehending EWS. As well as the endemic comic thematic tenor of EWS, Kubrick laces the film with a series of visual and dialogic jokes, but these jokes are for the most part unstressed, not readily apparent. EWS achieves a rich perspectival ambiguity that can very well be described as the work of a genius of dramatic narrative. This intersection, this deliberate interplay, between the ostensibly serious and the subtly comic is exquisitely handled and results in a filmic style that is emotionally complex and conceptually astute.

6. The *acting* is engaging and excellent across the board, from the largest speaking parts to those among the smallest. Examples just here will be withheld, though many interesting examples could be given; the important point with respect to the technical aspect of EWS is this: *The angles of the actors as captured by Kubrick’s lens contribute (to a larger or smaller degree) to the superiority of the acting*. Kubrick’s eye brings out the very best in his actors. Kubrick’s filming of Tom Cruise is especially expressive and highlights aspects of Cruise’s comportment that is striking and novel. In EWS Cruise can look hard and of powerful stature, or alternatively he can look slight and vulnerable, depending on the perspective of him as caught by Kubrick’s lens.

Perhaps just here something should be said regarding Tom Cruise’s performance of Dr. Bill Harford, as his character is the highly visible thread that holds EWS together and which in his characterization embodies, sustains, the po-faced tone of the film. Speaking most generally, Cruise is convincing as a medical doctor, as evidenced by his well-nigh mincing articulation of the line, “I went to medical school with him” (7), and by the authenticity of the dispassionate concern he evinces throughout his examination of an ailing Mandy (15). His “doctor smile” is persuasive and the last CU look he gives Mandy is excellently, powerfully sympathetic. Cruise’s phone manner as he awaits for the phone to be picked up at Marion’s (in 109), his officious phone pose, rings true for a physician. And then the split-second change in Cruise’s facial expression just as the receptionist at the hospital says, “I’m sorry” is very much of the nature of a physician who has become used to such responses; and the sad look on Cruise’s face that results is eminently convincing. What helps lend gravitas to Cruise’s performance is that Cruise keeps his voice in its lower registers for most of the whole of EWS. In other films of Cruise’s such as *A Few Good Men*, *Jerry Maguire*, or *Born on the Fourth of July*, the latter two featuring Cruise’s most convincing performances before EWS, Cruise’s voice at times reaches a high pitch. In EWS, one of the few instances when Cruise’s voice inclines towards the upper registers is when he starts to get angry in the bedroom in 33 (“You’ve been *trying* to pick a fight with me and now you’re *trying* to make me

jealous.”). Other than this memorable example, Cruise’s voice in EWS is mostly kept low, at a ‘dignified’ pitch throughout, which sustains an authority to Dr. Bill Harford’s personation.

7. The final scene of EWS showcases the most curiously articulated declaration of “I love you” I’ve ever heard in a film.]

### [One strange transition

A strange juxtaposition, actually.

At the end of scene **60**, at the end of the conversation between Bill and Nick in the Sonata Cafe, when Nick asks, “...where the hell are you gonna get a costume at this hour of the night?”, the scene cuts to **61. Ext. Another Street - Greenwich Village - Night**, a street outside Rainbow Fashions. The strange thing is, *a taxi pulls up in front of Rainbow Fashions* and Bill pays the fare and alights. Why is this strange? Because Rainbow Fashions is actually *right across from street* from the Sonata Cafe.

Three hints give this away, and both are in scene **62** (Bill on the steps of Rainbow Fashions talking to Milich face to face who is on the other side of a glass door):

a. Gillespie’s Diner (which is directly adjacent to Sonata Cafe), with its sign of red with yellow lettering, is visible over Bill’s right shoulder, but the sign is darkened and is hard to make out.

b. Gillespie’s Diner is heralded by a yellow neon arrow leading vertically down with the point positioned toward the front door. Also, and similarly, the Sonata Cafe has a red neon saxophone hanging on its facade. These two illuminated neon signs, which are near to one another, can be seen glowing amid a reflection of city lights that is cast upon the glass of Rainbow Fashions’ front door, behind which stands Milich. The lettering of “Gillespie’s” can be read in the reflection, too.

c. Over Bill’s left shoulder, across the street, is a glowing red neon sign “Eros” in a second-floor window. In **90**, we can clearly see, in the light of the morning, that the Eros sign is located a couple buildings to the right of Gillespie’s.

Though Rainbow Fashions is actually right across the street from the Sonata Cafe and Gillespie’s, EWS at the same time suggests that Rainbow Fashions is on another street. Even though Gillespie’s and the neon signs of Gillespie’s and the Sonata Cafe can be seen reflected in the glass at Rainbow Fashions, and even though Gillespie’s can be seen over Bill’s right shoulder as he speaks to Milich (including such dialogue as, “Just to let you know that I really am Dr. Harford, this is my New York State Medical Board Card.”), still, for all this, the film also presents Rainbow Fashions on another street (hence Bill arriving in a taxi).

There are two further clues relating to this point: an advertisement of white lettering, “SEWING THREAD”, painted on a brick wall, under which is a red and yellow storefront sign called CJ’s Auto Repair. This advertisement and CJ’s Auto Repair are both visible on the left side of the screen when Bill pulls up in front of the Sonata Cafe in **90**. The advertisement “Sewing Thread” is also visible on the left side of the screen when Bill pulls up in a taxi in front of Rainbow Fashions (**61**), but as for CJ’s Auto Repair, the shape and the dimensions of the store remain in the block of buildings but the store has been closed up, as it were; a bare blank wooden plank of the same dimensions of the CJ’s sign is now displayed.

In scene **46**, when Domino asks Bill, “Excuse me, do you know what time it is?”, the street leading away from them has visible in the far distance both the SEWING THREAD advertisement and CJ’s Auto Repair sign, which should therefore also make it the street where the Sonata Cafe, Gillespie’s, and (possibly) Rainbow Fashions are situated, and on the right side of the

street there is indeed what looks exactly to be Rainbow Fashions, but all of its lights are off and it remains unobtrusive.

Rainbow Fashions should be on the same street as the Sonata Cafe. Both have at the end of their streets the “Sewing Thread” advertisement. But CJ’s Auto Repair is visible in the shots of the Sonata Cafe, whereas an emptied address of the same shape and dimensions of CJ’s Auto Repair is alternatively visible in the shots of Rainbow Fashions. Domino’s apt. could very well be just around the corner from the Sonata Cafe and Gillespie’s, which could (perhaps) make her also just around the corner from Rainbow Fashions.

One last point: in scene **90**, Bill stands in front of (a closed) Sonata Cafe, holding the Rainbow Fashions bag given him the night before. He then goes to Gillespie’s and then to Hotel Jason and only then does he double back to Rainbow Fashions. He carries his Rainbow Fashions bag from the Sonata Cafe to Hotel Jason, though, if, in one sense, Rainbow Fashions might be right across the street from the Sonata Cafe, Bill could have unloaded the bag *before* going to Hotel Jason, but did not.

This inconsistency in the address of Rainbow Fashions relates to EWS as being both a puzzle and a “dream story”.]

#### [Five dream-like elements of EWS

These are the five most “dream-like” elements of the narrative of EWS. This is not to say that all else in EWS is apparent and clear—far from it.

1. This is a strange coincidence. *The wallpaper in Lou Nathanson’s death room (39) is identical to the wallpaper visible in the hallway leading to the front door of Bill and Alice’s apt. (visible in 87 and 131).* Seen to be exactly the same in both locations, the wallpaper has two patterns to it: white fleur-de-lis on a blue field; also blue and white stripes.

2. As just recounted above, the weird fact of Bill getting out of a taxi in front of Rainbow Fashions, even though Gillespie’s is visible over Bill’s right shoulder as he stands in front of Rainbow Fashions (**62**).

3. *How does the Mysterious Woman at the Masked Ball know that Bill is an intruder there? It is exceedingly strange that she knows of his subterfuge, especially because her back is to Bill as he makes his entrance.* Does the Mysterious Woman never see Bill arrive? Somehow, the Mysterious Woman can just *sense* Bill’s outsiderhood (**79 - 80**).

4. The uncanny correspondence between the goings-on at the Masked Ball and incidents of Alice’s dream as recounted to Bill (**88**).

5. How did Bill’s mask end up in Alice’s hands? Is it conceivable that the mask might have fallen out of the capacious bag wherein it was kept? It is conceivable, but it does not seem overwhelmingly likely, insofar as the bag is deep and Bill is conscientious. Whatever happened with respect to the mask, it had to have happened the morning after and off-screen. The spectator can *never* know what happened (**130**).]

#### [What’s in a name?

Considerations of the names of the characters in EWS may reveal meanings, or might reveal nothing at all.

### 1. *Bill and Alice Harford.*

a. Frederic Raphael, the co-screenwriter of EWS, relates in *Eyes Wide Open*, his memoir of working with Kubrick, that Kubrick's choice of "Harford" reminded Raphael both of Hertfordshire, the county in England wherein Kubrick and his family lived, and of the actor Harrison Ford, Kubrick's original choice for the role of Dr. Bill Harford.

b. In a sense, one can say that the "heart" has been taken out of "Harford"—that is, the "t" is missing. Without the "t", which would make "Hartford", the name to the ear tends less to Hartford than to Har*d*-ford. One more point: Articulated, "Harford" has a soft essence to it, has a nebulous center, whereas "Ziegler", for example, sounds hard.

c. Bill is a physician in the film so it is mildly ironic that in both "William" and "Bill" the word "ill" is noticeable. A "bill" is also a piece of paper money, money being an integral facet of Bill's adventures in EWS. Furthermore, a "bill" is an itemized list of materials (think of a character being a list of 'character traits'). (Also, recall in scene 95, BILL (to Milich): "I must have lost it [the mask]. Can you just put it on the bill, please?")

d. Just as Bill includes "ill", so the name Alice includes the word "ice", and, though scrambled, "ail". Alice is also reminiscent (as how can it not be?) of Lewis Carroll's Alice.

### 2. *Victor Ziegler.*

a. "Ziegler" is German-Jewish for a brickmaker or bricklayer.

b. "Zeigler" is a renowned style of intricate Persian carpet.

c. President Richard Nixon's press secretary was named Ziegler.

d. "Ziegler" in EWS is given an American pronunciation, ZIG-ler. In German, it would be pronounced ZEEG-ler.

### 3. *Milich.*

a. In German, "milli" is the prefix for billion; and "ich" means I: so, appropriately for a costumer, the name Milich, to the ear, sounds like "Billion-I."

### 4. *Amanda Curran.*

a. The name "Amanda" derives from a Roman word meaning "She who should be loved".

b. Constance Curran was one of the young James Joyce's closest friends. Significantly, it was Curran who was the model for the character Gabriel Conroy in Joyce's story, "The Dead". "The Dead" and EWS are similar in a very specific way. In "The Dead", Gabriel and Gabriel's wife Greta retire to a private room following a night at a party, at which time Greta divulges to her husband her true (and deep) feelings regarding a man from her past, which devastates Gabriel and shatters (forevermore?) his complacency—which is exactly analogous to Alice's revelation to Bill of her feelings for the Naval Officer.

### 4. *Domino.*

a. A "Domino" is a type of eighteenth century masquerade costume.

b. Dominoes: a game.

c. As it happens, in Bill's scenes with Domino, her name is never heard spoken; yet, when Bill returns to her apt. looking for her the next night, he knows of her by name.

5. Some of the characters of EWS are not given names, such as Milich's daughter, the Mysterious Woman at the Masked Ball, the Waitress at Gillespie's, and the Clerk at Hotel Jason.

#### 6. Somerton.

a. "Somerton" has three syllables and eight letters—as does the "Overlook" Hotel (from *The Shining*). A significant correspondence?

b. "Somerton" is the name of an old-world town (eighth century) in the county of Somerset in England. "It was the seat of the West Saxon kings" (F.R. Banks, *Old English Towns*, p. 109). W.G. Hoskins, in his *Fieldwork in Local History*, writes that "Somerton . . . calls for microscopic study" (p. 160) but does not go any further than that.

#### 7. Hotel Jason.

a. Jason is the historical/mythological adventurer whose exploits predated by a generation those of Odysseus. Jason is known as the first hero in Europe to undertake a great journey. Jason's tale began out of complications regarding wives.

An interesting aspect of the names in EWS is that the majority of them are trochees (and the majority of these are trochaic): *William* (wil-yem) *Harford*, *Alice Harford*, *Victor Ziegler*, *Sandor Szavost*, *Nightingale*, *Mandy*, *Mr. Milich*, *Sally*, *Curran*. *Harris* and *Lisa*, and *Rosa* are also trochees.

Four names are dactyls: *Marion* (*Nathanson*), *Domino*, *Helena*, *Somerton*. (Also *William* if pronounced wil-e-yem.)

*Bill* and *Nick* are one punchy syllable each. (Also *Gayle* and *Carl* and *Lou*.)

*Amanda* and *Nuala* (and *Ilona*) are amphibrachs (as is the word *romantic*).

**trochee: Stressed-unstressed dactyl: Stressed-unstressed-unstressed  
amphibrach: unstressed-Stressed-unstressed]**

### 1. Int. Dressing Room - Bill and Alice's apt - Night

**[ALICE, a woman with her back to camera, lets a black dress slip from her body to the floor.]**

This shot occurs *during* the opening credit sequence. It comes *after* four cards, Warner Bros. presents - Tom Cruise - Nicole Kidman - A film by Stanley Kubrick, and *before* the title card itself, Eyes Wide Shut.

It is a shot that only lasts five seconds or so but resonates. The colour scheme of EWS is epitomized in **1**. A high value, highly chromatic (high-key) *yellow* predominates, juxtaposed dynamically to a lower value, intermediate key *red* (the curtains, doubled in the mirror); also a medium value *blue* of high chroma (nightlight through the window); stark absolute *blacks* (dress, high-heeled shoes) which act to intensify the other colours; and, not least, a beautifully brilliant, middle value, strongly chromatic *orange* (flesh colour). To put it in the tradition of Goethe's theory of colours, the shot blends the hot, the warm and the cool. The gorgeous colour effects in EWS are in large part due to this particular colour scheme, the juxtaposition of middle-to-high chromatic colours from distinctly different value zones. Significant details

of the shot include a mirrored closet-door to left; a window with open blinds at right; four slender fluted columns, two at left and two at right; high-heeled shoes; a newspaper; two tennis rackets crisscrossed. Predominant in this opening shot of EWS is the expression of *exposure*.

**1** is an “overture” of EWS. The shot (its colors and sharpness) “prepares” or “sets” the eye of the spectator for the aesthetic temperament of the film, just as an overture in an opera or musical attunes the ears of the audience to the tonality and attitude of expression of the aural spectacle to follow.

The sets of pillars to the left and right of the frame delineate a “proscenium arch” (that which separates a theatre stage from the audience)—the audience is *looking in* onto the scene, like a peeping tom.

Alice removes her clothing, as if to say, “we are going to let it all hang out”. Yet the shot is an expression of both *revelation* and *concealment*. Alice is revealed, but her back is to us.

### [The Circle in EWS

1. The last shot of the film (**134. Toy Store - Day**) is of Alice at right (with only the back of Bill’s head visible at left); she says, “...there is something very important we need to do as soon as possible. . . . Fuck.” And the first shot of the film is of Alice, her back to the camera, disrobing.

2. At the commencement of the final scene in the toy store (**134**), to the right is a pile of red boxes, each a set of magic tricks called The Magic Circle.

3. At the Masked Ball (**79**), the ritual Bill walks in on upon first entering is a circle of eleven robed women standing around the character of Red Cloak.

4. There is a similarity of tone (relating to pace) between the first two scenes of the film (in Bill and Alice’s apt.) and the final scene (in the toy store) that connect them as it were in a circle. How can this tone be characterized? As a sort of low-key, somewhat flattened, almost grudging, jejune even, pace.]

### [Games in EWS

The theme of The Game is an important one with respect to EWS. Let this theme be identified just here via a series of the most explicit examples:

1. In scene **1**, the *first shot* of the film, the two criss-crossed tennis rackets.

2. In (**4**), as Bill and Alice are saying their goodnights and goodbyes to Helena and Roz (the babysitter), Helena asks, “Can I stay up and watch *The Nutcracker*”? This is subtle and wry; think of the word “nut” as meaning “something difficult to solve, a knotty puzzle”. It is EWS that is to be a hard nut to crack. Listened to in this light (re: the film as a puzzling code to be cracked), the audience can identify intrinsically with this line, which for this reason (and one other) has a comical spin to it (and which relates to another heading, “EWS in Conversation with the Audience”, see below).

3. In (**6**) Ziegler says, “You should see my serve now, it’s terrific.”

4. In (**11**), during Alice’s dance with Sandor Szavost, Szavost says to her, “I have some friends in the *art game*.”

5. The name “Domino” (**46**).

6. Some of the iron work on Somerton’s front gate is wrought in the shape of spades (as in playing cards). (**103**)

7. In (129), the red pool table in Ziegler's billiard room.
8. Also in (129), Ziegler tells Bill, "Please, Bill, no games."
9. In (134), the red box of magic tricks called "The Magic Circle".]

## 2. Ext. Apartment Block (Central Park West) - Bill and Alice's apt - Night

This shot is seen twice, the second time (104) in Part III between 103. **Ext. Somerton gateway - day** and 105. **Int. Bill and Alice's apt - night**. (One way to tell that 104 is actually 2 shown again is to notice a man in an overcoat sitting on a park bench at screen-left; 104 is discovered to be the exact same shot as 2 because this seated figure is in the exact same position in "both".)

The New York City street fronting the cubical apartment building recedes toward screen-left, diminishing to its vanishing point. The perspective is such that a quarter of a mile or more of the length of the street is visible, signifying blocks and blocks of the district. *A pathway leading into an obscure distance*. It is a potent symbol, resonant with meaning. (Shades of the corridor of light in Part IV of *2001: A Space Odyssey*?) EWS has commenced; the title card has been seen; now the spectator is *on the road*; a *course* of thought is herewith going to be blazed.

A streetlight flashes green: go.

The blare of a siren is heard.

Lining the city street are a dozen and more streetlamps.

### [Lamps in EWS

Lamps are one of the many leitmotifs of EWS.

The number of the dozen and more streetlamps receding into the vanishing point (in 2) puts into perspective the amount of lamps seen henceforth in each individual scene. And lamps there are a-plenty throughout EWS.

On this point:

1. For one thing, lamps were a necessity. Kubrick demanded verisimilitude, and, as lamps obviously feature in indoor places, so lamps are seen here and there in all the indoor scenes. Importantly, Kubrick chose to use available light wherever he could to illuminate scenes; sometimes, the only light (or the primary light) for a scene is shining from lamps visible in the shot.

2. There is a thematic (or interpretative) point derivable from the amount of lamps visible in each setting. When compared to (2) and its dozen and more of streetlamps, the meagre amount of lamps seen in each setting is put in relief, and can be explicated as relating as a sort of cinematic shorthand to the narrow (re: limited, individual) world-view or perspective ("amount of light") that is necessarily sustained by individuals. To present a more straightforward example of this point: Ziegler, who is very wealthy, has fourteen lamps in his Billiard Room; whereas only one illuminated lamp each is primary in both the Sonata Cafe (60) and Rainbow Fashions (63). Bill and Alice's bedroom has four lamps.]

## 3. Int. Bedroom - Bill and Alice's apartment - Night

The scene is filmed in one shot using a fluid Steadicam. The camera starts with Bill in the dressing room (now darkened), tracks back into the bedroom with Bill who is searching for some of his personal



possessions, follows Bill into the bathroom where Bill stands with Alice, stays with Alice in the bathroom after Bill leaves, then comes back with Alice into the bedroom, and finally is left in the (darkened) bedroom when Bill and Alice leave, turning off the lights and shutting the door behind them.

To recap: The first shot of EWS is of *Alice* alone in the (lighted) dressing room, the second shot is of a long road, and the third shot is of *Bill* alone in the (darkened) dressing room. The difference between light and dark in **1** and **3** is evocative of a fundamental difference between the qualities of the male and the female. There is a road (a world, a void) between them. However, both characters are introduced with their backs to the camera. The correspondence between their introductory poses bonds the two characters together.

This opposition of light and dark in **1** and **3** inaugurates a visual disparity between the characters which will be sustained throughout the bedroom scenes of the film. Alice's revelation of the Naval Officer episode in her life occurs in the lighted bedroom (**33**); while Alice's revelation about how she wanted to make fun of Bill takes place in the darkened bedroom (**88**); as does Bill's aghast discovery of the mask on his pillow (**132**).

Is there something vaguely unsettling about a main character being introduced from the back? Think of the entrance of Cary Grant in Hitchcock's *Notorious*. When seen from behind a character is inscrutable, the face is *hidden*. The character is expressing *secrecy* and the audience is feeling *left out*.

Interestingly, Bill is inhabiting the dressing room at a different time period from **1**. That is to say, some of the details of the dressing room have changed. The lamp is gone, and the window ledge is now crowded with objects, such as a framed photograph and books. This difference in the arrangement of the dressing room accentuates each character's existential *separateness* from the other. They each live in their own world, even if they live together.

Scene **3** (with **4**) is in the manner of an exergue, "outside-the-work", a "pre-story" scene, somewhat akin to taking a peek at theatre actors in their dressing rooms just before the curtain is to rise on the stage production.

In **3**, the camera is exhilaratingly fluid but the busyness of the scene (preparing to go out for the evening) is low-key, restrained. The camera movement communicates an anxiousness in the characters that is, in their comportment, at face value somewhat undemonstrative. Scene **3** excellently communicates fidgety expectancy.

The first painting seen in EWS, which is a film full of paintings, is hanging over a side table on the left-hand side of the entrance to the dressing room. The painting is of a passageway, a sort of hedge-corridor or arcade, leading into an unseen garden. The daylight in the painting is brilliant, noontime light.

(T.S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton": Footfalls echo in the memory/Down the passageway which we did not take/Towards the door we never opened/Into the rose-garden.)

Other paintings in Bill and Alice's bedroom are still-lives, paintings of flowers, of twigs, of autumnal fruits (pumpkin, squash). Other paintings specific to the room will be identified later, below.

In the darkened dressing room, where there is a bookcase of books to screen-right, one title can be read, a red title on white: FEAR.<sup>2</sup>

In a low-key domestic bit of business, Bill picks up his keys, mobile phone, handkerchief, and, finally, his wallet.

**Bill**  
**Honey, have you seen my wallet?**

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<sup>2</sup> Footnote, 2010: This is one of the times in which I may have been "seeing things" back in 1999. I cannot confirm for certain that this is what the book reads, because the image is too small on dvd.

Alice (off-screen)

Isn't it on the bedside table?

Bill

Yes. . . now listen, you know we're running a little late?

### [Money in EWS

Money acts as a sort of “password” for Bill to figure in his adventures throughout the film. Consider these examples: Bill (whose name itself reminds of paper money) buys Nick a drink at the Sonata Cafe (60). Bill gives Domino \$150 (58). Bill pays the taxi driver outside Somerton \$80 for the meter and tip, and promises to pay the resultant meter fare plus an extra hundred (75). Bill buys a cup of coffee and elicits the information he wants from the waitress at Gillespie's (91). Bill pays Milich \$375, for the clothing, for Milich's “trouble”, and for the missing mask (95). Interesting that the mask Bill wore to Somerton's Masked Ball is the cheapest price audibly tendered to Bill in EWS: \$25.

Money relates also to another theme of EWS: the theme of “aristocratic” freedom and licence. It is money (not just the password “Fidelio”), it is *having money* that allows one the privilege of the experience of Somerton's Masked Ball.

Consider what Szavost tells Alice during their dance in scene 16. SZAVOST: “I love Victor's art collection, don't you? . . . He has a wonderful collection of Renaissance bronzes.” This line heralds the theme of the Renaissance in EWS. For now, let us recall that the onset and flowering of the Renaissance was effectuated by the capitalist successes which afforded rich Florentines the luxury to patronize the creation of fine art.

When Bill, sitting in the back of the taxi, approaches the gates of Somerton at night (73), the three colours heralding Somerton are *red* (a red jeep parked behind the Somerton gates), *white* (a spotlight), and *blue* (the gates themselves). Wealthy America.

And then this detail: in 129, Ziegler says to Bill, “[This beautiful scotch is]” a twenty-five year old. I'll send you over a case.”]

### [The phone in EWS

The phone figures prominently five times in EWS. The phone in Bill and Alice's bedroom (33); Nick's mobile phone (60); the phone in the office of Bill's surgery (109); and Bill's mobile phone (50 and 126).

1. In (33), the phone rings, interrupting the breathless mood following Alice's revelation of the desire she felt for the Naval Officer. Via the phone is related to Bill the news that Lou Nathanson has just died. As Bill's own life up to that point suddenly “died”, became defunct, just as Alice divulged her secret, so the phone call relays a message to Bill of a life now passed away.

2. The phone call that Alice gives Bill when Bill is at Domino's apt (50) could very well have saved Bill's (and by extension Alice's) life. Alice's phone call leads Bill to forgo entering into sexual relations with Domino, who is, at this point secretly, HIV-positive. (Alice's phone call reminds of the last line of Beethoven's *Fidelio*: “Never can we praise too much the wife who saved her husband's life!”)

3. Nick receives a call on his mobile phone in the Sonata Cafe which gives him, and Bill, the password, “Fidelio” (60).

4. Bill attempts to phone Marion from his office and inadvertently carries out a “heavy breathing” crank call, so to speak, with Carl on the other end (109).

5. Bill receives a call, following his visit to the morgue, requesting his presence at Ziegler’s (126).

(More on 1, 2, 3, and 4 and 5 below)]

### Scene 3. CONTINUED

[Bill Harford in evening dress is looking for something. He walks (from the darkened dressing room) into a bedroom, goes to a small table, picks up keys and a mobile phone. . . .

**Bill**

Honey, have you seen my wallet?

**Alice (o.s.)**

Isn’t it on the bedside table?

[Bill walks across to the bedside table and finds his wallet.]

**Bill**

Yes. . . now listen, you know we’re running a little late?

When we consider the importance of the phone and money to Bill’s ensuing adventures, it is significant that these are the two most visible accoutrements that Bill avails himself of in the first shot of him in EWS.

There is yet more of consequence to be said regarding this expressive opening dialogue exchange. The first line of the film (in 3)—BILL: “Honey, have you seen my wallet?”—, in partnership with the fluid camera movement of 3, suffices as an economical summary of the general structure of Bill and Alice’s relationship. Both the opening line and the camera movement accentuate, quite deftly, the semblance of the *unity* of the couple. The line of dialogue integrates both parties (“have *you* seen *my* wallet?”) just as the camera movement of the scene (with Bill, then with Bill and Alice, then with Alice, then with Alice and Bill) emphasizes intimacy, integration, balance. That Alice knows just where Bill’s wallet is to be found, is almost touching, it is sweet. In addition to this, and importantly, the line of dialogue points both parties toward a specific vector: “Honey, have you seen *my wallet?*” The business of Bill’s wallet being the focus of this opening line suggests a structure of relations between husband and wife. Specifically, Bill is the breadwinner in the marriage. His wallet, by extension, means a lot to Alice. Hence Bill’s wallet—his money —gives him a certain power. And this is a significant point. It is a point that can be given the following interpretative gloss. That the character Bill asserts the fact of his wallet, of his money, aloud, is, in a non-literal sense, an indirect claim and apology for the value of Bill’s role in the marriage. (Bill’s line in scene 7, “This is what you get for making house calls”, communicates an analogous characterization of the power relationship of their marriage.)

**Bill**

**Yes. . . now listen, you know we're running a little late?**

**[The theme of “running a little late” in EWS**

Various aspects of time can be spoken of with respect to EWS; right here will be noted only one such aspect, the theme of “being too late for. . .”. Consider these examples:

1. In (3), Bill says, “...we're running a little late”.
2. In (4), when Helena asks her parents if she can stay up until they get home, Bill her father answers, “It's going to be a little late for that.”
3. After only a minute or so of Bill and Alice, just arrived, dancing in Ziegler's ballroom, the band stops and the bandleader says, “The band is going to take a short break now and we'll be back in ten minutes.” (7)
4. Scene (39), Bill's conversation with Marion in Lou Nathanson's death room, is a development for which the audience is almost “too late for”: Marion's revelation that she loves Bill comes after months of seeing him, but the film only shows the very last moments that they will see each other (possibly for ever).
5. It is significant that Alice calls Bill at Domino's exactly *just in time*, effectively keeping Bill away from Domino (50).
6. Just as Bill enters the Sonata Cafe to hear Nick play, Nick and the three-piece band are just finishing up their set for the night (60).
7. Bill is too late to meet with Peter Grenning, proprietor of Rainbow Fashions; as Milich relates, “Grenning moved to Chicago—over a year ago.” (62)
8. Bill tells Milich in the Costume Room of Rainbow Fashions, “I've obviously left things a bit late tonight . . .” (64).
9. In (79), the scene in which Bill, as masked, enters into the ritual already underway in Somerton's Marble Hall, Bill enters “too late” as it were, having missed the beginning of the ceremony. By virtue of his late arrival Bill is immediately put under suspicion.
10. The Mysterious Woman is *just in time* to save Bill from punishment at the hands of Red Cloak at Somerton (86)
11. In (90) it is significant that Bill arrives *too early* for the Sonata Cafe, which is still closed.
12. In (93) (Hotel Jason), Bill realizes that he is too late to meet Nick, who has already checked out.
13. When Bill is fleeing the Stalker, Bill hails a cab, but the driver shrugs him off, exclaiming, “Off duty!” (119)
14. Bill arrives at the hospital too late to talk with Amanda Curran, who has already passed away (123). (Alice saw a Naval Officer and almost lost her heart and mind to him; now Bill looks at the dead Amanda Curran on a tray in the morgue—might he be experiencing what Alice felt, but towards the dead woman?)

15. The number 19 visible on the body drawer in the morgue: it is very late in the day for the twentieth century (125).]

### Scene 3. CONTINUED

[Bill goes into the en-suite bathroom. Alice is sitting on the loo wearing an evening dress.]

Alice

I know. How do I look?

Bill

Perfect.

[Alice gets up from the loo as Bill checks his bow-tie. Alice pats herself dry with the toilet tissue.]

Alice

Is my hair OK?

Bill

It's great.

[Alice flushes the tissue away down the toilet.]

Alice is a beautiful woman, clothed and coiffured for maximum appeal. The first frontal view we have of Alice is of her sitting on the toilet; we are directly privy to a quintessentially private moment, as Alice pats herself dry and then pulls up her knickers.

Scene 3 is presented as a privileged glimpse as it were “behind the scenes”. Characters functioning in the bathroom is as “behind the scenes” as is possible, save for the filming in real-time of characters sleeping.

*Realism* and *voyeurism* coincide in 3.

It is as if EWS is promising “to show it how it is”, promising *accuracy* and a tough realism; but in one sense, this is just a ploy. Because whatever of EWS is disclosed, unconcealed to sight, that much more of the film remains hidden, and a mystery. The sharpness of the filmic image and verisimilitude of the busyness belie the mysteries of EWS which remain ever emergent.

### [Four early views of women in EWS

Kubrick plays with the ways of apprehending beautiful women onscreen in EWS.

Consider:

1. The first time we see Alice Harford's face, she is on the toilet (in an unbeautiful moment?) (3).

2. The first woman seen naked and full frontal in EWS is Mandy, sprawled on a comfy chair in Ziegler's bathroom (15). Mandy has OD'd on heroin and coke and is in a bad way. She is slumped, sick. Her body is presented as an object drained of a sexual signification, it is an object to be stared at as a lamp or a couch or an artwork can be stared at.

3. The third appearance of female nudity in EWS is in Bill's surgery; Bill examines a young woman's bare chest with a stethoscope (22).

15 and 22, two early views of women who are naked in EWS, are chilly, dispassionate views (22 comically so). These two women are presented not as it were with a "come-hither" aura, but impersonally, as medical patients.

4. In the same montage sequence as 22, Alice is seen from behind completely naked, fitting her bra. The camera rises up her *legs* to her upper half (25). This is directly juxtaposed to the following shot (26) of Bill extending a male patient's *leg* up into the air. The body envelope is jeered at as a slab of meat.

These four views of women contribute towards the complexification of apprehending the female form in EWS.]

### Scene 3. CONTINUED

[Bill and Alice in the bathroom together.]

Alice

How do I look?

Bill

(not looking at Alice)

Perfect.

### [EWS in conversation with audience

This is a topic that some spectators might find oblique and hard to fathom, as it involves 'coinciding' with the film in a way that is different from the so-called way of 'watching' a film; a way that involves the spectator entering into a running dialogue with the film.

*EWS enters into a running dialogue with the spectator for the duration of the film.* Throughout, EWS comments self-reflexively on the activity of watching the film, as if EWS is speaking directly to the spectator.

Examples:

1. Near the beginning of EWS, when the spectator is already well aware of the sharp and beautiful visual production of the film, Alice asks: "How do I look?" and Bill answers, "Perfect." (3)

2. In (4) Helena asks, "Can I stay up and watch *The Nutcracker*?"

3. Ziegler says to the new arrivals, "Thanks so much for coming." (6)

4. Bill says to Alice, "This is what you get for making house calls." (7)

5. The Bandleader says, "Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you're enjoying yourselves." (7)

6. Relating to seeing EWS over again: Bill says to Nick, "God, you haven't changed a bit." And Nick answers, "Thanks, I think." (Bill later says, "Great seeing you." To which Nick replies, "Good seeing you too.") (9)

7. Alice yawns as scene **30** begins (Bill is watching football).
8. Still early in the film, Marion says, “I don’t think it’s really sunk in yet.” (39)
9. A large ad on a brick wall on Miller Street (where Bill is confronted by the gay-bashing students (45) and which is the same street where Sharky’s is situated (119)) reads, “Thank you! I love you!”
10. Domino asks, “Going anywhere special?” Then, “How’d you like to have a little fun?” “Would you like to come inside with me?” (46)
11. In Domino’s apt., Bill tells Alice over the phone, “We’re still waiting for relatives to arrive.” (56)
12. Milich points to mannequins and asks, “Looks like alive, huh?” To which Bill answers, “Yes, it’s wonderful.” (64)
13. Nick says to Bill, “Bill, I have seen one or two things in my life but never, never anything like this.” (60)
14. Mysterious Woman tells Bill, “You’re in great danger. And you must get away while there is still a chance.” (80)
15. The Young (masked) Woman asks Bill, in the Library of Somerton, “Have you been enjoying yourself?” To which Bill responds, “I’ve had a very interesting look around.” (83)
16. Red Cloak says, “When a promise has been made here, there is no turning back.” (86)
17. Bill says to Alice, “I’m sorry I woke you up, but I thought you were having a nightmare.” (88) He asks her, “What were you dreaming?” “. . . just these weird things,” she answers.
18. The letter Bill receives from the Elderly Gentleman at Somerton reads, in part: “Give up your inquiries, which are completely useless . . .” (103).
19. Alice yawns as scene **105** gets underway (Bill comes home for dinner).
20. Painted onto a metal gateway and seen in the background as Bill passes by is the word “findings”: this relates (playfully) to the spectator sport of discovering detail in the background of the film. This “findings” is seen for an instant beside the Diamond Jewellery store in **118**.
21. Ziegler says to Bill, “Sorry to drag you over tonight.” (129)
22. Ziegler says, with respect to the Masked Ball, “. . . suppose I said all of that was staged, that it was a kind of charade? That it was fake?” “Fake?” asks Bill. “Yes,” replies Ziegler, “fake.” (129)
23. The final conversation between Alice and Bill in the toy store; including: BILL: “And no dream is ever just a dream.” (134)]

#### [The word and concept “see” in EWS

Consider:

1. The first line of the film. Bill: “Honey, have you *seen* my wallet?” Then Alice: “How do I *look*?” “You’re not even *looking* at it.” Then Bill to Alice, “You always *look* beautiful.” (3)

2. Roz the babysitter exclaims, "Wow! You *look* amazing, Mrs. Harford!" Then Helena asks, "Can I stay up and *watch* The Nutcracker?" (4)

3. Ziegler says to Bill and Alice, "How good to *see* both of you." Also, "Alice, *look* at you!" "I could have told you that *looking* at his bill." Also, "I'll *see* you in a little bit." (6)

4. Bill to Alice, "You *see* that guy at the piano?" (7)

5. Bill to Nick, "I *see* you've become a pianist." (9)

6. Bill to Nick, "Great *seeing* you." Then Nick to Bill, "Good *seeing* you too." (9)

7. Bill to Gayle, "That sounds like a terrible *oversight*." (12)

8. Bill to Gayle, "And you got something in your eye!" (12)

9. Bill to Mandy, "Let me *see* you open your eyes. *Look* at me. *Look* at me. *Look* at me. *Look* at me. *Look* at me. *Look* at me. *Look* at me, Mandy. Good. Good." (15)

10. Alice says to Szavost, "Didn't he wind up all by himself? Crying his eyes out in a place with a very bad climate?" (10)

11. Szavost to Alice, "Have you ever *seen* his sculpture gallery?" "Would you like to *see* it?" "I can show it to you." (16)

12. Szavost to Alice, "Alice, I must *see* you again." (18)

13. Alice says, "Well, I first *saw* him that morning in the lobby." "He *glanced* at me as he walked past, just a *glance*." (33)

14. Bill says, "I'm gonna have to go over there and show my face." (33)

15. Nick says, "I play blindfolded." Nick then says, "Bill, I have *seen* one or two things in my time but never, never anything like this. . . ." (60)

16. Milich asks Bill, "You *see*?" Milich later exclaims, to the two Japanese men, "Couldn't you *see* she's a child?" (64)

17. Bill (masked) says, "I've had an interesting *look* around." (83)

18. Mysterious Woman says to Bill (masked), "I've been *looking* all over for you." (83)

19. Bill asks the Mysterious Woman, "Let me *see* your face." (84)

20. Alice says to Bill, "And I knew you could *see* me in the arms of all these men. . . ." (88)

21. Bill asks the clerk (at Hotel Jason), "*Look*. . . did you notice anything, I dunno, unusual about the way he left?" The clerk later replies, "I also thought he *looked* a bit scared." "Mr. Nightingale tried to pass me an envelope, but they *saw* it. . . ." (93)

22. Bill asks Lisa his receptionist, "How's my afternoon *looking*?" Then he says, "Something's come up and I'm not going to be able to *see* them." (99)

23. Helena says to her father, "*Look*, I got all these right." Bill says to Helena, "We'll *see* about that." Helena replies, "He could be a *watchdog*?" "We'll *see*," Bill repeats. (105)

24. In the billiard room, Ziegler says to Bill, "It was great *seeing* you both." Also, "I *saw* everything that went on." Also, "To keep you quiet about where you've been and what you've



*seen.*” Bill asks, handing Ziegler the newspaper cutting, “Have you *seen* this?” Bill goes on to say, “I *saw* her body, in the morgue.” (129)

25. Helena says in the toy store, her last line of dialogue in the last scene of the film, “*Look, mommy.*” (134)]

### Scene 3. CONTINUED

[Alice in bathroom alone]

Alice  
Did you give Roz the phone and pager numbers?

Bill (o.s.)  
Yeah. I put it on the fridge . . . let’s go, huh?

[Alice washes her hands and dries them as she looks in the mirror.]

Alice  
(removing her  
eyeglasses)  
Good. All right, I’m ready.

[Alice leaves the bathroom and goes to the bed to pick up her coat and bag.]

The quotidian exchange between Bill and Alice concerning Roz the babysitter reveals—if any more evidence was needed following Bill’s distant regard of his wife—just how pre-occupied, unresponsive and complacent Bill is throughout the scene. Consider this exchange of dialogue in the next scene (4): BILL: “What’s the name of the baby sitter?” ALICE: (whispering) “Roz.”

There is a slight irony in Bill using the word “fridge” insofar as in the scene he is acting chilly toward Alice.

The camera pulls back in front of Alice as Alice breezes out of the bathroom (“All right, I’m ready”) into the bedroom; she momentarily passes by close to the camera which is on her right side; her face is in three-quarters profile and is framed for maximum beauty. Her penetrating eyes are for the first time in EWS strikingly brought out. Alice passing by the camera in time to the swell of the waltz: it is a charmed, vigorous moment which punctuates the scene.

(There is a similarity in the structuration of the openings of *Barry Lyndon* and EWS. Specifically, it is in the *third scene* of each film where each narrative really “gets underway”, so to speak. In *Barry Lyndon* it is in the third scene where the eponymous hero Redmond Barry himself is first introduced. In EWS, the third scene of the film—if we consider the two shots previous to this as each being a scene—is of Bill and Alice, husband and wife, seen for the first time together, in their bedroom, performing their pre-party rituals, a performance neatly capturing the commonplace nature of the Harford’s marriage.)

One more relevant correspondence. The moment in scene 3 of EWS when Alice, exiting the bathroom, breezes past the camera, her face close to the lens and “expressively natural”, so to speak, is analogous in format to a particular moment early in *The Shining*. It is in the first scene of *The Shining* (following the opening credits), which is an establishing shot of the lobby of the Overlook Hotel. Jack enters, small at first in the frame; he inquires at the front desk regarding Mr. Ullmann, then, departing from the desk, Jack passes close by the camera, looming large in the frame, his left profile only inches from the lens, as he proceeds, diminishing in size again, toward Mr. Ullmann’s office. This “fly by” of Jack’s and Alice’s “fly by” are very much alike; both are only momentary and capture on the characters’ faces what could be their “real”, artless, accustomed facial countenances.)

And then Bill switches off the stereo, cutting off the title music. The transition from the Shostakovich waltz to the quiet ambience of the New York apartment is a dynamic one. The ambience is almost too quiet, too still: it is a sheer shift in tonality. Just as in certain twentieth century orchestral music, such as in Berg's Violin Concerto or Wolfgang Rihm's "Time Chant", so in EWS, silences speak, too. In EWS the moment referred to here seems not silence exactly, but *a* silence.

Also, the title music being determined by Bill interweaves Bill with the structuration of the film. In that moment, the switching off of the Shostakovich waltz, Bill becomes intimately allied with the film style. He is not only *in* it, but *of* it. His personality, and the personality of the film style, which are two different things, are at the same time presented as being in very close association.

Of Kubrick's films, bathrooms feature most conspicuously in *The Shining*. In EWS Bill and Alice's bathroom is seen in three scenes; Ziegler's bathroom features prominently as well. The essence of bathrooms is something uncanny, for it relates to the fundamental in what is human, the elemental prior to the institution of reason.

#### 4. Int. Corridor - Bill and Alice's apt. - Night

**[Bill and Alice walk down the corridor. Alice starts to put her coat on and Bill helps her.]**

A small moment but a telling one. Proceeding down the corridor Bill gestures to help Alice don her coat. And Alice doesn't stop walking *or even just slow her pace* so Bill can help her with ease, she doesn't even look at him. Indeed, she exhibits a distant, self-contained look. Bill making a concerted effort to implicate himself in Alice's well-being serves to characterize a sort of power relationship or structure of relations between them. This small busyness, Bill's gesturing for Alice's coat while Alice continues walking, communicates in a cinematic shorthand that Alice "is the one on top", and indeed, when the last scene in the toy store is considered (134), in which Bill becomes as fawning and sheepish toward Alice as a little boy caught in some mischief, this small but revealing moment is borne out.

There is a subtle use of sound here. The ambience of the corridor is hollow, and as Alice and Bill walk there is something brittle and austere, a feeling somewhat tense, in the sound of their footsteps.

There is a large painting of a cat hanging in the corridor.

#### **[Corridors in EWS**

Corridors are a recognizable feature of Kubrick's aesthetic in many of his films, most memorably in *The Shining*. In EWS corridors and hallways take up a conspicuous amount of screen-time. Herein is a list of the corridors/hallways of EWS:

1. (4) In Bill and Alice's apt.
2. (6) Ziegler mansion (Bill and Alice arrive down a corridor to meet Ziegler and his wife Iona in a large hallway.)
3. (14) Bill is led down another corridor of Ziegler's mansion arm in arm with Gayle and Nuala.
4. (38) Bill walks down a hallway from the front door of Lou Nathanson's apt. to the dead man's bedroom, in which awaits Marion.
5. (40) Carl walks down the same hallway as in (38) to the same bedroom, where Marion and Bill are standing.
6. (60) Bill descends a corridor-like stairwell when entering the Sonata Cafe.

7. (78) Bill enters the pillared hallway of Somerton, giving the password, “Fidelio”, along with his coat, to a Masked Butler.

8. (80) The Mysterious Woman, after choosing Bill from out of the crowd with a kiss, leads Bill down a red-carpeted hallway.

9. (81) Bill walks through the hallways of Somerton, wandering in and out of rooms.

10. (84) The Mysterious Woman exchanges words with Bill for a final time in a small hallway off Somerton’s library.

11. (86) Bill is led down the same corridor as in (80) back to the Marble Hall, where he is unmasked.

12. (87) Bill, tired and dazed, walks down the corridor of his apt. upon returning from the Masked Ball at Somerton.

13. (105) Bill, returning from being given the warning letter at Somerton’s gates, enters his apt. and walks down the corridor.

14. (110 and 112) Carl walks down the hallway of Nathanson’s apt. and answers the phone (with Bill silent on the other end).

15. (124) Bill is led down a hospital corridor to the morgue.

16. (126) Bill is walking down another corridor of the hospital when his phone rings with the message to go meet Ziegler.

17. (128) Bill is led down the same corridor as in (6), heading to Ziegler’s billiard room.

18. (131) Bill enters his apt. and walks down the corridor, ending up in the kitchen, where he opens a can of beer.]

#### Scene 4. CONTINUED

[Bill and Alice enter a living room where Helena, their seven year old daughter, sits watching television with Roz, the student babysitter. There is a decorated Christmas tree behind the sofa.]

#### [Christmas Decorations in EWS

Since EWS takes place over Christmas week in New York City, it is by no means surprising that the film is going to be rife with holiday decorations in the manner of Christmas trees and coloured lights and Christmas cards and similar fixtures. Yet the Christmas decorations in EWS are not *only* visible for reasons of verisimilitude. Interestingly, Kubrick at times uses Christmas decorations in such a manner that they contribute to the unfolding of the meaning-production of EWS.

All of these examples herein listed are used, or at the very least can be explicated as having been used, in a meaningful way.

(To explicate with detail the nuances of each use of Christmas decorations listed below would necessitate a discussion of some length; so at this early point only the list itself will be mentioned, and explanation and analysis will follow later.)

1. The first Xmas tree in the film is the tree in the living room in Bill and Alice's apt. (4). All lights are blazing; and in a CU of Helena as she asks, "Can I stay up and watch *The Nutcracker*?" the depth of field is shallow, making the Xmas lights on the tree behind her shine as blurry circles with moderate chroma (4).
2. The Ziegler mansion (5 - 18) is brimming with decorations, including:
  - a. a huge glowing tree in the hallway where Bill and Alice greet their hosts.
  - b. the beautiful "curtains of light" decorations bedecking the walls of the ballroom.
  - c. the large green, bristly "star" or "asterisk" decorations hanging on the walls of the hallway and ballroom.
  - d. a second tree in the ante-room near where Bill is introduced to Gayle and Nuala.
  - e. a third tree in the hallway down which Bill is led arm in arm with Gayle and Nuala.
3. The reception of Bill's surgery is decorated with lights and Xmas cards (20).
4. The bedroom where Lou Nathanson lay dead has an Xmas tree glowing to the left of the doorway (39).
5. Here and there throughout the city streets are Xmas lights.
6. In Domino's apartment there is a small lit tree (48).
7. Also in Domino's apartment are three Xmas cards tacked up above the tub. When Bill leans back against the tub, one particular Xmas card is hanging right over his left shoulder. (48)
7. The interior of the Sonata Cafe is covered in coloured Xmas lights. Also, by the stage there is a bit of the "Curtain of Light" decoration seen at Ziegler's. (60).
8. A squat tree is seen to the right of the entranceway of Rainbow Fashions (63), its luminous red lights exhibiting extraordinary halation.
9. A suburban road the taxi (with Bill inside) drives down en route to the Masked Ball at Somerton has a festive illumination strung across the road proclaiming, "HAPPY HOLIDAY" (70).
10. Gillespie's Coffee Shop has a somewhat vivid yellow streamer festooning the mirrored wall behind Bill's back (91).
11. Hotel Jason has a respectably decorated tree (93).
12. There are Christmas cards standing up on a shelf right behind Bill as he sits in his office at work (99).
13. When Bill is being followed by the Stalker, they pass a restaurant, the window of which is covered in the "Curtain of Light" decoration seen at Ziegler's and at the Sonata Cafe (119).
14. In the passageway of Sharky's there is hanging from the ceiling a long decoration, a bristly green thing, with curled ends, with coloured lights, and two fake candles atop it. (120).

15. In the main entranceway of the Hospital there is an illuminated Xmas tree (123).

16. When Bill is led down the corridor of Ziegler's mansion toward the billiard room, a bit of the curtain of light decorations can be seen; also one of the star or asterisk decorations is visible, but which is not at this time illuminated; also the same hanging decoration as that seen in the passageway of Sharky's is visible (128).

17. When Bill returns home dejected after his meeting with Ziegler in the billiard room, Bill approaches the illuminated tree in the living room and switches its lights off (131).

18. The morning after Bill tells Alice "everything", when they are sitting in the living room, the Xmas tree is behind Bill, and its lights are turned off (133).

19. The Toy Store at the end of EWS is decorated with glowing Xmas lights (134).]

#### Scene 4. CONTINUED

The young Helena is wearing pearlescent wings, giving her the look of a fairy out of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and she has on her lap drawing paper; and strewn across the table by the couch are a dozen or more magic markers.

Helena

Can I stay up and watch *The Nutcracker*?

Alice

What time's it on?

Helena

Nine o'clock.

#### [The mentioning of time in EWS

1. BILL: "You know we're running a little late?" (3)

2. HELENA: "Nine o'clock." (4)

3. BILL: "It's going to be a little late for that." (4)

4. ALICE: "We shouldn't be home any later than one o'clock." (4)

5. ALICE: "See you in the morning." (4)

6. ZIEGLER: "... enjoy the party and I'll see you in a little bit." (6)

7. BANDLEADER: "The band is going to take a short break right now and we'll be back in ten minutes." (7)

8. BILL: "How long has it been?" NICK: "Oh, jeez! I don't know, about ten years?" (9)

9 NICK: "I'm gonna be down in the village for two weeks in a place called the Sonata Cafe." (9)

10. BILL: "How long's she been like this?" ZIEGLER: "Maybe five, six minutes." (15)

11. SZAVOST: "We won't be gone long." (16)
12. BILL: "No . . . I'd keep her here for another hour." (17)
- (46) 13. DOMINO: "Excuse me, do you know what time it is?" BILL: "Ten past twelve."
14. DOMINO: "Don't worry, I don't keep track of the time." (48)
15. ALICE: "I was just wondering if you were going to be much longer?" BILL: ". . . It could be a while." ALICE: "Any idea how long?" (53 - 55).
16. NICK: "We're going to be here for the next two weeks. So, please, do stop by." (60)
17. NICK: "So what brings you out at this hour?" (60)
18. NICK: "Are you married?" Bill: "Nine years." (60)
- (60) 19. NICK: ". . . it's in a different place every time and I only get it an hour or so before."
- (60) 20. NICK: ". . . where the hell are you gonna get a costume at this hour of the morning?"
21. BILL: "I apologize for disturbing you at this late hour but I need your help." (61)
22. MILICH: "He moved to Chicago - over a year ago." (61)
23. MILICH: "I lost in two weeks a lot of hair, mostly here." (64)
24. BILL: "I've obviously left things a bit late tonight, so if you don't mind . . ." (64)
25. CAB DRIVER: "How long you gonna be?" BILL: "I dunno, maybe an hour or more, but maybe only ten minutes." (75)
26. MYSTERIOUS WOMAN: "You must go now." (80)
27. MYSTERIOUS WOMAN: "May I borrow him for just a few minutes?" (83)
28. ALICE: "What time is it?" BILL: "A little after four. . . . it took longer, longer than I thought." (88)
29. WAITRESS: "I think there's usually someone in the office around two or three." (92)
30. BILL: "When did he check out?" CLERK: "Umm. . . about five o'clock this morning." BILL: ". . . It's a pretty early check out, isn't it?" CLERK: "It is a little on the early side, yeah." (93)
31. CLERK: "Well, he came in this morning around four-thirty a.m. with two men." (93)
32. JAPANESE MAN 1: "Thank you, Mr. Milich. I'll call you soon." (95)
33. LISA: "I think it's just Mrs. Akerly at two-thirty and Mrs. Kominski at four." BILL: ". . . And please, call the garage and have them get my car out in half an hour." (99)
34. ALICE: "Want to eat at seven?" (105)
35. BILL: "Are you expecting her back soon?" (115)

36. SALLY: “Well, considering you were with Domino last night . . .” SALLY: “. . . she got the results of a blood test this morning. . .” (116)

37. RECEPTIONIST: “I’m sorry, doctor, Miss Curran died this afternoon . . . at three-forty-five p.m.” (123)

38. BILL: “. . . tell him that I’ll be there in about twenty minutes.” (126)

39. ZIEGLER: “Sorry to drag you over tonight.” (129)

40. BILL: “That was a terrific party the other night.” (129)

41. ZIEGLER: “That’s a twenty-five year old. I’ll send you over a case.” (129)

42. ZIEGLER: “I know what happened last night. And I know what’s been going on since then.” (129)

43. ZIEGLER: “. . . you went to Nick’s hotel this morning and talked to the desk clerk.” (129)

44. ZIEGLER: “I don’t think you realize what sort of trouble you were in last night.” (129)

45. ZIEGLER: “. . . the last-minute interventions. . .” (129)

46. ZIEGLER: “You’ve been way out of your depth for the last twenty-four hours.” (129)

47. ZIEGLER: “. . . it was always just gonna be a matter of time with her.” (129)

48. ZIEGLER: “Someone died. It happens all the time.” (129)

49. ALICE: “Helena’s gonna be up soon.” (133)

50. ALICE: “The important thing is we’re awake now and hopefully for a long time to come.” BILL: “Forever.” ALICE: “Forever?” BILL: “Forever.” ALICE: “Let’s. . . let’s not use that word, it frightens me.” (134)

51. Related to this topic: The audible ticking of a clock in Lou Nathanson’s death room (39) and in Ziegler’s billiard room (129).]

### [Sexual Puns in the Dialogue

1. HELENA: “Can I stay up to watch *The Nutcracker*?” (4)

2. BILL: “How long’s she been like this?” ZIEGLER: “Maybe five, six minutes.” (15) (Think of SZAVOST: “We won’t be gone long.” (16).) [Humorous allusion to the time of the sex act. See also 5.]

3. CARL: “Thank you very much for coming over here tonight.” (41) [Funny that Carl would say this, considering his fiancé was just “making love” to Bill.]

4. DOMINO: “Would you like to come inside with me? . . . Come on, come on.” (46)

5. CAB DRIVER: “How long you gonna be?” BILL: “I dunno, maybe an hour or more, but maybe only ten minutes.” (75)

6. BILL: “Will you come with me?” (84) [To Mysterious Woman.]

7. WAITRESS: “Nick Nightingale? Sure, he comes in here.” (91) [The waitress who seems to be having an affair with Nick—how else would she know where he is staying?]

8. CLERK: “Two Men. Big guys.” (93) [Makes a suggestive hand gesture]

9. MILICH: “Yes dear . . . come, come.” (95) [To the daughter he turned into a whore.]

10. BILL: “Come in.” (99) [Just after envisioning Alice having sex with the Naval Officer.]

11. LISA: “I think it’s just Mrs. Akerly at two-thirty and Mrs. Kominski at four.” (99) [Mrs. COME-in-ski.]

12. SALLY: “Why don’t you come in for a second?” (115)

13. ALICE: “He’s big.” (134) [Helena holds up a stuffed bear.]

Other uses of “Come” : ZIEGLER: “Thanks so much for coming. . . . Thanks for coming.” (6); BILL: “I came as soon as I got the message.” (39); MILICH: “Come in.” (63); RED CLOAK: “Come forward.” (86); ALICE: “Come on, lie down, lie down.” (88); ZIEGLER: “Come in.” (129).]

### (Scenes 5 - 18: At Ziegler’s Mansion)

This sequence of thirteen scenes is for sheer filmmaking virtuosity among the greatest Kubrick has filmed.

Quick synopsis: At Ziegler’s mid-town Manhattan mansion (5) Bill and Alice enter and are met in a large hallway by Victor Ziegler and his wife Ilona where generic greetings are exchanged (6). Thenceforth Bill and Alice enter into the ballroom and share a short dance together before the band takes a ten minute break and Bill and Alice decide to momentarily separate (7). Alice goes off to down a glass of champagne en route to the bathroom (8) while Bill, still in the ballroom, hails Nick, the band’s pianist, who is an old university friend (9). Meanwhile, standing alone at the bar in an ante-room Alice is met by Sandor Szavost, a Hungarian, who invites Alice to dance (10). Dissolve to the ballroom where Alice and Szavost dance (11). At the same time, in an ante-room just off the Ballroom, Bill is introduced to two coquettish young models, Gayle and Nuala (12). While dancing with Szavost, Alice sees, through a doorway, Bill speaking to the two models (13). Bill is led down a corridor arm in arm with Gayle and Nuala and the three of them come to a halt in the same large hall as in scene 6. Harris, Ziegler’s personal assistant, interrupts to ask Bill to follow him up the stairs to where Ziegler wants to see him (14). Upstairs, Ziegler ushers Bill into a large bathroom where Mandy, during a sexual encounter with Ziegler, has OD’d on drugs (15). At the same time, Alice is still dancing with the lubricious Szavost who attempts to seduce Alice upstairs for a quick assignation (16). Meanwhile upstairs in the large bathroom, Mandy comes round and Ziegler is relieved that Bill was there to help (17). Back in the ballroom downstairs, Alice stops dancing with Szavost and says her goodbyes (18).

### [Parallel editing in EWS

“Parallel editing” is when there is a cut-away from a location (a) to another location (b) where action is occurring simultaneously to a, and then a cut-back to the first location (a).

There are not many instances of parallel editing in EWS.

1. In the Ziegler Mansion sequence, 8 and 9 are simultaneous; 11/13 and 12 are simultaneous; 15 and 16 are simultaneous; 17 and 18 are simultaneous.



2. In the montage sequence of the morning following the night at Ziegler's Mansion, **20** (Bill at work) and **21** (Alice and Helena in their kitchen) are simultaneous; **22** (Bill at work) and **23** (Alice and Helena in Helena's bedroom) are simultaneous; **24** (Bill at work) and **25** (Alice in her dressing room) are simultaneous; **26** (Bill at work) and **27** (Alice and Helena in Alice's bathroom) are simultaneous. (If one is an absolute stickler for accuracy, these examples are at any rate *nearly* simultaneous!)

3. **(48)** Bill in Domino's apt. and **(49)** Alice watching television in her kitchen are simultaneous.

4. As Bill is being led by a Tall Masked Butler toward the Marble Hall of Somerton in **(84)** there is a cut-away to Nick being led, blindfolded, through a large Palm-Lined Hall **(85).**]

## 6. Int. Corridor - Ziegler mansion - Night

**[Bill and Alice, holding hands, walk down a corridor lined with display cases and works of art. A large party is in progress. Guests, all in evening wear, are still arriving. An orchestra playing dance music can be heard further off in the house.**

**Bill and Alice come into a large hallway where they stop beside the hosts, Victor Ziegler and his wife, Ilona, who are greeting the guests to their annual Christmas party.]**

	<b>Bill</b>
<b>Victor, Ilona . . .</b>	
	<b>Ziegler</b>
<b>Bill, Alice . . .</b>	

This opening bit of dialogue, along with the composition of the four characters in the frame, emphasizes—contributes to—a structural technique in EWS of *doubling*, of *mirroring*, that is intrinsic to the character of the film as a whole.

The four opening words of the scene are, with respect to this theme of doubling, clear.

As for the framing: Ilona and Alice are largest in the frame, close to the camera. Ilona to the far left (her right side to the camera), Alice to the far right (her left side to the camera). Ziegler and Bill are smaller, set deeper in the frame. Ziegler to Ilona's left, Bill to Alice's right. (So that would obviously mean that Bill is standing tending to Ziegler's left side). The position of the four characters are symmetrical in the shot. A tenor of congruity, of balance, of stability, of harmony, predominates.

The scene is captured in one unbroken master-shot. It is a spectacle with at least a half-dozen components, any of which can engage the eye and the concentration of the spectator. Indeed, it is up to the spectator to choose what is to be observed in scene **6**. As the scene lasts about a minute or so and consists of one shot with no cut-aways, the spectator has the leisure as it were to scan the contents and depth of the frame-image. Scene **6** rouses the eye of the spectator to dart swiftly this way and that among the contours of the frame. Scene **6** incites rapid eye movement. Thus does the film arouse the spectator with an animation that correlates with the stimulating atmosphere of a party.

Nevertheless, the spectator will not be able to study in one viewing all of the visual content of **6** because of both the aggregate of details which comprise it and the brevity of its running time. In one viewing of **6**, a spectator can give complete attention to, say, Ilona, admiring, for example, her face, her red dress or her marvellous jewellery; another viewing might choose Ziegler as a focus. What of the film is apprehended by the spectator's gaze is always going to be a *limitation* of the available sensory (visual and audible) and thematic possibilities. The spectator is always—and most often unconsciously—making decisions as to what in and of the film is going to be given consideration. *What is seen of a film is always a limitation of what can be seen of the film.*

[The hall is large and marbled with a vast staircase in the background. Illuminations creating a ‘curtain of light’ hang from the walls, and there is a Christmas tree laden with decorations. In the middle background is a large marble statue of what looks like a Greek goddess in the arms of a Greek god with large unfurled wings.

Ziegler, a man in his fifties, and his wife welcome Bill and Alice. The four trade handshakes and kisses.]

**Bill**

Merry Christmas!

**Ziegler**

Merry Christmas! How good to see both of you.  
Thanks so much for coming.

[The phrase “Merry Christmas” in EWS

EWS takes place over Christmas week. Though the film is decorated throughout with the usual trappings of the holiday season, the common phrase “Merry Christmas” occurs in two scenes only, and is heard a total of only three times—though there is ample opportunity throughout the film for characters to trade the familiar expression.

1. In (6) Bill and Ziegler say to each other, “Merry Christmas!”
2. In (114), as Bill alights from a cab in front of Domino’s apt., he tells the driver, “Keep the change. Merry Christmas.”]

**Scene 6. CONTINUED**

**Ziegler**

Merry Christmas! How good to see both of you.  
Thanks so much for coming.

**Alice**

We wouldn’t have missed it for the world.

**Ziegler**

Alice, look at you! God, you’re absolutely stunning.

**Alice**

Oh, thank you.

The music heard distantly coming from the orchestra is “I’m in the Mood for Love”.

Ilna is wearing an elaborate necklace of close-set diamonds and matching diamond earrings, all of which refract the light into the six colours of the spectrum remarkably brilliantly.

Early on, Alice, who is standing on the far right, gravitates backward, losing some of herself out of the picture frame. *Bill’s left hand, positioned behind Alice at her waist, quickly and subtly draws her back into the frame where his hand keeps her whole form just inside the shot, preserving the harmony of the composition.* This same hand also pats her waist, keeping time with the music.

Ziegler  
(to Ilona)

And I don't say that to all the women, do I?

Ilona

Oh, yes, he does.

Alice

He does!

The four characters are engaged in a *ritual*, a social ritual: a *barkening*: greetings: the performance of hearty salutations exchanged between gracious hosts and amiable guests. It is a light-minded geniality in which the words spoken may either have a significant meaning or may have none at all. It is a play performed that might be as impersonal and superficial as it is ostensibly authentic and personal.

For example, Ziegler's first three lines could be spoken word-perfect to each and all of the incoming guests. And Alice's reply, "We wouldn't have missed it for the world" is one more pre-packaged phrase.

In more than one way Ziegler and his wife put in relief aspects of Bill and Alice. For example: Ziegler's line, "Alice, look at you! God, you're absolutely stunning" in scene 6 can be set up against Bill's exchange with Alice in their bathroom in 3: **ALICE: "How do I look?" BILL (not looking): "Perfect." ALICE: "Is my hair OK?" BILL: "It's great." ALICE: "You're not even looking at it." BILL (distant): "It's beautiful . . . You always look beautiful."**

In 3, as has been pointed out above, Bill is too pre-occupied with his own preparations to give Alice proper, tender acknowledgement of her beauty. It is evident that Bill has become complacent, at least outwardly, with Alice; hence his distant manner with her. Ziegler's compliment to Alice in 6 is, on the other hand, outwardly winningly ingenuous. Yet, as Ilona cattily observes, "He says that to all the women," which could be taken as a subtle, effective dart aimed at Alice. (On the other hand, Ilona's comment could be innocuous and empty, knee-jerk small talk is all, though it illuminates Ziegler's comment regardless.) The point of this is that at face value Ziegler's admiration sounds more sincere than Bill's, but it won't be. The divide between appearance and reality: the obscurity of surface. What is to be trusted, what taken on trust?

(It seems that the most unmitigated of the three sets of compliments given to Alice on the evening is that expressed by Roz, the babysitter, "Wow! You look amazing, Mrs. Harford!" in scene 4.)

Even if the words spoken between the Zieglers and the Harfords are taken as supremely genuine expressions of sentiment, the strange, cold, impersonal nature of the phrases themselves ("Thanks so much for coming." "We wouldn't have missed it for the world.") is not thereby abridged. It is a somewhat eerie fraternity. There is an abstruse strangeness that permeates the exchange between the two couples due in part to the impersonal essence of social speech, of words, that is at odds with personality.

Going on the evidence of the three scenes of EWS between Bill and Ziegler, it is difficult to gage their friendship with a sort of exactitude. It might very well be that Bill is Ziegler's doctor pure and simple, that the doctor might have no personal relationship with his patient, except for Ziegler's annual Christmas party which would be the exception to the rule. For example, Ziegler and Bill might not even now-and-then meet for a social game of, say, tennis (or racquetball or squash). This description of their relationship as one predominantly official, but friendly, fits the evidence that EWS presents throughout. Still, as it is, in (6), one cannot penetrate the glittering surface of the social ceremony of welcoming courtesy to explore the essential relations.

Ziegler  
(to Bill)

Hey, that osteopath you sent me to got to work  
on my arm . . . you should see my serve now, it's

**terrific!**

By the by: Osteopathy, as a theory and a system, was founded (ca. 1889) by an American (Dr. A.T. Still).

**Bill**

**He's the top man in New York.**

**Ziegler**

**I could have told you that looking at his bill.**

During this exchange between Ziegler and Bill, Ilona and Alice trade words which are spoken quietly and which are not in the published screenplay. Ilona comments on Alice's "beautiful dress" and Alice responds, gesturing at Ilona's own dress and articulating something appropriate. The bustle of the overlapping dialogue and conversational attitudes lends an energy and a lively verisimilitude to the master-shot of four characters standing chatting. Bill lends activity to the scene as well when he first attempts to greet Ilona with a kiss; he feints first to his left, but finds Alice in the way, so then he proceeds to the right. Throughout, the spectator's eye is drawn this way and that, engaged in an energetic encounter with the shot.

**Ziegler**

**Listen, go inside, have a drink, enjoy the party and I'll see you in a little bit. OK? Thanks for coming.**

**Bill**

**Thank you.**

#### **[The phrase "Thank you" in EWS**

And the withholding of the same (in **25** and **30**) . . .

1. ROZ: "Wow! You look amazing, Mrs. Harford!" ALICE: Oh . . . thank you . . . Helena, are you ready for bed?" (**4**)

2. ZIEGLER: "Alice, look at you! God, You're absolutely stunning!" ALICE: "Oh, thank you." (**6**)

3. ZIEGLER: "Thanks for coming." BILL: "Thank you." (**6**)

4. BILL: God, you haven't changed a bit!" NICK: Thanks, I think." (**9**)

5. SZAVOST: "I have some friends in the art game. Perhaps they can be of some help?" ALICE: "Oh, thank you." (**11**)

6. ZIEGLER: "Listen, I can't thank you enough for this. You saved my ass." BILL: "I'm glad I was here." (**17**)

7. BILL: "Please ask Janelle if she will bring me my coffee." LISA: "Sure." BILL: "Thank you." (**20**)

8. BILL: "Hello? Yes, this is Dr. Harford. When did it happen? No, no, erh . . . I have the address. Thank you." (**33**)

9. BILL: "How is Miss Nathanson?" ROSA: "Not so good. She's in the bedroom."  
BILL: "Thank you." (38)

10. BILL: "I came as soon as I got the message." MARION: "Oh thank you." BILL:  
"I'm so . . . I'm so sorry." MARION: "Oh, thank you." BILL: "Your father was a . . . was a very  
brave man." MARION: "Oh, thank you." (39)

11. MARION: "We're going to get married in May." BILL: "Well, that's wonderful news.  
Congratulations." MARION: "Thank you." (39)

12. CARL: "Is she . . . is she in the bedroom?" ROSA: "Yes, she is." CARL: "Thank  
you." (40)

13. CARL: "Thank you very much for coming over tonight." BILL: "It's the least I could  
do." CARL: "It means a lot to us." BILL: "Thank you . . . Marion, your father was very proud of  
you and I know you gave him great comfort these last months." MARION: "Thank you." CARL:  
"Thank you." (41)

14. Advertisement on brick wall: "Thank you! I love you!" (45)

15. DOMINO: "Well, thank you very much." (58)

16. BILL: (first words to Maitre d' of Sonata Cafe in place of greetings) "Thank you."  
(60)

17. VOICE: "Nick, that was great!" NICK: "Oh, thanks." (60)

18. BILL: (to Maitre d', serving Bill's beer) "Thank you." (60)

19. NICK: (to Maitre d', serving Nick's drink) "Thank you." (60)

20. NICK: (to voice on phone) "OK, sir. Thank you. Bye-bye" (60)

21. BILL: (to cab driver in front of Rainbow Fashions) "Thanks. Keep the change." (61)

22. BILL: "Fidelio." GATEMAN 1: "Thank you, sir." (76)

23. BILL: "Fidelio." MASKED BUTLER: "Thank you, sir." (78)

24. WAITRESS: "Anything else?" BILL: "No, thank you." (91)

25. BILL: (to CLERK) "Um . . . well, anyway . . . I certainly . . . I certainly appreciate  
your help." (93)

26. MILICH: "Was your outfit the success?" BILL: "Yes, it was. Thank you." MILICH:  
"Good, good." (95)

27. JAPANESE MAN 1: "Thank you, Mr. Milich." (95)

28. MILICH: "Well, Dr. Harford . . . thanks for the business." (95)

29. LISA: "Tuna salad and black coffee." BILL: "Thanks." (99)

30. BILL: "And please, call the garage and have them get my car out in half an hour."  
LISA: "No problem." BILL: "OK?" LISA: "Sure." (99)

31. ZIEGLER: "Do you feel like playing?" BILL: "No thanks." (129)]

## Scene 6. CONTINUED

Bill

Thank you.

Alice

Bye.

[Bill and Alice make their way to the crowded main reception room.]

To the innocuous spectacle of the two couples mingling in scene 6, there are, when the scene is filtered through the knowledge of the rest of the film, ominous undertones, all of which relate to the character of Ziegler, who, at face value, is sunny, ingratiating.

1. *Game-playing*. ZIEGLER: “You should see my serve now, it’s terrific.” A serve in a sport such as, say, tennis or volleyball, is an introductory intentionally dynamic high-velocity putting-into-play of the ball. In Ziegler’s line there is the vaguest whiff of bold power, of aggression, of a challenge. Game-playing as a theme with respect to social behaviour relates to hidden agendas, to tactics, rivalry, power-plays, manipulation.

2. *The sexual connection*. EWS establishes a clear connection between Ziegler and the Masked Ball at Somerton. Ziegler is portrayed as a highly sexual character, both in his speech and in his actions. For example: (a) It was Ziegler who recommended Nick Nightingale to Somerton’s “people”. (b) In (129) Ziegler uses no less than a half-dozen sexual idioms to pepper his speech, and even endeavours a brash sexual gesture to punctuate a point. So, Ilona’s admission that Ziegler “say[s] that to all the women” suggests, indirectly, Ziegler’s conspicuous involvement with the dangerous sexual element of EWS.

3. This point fuses points 1 and 2, *game-playing* and the *sexual connection*. As will be discussed below, the two models, Gayle and Nuala, who try their best to seduce Bill into an impromptu clandestine menage-a-trois during Ziegler’s party, are—or, going on the evidence given by the film, seem very well to have been—*hired* (probably by Ziegler?) to seduce Bill for some specific but unstated purpose. Desire, seduction, paranoia and danger coincide in the exchange between Bill and the predaceous Gayle and Nuala—an exchange perhaps orchestrated by the tricky, libidinous Ziegler himself.

4. When Ziegler says, “I’ll see you in a little bit”, the film anticipates the slightly seedy scene of (15) in which Mandy has OD’d during a seduction by Ziegler in, of all places, a bathroom. So, when refracted through the knowledge of what is to come, Ziegler’s proleptic line, “I’ll see you in a little bit”, is only on the surface bright and innocent, and is actually cankered, giving off a whiff of corruption.

5. This fifth undertone is illuminated only retroactively, by a moment in the Masked Ball. Bill entering Somerton’s Marble Hall and being regarded by a sinister pair of masked figures (man and woman) looking down at him from the balcony (in 79) relates, in an uncanny and abstract way, to Bill being harkened to by Ziegler and Ilona in scene 6. Both involve a deliberate *giving heed to*, the acknowledgement of a visitor, the second example an abstract rendering of the first.

These five points are striking examples of an excellently subtle and sinister drift of corruption that haunts the distinct cheerful urbanity and polish of the surface social interaction in (6).

This sinister drift underscores the visual complexion of the scene which was characterized above in this manner: “A tenor of congruity, of balance, of stability, of harmony, predominates.”

## 7. Int. Ballroom - Ziegler mansion - Night

This scene (7) is comprised of six shots: (7a) A slow dissolve to an establishing shot, which is a slow zoom-out already in progress, of the opulent, crowded Ballroom; (7b) Bill and Alice dancing; (7c) Nick Nightingale playing the piano; (7d) Back to the angle of 7b but closer: Bill recognizing Nick; (7e) The small orchestra reaching the end of “I’m in the Mood for Love” and the Bandleader addressing the guests; (7f) Back to the angle of 7d: Alice leaves the ballroom as Bill intends to approach Nick.

7a. A rich gorgeous yellow light tints the Ballroom, spread from the ‘curtain of light’ illuminations decorating the Ballroom walls. On the far end is the red-carpeted stage with Nick Nightingale visible playing the baby-grand piano on the left. Amid the crowd of dancing guests, Bill and Alice can be seen, small but visible, in the bottom center of the screen throughout the slow zoom-out. The slow dissolve from Bill and Alice walking through a doorway completing scene 6 to the slow zoom-out and soft-ish focus of 7 is a lyrical, almost wistful transition. By virtue of EWS being a Kubrick film, I cannot help but recall the July 4, 1921 ball in the Gold Room of the Overlook Hotel in *The Shining*. Like that ball, the ball in which Bill and Alice have just entered has, by virtue of being photographs on celluloid, already happened, *is already in the past*. The ethereal light and soft focus (as well as the old tune) contributes to the shot 7a suggesting a memory.

Interesting use of music: In scene 6, “I’m in the Mood for Love” is playing in the background. The dissolve to scene 7 indicates the passage of time, but the song accompanying the visuals does not correspondingly jump forward however many bars. “I’m in the Mood for Love” continues on sonorously without a hiccup through the dissolve which reveals Bill and Alice dancing to the melody in 7. Hence, the music seems somewhat ‘disjointed’ from the visuals. The music is linked to the visuals in an ‘unreal’ way.

### [The zoom-in-progress in EWS

There are eight instances in EWS of a cut to a zoom, either a zoom-in or a zoom-out, which is already in progress as the transition is made.

1 In scene 7, the cut to the establishing shot of the Ballroom which is a slow zoom-out already in progress.

2. and 3. The last two views of Bill after Alice’s Naval officer monologue (33).

4. Bill inside the cab heading to Lou Nathanson’s (34).

5. The last shot of the scene of Bill in Domino’s apt., when Bill sits on the bed following his phone call from Alice, is a zoom-in in progress (58).

6. In (79) the cut to the zoom-in already in progress of the sinister Masked Man and Woman looking down at Bill from the balcony of the Marble Hall of Somerton. This example is a remarkably evocative and powerful shot.

7. Still in (79), the shot when the Mysterious Woman chooses Bill with a kiss to his mask’s lips, is a zoom-in in progress.

8. Bill walking down the sidewalk toward Hotel Jason (92).]

## Scene 7. CONTINUED

7b. Cut to a waist-/thigh-high shot of Bill and Alice dancing to the music amid a crowd of dancing bodies. The tune, “I’m in the Mood for Love”, is at moderate speed. A general sense of warmth pervades, due to the autumnal yellow (lights) and orange (flesh-tone) hues, accentuated by the strong value contrast of

the black of tuxedos and dresses. The focus seems a bit sharper than **7a**. The yellow and orange hues, both of strong chroma, and offset by strong value contrast, along with the sharp, deep focus lensing make the cut to **7b** a thrilling one, the shot rivets the eye. The texture of the cinematography is painterly and sumptuous, it almost looks composed of oils.

The camera remains in the same general spot, keeping a single perspective, a slightly upwards - flattering - angle, on Bill and Alice as they slowly turn together to the music. The staid dancing of Bill and Alice, their feet settled on the floor, is put in relief by the thrilling, wheeling, floating sensations of the dance of Alice and Szavost that commences in scene **11**.

In **7b**, following Bill's line, "Not a soul," Bill's face comes into view as he turns with his wife in time to the music and his eyes shift far to the left side in their sockets, displaying a lot of the whites as he looks sharply off to screen-right; at this moment, with this gesture, Tom Cruise, impeccably groomed and tuxedoed, looks as "Hollywood handsome" as he is going to get in EWS. Cruise is endeavouring to charm, if not captivate, the spectator with his personal allure. With this gesture, Cruise is courting the spectator, "putting his best face forward", striving for sympathy. (The concept of *courting*, and of *seduction*, with respect specifically to the *filmic style* of EWS in Part I of the film, will be returned to below, in the discussion beginning with scene **10**.)

**Alice**

**Do you know anyone here?**

**Bill**

**Not a soul.**

**Alice**

**Why do you think Ziegler invites us to these things every year?**

**Bill**

**This is what you get for making house calls.**

**7c.** Cut to Nick Nightingale behind the piano, in a white tux, looking a little like a lost puppy. He has a subdued, delicate air about him. He also looks distracted, mildly so.

This shot of short duration (less than five seconds) is interesting as in this instance the film style of EWS *gets ahead* of Bill. That is, in **7c** Nick is viewed closer-up, significant in the frame, which indeed signals Bill's recognition of Nick, but Bill is only seen acknowledging Nick (in **7d**) *after* the significant view of Nick in **7c**. This is another instance of the intimate interrelationship between Bill and the structuration of EWS (the first instance being the act of Bill switching off the title music).

**7d.** Back to Alice and Bill, the same angle as **7b** but a bit closer: Bill is gazing regardfully at Nick.

**Bill**

**You see that guy at the piano? I went to medical school with him.**

**Alice**

**(giving Nick a languorous look)**

**Really? He plays pretty good for a doctor.**

**Bill**

**He's not a doctor. He dropped out.**

**[The bandleader brings the music to a stop.]**



7e. Low-angle upwards angular view of the Bandleader on the stage, holding a violin, the mellow brown colour and glossy varnish of which are beautifully brought out; with Nick to the left at the piano.

**Bandleader**

**Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you're enjoying yourselves. The band is going to take a short break now and we'll be back in ten minutes.**

**[The guests applaud as the band leaves the stage.]**

A vague air of mild *melancholy* pervades, but so quietly, scene 7 (and persists in scene 9). This melancholy is actuated out of a series of components: (i.) the autumnal colours which are reminiscent of the month of October; (ii.) the dreamy bygone feel of the event; (iii.) Bill and Alice discovering themselves alone amidst an assemblage of strangers; (iv.) the downbeat tenor and cadence of Bill's lines, "He's not a doctor. He dropped out."; (v.) And then the band promptly stops for a break, a cessation that accents the sense of privation. The band's break, arriving just as the ballroom scene is getting underway, feels premature, and a tad queer: it seems a sudden untimely rupture in the pace.

Alice's line (in 7d), "Really? He plays pretty good for a doctor," can be given a dual signification.

1. The line inaugurates a mode of light comedy that is going to continue throughout Alice's interaction with Sandor Szavost (in 10, 11, 13, 16, and 18). Throughout, the humorous elements remain low-key, unaccented.

2. The line can be given a more meaningful significance. The line reveals, indirectly, the boredom unsettling the heart of the Harford's marriage. "He plays pretty good, *for* a doctor" can connote, in an admittedly understated, well-nigh unconscious manner, that in Alice's estimation there is a divide between being a doctor, which her husband is, and having that special sparkling something that is a talent for melody. In other words, she finds her husband a bit boring.

Bill's line (in 7b), "This is what you get for making house calls," actually has a three-fold sense. On one level it is an innocent, light-hearted reply to Alice's wonderment, in a similar vein to the light humour of Alice's line of 7d limned just above.

The second signification of the line, "This is what you get for making house calls," relates to the power structure of Bill and Alice's marriage. The line can be rewritten as follows: "This is what *we* get for *me* making house calls." Alice has the chance to enjoy such an opulent society party because Bill is the breadwinner who furnishes such an opportunity. More generally, Bill's wages sustain Alice's livelihood.

Bill's line, "This is what you get for making house calls," has also a more abstract humorous element to it. To activate the abstract element in Bill's line requires a bit of distance between spectator and film. This third signification can be identified as follows. Kubrick is famous for virtually living on the telephone, and his penchant for marathon phone conversations is alike well known. Kubrick had the (rarest) privilege to conduct all of his business with Hollywood via phone calls from his house. All of Kubrick's pre- and post-production for EWS was engineered by means of the telephone. No other film director on the planet Earth worked - or works - in such a manner. Kubrick enjoyed all of the contacts and resources available for an A-list Hollywood production without emerging out of his house, without having to see virtually anyone face to face. *It was the phone that was Kubrick's lifeline to the sustenance supplied by Hollywood.* Bill's line is an irreverent self-reference.

### [Kubrick's most obvious self-references in EWS]

1. The bed in which Lou Nathanson lay dead has a plush white headboard which is distinctly similar to the headboard of the bed whereon the astronaut Dave Bowman expires and is transfigured into the Starchild at the end of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. (39)

2. There is an advertisement, two different versions of which is seen in two different locations, on a brick wall near Domino's apt. and on a brick wall near Rainbow Fashions, which includes in large white easily read lettering, "MANNING makes best BOWMAN" (61 and 114).

3. One of the extras populating the background of the Sonata Cafe seems a dead-ringer for Kubrick himself—the figure, the expansive balding forehead, the large glasses, the facial cast, the beard—, but, comically, it is not Kubrick (60). (This recalls the caricatured double of Kubrick that is directing a documentary on the war in *Full Metal Jacket*, which itself recalls Francis Coppola's cameo as a high-strung documentarian in *Apocalypse Now*.)

4. In the inner room of Rainbow Fashions, the rug on the floor is black and extends in a narrow rectangle which approximates faithfully the plane dimensions of the monolith of *2001*; moreover, this rug-cum-monolith points straight at English costumes in the vein of those exhibited in *Barry Lyndon*; furthermore, in this same scene Milich's slightly seedy aspect and bathrobe recalls Jack Torrance in *The Shining*. (64)

5. In (100), the licence plate of Bill's Range Rover is "9987." 99 is the year of EWS's release; and 87 was the year of Kubrick's last release, *Full Metal Jacket*. (Also in this vein, the taxi cab that takes Bill to Somerton's Masked Ball (71) has as a licence plate, "M7 96". The principal photography of EWS began very near the month of July in 1996.)

6. A sign visible hanging up on a brick facade reads, "Vitali Realty" (in 119), Leon Vitali being the actor who played Lord Bullingdon in *Barry Lyndon* and who, as evidenced initially in the credits of *The Shining* and then in those of *Full Metal Jacket*, became one of Kubrick's most trusted aides. In EWS, Leon Vitali is credited no less than three times, as, successively, the actor who played "Red Cloak", as the Assistant to the Director, and as the co-Casting Director. Furthermore, in what can be taken as a bit of overkill: in the *New York Post* story that Bill reads in Sharky's Cafe, the story, "Ex-Beauty Queen Dies in Drug Overdose", it can be seen in the last column that Amanda Curran once dated "the London Fashion Designer, Leon Vitali" (121).]

### [Kubrick prophesy of his own death in EWS]

This heading is here because it relates to the one directly above.

It is a matter of record that it was just the day after EWS was shown in its entirety in a cinema for the first time, for the top brass of Warner Brothers and Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, in early March 1999, that Kubrick passed away, from heart failure, in his bed at his home. There are two bits of dialogue in EWS which, when heard in this light, are uncannily harbingers of the nature of Kubrick's own death.

1. Marion's speech to Bill in 39. Here, Marion recounts the half-hour leading up to her discovery of her father's death, and if an imaginative leap is taken Marion could be taken for one of Kubrick's three daughters speaking of Kubrick's own death. (Two of Kubrick's daughters spoke, one tearfully, of Kubrick's death on the BBC on September 4, 1999).

2. Bill's line to Ziegler in 129: "You called it a fake, charade . . . *what kind of . . . charade ends with someone turning up dead?*" ]

## Scene 7. CONTINUED

Alice

Do you know anyone here?

Bill

Not a soul.

This exchange (at **7b**) achieves an eerier signification when considered retroactively. *EWS presents the Masked Ball at Somerton and the Party at Ziegler's as two different filmic presentations of the Same.* (And as will be discussed below, Bill and Ziegler both mix up the two in their final conversation, in **129**.) It can be established that the Masked Ball is the abstract rendering of the Party at Zieglers; just as the hedge maze in *The Shining* can be recognized as an abstract rendering of the labyrinthine interior of the Overlook Hotel. (For “abstract rendering” read: the visual transmutation of a conventional structure (a hotel, a NYC Christmas party) into its symbolic (infra-)structure (a hedge maze, a strange sybaritic ritual), in which the one coheres with the other.) This point will not be explicated at length just now. What is relevant at the moment is simply this, that at the Masked Ball at Somerton Bill will indeed know “Not a soul”.

**7f.** Bill and Alice applaud the band with the rest of the guests; then Bill suggests that they go say hello to Nick.

Alice

Honey, I desperately need to go to the bathroom.  
You go say hello and I'll meet you . . . where? At the  
bar?

Bill

Good.

Bill kisses Alice on the cheek and Alice departs from the ballroom to look for a bathroom (which is, at face value, a slightly humorous incident: just arrived, and Alice already has to go to the bathroom: it is a good-natured joke toward women who are evidently more diuretically inclined than men); while Bill prepares to approach his old friend Nick Nightingale, the piano player.

The connection between Alice and the “bathroom” is a somewhat significant one in light of the succeeding events of the party at Ziegler's. It will be in the upstairs bathroom (**15** and **17**) where Mandy is splayed on a comfy chair, having OD'd on heroin and coke. Ziegler had brought Mandy into a bathroom in order to seduce her. And it seems to be the case that Ziegler might very well have continued his sexual relations with the ailing Mandy until he was finished. This ambiguous bit of business sets up a power relationship between (to put it here bluntly) masculine dominion and feminine victimization. While downstairs dancing with Alice, Szavost endeavours to seduce her upstairs for sex, upstairs where is seen the ramifications of an ignominious sexual encounter - Mandy used and discarded.

### 8. Int. Ante-room - Ziegler mansion - Night

[Alice walks by a waiter holding a tray with glasses of champagne. She takes a glass without stopping and downs it 'in one' as she moves away.]

This incidental bit of business with the champagne is exceedingly true-to-life. For what else does one do when found to be islanded at a party where all of the guests are strangers? One drinks the booze.

### [Drugs in EWS

1. Alice swallows the *champagne* with a dramatic gesture in order to loosen her to the fact that she and her husband know no-one at Ziegler's party. (8)
2. Bill and Nick Nightingale share glasses of champagne during their chance encounter in the ballroom at Ziegler's party (9).
3. During sex with Ziegler in a bathroom, Mandy has OD'd on *heroin and coke* and her life for a time seems to hang in the balance. (15)
4. Alice seems to gravitate close to agreeing to an quick tryst with Szavost - and this because she's "had a little too much champagne" and her guard is down (18)
5. After sharing a *marijuana* joint, Alice divulges to her husband what happened a year earlier at Cape Cod when Alice encountered a Naval Officer (33).
6. Bill is drinking a pint of *beer* during his conversation with Nick in the Sonata Cafe, when Bill persuades Nick (whose own drink is a vodka and tonic) to give him the password and the address to the Masked Ball at Somerton (60).
7. Standing in the kitchen of his apt., Bill is drinking a can of (Budweiser) *beer* during the highly charged moment when he and Alice smile at each other while he remembers Alice's hurtful words, heard in a voice-over, including, "I was fucking other men, so many, I . . . I don't know how many I was with" (105).
8. Bill is given two tumblers of "twenty-five year old" *scotch* during his slippery billiard room conversation with Ziegler (129).
9. Returning home from Ziegler's totally dejected, Bill walks into the kitchen, gets a can of (Budweiser) *beer* from the fridge, sits at the kitchen table, and begins to drink (131).
10. Looking highly disturbed the morning after Bill has told her "everything," Alice is smoking a *tobacco* cigarette which has been burned close to the butt (133).]

### 9. Int. Ballroom - Ziegler mansion - Night

[On stage, by the piano, Nick Nightingale, in white tux and bow tie, is sorting through sheet music as the band takes its break. Bill walks up to the stage.

Bill  
Nightingale! Nick Nightingale!

[Nick looks around to see who is calling his name. He jumps down from the stage, and he and Bill greet each other like old friends.]

The music heard on the soundtrack is "It Had to Be You." As the band is on its break, the music would seem to be playing from a stereo system. Depending on the performance, the song "It Had to Be You" could sound jaunty, jocular even, played *allegretto*. In EWS the performance of "It Had to Be You" is played *andante grazioso*, with a deliciously rich and relaxed swing to it; the tune here has a seductively casual urbanity - with a touch of sentiment, a yearnsome feel.

Scene 9 has a running time of very near to two minutes, is comprised of two shots (9a and 9b), and is the first scene in the film which (to put it in a common way) sets the story going, as the character Nick Nightingale is the necessary link between Bill and the Masked Ball at Somerton. It will be Nick who, the following night at the Sonata Cafe (60), will introduce Bill to the fact of the existence of the Masked Ball

at Somerton, who will moreover divulge the address of Somerton and, most significantly, will give Bill the password (“Fidelio”) necessary for admittance to that mysterious place. The meeting of Bill and Nick at Ziegler’s party is a chance encounter pure and simple which has the most profound consequences for Bill.

Nick Nightingale has the cast of “the boy next door”. In his mien he is very “American”. The lilt and inflections of his voice are engaging. (A comparison: Nick’s vibratile tone is quite different from the exceptional clarity of Gayle’s voice.) In Hollywood terms, Nick is a “likable character.” His scrabbly goatee, which is a not very convincing addition to his features, is something to fondly fault rather than plainly denounce. His stab at a goatee muddies his face, there is no authority in it; it is a unsuccessful pretence, but it is not pretentious. Nick Nightingale has soft edges, he is vulnerable, there is a sad suggestion to him. Recall how, in the Sonata Cafe (60), the collar of Nick’s suit jacket rides up high to his neck, giving his seated form a dwarfed, childlike aspect. And then Nick’s white tux, in (9), looks just that little bit too big for him. And the familiar tunes played by Nick and the orchestra are easy to play. Nick Nightingale could be deemed, to employ an Americanism, a bit of a sad sack.

There is a sentimental and a melancholy and a bittersweet feel to the dialogue shared between Bill and Nick. *Sentimental*, in part because each reminds the other of a past time, namely their time at university twelve years earlier, where they were in a certain manner not yet fully formed. Now they meet again as what they have become. *Melancholy*, in part because Nick is presented as a character who has not achieved a personal success, but is a kind of a drifter, someone who has *settled*, his best opportunities missed, a character with a bit of palpable self-sorrow, his youthful promise neglected, ebbing. Nick Nightingale is the model of a personage whose youthful dreams have given way to the slow decline into an unfulfilling midlife (Bill and Nick are in the region of 35 years old). *Bittersweet*, in part because it is somewhat due to a loneliness endemic in Bill which provokes the high pitch of his regards for his old friend, including an arm thrown over Nick’s shoulders and a florid patting of Nick’s stomach, a patently intimate regard. It is an enthusiasm which Nick, who looks just that little bit uncomfortable (especially in the Sonata Cafe in 60), does not exactly share.

Bill

. . . . I see you’ve become a pianist.

Nick

Oh, yes. Well, my friends call me that. How about you? You still in the doctor business?

Bill

You know what they say, once a doctor always a doctor.

[Bill takes a couple of glasses of champagne from a waiter standing with a tray and hands one to Nick.]

Nick

Yes, or in my case, never a doctor, never a doctor.

Bill

Cheers.

Nick

Cheers.

[They “clink” glasses and each takes a sip.]

Bill

I never did understand why you walked away.

Nick

No? It’s a nice feeling. I do it a lot.

EWS sets up a series of characterological interactions which have their ground in a presumptive social hierarchy - a “pecking order.” For example, just as Bill submits himself to—dotes upon—Ziegler and the Mysterious Woman, so, and successively, Nick Nightingale, the Waitress at Gillespie’s, and the Clerk at Hotel Jason, are going to capitulate to “Dr. Bill”. Bill yields to Ziegler’s stature, just as Nick and the others mentioned are going to yield to Bill’s. This topic could be headed, “Power Relationships in EWS”. For a specific and simple evidence of this: in scene 9, Bill hands Nick the glass of champagne and says, “Cheers” first; whereas in scene 129, Ziegler is going to hand Bill a tumbler of scotch and it is Ziegler who first says “Cheers”. This specific example is not insignificant because it is a marker of an unstated order which determines characterological interactions in EWS. (But this is a topic that has to be developed only carefully.)

Bill and Nick indeed greet each other affectionately, “like old friends.” Nick’s speech, for such an informal encounter, is personally revealing (“I do it a lot”) which seems to express that the two of them are right back in the mode of relations they left off with twelve years earlier, as if no time has past. However, it cannot be ascertained exactly what sort of friends the pair were back in their university days. Meetings like this do tend to have an enthusiasm that might be out of proportion to the original tenor of the friendship. This might be a small point but it relates to the whole series of unanswered questions raised by EWS. (The heading, “Unanswered questions in EWS” will be found below.)

When Nick asks Bill, in a line of dialogue that precedes what is presented above, “So how you doing?” Bill responds, “Not too bad, you know, not too bad.” Bill’s response is self-effacing, as would be expected in a social exchange such as this, but, significantly, Bill articulates his line a bit too lowly; he squashes the articulation of the second “not too bad”, which gives the line, when heard, a troublesome depth to it. Just as how Alice’s aloof demeanour in scene 4 when Bill is attempting to help her don her coat reveals a mild disquiet and an unsettledness, so the cadences of Bill’s line reflect, just as subtly, a similar, and wistful, unsettledness.

There is a seemingly trivial, entirely forgettable moment that occurs during the dialogue between Bill and Nick which might be differently described as a moment of the highest importance which has an intrinsic relationship to what eventuates for Bill. It is the momentary interruption by the character who is identified (significantly) only in the end credits (and in the screenplay) as “Ziegler’s Secretary.”

**[They “clink” glasses as a man in evening dress walks up to Nick. This is Ziegler’s Secretary.]**

**Secretary**

**Excuse me . . . Nick, I need you a minute.**

**Nick**

**Be right with you.**

**[Ziegler’s Secretary walks away.]**

**Nick**

**(to Bill)**

**Listen, I gotta go do something. If I don’t catch you later, I’m gonna be down the Village for two weeks in a place called the Sonata cafe. Stop by if you get a chance.**

**Bill**

**I’ll be there. Great seeing you.**

**Nick**

**Good seeing you too.**

**[They exchange friendly pats as Nick goes and the scene dissolves to scene (10).]**

At face value Ziegler's Secretary is a character similar to that of Bill Watson in *The Shining*. Both characters are in their persons slight and slim, unassuming and nondescript; they are both of the fewest of words, are a bit foolish looking, and in both films both seem to have no bearing on what happens and are for that reason almost immediately forgettable. In light of what eventually unfolds in EWS, however, Ziegler's Secretary, though having a screen-time of less than ten seconds in total, might figure into Bill's ensuing fortunes in a significant way. The rest of this paragraph will be necessary to explain this. It has to do with the connection between Ziegler, Nick, and Somerton. Ziegler tells Bill in **129**: "And then I remembered seeing you with that . . . that prick piano-player . . . Nick whatever-the-fuck his name was at my party. It didn't take much to figure out the rest." In the party-at-Ziegler's sequence as filmed, at no time is Ziegler seen acknowledging the meeting between Bill and Nick. It could very well be *Ziegler's Secretary* who is the witness, who thenceforth divulges, and soon, what he has seen to Ziegler. Ziegler's Secretary is interrupting Bill and Nick's conversation most likely in order to apprise Nick of information regarding the Masked Ball at Somerton that is going to transpire the following night. This speculation is acceptable specifically because the Secretary is presented in an ominous light. For one thing, when the Secretary approaches Nick he is not deferential but brusque, his delivery well-nigh patronizing. Compare this to how Harris, Ziegler's personal assistant, interrupts Bill's interaction with Gayle and Nuala (in **14**): HARRIS: "Sorry, Dr. Harford. Sorry to interrupt." For another thing, and even more revealingly, Ziegler's Secretary gives Bill a palpably sinister look, a distinctly suspicious once-over. By virtue of the ominous sheen to the Secretary, the Secretary seems an emissary of all that is related to the mysterious Somerton. (Remember that Ziegler tells Bill, in **129**, "I recommended that little cocksucker [Nick] to those [Somerton] people and he's made me look like a complete asshole.") The relationship between Bill meeting Nick, and then Ziegler becoming aware of that fact, has now been delineated. Though the business with Ziegler's Secretary is ostensibly entirely slight and fleeting, it in fact indicates that Bill has already done himself in. Before Bill has even arrived at the Masked Ball at Somerton, *he has already given himself away*. For a character like Bill who hates to reveal himself or to have himself revealed, this moment with the Secretary is a self-incriminating *fait accompli* unfortunate and odious all the more for seeming so inconsequential and by the by. It is a moment of the highest importance presented as a moment of the highest insignificance. (For a more detailed exposition of the relationship between Ziegler and the Masked Ball, which puts further light on this particular point regarding Ziegler's Secretary, see below.)

The colour scheme of the composition of scene **9** contributes as well to the ominous and melancholy feel of the proceedings, though this role that colour plays—the colour *white* specifically, with red and black as well—can only be recognized as such retroactively. (See below.)

Let us quickly sketch in the details of the two shots. **9a** is positioned atop the stage, behind Nick, with Bill down below on the dance floor, approaching toward the camera. Cut to **9b** which is now on the dance floor with Bill facing the stage and Nick; Nick jumps down off the stage and the two proceed to walk side by side across the dance floor, the camera facing them at thigh-/knee-level, tracking backwards until all three come to a stop when Bill reaches for the glasses of champagne.

The composition of the commencement of the shot **9b** (that is, for the duration that the camera is stationary before it begins its slow track-backwards) is striking and lovely. The three principal components of the shot, other than the two speaking characters, are the black baby grand piano on the stage, the red rug covering the stage, and the large Christmas decoration (around four, five feet high and three feet across) hanging on the ballroom wall to the far left, a star or asterisk shaped out of wreathy material and adorned with glowing white lights. The *black* piano comprises well-nigh half of the screen, from the centre to the right, and by virtue of its size in the frame sustains a quiet but evocative presence. The camera is positioned close to the edge of the stage and is not very far over the level plain of the stage, so that the rug looks foreshortened. (If the camera tracked forward, it would skim less than a foot over the surface of the rug. And if the camera lowered its height a bit, the red surface of the rug would vanish behind the horizon of its edge.) Shot in deep focus, the line of the angle of the rug, and the rug's remarkably brilliant *red* colour, are impressive, thrilling. Like shot **7b**, shot **9b** rivets the eye, it intoxicates the spectator. The gloss of the piano is captured gorgeously; the deep focus lensing catches expertly the wave-like scintillations of the reflections of the curtains of (yellowish) light and other (prismatic) colours on the visible (right) side of the piano's surface. So skilled and sharp is the lensing of the film that the black of the piano looks for all the world as if it were not flat but full of depth. The nap of the red rug is also startlingly well brought out; its plushness is well-nigh palpable. The star decoration, which is to the far left of the screen, close to Bill, at his back, is a

marvel of halation: it is bathed in and radiates a diffuse *white* light which looks as thick as a haze of smoke. The shot **9b** is a visual symphony composed primarily of the colours *black*, *red* and *white*.

As for the two characters Bill and Nick, they complement—more precisely, are fused with—the colour scheme of **9b**: Bill's tux is black, Nick's tux is white, and the orange of their skin, as captured in the shot, inclines more toward red than to yellow. (Orange is of course situated between red and yellow in the colour wheel.)

### [Colour in EWS: a partial lexicon

To compile an unabridged inventory of each use in EWS of the six hues of the spectrum along with black and white would be an enterprise beyond the scope of the present task. *Each shot* of the film would have to be dissected into its principal and subsidiary colours and be apprehended solely as such. Such an exhaustive account would play a significant part in a painstaking analysis of the nature of the continuum of the colours of EWS. That would be a study of film form I am not certain has ever been endeavoured on any film whatsoever; it would necessitate approaching EWS as if the film were a string of canvases of shifting colours and nothing but, twenty-four canvases a second, a *show of light* pure and simple—the film as a narrative of, by, and about colour exclusively. The psychology of colour sensation would be a necessary ancillary topic for consideration. An unabridged inventory of the colours of EWS, along with a theoretical explication of the cognitive ramifications of the blending and sequencing of the colours would be first and foremost a pursuit within the compass of science.

Our purview just here is a more narrow one. The most prominent uses of colour in EWS will herein be compiled. The headings will be general, just “red”, “white”, and so forth. A red, say, is always going to be a specific shade of red; but frequently simply the description “red” will suffice. The instances as listed will not conform to their order of appearance in EWS; instead, the most conspicuous and crucial usages come first.

#### RED

1. The expansive rug in the Marble Hall of Somerton.
2. The drapes in Bill and Alice's bedroom. And the sheets and pillowcases of their bed (in **33**). (And the sofa in their living room.)
3. The baize of Ziegler's pool table.
4. The display of the costumed mannequins in the Inner Room of Rainbow Fashions.
5. The corridor/stairwell leading down into the Sonata Cafe.
6. The painting of the reclining nude woman in Ziegler's bathroom.
7. The front door of Domino's apartment house.
8. The walls of the Toy Store. (Also purple.)
9. The character Red Cloak.
10. The rug on the ballroom stage at Ziegler's.

#### WHITE

1. The glowing white walls in the CUs of Bill bringing the stricken Mandy round.
2. The glowing white wall behind Bill as he sits chatting with Marion in the room where her father, Lou Nathanson, lay dead.
3. The envelope handed to Bill at Somerton's front gates.
4. The neutral greenish-white of the morgue, and the opaque white of the body drawer door numbered “19”. Also the walls of the hospital corridors and the walls of Bill's Private Office in his Surgery.
5. Christmas lights seen in the CU when Domino and Bill kiss wetly on the lips. And the kitchen of Domino's apt. (as seen in **58**).

#### BLACK

1. The colours of the cloaks of the masked figures, including Bill's, at Somerton. And the colour of the tuxedos (and select dresses) at Ziegler's party. (The use of black reaches its



apotheosis in EWS in the shot of a masked Bill watching the proceedings in the Library of Somerton.)

2. Mandy's eyes (her 'whites' included) as seen when she, in her drug stupor, opens them onto Bill.

3. Marion's dress and her necklace.

#### **BLUE**

1. The colour of night through the Harford's bedroom and bathroom windows, and the Harford's room and bathroom when the lights are off.

2. The colour of the wallpaper in the room where Lou Nathanson lay dead. Also the colour (bluish-purple) of the bedsheets.

3. The front gates of Somerton.

4. The Sonata Cafe. (Also purple.)

5. The rug in the lobby of Hotel Jason.

6. Bill's overcoat (which at night looks black).

#### **ORANGE**

1. Skin colour.

#### **PURPLE**

1. Domino's dress, and her bedsheets. Also the front room of her apt. (in 48).

2. The sheets and pillowcases on Bill and Alice's bed (after 33).

3. The drapes in the bedroom where Lou Nathanson lay dead.

4. The Sonata Cafe. (Also blue.)

5. The cloaks of the two Henchmen flanking an enthroned Red Cloak in Somerton's Marble Hall.

6. The wooden front door of Somerton.

#### **PINKISH-PURPLISH**

1. The illumination of the Xmas tree in the bedroom where Marion dwells with her dead father.

2. The front room of Domino's apt. (in 116).

3. The Sonata Cafe. (Also blue, purple.)

#### **YELLOW**

1. The walls, when illuminated, of Bill and Alice's bedroom and apt.

2. The Marble Hall of Somerton.

3. The tint of the ballroom at Ziegler's.

#### **BROWN**

1. The yellow-brown of the walls of Ziegler's billiard room.

2. The browns here and there in Somerton.

3. The blurred, brownish background of the CU of Domino kissing Bill.

4. The cabinet door behind the Clerk in Hotel Jason.

#### **GREEN**

1. The deep seagreen intensifying Ziegler's bathroom.

2. The colour of the tricorne hat of the Sinister Masked Man on the balcony of the Marble Hall at Somerton.

3. The trees around Somerton's front gates.

4. The sickly washed-out morgue-like green of the entranceway to Domino's apt. building.

4. The six lamps hanging over Ziegler's pool table.

#### **GOLD**

1. The top half of Bill's mask.

2. The top half of the Mysterious Woman's mask.

### RAINBOW DOTS

(This refers to the ovals of high chromatic colour which are Christmas lights out of focus and which speckle the background of a half-dozen or so particular shots of EWS with all six colours of the spectrum.)

1. CUs of Bill in the Sonata Cafe. (This is definitely the most extraordinary use of rainbow dots in EWS.)
2. On the left-hand side of the CU of Marion in the last shot of scene **41**.
3. In the CU of Helena when she asks, "Can I stay up and watch *The Nutcracker*?"
4. On the far left of the screen when Alice says her goodbyes to Szavost in **18**.
5. In the final shot of Alice in EWS.

Two further notes:

1. Of the six colours of the spectrum, green and orange (except for skin colour) are the rarest in EWS.

2. It is significant that, as black and white are the two colours in EWS that are related to sickness and oblivion, so the fun-fur coat and hat that Domino is wearing when she meets Bill on the street is, yes, black and white (zebra stripes).

Also, Ziegler is wearing black and white (white button-down shirt, black t-shirt) during his conversation with Bill in Ziegler's billiard room.

Here is a quick thematic recap of the most meaningful colour-significations in EWS (and this necessitates a few judgment calls):

1. *Red* relates to the uncanny and threatening goings-on at Somerton.
2. *White* relates to sickness and death (oblivion).
3. *Black* relates to what can be called "the void".
4. *Blue* is predominantly related to the character of Bill.
5. *Purple* is predominantly related to the debilitated Domino.
6. *Yellow* can be considered as being related to Alice.
7. *Pinkish-purplish* relates to the emotional state of concupiscence.
8. *Rainbow dots* relates to an intense inner emotional condition (of Bill especially).

To put this schema into practice, herein are three representative examples: (1.) As, in the first shot of EWS, the Harford's bedroom is seen as predominantly yellow and red, so, when the Marble Hall of Somerton is seen as predominantly yellow and red, the Harford's bedroom is simultaneously put into mind. (2.) As the sheets of the Harford's bed are seen as purple (in **88**), so the goings-on with Domino (as in **48**) are for that specific reason put into mind. (3.) The interior of the Sonata Cafe, which is a blend of red, pinkish-purplish, blue, and purple, is engineered to evoke a wealth of correspondences.

A fourth example will follow directly underneath.]

### Scene 9(b). CONTINUED

So, as can now be determined, the colour scheme of **9b**, the shot of Bill and Nick meeting at the edge of the ballroom stage, a shot which is composed of the colours red, black and white, is a shot rich with ominous significations. Specifically, *Somerton and its uncanny essence is embodied in 9b*, however understatedly. However merry it may be on the surface, the meeting of Bill and Nick buzzes with a baleful undertone.

In addition, the shot gains energy from the busyness of Nick jumping off the stage to meet Bill face to face. Interestingly, this particular exertion is one of the very few athletic moments of EWS (along with Bill being pushed against the parked Mercedes by one of the gay-bashers in **45**, and Milich's daughter running up to Bill in **64**). Further energy is generated from the flamboyant affectionate pats and slaps Bill and Nick trade, and their bouts of lively laughter.

### Introduction to scenes 10 to 18

This series of scenes can essentially be divided into three parts. *Alice's encounter with Sandor Szavost* (scenes **10**, **11**, **13**, **16** and **18**) is the linchpin of the party-at-Ziegler's sequence. The lush, lusty atmosphere of the party, and the exquisite cinematographic technique of the same, reach their fullest expression in the luxurious dancing between Alice and Szavost. While the divertissement between Alice and Szavost is the general organization principle of the second half of the party-at-Ziegler's sequence, the heart of the sequence as a whole is specifically scene **15** (sustained by **17**), *Bill tending to an ailing Mandy*, Ziegler's latest sexual conquest, in a guest bathroom of Ziegler's mansion. The third component of the latter half of the party-at-Ziegler's consists of the two scenes wherein *Bill interacts with the flirtations models Gayle and Nuala* (**12** and **14**). This trio of situations is integrated together by and large through the medium of parallel editing, which contributes to the thematic unity of the subdivisions of the sequence. Together, these scenes constitute the climacteric of Part I of EWS.

These eight scenes amount to a presentation-within-the-play, as it were, a presentation that is an account of *aspects of (a) romance*. Scenes **10** to **18** act out a comedy of the human mating ritual: meeting, flirtation, resistance, seduction, risk, the proposition, surrender, consummation, parting. The presentation of these particular steps of a love affair is comprised of the sum of the tripartite situations. These eight scenes exist together as a single complex, and could be subtitled, "Stations of Amorous Love".

Kubrick's aesthetic of pace (that is, the filmic rhythm determined out of the unity of the camerawork (placement and movement) and the running time of each particular shot) in these eight scenes can be described as *steady* and *trancing*. Each scene is at least a minute in duration, but the majority of the scenes, five of them, are composed of only two shots or less. Long takes predominate. Only in the scenes in Ziegler's bathroom, which are the heart of the entire sequence, does the editing become more rapid and the shots more numerous.

Here is a list of the number of shots per scene. Scene **10** - Alice meeting Szavost: *2 shots*. Scene **11** - Alice dancing with Szavost: *3 shots*. Scene **12** - Bill talking with Gayle and Nuala: *1 shot*. Scene **13** - Alice and Szavost dancing: *1 shot*. Scene **14** - Bill with Gayle and Nuala: *1 shot*. Scene **15** - In Ziegler's bathroom: *15 shots*. Scene **16** - Alice and Szavost dancing: *1 shot*. Scene **17** - In Ziegler's bathroom: *11 shots*. Scene **18** - Alice and Szavost parting: *1 shot*. All together these scenes comprise something like fifteen minutes (or thereabouts) of screen time.

As will be discussed below, in more than one edit—as in the one in **10** especially; and then, for instance, the cut from **11** to **12**,— the transition from the geometrical composition of one frame to that of the next is striking, in one instance well-nigh eyepopping. At specific moments of EWS the editing, obviously exceptional, has especial potency. With Kubrick's EWS the art of film-making has achieved a perfection. Indeed, from start to finish, Kubrick's tessellation of shots in the party-at-Ziegler's sequence is of so assured a poise that the temper of the whole can be described as *angust*. There is neither a single extraneous cut in the sequence nor a single extraneous shot. The filmic technique here is as sure-footed, as virtuosic, as it is possible to be.

### 10. Ante-room - Ziegler mansion - Night

The music on the soundtrack is still the elegantly performed and seductively paced “It Had to Be You”, which, to recall, underscored the meeting of Bill and Nick in the Ballroom.

Slowish dissolve from **9b** (Bill standing by himself in the Ballroom, watching Nick depart screen-right) to:

[Alice stands, back to the bar, holding a glass of champagne. The room is crowded with people talking. A tall, handsome man, suave and middle-aged, also stands at the bar. He turns from a conversation he is having and notices Alice next to him. His name is Sandor Szavost. He takes a sip of whisky as he studies her, and puts his glass down on the bar. Alice, still looking for Bill to join her, also puts her champagne glass down.

Szavost then nonchalantly picks Alice’s glass up as Alice’s gestures to do the same.]

Alice

Umm, I . . . I think that’s my glass.

Szavost

I’m absolutely certain of it.

[Szavost stares into Alice’s eyes as he seductively drinks the contents of Alice’s glass.]

Szavost

My name is Sandor Szavost. I’m Hungarian.

[He takes Alice’s hand and kisses it.]

Alice

(a little tipsy)

My name is Alice Harford. I’m American.

Szavost

Delighted to meet you, Alice. Did you ever read the Latin poet Ovid on *The Art of Love*?

Alice

Didn’t he wind up all by himself? Crying his eyes out in some place with a very bad climate?

Szavost

But he also had a good time first, a very good time. Are you here with anyone tonight, Alice?

Alice

With my husband.

Szavost

Oh, how sad! But then I’m sure he’s the sort of man who wouldn’t mind if we - danced.

[Alice thinks for a moment, then offers her arm to Szavost.]

Scene **10** is composed of two shots, **10a** and **10b**. Both are extraordinary; are attractive to the point of astonishment. **10a** starts to the front of Alice, tending to her right side though both of her eyes are visible; as the dissolve from **9b** is achieved, the camera in **10a** begins tracking slowly in a graceful arc to the

right, circumnavigating around Alice; continuing smoothly without hesitation in time to the delicious lilt of the music the camera performs a neat and faithful three-quarters circle around Alice, slowing to a halt directly behind her, with Szavost standing to her right at screen-right. For the duration of shot **10a**, the characters acknowledging each other, up to and including Szavost kissing Alice's hand, the camera and its angle remain stationary and still. In **10a** Szavost turns from his right side facing the lens to his left side facing the lens; as he stands considering Alice, his front is visible to the lens. The sole cut of the scene comes just after Szavost suavely kisses Alice's right hand. *In what is the most masterly cut in the whole of EWS*, **10b** then reverses the angle, flips the spatial relationships: Alice is now seen from the front, now on the right side of the screen, eyeing Szavost who is now dominating screen-left.

The transition from **10a** to **10b** is the most exquisite cut in the whole of EWS, which amounts to saying that it is one of the most memorable transitions in the whole of Kubrick's oeuvre. It is a cut verging on having the exhilarating force of the most famous transition in *2001*, the bone to spacecraft transition. In that latter film, the cut from bone to spacecraft performs a conceptual function. The cut of EWS under consideration here is yet more abstract than the one in *2001*; the transition from **10a** to **10b** reveals, and is an expression of, purely and simply, the *beautiful*.

To apprehend what is authentically beautiful is to stand rapt in a breathless fascination. But how to express, in words, with a faithfulness, an exactitude, the alchemy of this lived experience of beauty? More simply, how to describe what makes something beautiful, beautiful? Obviously, and for more than one reason, the task is unfulfillable. What is experienced as beautiful cannot be succinctly crystallized in apodictic phraseology because the beautiful as experienced is a complex of a blend of sensations and internal processing, some amount of which is unconscious to the point of mystery. By virtue of the fact that it takes the sensorium of a spectator to unconceal what is beautiful to sight and to recognize it as such, what is beautiful is always more than the sum of its parts. "Beauty" can be characterized as an aura arising from a complex of concrete details. Pinpointing in a list the concrete details of something that is beautiful is not enough to capture the essence of that which is apprehended as beautiful. The magical aura of the beautiful cannot be captured in words, but only experienced, lived, in the manner of a discovery, a moment of surprise.

So it is a sort of a losing battle to try to comprehend herein what makes the quality of **10b**, specifically, such a beautiful one. A faithful list of the components of the shot composition would not suffice as an authentic recreation of what is beautiful in the shot; that is, reading the list of what makes the shot what it is would not initiate the heady feeling of the experiencing of the shot. However comprehensive in terms of the details, a description of a beautiful object is always going to be wanting. Certain impressive aspects of **10** can only be indicated here, nothing more. And yes, there is a certain fatuity in attempting to argue the beautifulness of what is beautiful, for who does not accept that beauty is relative? (But it cannot be the case that every last object that is seen as beautiful is only apprehended as such because of cultural conditioning? A sunset or a sunrise are considered beautiful in no matter what culture, no matter what time, they happen?)

In **10a** the sinuosity of the camera movement coupled with Alice's keen eyes contribute to a gorgeous, wholly engrossing shot. As in all the other shots of EWS, **10a** is choreographed with a precisionist determination. As the camera curves around Alice to her left side, Alice artfully repositions her head toward the lens to keep both eyes in the frame. Alice's subtle movement here is absolutely ravishing. Such a movement spellbinds because the angle of Alice as captured by Kubrick's lens is so sharp and winsome, she is framed for maximum appeal. There is an exhilaration to be felt in witnessing Kubrick's actors reaching their marks *exactly*. Also, Alice turning in the same direction of the camera movement lends momentum, a slow swell, to the shot. Other intrinsic technical attributes of this sublime cinematic moment include, of course, the rich (lowish value) colour scheme and texture of the shot, and the seductive rhythm of the music on the soundtrack.

*In scene 10 EWS endeavours to seduce the spectator, to dazzle the spectator with its comeliness and refinement. EWS is making love to the spectator (in the Jane Austen sense of "seeking to win amorous esteem").*

After the camera reaches its stopping point directly behind Alice, which affords a view of both the low back of Alice's black dress and her skin tone (excellently brought out by EWS), Alice proceeds, without looking, to place with her right hand her champagne glass on the flat surface of the bar behind her. Then, leaning back a little bit, Alice, her both arms straightened and angled to either side behind her, rests her

hands against the bar. Thereby is her body projected forward—though of course seen from behind—with the thrust reminiscent of, say, a figurehead fronting an eighteenth century merchantman. Seen from the front by a figurant in the scene, the extension of Alice's body, its alluring pose, its voluptuous exposed tendency, would predominate. But if seen from the front with the camera lens, the angle would flatten Alice's posture and the effect would to a large degree be lessened. It might look stark and faintly ludicrous. Seen from the side, Alice's posture would look too-too mannered, more in the spirit of a fashion advertisement than a significant cinematic shot. But when seen from behind—and arguably *only* from behind—the full force of Alice's willowy pose is realized. *To bring out the best of that specific pose, Kubrick's angle as chosen is exactly qualified.*

The champagne glass that Alice places on the bar behind her rests in the middle distance between Alice and Szavost. The glass is at bottom-center of the screen and is small in the frame, yet all the same it has an expressive presence, just as the baby grand piano has a (quiet) presence in **9a**. The glass, which is elegantly narrow and short, is positioned very near the edge of the table. A certain *precariousness* predominates in the essence of the glass (which thereby cannot but evoke the crystal glass that falls from the table to shatter into chaotic pieces in the fourth part of *2001*). The glass expresses a fineness of form, a delicacy of shape, a transparency of texture: a symbolic self-reference to the aesthetic of EWS? The fact of the delicate glass that might fall but does not expresses the pressure of the film form wherein many fine and distinct elements are (perhaps only just?) succeeding to hold together as a unity, sustaining a most magical and grand of filmic moments. A small detail but, as in the case all throughout EWS, a significant detail, the dangerous placement of the fragile glass contributes to a tone that can be described as *breathless*, or, gripping.

Shot **10a** is in two parts: the first is the slow circumfluent camera movement around Alice, the second is the introduction of Sandor Szavost and his acknowledgement of Alice.

*Sandor Szavost* gives off a first impression which is favourable. Tall, broad, and suave, he has an engaging presence. He fills out his tuxedo well and his vest is appointed with a gold fob, a dapper touch. His expression is mature and urbane, with a strong well-proportioned profile. He is taller and broader than Alice's husband. His dark eyebrows are large and striking and lend force to his aspect. Szavost's demeanour, taken as a whole, can be characterized—from first appearances—as highly polished. His drawn-out consideration of Alice before he reaches for her glass buzzes with an easygoing and expectant energy. Just as Szavost is captivated by Alice, so the spectator is captivated by the composition and temper of the frame. Both Szavost and the spectator can be in the midst of experiencing a species of *love at first sight*. (Thus can the spectator identify with Szavost.) What is most persuasive in Szavost's character is his voice. Szavost's voice has a mellow euphony that lulls, a dusky depth to it that is soothing on the ear. His lines as spoken are dulcet and harmonious, are, indeed, hypnotic. His intonation is touched only slightly with a mid-European accent which gives his character the spice of the mysteriously foreign and the exotic. (By the by, the authentic Count Dracula might have a voice that is exactly of the pitch and lilt of Szavost's.) Just as smoothly flowing as Szavost's speech are his movements; his bearing is serene, excellently controlled, a marvel of poise and self-possession. There is not a single movement of Szavost's that is crude; rather, his motion is always easy and level, almost as if he were underwater. Going on the visual evidence of first appearances, Szavost exceedingly charms the spectator (and, of course, Alice as well).

But when one blinks and looks again, other aspects of Szavost emerge. These points might be arguable. He has a slump to his stance which communicates a certain enervation as well as his middle age; he has a visible paunch; and his hair which is slicked back looks less stylish than merely greasy. This is an arguable point. His hair in places has turned white, and what is left of his black hair muddies the effect of the whole, which is intensified by its oleaginous look.

The act of Szavost swallowing the contents of Alice's glass is audacious and discourteous, but, by virtue of Szavost's cultivated performance of the same, it is also intriguing. In what is a wry bit of business, Szavost makes rudeness seem genteel. Alice thinks so; she chooses to humour Szavost rather than take offence. One is intrigued to receive Szavost's next move, which would thus determine Szavost's opening act as a successful one. There are five factors which intensify the virtuoso effect of Szavost downing Alice's champagne. (1.) Szavost's movements, up to and including the tilting back of his head to drain the glass, are entrancingly slow, mellifluous even. (2.) The way he keeps his eyes locked on Alice's as he commences with his rakish act is piquant. (3.) The way he holds what is left of the champagne in his mouth until he has brought his head back down so as to eye Alice flirtatiously, and only then swallow the last of the champagne in a perceptible, though subtle, swallow, is humorously suave. (4.) The business of the drinking of the

champagne comes in the murmurous hush of the pause between the end of the tune “It Had to Be You” and the start of the next tune. (5.) The tune that commences as Szavost completes his opening gambit is “Chanson D’Amour”, a timely title for a tune just here, which has a more zestful rhythm and a higher (jauntier) pitch to its melody than the preceding tune and which thereby brings out the comic cast of the encounter.

Alice’s line, “Um, I . . . I think that’s my glass” is spoken with the flamboyant manner of a person obviously intoxicated. As Alice will soon become aware, she has already had too much champagne and her wonted deportment has given way to an unsteady wobble. With the presentation of this line EWS teeters on a tonal cusp. Alice’s inebriation is almost, but not quite, a slapstick *caricature* of drunkenness. With this line the comic possibilities of the situation of an ageing roué stooping to seduce a drunken beautiful woman are as it were noted. The conduct of Alice’s tipsy introduction to Szavost suggests a farce along the lines of an *opera buffa*, a English Restoration comedy, a German *Singspiel*, or a French classical comedy. But with the presentation of this single line the comic quality of the encounter finds its only overt expression. *From here on EWS is going to wear a comic mask, but under its straight mask.* (Many technical factors contribute to EWS keeping its straight mask in tact, including the ravishing colour scheme and the august camerawork and the trancing pace.)

The framing of Alice in **10a** is felicitous with respect to the Christmas decorations hanging on the walls of the ante-room, specifically, one decoration on the wall opposite Alice. When seen from behind, Alice’s head is dead-set in the midst of an illuminated decoration which is comprised of three five-pointed stars which look to be lolling on stems. An exceptionally pretty, vaporous yellow light suffuses the air around the decoration. Alice is posed in such a manner that the three star-flowers seem to be springing from out of her head. Also, the yellow light casts a warm glow around her head. What is significant in this framing is that *the decoration is a deft visual shorthand for Alice’s excitable inebriation.* The representation of incandescent shooting stars corresponds to the heady experience of feeling drunk on champagne and the giddy emotional swells that accompany such drunkenness. One can “see stars” when one is sloshed; and see “fireworks” when encountering someone sexually attractive. (Also, “to have stardust in one’s eyes” is to be lost to dreamy romance.) The tableau of the luminous stars emerging from the region of Alice’s head assists in communicating her inner condition in a neat, casual, almost unconscious, manner. The interplay between Alice and the Christmas decorations in Ziegler’s ballroom will become even more dynamic than this particular instance, as will be pointed out below. The harmonic convergence of Alice’s head and the Christmas decorations, in this instance and in the ones following, are presented as if the conjunctions were the result of chance, but of course they were rather the significant outcome of precisionist choreography.

If the varied narrative of EWS had to be characterized or condensed into a one line unifying description of its essence, one such effort could run, “The Unstable Ground of Logic” or, *The Limitation of Logic.* Logic in EWS is allied by and large with the character of Dr. Bill Harford. At this point an explication of this vital theme will be withheld. What is significant just here are the two lines of Szavost’s that are his *first* and *last* lines in **10**: “I’m *absolutely certain* of it” and “But then I’m *sure* he’s the sort of man who wouldn’t mind if we - danced”. *Certainty* and *sureness* are of the self-determined essence of Logic which sets its own rules and defines its own boundaries and thence acknowledges with absolute conviction such a structure as not arbitrary but rather as impersonal, impartial, eternal truth. (Recall how Alice undercuts Bill in **33** with: “You’re very, very sure of yourself, aren’t you?”, a line which leads directly to Alice’s admission of her encounter with the Naval Officer which was an experience that confounded reason and logic.) Szavost is presented as a man’s man, an embodiment of Logic: a man firm, knowing, stable, confident, composed, arrogant, authoritative. Szavost’s “absolutely certain” and “I’m sure” are verbal evidence of the self-determined essence of the *Logos* of civilized man. In these two lines of Szavost’s EWS presents for consideration the self-conditioned certitude of masculinity and logic; and this is a set-up, because EWS when taken as a whole proceeds to pull the rug out from under Logic, to express the instability and insecurity at the heart of certainty. Throughout, EWS upsets certainty and confounds Logic and at more than one point (Bill in the library at Somerton in **83** and Bill staring at his mask on his pillow in **132**) stares unblinkingly into the non-rational void that Logic inhabits as a sort of enclave. Indeed, the structure of the narrative of EWS is constructed in a puzzling way so that Logic is powerless to understand and wrap up neatly everything that happens. Taken at face value, Szavost’s certitude is amusing; taken retroactively, it has a philosophic consequence.

The composition of a filmic image is determined by two primary factors, the placement of the camera and the angles of what it captures with the lens. (What is captured in the frame and how it all is captured in the frame are two different things.) The geometrical make-up or design of the frame has itself a power to communicate information to the spectator. This information can express different things but is generally speaking in the manner of a *mood*. This mood is imparted in as subtle a way as can be, because a spectator is not (generally speaking) watching a film in terms of the geometrical compositions of the shots. But if the composition of one shot is built of strong verticals and horizontals, and the very next shot is built of swooping diagonals, then, however unstressed the geometry of the shots may be, their dynamic contrast of vectors will be imparted to the spectator in the manner of a mood, a feeling. For the simplest of examples along these lines, a shot of a character who is captured head to toe in the frame is going to impart a different feeling to the spectator than - or, when juxtaposed to - a shot of a character whose face is in extreme close-up. The geometrical composition of a frame goes a long way toward the production of filmic meaning, but at the same time the geometry *specifically* of a shot may go completely unacknowledged by the spectator. The geometry of the successive frames of a film are as near and as necessary as, say, the air that we breathe; but just as air is enjoyed by the many without there being necessarily a heeding of the same, or just as one blinks and blinks one's eyelids involuntarily without necessarily being always aware that it is being done, so the geometry of the frames of a film are always up close and of the highest importance but are simultaneously unobserved as such. *The geometric composition of a shot communicates its formal meanings well-nigh subliminally.*

To elaborate on the above, herein is a capsule description of the series of shots **10a**, **10b**, **11**, and **12**, with respect only to the predominant geometrical thrust of the composition of each frame. The list could indeed continue on, from shot **13** onwards, but for brevity's sake what is described below must serve as a suitable exemplum of this particular topic.

In **10a** the camera traces a three-quarter circle—an *open circle*—around Alice and then slows to a halt behind her. The composition as revealed is rectilinear, dominated by strong *verticals* which are perpendicular to a strong *horizontal*. Verticals, in the upright poses of Alice and Szavost and the champagne glass on the table between them; horizontal, in the line of the bar which cuts just across the bottom of the screen virtually from end to end.

**10b** is revealed as a dynamic contrast to **10a**. **10b** is composed of sweeping *diagonals* rushing from screen-left to meet at screen-right; also, the outer lines of Szavost and Alice trace a *triangle* which is the dominant (though abstract) shape of the composition.

Shot **11**, of Alice and Szavost dancing, is characterized by the rotary movements of both the dancing couple and the camera, thus recalling the shape of the *circle* that the camera traces in **10a**, though in **11** the circle is a closed one.

Shot **12**, of Bill standing with Gayle and Nuala, their three bodies upright, flips back to the north-south *verticals* of shot **10**.

To recap: the continuum here under consideration (shots **10** to **12**) runs: *circular to rectilinear to triangular to circular to rectilinear*. The contrasting arrangements of elements from shot to shot serve to express moods that correspond either to character or theme. The geometrical compositions of the frames act as a sort of symbolic language which contributes meaning - in what can be an unconscious transaction - to the more obvious matter of what is happening *in* the frames. For example, the strong rectilinear cast to shot **12**, which gains further force from its juxtaposition to the circular movement of **11**, expresses in a visual shorthand an essence of Bill's character. The *rigidity* of the shot will come through to the spectator even if the composition of the frame is not consciously acknowledged as being intended to be expressive as such. The geometrical succession from **11** to **12** is a particularly effective one. As is, and especially, the transition **10a** to **10b**.

Just as it has been imagined above (in "Colour in EWS: a partial lexicon") that a treatment of the narrative of EWS could be written solely on the basis of the psychological ramifications of the blend and succession of colour—that EWS could be apprehended solely and abstractly as a story of, by, and about colours—so it is conceivable that a close examination of the continuum of the predominant *shapes* in the frames could also be attempted. That is, it could be endeavoured to apprehend EWS solely and abstractly as



a collection of changing shapes and to analyse the shape-narrative solely as such. Though in this instance also I have no knowledge of any such study having ever been undertaken on any film whatsoever.

Thus have we arrived at the transition to shot **10b**. **10b** is among the half-dozen most significant shots in the whole of EWS. The principal substance of what shot **10b** conveys or depicts is *a vision of the beautiful*. The beauty of the composition of **10b** is forcefully brought out all the more by virtue of its juxtaposition to the complexion of **10a**. **10a** is the well-designed preparation for the revelation of **10b**. The design of **10b** is eyepoppingly beautiful; but the effect would be somewhat lessened if the editing of the shots was not as superlative as it is. So to discuss what makes **10b** as effective and memorable a shot as it is must take into account not only the design of its own composition but its placement adjacent to **10a** and the precisionist editing that joins the two shots in a powerful unitary relationship.

**10b** flips the arrangement of the two characters as set up in **10a**. Whereas in **10a** Alice is seen from behind and at screen-left, in **10b** she is seen from the front and is at screen-right. **10b** reveals that the characters are standing alongside a well-stocked bar, behind which is a corner of the ante-room. The colour scheme of the shot is a ravishing *melange* of chromatic yellow, mellow (lower value) yellow-browns, flesh orange, and striking black; the rich texture of the whole is such that the frame looks composed of lustrous oils. Alice dominates the right side of the screen and Szavost is dominating the left-to-middle side of the screen. The camera is positioned a bit to the left of Szavost, and the angle of the camera placement is on a diagonal with respect to the two characters, so that, as Szavost is facing Alice, with his right side visible to the lens, the angle of his body is sheer, his face is in oblique profile. Not much of Szavost's face is visible in the shot; it is the black field of his tuxedo that is his dominant visual feature in **10b**. As Szavost is standing to the side of Alice and is almost a head taller, Alice has to turn her head slightly to her right and upwards for her to gaze into Szavost's eyes. The conjunction of the shapes of Szavost and Alice as brought out by the position of the camera lens traces an acute triangle in the frame. The curved line of Szavost's shoulders and back is the left side of the triangle, Alice's left arm outstretched backwards against the bar is the right side of the triangle, and the tip of the triangle is in the region of Szavost's forehead. Visible on the back wall in between the two characters is a bit of the curtain of light decoration, a luminous spread that is opened up on the top-to-left-hand side of the screen and funnels down in a swooping manner to gather just behind where Alice holds her head. The downwards narrowing swoop of the curtain of yellow lights adds shape and momentum to the right-hand slope of the triangle. An arrangement of liquor bottles is visible on the bar behind Szavost; while on Alice's side of the screen, positioned behind her at her left side, are a raised brown pot of white and red flowers, and, on the side wall, a portrait which is of the style, it would seem, of the Flemish portraitists such as Van Dyck. The framing of the shot is such that Alice looks a little crowded by Szavost, a little cornered; Szavost's stance with respect to Alice, as captured by the lens, could be described as *encroaching*. Just as Bill is kept to the extreme right of the screen by Gayle and Nuala in **12**, so in **10b** Alice is caught as it were at screen-right by the obstacle of Szavost.

**10b** is a thrilling revelation that enraptures the eye. The breathlessness that is generated from **10a** is turned up a notch then released and relieved with **10b**; one almost gasps with wonder and delight when **10b** is revealed. The swooping diagonals leading from top- and bottom-left straight to Alice are dramatically realized. In **10b** the dominant vectors all converge on Alice. Alice is the radiant, riveting focal point of **10b**. The dynamic contrast with the rectilinear cast of **10a** intensifies the bold thrust of the diagonal course of **10b**. The orange-yellow tint of **10b** mesmerizes the eye. In **10a**, screen-right is dominated by the expansive field of black that is Szavost's tuxedo; in contrast to this, in **10b** Alice inhabits the space where that blackness was. The cut as it were pulls the opaque blackness away like a curtain to reveal a sharp and colourful and richly textured depth underneath. The flat blunt blackness giving way to the exquisite perspective of Alice is a transition that is stimulating to the eye and energetic to the sense, exhilarating to behold, and contributes to the delighted shock of the revealing of **10b**.

This next point attempts to describe one of the most crucial moments in EWS. A point which might be obvious or obtuse, depending.

By virtue of the composition of shot **10b** as being comprised of diagonals which swoop right to Alice, right to Alice's two eyes, her gaze is intensified with an inspired force. In **10b** Alice's gaze is almost as palpable as a touch. What intensifies the effect of her spellbinding aspect is the pointed film editing. *As the transition is effected from 10a to 10b, milliseconds count.* At this specific moment of EWS, the film can be experienced—enjoyed consciously—by the millisecond. The moment **10b** is unconcealed to sight Alice is already moving in the frame. Blink and it will be missed, yet this movement of Alice's is the pay-off of the

complex of dynamic facets of **10**, and this climax comes in the first milliseconds of shot **10b**. Just as **10b** is revealed to sight Alice is moving her head toward Szavost. This movement lasts only split-seconds then Alice brings her head back a bit to her right. The geometrical arrangement of the frame coupled to the quality of the sharpness of the lensing brings out the fullest force of Alice's subtle head gesture. By virtue of the harmonious interplay of the various elements of the composition, which includes the precise angles of Alice's face as captured by the lens, Alice's eurhythmic movement has extraordinary expressive power. It ratchets up the pressure and then, in her pull back, immediately releases the pressure. The spectator is left woozy, entranced, open to influence. That this subtle head gesture has such weight and force is due to the magical calculus of Kubrick's film art that has to be seen on the large cinema screen to be believed. *With this fleeting moment the precisionist aesthetic of EWS achieves the most perfect pitch, so to speak.*

It is indeed a losing battle to try and condense in words the enchantment of **10b**. Technical aspects of the shot can be noted. The swooping geometry of the composition; the fine-art colours working magically together; the keenness of the angles that the lens captures; the appeal of Alice's eyes, hair, dress, skin colour, shape, pose, expression, movement, articulation; the harmonious interplay of all of the details; the jaunty melody of "Chanson D'Amour"; the engaging shift in pattern from **10a** to **10b**; the extraordinary trajectory of Alice's head gesture; the temporal duration of it all; the fun of the discovery—which is, in a way, a chance encounter. **10b** is an incarnation of the beautiful that transfixes the spectator with its virtuosity. It is a successful seduction.

Alice

(a little tipsy)

My name is Alice Harford. I'm American.

Szavost

Delighted to meet you, Alice. Have you ever read the Latin poet Ovid on *The Art of Love*?

Alice

Didn't he wind up all by himself? Crying his eyes out in some place with a very bad climate?

Szavost

But he also had a good time first, a very good time.

Szavost's allusion to the Latin poet Ovid is the pivotal moment of the dialogue of scene **10**. What meaning is produced by it depends on how it is heard. That is to say, the more one knows of Ovid, all the better does Szavost's line sound.

## Ovid

Publius Ovidius Naso, or *Ovid* (43 BC - AD 17) was a man who rose high in Imperial Rome on the strength of his own wit, and his own wit, it would seem, eventually became his own undoing. This resemblance in Ovid's life to the "tragic flaw" and the "reversal of fortune" of Aristotelian tragedy contributes to the fascination of Ovid's character. And what was Ovid's tragic flaw? What self-same personality trait was it that motivated his glittering rise only to thereafter bring about his dismal downfall? It was - Erotomania.

For Ovid the young man and for Ovid the Roman poet, *hedonistic passion* was his main concern and primary theme. He revelled unabashedly in priapism and his fame as a poet was based on such amorous works (his first four known works) as *Amores* (Amours), *Heroides* (Heroines), *Ars Amatoria* (The Art of Love), and *Remedia Amoris* (The Remedy of Love). Ovid did not assume the mantle of the poet of love—or, as he describes himself in *The Art of Love* (Bk. II), as "the preceptor of wanton love"—as a sort of literary pose with which to gain renown; rather, Ovid was a man for whom the gamut of experience of sexual love

was, at least for a time, felt to a genuinely exaggerated degree. As typified by his *Amores*, Ovid is an archetypal lothario; he was the ancient world's prototype of a Don Juan or Casanova. Just as, say, Shelley and Keats were authentic in their love of poetry, so Ovid was just as authentic in his love of love; the man and the poet were all of a piece. The passion in and of Ovid's life was so great it ran off into print. So intoxicated with all of the aspects of love was Ovid, he would often lose himself to the concupiscent excitement even to the loosening of his morals and the loss of his self-control. This "problem" was compounded by the fact that, as Ovid relates in his *Amores* (Bk. II, El. IV), "There are a hundred causes for me always to be in love." Not only was Ovid taken with the experiencing of love, he was fascinated with it, captivated with the drama of it. In the *Amores* he writes that he intended to write of heroic themes, as in the manner of Virgil, but, as it happened, he could not help himself, he was forced by the arrow of Cupid to employ his talent to amorous themes. "This work," Ovid writes, "has love demanded" (Bk. II El. I). One of the great complications of Ovid's love life was that, as it would seem, he often fell in love with women who were already married. Hence, Ovid by necessity became a maestro of seduction and adultery. A how-to handbook on the sexual seduction of mistresses, *The Art of Love* is the outcome of Ovid's copious research. Such a quasi-didactic manual suggesting efficacious strategies of courting could be a boon to the gallant insofar as "Love is a species of warfare" (AA, Bk. II).

*The Art of Love* is a poem in three books of 2,330 lines in total. Its publication date has a significant ring to it, it has been marked at 1 BC/AD 1. In its day *The Art of Love* went through at least two editions. The first edition was of two books only and was intended specifically for men. The first book pinpoints locations where mistresses might be found and proceeds to outline proper modes of courting conduct. The second book continues its instruction into the mechanics of winning and keeping a mistress. The third book, which came later, in the manner of an afterthought, was intended as instruction for women in how to be suitably appealing for the purposes of charming men. (Also in the third book Ovid makes his case that women should yield to sex as often as possible, using a "gather ye rosebuds while ye may" argument which anticipates the conventional Elizabethan entreatment as epitomised by Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress".) Though the subject matter of the *Amores* and *The Art of Love* is similar, the tone of the two works is very different. The *Amores* (pub. c. 20 BC) is a poetic sequence on the vicissitudes of love in the manner of Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* and Shakespeare's sonnets; indeed, Ovid's *Amores* seems to have been the inspiration for those two latter works. The *Amores* is passionate, personal, serious. *The Art of Love* on the other hand seems a light-hearted amorous sport, a work of leisure, an expression of the cultivated class. By the time Ovid came to write *The Art of Love*, some of the fire had gone out of his passion; his handbook on seduction has a whiff of cynicism about it. *The Art of Love* is written in a knowing, detached, worldly-wise, if not decadent, style, it has a witty and urbane and sophisticated composure, a tone very much in the spirit of Szavost's encounter with Alice.

#### [Selected Quotes from Ovid's *The Art of Love*

Two translations of *Ars Amatoria* are used here, one prose (trans., Henry T. Riley, 1890) and one poetic (trans., Peter Green, 1982). Here are selected quotes, in order of appearance:

1. "Should anyone here in Rome lack finesse at love-making, let him/Try me—read my book, and results are guaranteed!" (G)
2. "Like me, girls love stolen passion,/But are better at camouflaging their desires." (G)
3. "Make promises, what's the harm in/Promising? Here's where anyone can play rich." (G)
4. ". . . gaze deep into her eyes with open passion—/One silent glance can speak/Whole volumes." (G)
5. "Make sure you're the first to snatch that cup that/Her lips have touched; drink from where she has drunk . . ." (G)
6. "To be loved, be worthy to be loved." (R)

7. “Whatever she approves, do you approve.” (R)

8. “Any illiterate oaf can catch the eye/Provided he’s rich. Today is truly the Golden/Age: gold buys honours, gold/Procures love. If Homer dropped by—with all the Muses, but empty-handed—he’d be shown the door.” (G)

9. “He who charms with his discourse, let him break the quietude of silence; . . . He who drinks with elegance, let him drink.” (R)

10. “As many as the shells on the sea-shore, so many are the pangs of love; the shafts which we endure are reeking with plenteous gall.” (R)

11. “It is not becoming for men of good breeding to cause weariness of their company.” (R)

12. “Nothing but wanton dalliance is taught by me: in what manner a woman is to be loved, I purpose to teach.” (R)

13. “Even now, be mindful of old age, that one day will come; then will no time be passed by you in idleness. Disport yourselves, while yet you may. . . . How soon, ah me! are our bodies pursed with wrinkles, and that colour which existed in the beauteous face, fades away! . . . We men, to our misfortune, become bald; and our hair, carried away by time, falls off.” (R)

14. “I hate it unless both lovers reach a climax:/That’s why I don’t much go for boys./I can’t stand a woman who puts out because she has to,/Who lies there dry as a bone/With her mind on her knitting. Pleasure by way of duty/Holds no charms for me, I don’t want/Any dutiful martyrs. I love the sighs that betray their rapture,/That beg me to go slow, to keep it up/Just a little longer. It’s great when my mistress comes, eyes swooning,/Then collapses, can’t take any more/For a long while. Such joys attend you in your thirties:/Nature does not bestow them on green youth.” (G)

15. “Give me the palm, you grateful/Young lovers, wreath myrtle in my scented hair!/As great as Podalirius was among the Achaeans/For his healing arts, or Achilles for his strength,/Or Nestor in counsel, or Calchas as prophet, or Ajax/In arms, or Automedon as charioteer,/So great am I at the love-game. Sing my praises, declare me/Your prophet and poet, young men: let my name/Be broadcast world-wide. As Vulcan made arms for Achilles,/So have I done for you: then use/My gift, as he did, to conquer! And when you’ve brought down your/Amazon, write on the trophy *Ovid was my guide.*” (G)

16. “She, whose breath is strong smelling, should never talk with an empty stomach; and she should always stand at a distance from her lover’s face.” (R)

17. “That which is hid is unknown. . . . What but *fame* alone is sought by the hallowed poets? The sum of all my labours was that crowning object.” (R)

18. “Chance is powerful everywhere; let your hook be always hanging ready.” (R)

19. “Many a time, at the funeral of a husband, is another husband found. To go with the tresses dishevelled, and not to withhold your lamentations, is becoming.” (R)

20. “[Women,] Use sexy taboo words while you’re making love,/And if nature’s denied you the gift of achieving a climax,/Moan as though you were coming, put on an act!” (G)]

Sandor Szavost’s query to Alice, “Did you ever read the Latin poet Ovid on *The Art of Love*?” is an accomplished chat-up line, and, for Szavost’s purposes, nothing more. Szavost employs a venerable subject (a “Latin poet”) for the purposes of casual small-talk. Obviously, Szavost is not about to enter into a learned conversation on the peculiarities and technicalities of Ovid the Latin poet. If Alice had said, say, “No, I

haven't read him," would Szavost have rejoined with something along the lines of, "Oh Ovid is a darling! He had just the most beneficial influence on the Latin Elegiac meter!" Probably not. Rather, one can assume that Szavost intends nothing of the kind. (As Ovid himself instructs, "Don't look too highbrow. Who but a mindless ninny/Declaims to his mistress?" (AA Bk. 1)) Now that a sketch of the poet Ovid has been given, the character of Szavost's allusion to the Latin poet can be fully apprehended. As it is, Szavost's line is a consummate verbal aphrodisiac. As translated Szavost's line runs exactly thus, "*I will have sex with you whether you're married or not. Do you want to?*" Szavost's query as presented is appealing and admirable because the packaging as it were of its secret lascivious sentiment is so polished. Szavost's line has a whiff of the learned, it sounds cultured and sophisticated, while being at the same time salacious, if not downright lecherous. Szavost is all deft, attractive surface, he shows an appealing front.

Before Ovid's downfall is discussed, there are four further aspects of Ovid and *The Art of Love* which relate to EWS and which can be indicated. The first two might perhaps be construed as more relevant than the latter two. First, in social standing Ovid, like Dr. and Mrs. Harford, was of the (slightly upper) middle-class. Ovid had money, but not nearly enough to even begin to compete with the authentically wealthy; indeed, in Rome Ovid had to rely on the largesse of patrons. Ovid had just enough money to subsist tolerably in Rome—which is similar to the financial status of the Harfords in New York (as evidenced in their posh but somewhat small apartment). Second, Ovid was a city poet. He was an urban predator. Rome was his haunt, Rome was the arena of his success. *The Rome of Ovid*, that labyrinth of apartment blocks punctuated with civic buildings and public esplanades and the private mansions of the wealthy, is similar in spirit to the New York of EWS. Like the Harfords' journey through EWS, Ovid's life in metropolitan Rome was dominated by interiors. (Not once in EWS is Alice seen out-of-doors.) Third, the success of *The Art of Love* depended on how much leisure time the educated classes had to dedicate to such an "entertainment". The reception of EWS depends on similar cultural factors. Both *The Art of Love* and EWS are expressions of a strong civilization complex enough to yield such refined artwork. Lastly, there is a broad similarity between the artists Ovid and Kubrick. Both were innovative artists who reached a technical perfection in their respective arts. By way of comparison, what Alexander Pope was to the English heroic couplet, was Ovid to the Latin elegiac couplet (Wilkinson, L.P., *Ovid Recalled*, ch. 3). The art of both Ovid and Kubrick is inventive, skillful, tending to beauty and excellently finished. These four linked correspondences, especially the first two, though all are minor, serve to tighten the relationship between Ovid and EWS. That these coherences exist between them makes Szavost's allusion to Ovid all the more adroit and engaging, and suggests how finely interrelated the parts of EWS are.

**Alice**

**Didn't he wind up all by himself? Crying his  
eyes out in some place with a very bad climate?**

**Szavost**

**But he also had a good time first, a very good  
time.**

Indeed, Ovid rose high only to be brought virtually as low as he could have been brought save for a public execution. His last decade was a pathetically downbeat closure to an otherwise sparkling life. A quick biographical sketch of Ovid's life will suffice to describe the nature of his eventual misfortune. Ovid was a native of Sulmo and grew up in its Arcadian landscape which was run through with melodious streams and blessed with an excellently temperate clime. Well-born, Ovid was educated in the city of Rome where he fostered a talent for poetry in a cultural atmosphere enriched by such living poets as Virgil and Horace. Love was Ovid's primary poetic theme and he enjoyed great fame in his day from his works. On the strength of his voluptuous wit Ovid became one of the leading personalities of Imperial Rome. Ovid's life in the heyday of his prestige must have been full of all the intrigues and sexual fireworks of an English Restoration comedy. Carnal escapades were his pastime and he must have made many enemies (aggrieved husbands among them) in the Imperial city. Three times he tried marriage and only the third time was contentment arrived at. Then, in AD 8, in the time that Christ was a young child, Ovid was banished by the Emperor Augustus to the Northern frontier of the Roman empire, specifically to the outpost of Tomis on the Black Sea. So far from Rome and its niceties was Tomis, the hapless Ovid might as well have been thrown into a black hole. All editions of *The Art of Love* were removed from Rome's three libraries and were

probably burned. Why was Ovid banished? The facts behind Ovid's offence have been lost to history and remain speculative, but a (good?) guess would include something carnal and spiced with intrigue. Ovid himself (in his late work, *Tristia*) ascribed his banishment to both Emperor Augustus' pique at the amorality of *The Art of Love* and to an "indiscretion", about which not much more than that is said except that it had to do with *seeing something*. And that "great names" were involved. (As it was, it was perhaps audacious of Ovid to bring out *The Art of Love* in the first place; for the hard-line moral climate of Rome, as legislated by Augustus, was firmly anti-adultery. Publishing *The Art of Love* might have been a brash move in its day, a deliberate flouting of convention, which would have contributed to its success, no doubt.) It is here that the resemblance to the Aristotelian hamartia lies: Ovid's obsession with matters amorous may have given him his immortal fame but it took his mortal happiness away for good. Ovid squandered the last ten years of his life off on his own, in enforced exile, far from his homeland, his wife, his friends, his amours. The trauma of his uprooting was intensified by the bleakness of his stopping place. Tomis was a harsh and forbidding environment that was to Ovid the very opposite of his Edenic childhood home. The landscape was as desolate as the surface of the moon. Worse, the climate was eternally wintry. Adding insult to injury, the unlettered locals were unable to read Ovid's poetry, a grievance Ovid voiced in one of his late, melancholy works. Exasperatingly, the threat of invasion by marauding barbarians was ever-present. Ovid's repeated pleas for clemency, cast in the form of fawning letters to Roman officials, came to naught. Back in the refined social circles of Rome, Ovid's reputation was debased. Ovid's humiliation was complete. Fallen low, never again did Ovid write about the subject of Love.

The upshot of EWS expressing the story of Ovid's rise and fall in the exchange between Szavost and Alice is the posing for the consideration of the spectator the glimmerings of a question: *what price hedonistic passion?* How is one to measure the value, the worth, of sexual pleasure? (Consider—for example—(1.) how, in scene 33, Alice divulges that she would have given up *everything* just to sleep with the Naval Officer for a *single night*. (2.) And how, appositely, Bill might have slept with an HIV-positive Domino that second night if she had been there, in 115.) Over the course of EWS Bill must repeatedly wonder if the sensations of a one-night dalliance are worth the sundering of his marriage vows and the violating of his wife's trust. Lost to sexual frustration, Bill more than once puts his life in danger just for a mere taste of the sensual. He has to keep wondering, is it worth it? Just how important does sexual love have to loom in the scheme of things? One can consider what became of Ovid using the story of Faust as a guide. Like Faust, Ovid had about twenty years in which to learn and experience as much as he liked; but as a direct result of his deal with destiny as it were, Ovid, like Faust, was eventually damned. One can wonder, in Ovid's case, was it worth it? Is the immortal fame that Ovid has found worth the pain that he endured throughout the last decade of his life? Are twenty years of hedonistic passion worth ten years of sufferance? It is a riddlesome question, one which Reason alone cannot be prevailed upon to answer.

Szavost, at least, has his answer to give: Ovid "had a good time first, a very good time," which Szavost takes as a justification of Ovid's painful ending. Szavost is an advocate of hedonism, of sensuality for the sake of itself, of seizing the sexual day and all else be damned. To Szavost, the pleasure of sexual gratification is its own justification. Szavost proposes that a few minutes of passion with him is worth betraying Alice's husband for. Sandor Szavost is the first incarnation of the *tempters* who populate EWS.

With respect to artistic technique, scene 10 is distinguished not only by its sumptuous cinematography but also by the fine modulation of the dialogue. A prosodic analysis of the lines would reveal iambs, and then a variety of three syllabled feet, employed to great rhythmic effect. The lines and the language might be simple, yet are they expertly laid out; the stress and the rhythm of the whole are melodious to the extent that the lines virtually speak themselves, accents and all, as if they were vocal lines of an opera. Consider the dialogue as presented in the manner of a poem. Hark the rising and the falling of the cadence and the words which stress themselves. To read these lines aloud is to make their melody most apparent to the ear:

My name is Sandor Szavost. I'm Hungarian. (1)  
 My name is Alice Harford. I'm American. (2)  
 Delighted to meet you, Alice. Have you ever read (3)  
 the Latin poet Ovid on *The Art of Love*?  
 Didn't he wind up all by himself? Crying his eyes out (4)  
 in some place with a very bad climate?  
 But he also had a good time first, a very good time. (5)  
 Are you here with anyone tonight, Alice?  
 With my husband. (6)  
 Oh, how sad! But then I'm sure he's the sort of man (7)  
 who wouldn't mind if we - danced.

Notice:

a. the relative harmony of the syllabication which hovers around the 24 syllable mark. The first two lines, of 12 syllables each, add to 24. Szavost's next response (3) is 25 syllables. (4) is 24 syllables. (5) is 25 syllables. (6) and (7) together make 23 syllables. So the scheme can run: 24 - 25 - 24 - 25 - 23.

b. the repetition in the number of syllables per line in (1) and (2). Each run 7 - 5.

c. how the two lines in (4) both start with a stressed syllable (*Did -n't* and *Cry - ing*). The *Oh* in (7) is the only other first syllable stressed. All of the other lines begin with an unstressed syllable.

d. how the climax of the whole is reached in the repeated stresses of "a *good time first*, a *very good time*."

e. how all of Szavost's lines hurry breakneck to their end without any caesural hiccups.

f. that the cadence of Alice's line, "With my *hus-band*", as heard spoken (sung?) by Nicole Kidman, is a musical motif. (Returning in **11**, "My *hus-band*" and in **18**, "I'm *mar-ried*".)

g. the rhyme scheme.

Before scene **10** comes to a close there is a final beautiful grace note to be played. It is the harmonious conjunction of Alice's face with the curtain of light decoration on the wall behind her. The curtain of light is composed of thin strands of innumerable pointillistic yellow bulbs. As described earlier, the curtain of light swoops down from the center-to-left top of the screen, narrowing on its way to where all strands merge at a point obscured by Alice's head. Where the strands come together the lights bleed together to a uniform yellow shine of brilliant chroma. At Alice's line, "With my husband", she leans her head slightly to her right, thereby allowing the strong yellow light at the edge of the curtain to articulate her profile with an exhilarating sharpness. Idealized by the aura Alice is a revelation of beauty.

The enchanting looks Alice gives Szavost as she considers him throughout **10b** are memorable. Also the way Alice, as Szavost speaks and finishes his last line, the last line of the scene, - also the way Alice lets her eyes drop to Szavost's lips twice. Such an action seems a giveaway that Szavost's flirtations are being responded to favourably.

With respect to Szavost's face, it is seen only in an oblique profile in **10b**; he is somewhat hidden from sight, though present all the same in the frame.

Thus has scene **10** of EWS been examined in its fundamentals.

Scenes **10** to **18** have been characterized above as "Aspects of a Romance" or "Stations of Amorous Love". In this scene **10**, the introduction of this account of love, what have been typified are *meeting, flirtation, resistance*, and then a first *surrender*.

## 11. Int. Ballroom - Ziegler mansion - Night

With the slow dissolve from scene 10 to scene 11, the first of four scenes of Alice dancing with Szavost in the Ballroom commences. (Scenes 11, 13, 16 and 18.) As these dancing scenes progress their tone gains in dreamy romanticism. The various technical components that comprise these scenes function together expertly, like clockwork. Dancing, Szavost and Alice trace a small circle on the Ballroom floor, moving in an anticlockwise direction, turning frequently as they keep pace with the music. At the same time, the camera - more specifically, a steadicam - cycles along with the two dancers who are themselves rotating. This double rotary movement produces pleasing visual impressions. *Triple* rotary movement would be more exact, as the two dancers are (1.) moving in a circle while (2.) turning from time to time while (3.) the camera circulates alongside them. Intensifying the cyclical effect, these varied movements are in wondrous alignment with the particulars of the set design and the rhythm of the music. A fluid harmony prevails. It is a vision of superior cinematic beauty which has the power to incite the heart of the spectator favourably. As realized by Kubrick's preternatural talent, these streamlined scenes are of a gorgeous artistry. The lubric lensing is lush and seductive and mesmeric. These scenes excite the spectator with delight, if not—rapture. The spectator is left stunned, in a voluptuous entrancement, wholly won over.

EWS is not by any means the first film to engineer a shot wherein a double rotary movement—the turning of the characters simultaneous with the cycling of the camera around them—is accomplished. Hitchcock's *Vertigo* features a prototype of this maneuver; Brian de Palma's *Body Double* attempted to perfect the motion of *Vertigo*'s example; Spike Lee's *Mo' Beter Blues* offers a stark, flamboyant example. Of this particular technical movement there should be many more examples from films of the last decade or so. Of the three examples listed, each use is wholly each film's own; each use eventuates in a mood specific to the context of the particular film. Just as in EWS Kubrick's employment of the double rotary movement is completely his own - which can go without saying.

The first exchange of dialogue in scene 11, spoken as Szavost and Alice dance, is quintessentially ordinary. The play-within-a-play of "Aspects of (a) Romance" is now well underway and the two characters are sticking to the script, as it were. One of the very most common of questions tendered during social situations is here employed. **SZAVOST: "What do you do, Alice?"** It is *the* conversational gambit, and as used in EWS it has a humorous tinge to it, as it *is* so unsurprising. Szavost is *so* suave, he *does not* fail to ask that most elementary, that most recognizable, of social questions.

Tipsy and giggly, Alice responds. **ALICE: "Well, at the moment I am looking for a job. I used to manage an art gallery in SoHo but it went broke."** The theme of "money in EWS" runs through this bit of dialogue. For another thing, it seems that *Alice tells the truth* in this line, which is of some interest to consider, insofar as in a situation such as this false fronts and masks might predominate. Szavost is a perfect stranger; Alice might have used a bit more discretion, perhaps, if she were not so relaxed from champagne. Furthermore, the fact that Alice is unemployed gives her (at least momentarily) a subordinate position; that is, there is a sense put forth that, as she is needy for work, so she might be ripe for some help. Unemployed: for that fact Alice might perhaps be just a bit more impressionable, more open to influence. A whiff of this, at least, is fleetingly evoked.

**SZAVOST: "Oh, what a shame! I have some friends in the art game. Perhaps they can be of some help?"** This is exactly as Ovid instructs: there is a virtue in making idle promises for the purposes of sexual seduction. ("Make promises, what's the harm in/Promising? Here's where anyone can play rich.") Szavost's suggestion is not to be believed, it is merely - and unabashedly - insinuating. Also, just as Alice's "my *hus-band*"/"I'm *mar-ried*" bits of dialogue are musical motifs as it were, so Szavost's lines are early on run through with a melodious motif as well: "Oh, how sad!" (10); "Oh, what a shame!" (11); "Oh." (11). For another thing, that Szavost raises the theme of "game" is significant. Such an allusion contributes to the suspect cast of his sincerity and his ingratiating conduct. In addition to this, the phrase "art game" relates to the structure of EWS as a whole. It has already been indicated that Helena's allusion to *The Nutcracker* in scene 4 can be taken as a humorous self-reference to the endeavour of the spectator to make sense of the puzzle that is EWS. In the same manner can "art game" be taken, as a sly reference to the ongoing procedure on the part of the spectator of producing meaning out of what is seen of EWS. (Recall the humorous self-reference of the magnet on the Harford's refrigerator which states, "I love art".) Also, Szavost's characterization of Alice's work as being a part of the "art game" can be construed as a subtle



devaluation of what Alice might consider as a meaningful and serious pursuit. The phrase “art game” as used by Szavost is worldly-wise, faintly cynical, and grounded in finance. One suspects that Alice’s view of her job was a bit different, that her heart was to some degree in it, that she indeed endorses the motto of her magnet, “I love art”. For such a dreamy situation, Szavost’s allusion to the “art game” smacks of hard reality.

**ALICE: Oh, thank you.** This line is said in a precious, daydreamy manner. Alice is obviously intoxicated, and her polite response is flamboyantly articulated. At the moment it is said the spectator is not entirely certain where Alice is coming from. That is, a question immediately hangs in the air: can Alice actually believe that Szavost might be intending to help her? Is she being genuine in her thanks? This shadow of a question sustains the farcical undertone that was inaugurated with Alice’s line, “I think that’s my drink” in **10**. Once again, the comedy inherent in the situation of an ageing lothario endeavouring to seduce a beautiful drunken woman with her guard down is brought out. The situation becomes faintly ridiculous. For one moment the spectator might think, *It can’t be, Alice can’t really believe him, but . . . ?!* Eventually it will be made plain that Alice is not to be conquered, yet in scene **11** the outcome is still up in the air and hinges on Alice’s perilous drunkenness. For this reason is Alice’s response amusing to behold. And then, if listened to differently, Alice’s response has another resonance to it. Alice’s “Oh, thank you” really means nothing in particular, as Szavost’s suggestion to help her is also just so much air. There is, as revealed in the lilt of Alice’s response and in the vibratile pause just after, a hollowness to their exchange. Alice’s “Oh, thank you” is almost burlesquely said, by which the meaninglessness of all of their words is emphasized. At this moment in **11**, it is realized that the dancers’ speech is just tactical talk around the real issue which is specifically and only sexual. All of their talk is trifling, a treading of water - indeed, it is just a game. Here language is employed as a barrier between people, as a tool to keep people separated.

Scene **11** is composed of three shots, **11a**, **11b** and **11c**. **11a** ends following Alice’s line, “Oh, thank you.” In **11a** the filming of the dancing of the two characters is as placid as was the dancing of Bill and Alice in scene **7**. Szavost and Alice are captured in a medium shot, and both their movement (dance steps and turning) and the camera movement are slow.

Throughout the scenes of Alice dancing with Szavost, her left hand is visible on Szavost’s right shoulder. Which means that Alice’s wedding ring is repeatedly visible in the frame.

**11b** is a quick cutaway (five seconds or so) to a view through the doorway of the Ballroom to the ante-room beyond, where Bill is standing chatting to the two young models Gayle and Nuala. There is a shift in camera movement with this cut. In **11a** and **11c** the camera is moving *right to left*. In **11b**, however, the camera completes a somewhat subtle movement from *left to right* as it frames the Ballroom doorway. This shift in the direction of the camera movement in **11b** adds a liveliness to the transition, as well as accentuating a tonal contrast with **11a** and **11c**.

**11b** is another instance of the style of EWS getting ahead of one of its characters. Just as in scene **7**, where **7c** reveals Nick Nightingale directly before Bill himself acknowledges Nick, so here in **11b** Bill is revealed directly before Alice is viewed seeing him, in **11c**. Like **7c**, **11b** is presented as (a sort of) a POV of a character, yet without the spectator immediately being aware of it.

The following discussion of shot **11c** condenses together significant aspects of the film form relating to the editing, the shot composition, and the nature of the dialogue, each of which might have been given its own demarcated paragraph, yet for the sake of pace and space have been presented thus.

The shot **11c** is a medium shot facing Alice and Szavost, with the camera positioned near where the doorway would be. The complexion of the shot has that pretty yellow tint to it that the eye of the spectator is accustomed to by now. The visible wall (or curtain) behind the dancers is a rich yellow-brown and is bare; no auxiliary details of **11c** detract from the powerful sight of Alice’s two eyes which as the shot commences exhibit enough force to well-nigh pierce the cinema screen. What contributes to the power of Alice’s gaze just here is the *editing of the shots 11b and 11c* which match up Bill’s form and Alice’s eyes. Alice’s eyes in **11c** are positioned very near the spot on the screen (right of middle center) that Bill inhabits in **11b**.

The spectator might be looking at Bill in **11b** and then with the transition to **11c**, the spectator's eyes are already positioned to meet Alice's eyes. The editing—working in tandem with the shot composition and colour—is such that Alice's eyes dramatically leap out just as **11c** commences. With her spectacularly keen two eyes Alice gazes toward where Bill would be standing and forthwith signifies to Szavost, with a pert flick of her head, that she recognizes who she is looking at. Alice's careless head gesture is further evidence of her inebriation; it is just the sort of archly casual mindfulness that a drinker, head cloudy and addled, would give. **SZAVOST: "Someone you know?"** Szavost's line is spoken wonderfully well, communicating his wry amusement with her 'slang gesture'. **ALICE: "My husband."** When Alice says "My *hus*-band"—spoken in the same manner as "With my *hus*-band" (**10**)—it is drawn-out, buzzing with signification, and it sounds, perhaps, almost apologetic, as if her husband is a complication that would better have been set aside, if only for the moment. The cadence of the two lines of Alice's involving "my husband" can perhaps be described as *leading*. Raising the suggestive topic of her husband, Alice is curious to find out what will be Szavost's next move. The way Alice says these sing-song lines regarding her husband, they seem to be *challenging* Szavost to give it all he has got.

**SZAVOST: "Oh."** As Szavost delivers his next line, the two of them, entwined in the dance, begin to gravitate screen-left, with the camera starting to move that way with them. **SZAVOST: "Don't you think one of the charms of marriage is that it makes deception a necessity for both parties?"** Reader, let us take first things first. Szavost's "Oh", which is pronounced with gusto, is his sly way of fanning flames of contention in Alice. Szavost has just watched at close hand Alice recognizing her husband dallying with two young models and Szavost is going to use what he has seen to his advantage. Amusingly, wilyly, his "Oh" sounds as if he himself is affronted by the sight of the very married Bill chatting lightly with the shapely models. Listened to in this light, Szavost's rakish witticism which follows is akin to a thumbtip pressed upon a wound of Alice's—because it suggests that Alice's husband might not be fit to be trusted off alone with those two young maidens. Meanwhile, as Szavost is speaking his sweet-talk, Szavost and Alice are moving, dancing, in space. As Alice and Szavost dance past the doorway of the Ballroom, just as Szavost nears the end of his line, the camera, as it pans with them, captures momentarily the Ballroom's doorway (on the right side of the screen), but only obliquely. This is the same doorway that was seen closer-up in **11b**, the doorway on the other side of which Bill is standing with Gayle and Nuala. The angle of the doorway as captured by the moving camera in **11c** is sheer, so much so that what is seen of the door is only the two doorjambs, and a bit of Christmas lights on the other side. The depth beyond the doorway (as seen in **11b**) is only hinted at, only remembered. The doorway is caught (only in this oblique manner) for no more than three seconds as the camera proceeds to move leftwards with, and inwards towards, Alice and Szavost. This business with the doorway in **11c** is a minor moment in EWS but an interesting one. The spectator knows that Bill is on the other side of the doorway but the camera angle of **11c** denies a view of him. In this instance, it could be said that Bill is hidden deep "within" the labyrinth of the world of the film. That Bill is closed out of **11c**, when he could very well have been captured if the moving camera was positioned just slightly differently, is significant to the extent that with Szavost Alice is standing on a forking path as it were, and she has to decide which way she is going to proceed, back with her husband, or onward with Szavost. Szavost momentarily dazzles her; fittingly then, Bill is momentarily eclipsed by the film form. Again, though it is a minor, wholly fleeting detail, all the same the obscurant glimpse of the doorway in **11c** is in its way a virtuosic moment, albeit unobtrusively so.

As the dialogue continues, the faces of the two characters become larger in the frame, the camera moves in a bit, adding an intimacy and an air of complicity to the proceedings. The closer the camera is to the characters, all the more engrossed with itself does the film art seem to be. **SZAVOST: "Don't you think one of the charms of marriage is that it makes deception a necessity for both parties?"** This is an eminently saucy, if not mordant, witticism, which serves to further Szavost's campaign for Alice's sexual favours. Deception and duplicity being pre-eminent thematically in EWS, with the institution of marriage being *the* thematic pivot, Szavost's line has an especial significance. The line is so representative of EWS, it could have graced the movie poster. (As it happens, it is interesting—as well as unorthodox—that the movie posters of EWS do not have any tag line whatsoever.) As spoken by Szavost, the line is a light-hearted rendition of what is a glum sentiment. That Szavost conflates *deception* with *charm* is deserving of contempt. Yet Alice only laughs at this nugget of wit—because there is a tough realism to Szavost's line, which would not be out of place in a play by Congreve or Wycherley. With Alice responding favourably with a laugh, Szavost thereupon continues his advance. **SZAVOST: "May I ask why a beautiful woman who could have any man in this room wants to be - married?"** This line is a clever compliment and is helped by Szavost's seductive delivery. And if the words "man" and "woman" were switched, the question would remain operative; thus the question, even taken at face value, is as relevant to the one as to the other.

**ALICE: Why wouldn't she? SZAVOST: "Is it as bad as that?" ALICE: "As good as that."** Szavost is grasping at straws here, only bluffing. Because Alice's response is weighted in a negative, Szavost calls her on it. Yet in her line Alice is not giving anything specifically negative away. The line is evasive rather than revealing. As it happens, though, Alice does make it easy for Szavost to rejoin with force as he does; it might have been made more difficult for Szavost if Alice had chosen to therewith pronounce an encomium of (her) married life. Perhaps, then, Alice's line is not completely innocent? With her line Alice is generously leading Szavost on. Which might amount to saying that Alice's line can indeed be taken as revealing a modest dissatisfaction with (her) married life. For that fleeting moment Alice might be someone *intrigued to be persuaded*. At any rate, Alice's response to Szavost's bluff - **"As good as that."** - is a point scored for Alice, and is an example of the stratagem of *resistance* that is endemic to "Aspects of (a) Romance". Alice's response, which is the last line of scene **11** before the cut to **12**, is presented, visually and audibly, with an easy attractiveness. It is a highly positive punctuation to scene **11**.

## 12. Int. Ante-room - Ziegler mansion - Night

**[The two beautiful girls, Gayle and Nuala, have their arms draped around each other as they talk to Bill.]**

Scene **12** is composed of one shot only and its duration is a minute and forty seconds or so. A knee-high shot of the characters, the camera angle remains motionless throughout. As has already been delineated above, the composition of scene **12** is dominated by strong north-south verticals—the bodies of the three upright characters in the shot. The rectilinear design, along with the stationary camera, together constitute a graphic change in quality from the fluent horizontal movement of **11** (and then **13**, too). The tune "Chanson D'Amour" can still be heard playing, though softly.

Bill is as it were *cornered* by the two young women. He is standing, very straight, almost flush against a mirrored wall behind him. The two women crowd him in where he stands. The stark verticals coupled to the vague sense of *entrapment* generate an understated disquietude. This unemphasized anxiety which suffuses the proceedings will be brought out a little bit further in **14**, in which scene Bill's encounter with Gayle and Nuala continues to its end. The disquiet insinuated in scene **12** can lead to a *suspicion*—a suspicion of the motives of the two amorous beauties. Scene **14** will offer further reasons to put under suspicion the sincerity of Gayle and Nuala's flirtations. To call the seductive pair *coquettes* would not go far enough. Because in scene **14**, at the very end of the scene, Gayle and Nuala will be given a palpably *sinister* air. (In fact, without the evidence of scene **14**, the vaguely sinister air of **12** would never have been brought out.)

As has been spelled out above, Alice, in her encounter with Szavost, is going to be brought to a sort of a threshold. Alice is going to have to consider—if only momentarily—whether she is going to take the bait and slip upstairs with her tempter for a quick assignation, thereby compromising her marriage. In **12** and in **14** Bill is poised at a similar threshold, in his encounter with the young models. While Alice has a single choice before her, Bill is faced with *two* different pathways on offer. Gayle and Nuala are two different "types" of women for Bill to choose between. Gayle has pinned-up blond hair and is two inches or so taller than Bill. Nuala has free, longish dark brown hair and is exactly Bill's height. (Actually, the height of the three characters is better brought out in **14**.) Gayle's dress is silver (with a hint of the bluish about it) and glitters spectacularly with all the colours of the rainbow. Nuala's dress is a ruby red (low in lightness) with a patterning of doily-type appliqués over the whole. While Gayle's dress is sophisticated, Nuala's dress has a childlike cast to it, it is pretty in a dainty way. Gayle is pushy. In **12** and in **14** Gayle keeps pressing ahead with Bill, taking the lead, leading him on. While Nuala speaks up only twice, preferring to communicate with looks; and for most of **14** Nuala acts positively coy. According to his fancy Bill could take to either one of the personalities before him, if not to both.

Though for the duration of scene **12** the camera remains stationary and the three characters keep their feet in place where they stand, there is in fact still movement to **12** which lends a liveliness to the proceedings. Gayle and Nuala may be standing in place but they are not standing *still*. Rather, the bearing of the two young women is excellently slinky. Their postures are fluxional, their heads are ever in motion, their bodies have a looseness about them which bespeaks the relaxation of champagne. Taken in all at once with the spectator's eye, the women's movements have the tremblesome quality of a mirage or a reflection

rippling on a calm pond. It is an amorous sight. Indeed, such suppleness can be an indication of an openness to libidinousness. (Consider how the only other character in EWS who exhibits such a tremulous carriage is the Clerk in Hotel Jason (93) who is obviously instantly infatuated with Bill.) One of the patent effects of the consumption of alcohol is that it can make a body sexually sensitive, if not intensely so. In her slinky movements Gayle suggests that her body is one entire erogenous zone. That the two young women have their arms entangled about each other intensifies their allure, their closeness has a sensual air, they are *touching*. Gayle and Nuala are at home with the sensuality of their bodies, and they seem to have put the welcome mat out.

With respect to “Aspects of (a) Romance”, Alice’s encounter with Szavost has thus far epitomised *meeting*, *flirtation*, *resistance*, and a provisional *surrender*. Scenes 12 and 14 are Bill’s own particular spin on *meeting*, *flirtation*, and *temptation*. These scenes spice up *seduction* with a suspicion of *risk*. The arousing proceedings are cut off, so that Bill is not pressed to tender a decision regarding *surrender*. All those hidden secrets of strangers in the night.- *Paranoia* might be applicable here, too.

Just as Gayle and Nuala are two different “types” of women, so Szavost and Bill are, in terms of their masculine comportment, two different “types” of men. Szavost is smooth as marble, not a foot placed wrong; his motions are superiorly fluid and sure, his speech ever well-crafted and slyly put. Bill on the other hand is noticeably awkward. However accustomed or otherwise Bill is in the art of flirtation, his manner with Gayle and Nuala is a little rough, and in places a little absurd.

Let us quickly recount the dialogue to help express our points.

**GAYLE:** So you know Nuala Windsor?  
**BILL:** No, no. And it’s very, very lovely to meet you both.

[They all laugh]

**BILL:** How do you spell Nuala?  
**NUALA:** N . . . U . . . A . . . L . . . A.  
**GAYLE:** You don’t remember me, do you?

[Bill tries to think.]

**GAYLE:** You were very kind to me once.  
**BILL:** Only once! That sounds like a terrible oversight!  
**GAYLE:** I was doing a photo shoot in Rockefeller Plaza, on a very windy day . . .  
**BILL:** And you got something in your eye!  
**GAYLE:** Just about half of Fifth Avenue.  
**BILL:** Right.  
**GAYLE:** You were such a gentleman, you gave me your handkerchief, which was also clean.  
**BILL:** Well, that is the kind of hero I can be . . . sometimes.

Returning to what was raised above regarding the roughness of Bill’s comportment, consider how, just when Bill remembers who Gayle is, he anticipates her explanation by interrupting her, cutting her off with the line, “And you got something in your eye!” Interrupting a young lady would be questionable enough in a situation where a gallant is determined to charm. What is truly awkward is the hand gesture Bill gives just as he speaks his line. He points his right index finger *abruptly* at Gayle. In contrast to this, Szavost in his movements is *never* abrupt. Bill’s jabbing hand gesture is stark, if not a bit coarse; and if his hand had been positioned just a little differently Bill might very well have bumped into the champagne glass that Gayle is holding up conspicuously in her right hand. In what is an artful connection to 10a, *Gayle’s champagne glass could very well have been knocked away and broken*.

Just as Szavost dominates Alice's space, so Gayle and Nuala dominate Bill's.

It has been expressed that Szavost's speech with Alice is always excellently composed. Whereas Bill's speech with the two young women is more than once faintly ridiculous. The two instances of this are recounted here. (1.) Ridiculous is Bill's question, "How do you spell Nuala?" If one stopped and listened to the sound of the name Nuala, it is realized that there seems only one way to spell it—exactly as it sounds! Bill's question is a damp squib of a come on, much, much less provocative than the three questions of Szavost's in **11c**. (2.) The second example of Bill's less than stunning flirtation technique comes with his last line in **12**: "Well, that is the kind of hero I can be . . . sometimes." That Szavost is so surpassingly sure of himself contributes to the fascination of his character; his confident style is part of his power to hypnotise. Bill, on the other hand, chooses to denigrate himself, specifically with his qualifier, ". . . sometimes." Just here, humility does not look very sexy. Oafish, rather. What Szavost has overmuch, Bill is wanting in: polished charm.

Bill gets it right once in the scene. His rejoinder, "Only once? That sounds like a terrible oversight." is admirably witty. So how fitting it is that he himself is the one who exclaims, just there, "Only once"!

It has been expressed that there might be something disingenuous about Gayle and Nuala. Their flirtations may be calculated moves. Their motivation to seduce Bill may have been determined by a third party who has engaged the personal services of the two women for a planned end. It can be suggested that this third party might very well be Ziegler. But what Ziegler's intentions might be for scheming such an act can only, and ever, remain entirely speculative. In fact, the suggestion that Ziegler might have something to do with Gayle and Nuala's seduction of Bill is itself only—yet perhaps not *sheer*—speculation.

What is more obvious in scene **12** (as in **14**) is that Gayle and Nuala hang on Bill's every word. They seem *determined* to want to find all that Bill says sparkling and deserving of the homage of audible laughter, whether Bill's speech is worthy or not. Perhaps Gayle and Nuala have chosen—in a *scheming manner*—to concertedly engage themselves with Bill and to find him appealing come what may? The two young women endeavouring to be *so* receptive to Bill operates in wry tandem with Bill's admittedly unspectacular efforts to charm. Part of the grim humour of the proceedings is that, in **14**, Gayle suggests that doctors might work too hard, while it is Gayle herself who is just there having to work somewhat hard at sustaining a voluptuous pace to her flirtations with the somewhat ham-handed Bill. Nuala laughs out loud only once at something of Bill's, his first line in **12**. Otherwise, Nuala remains unstirred by Bill's attempts at amusing banter, she does not laugh out loud, though in **12** she looks excellently up for doing so. As for Gayle, who has chosen to work at being entertained, in **14** she can generate only half-hearted, unexcited laughter at Bill's slightly flat levity. Gayle laughs as if out of politeness. And as for that one moment early in **12** when the three of them laugh together - **BILL: "And it's very, very lovely to meet you both." [They all laugh.]** - it is a flip moment. It is Bill's unabashed delight at meeting such young and beautiful ladies that is being laughed at - if not revelled in. The women draw Bill in immediately with their inviting laughter. Is there something impertinent to their shared laughter? Is it laughter which suggests something unstated - as if they were complicit in a secret? Is it the gay laughter of the young in love with the good fortune of being themselves? Laughter that is an anticipation of—here, erotic—bliss? Is this laughter somewhat *strange*? Laughter features at the end of the scene as well. Nuala's miming of laughter at the end of **12** is as expressive as any utterance. As Bill commences his somewhat lame line, "Well, that is the kind of hero I can be . . . sometimes," Nuala inclines her head toward Bill and as he continues speaking Nuala's head leans more and more as if she were not only hanging onto his every word but aspirating them. As Bill speaks Nuala has an expectant expression - mouth open, eyes narrowed, eyebrows arched - like that of someone watching a tightrope walker performing a dangerous maneuver. It is the expression of someone paying complete attention. Bill completes his line with his self-effacement, and alas, Nuala does not find it spontaneously funny, but she simulates laughter—she looks like someone laughing in a silent movie. Just here Nuala is gorgeous, enchanting. Her (mere) simulation of laughter is an early indication of the women's concerted *effort* to carry through with the seduction, come what may. It has thus been pointed out that laughter (virtually) begins and ends scene **12**. Similarly, the sound of laughter both begins and ends scene **14** as well - though the laughter that ends **14** has a share in the end of that scene's *sinister air*.

An interesting point. For all of Bill's roughness, he comes across as genuine - more genuine than Szavost. Indeed, it is *because* he is so sadly unskilled in flirtation that he comes across as sincere. Szavost, Gayle, and Nuala are more adept at role-playing. In EWS Bill is ever himself.

It has been noted that for the most part Nuala plays it coy. As she walks arm in arm with Bill in **14** she sneaks a look at his face only just as he shifts his own gaze away. Yet the two times she does speak she is silkily aggressive. In **12**, by the time Nuala arrives at the last letter of her name she has leaned herself saucily close to Bill's face. It is an encroachment Bill encourages with the widest of inviting grins. In **14**, after all of her affected shyness, Nuala will tug on Bill's extended right arm as she asks, "Don't you want to go where the rainbow ends?". That Nuala can switch from assertive to shy and back again so gracefully contributes to the sense of *paranoia*.

In **12**, the spot where Bill is standing with Gayle and Nuala is right across from the doorway to Ziegler's Billiard Room, which will feature prominently as the location of scene **129**.

One last point relating to scene **12** concerns the sound of Gayle's voice. Her voice has a clarity to it that, like a diamond, could cut glass. (Might Gayle's voice be described as *silvery*?) Her cadence and enunciation are as clear as the champagne glass she holds. Her articulation is impeccable. So there is an aptness in Gayle herself pronouncing the word, "clean". When Gayle says that word, the "clear as a bell" purity of her voice is sounded.

### 13. Int. Ballroom - Ziegler's mansion - Night

Scene **13**, like **12**, is of one shot only, and its running time is shorter than **12**, something like fifty seconds in duration. Kubrick's aesthetic in scene **13** is, to put it mildly, something special. With **13** the eye of the spectator undergoes entrancement. The co-ordinated dual movement of the dancers and the Steadicam, both excellently smooth and without pause, contrives a cinematic moment of high inspiration. Alice and Szavost are coasting along, lost to the pace and sway of their dance, gliding in an anticlockwise direction while periodically rotating on their axis. And the camera is moving with them, describing a circle, keeping its gaze level on the pair. The faces of Alice and Szavost are up close to the lens and in profile. In between their faces, details of the background of the Ballroom—other dancers, coloured lights, the decorated walls—are visible. As the camera is in perpetual movement, the background is seen to be streaking horizontally by (a sight which is not very different from the look of a landscape as seen through the passenger window of a moving vehicle). The use of the steadicam here, so even and steady, is expert. For a short while, close to the end of the scene, the two characters look very much to be *floating in space*. It is a lyrical effect. The profiles of Alice and Szavost for the most part keep to a level plane with respect to the lens, and the contrast between their foregrounded static poses with the streaming background produces this extraordinary optical illusion of buoyancy. **13** reveals a most hypnotic power. For the duration of the illusion of buoyancy, the spectator, like Alice, lost to the allure of the event, is riveted, whelmed by lyricism, entranced—as one successfully seduced. Of course, and also, the spinning of the Ballroom is a visual approximation of the disequilibrium that someone soused experiences. (The film *Henry and June* has a florid example of streaking circular camera movement approximating the POV of an intoxicated character.) **13** is an extravagant shot. Beautiful, it leaves one starry-eyed and abandoned to its artifice. In **13** EWS's wooing of the spectator—a wooing advanced by the revelation of **10b**—is complete, is *consummated*.

In **13** Szavost pursues his amorous onslaught of Alice with aplomb. The brief exchange of dialogue, reproduced just here in full, follows a single salacious trend of thought. **SZAVOST: "You know why women used to get married, don't you?"** This is the latest in the successful line of Szavost's provocative questions. His articulation is as smoothly gliding as all else in the shot. His "don't you?" is slyly attractive - in the sense of "exercising a pull", drawing Alice in. **ALICE: "Why don't you tell me?"** Just here Alice at least sounds open to influence, she is *inviting him* to continue. The spectator wonders if Alice is really, even if only momentarily, falling prey to Szavost's bewitchery. **SZAVOST: "It was the only way they could lose their virginity and be free to do what they wanted with other men . . . the ones they really wanted."** What Szavost says is delivered convincingly, at least. Though for Szavost to use such a brazenly sexual word—in this context—as "virginity" compromises his style somehow, which up to then operated through inference; it gives away the game which was already given away; it is a bold, if not indecent, move; and as it happens it is not just here a fatal one. The fricative "v" of "virginity" (echoed in **13** only in the "P" of "free" and "Fascinating") is the central nerve of the sonic cast of **13**'s dialogue. As for Szavost's historical sense, one wonders what his references are. Szavost's epigram, an advocacy of *hedonistic passion* spiced with the *illicit*, leaves Alice momentarily speechless as it sinks in. Just here is a

pregnant silence of three seconds or so where the illusion of buoyancy in **13** reaches its most powerful expression. Alice and Szavost's eyes are locked—just as the spectator's eye is arrested by the frame. The optical sensations of floating and streaming and the thrust of Szavost's amorous doctrine together with Alice's entertaining of it all generate an intense impression of arousal. Finally Alice breaks the highly charged silence. **ALICE: "Fascinating."** Compare Alice's yielding response here to her defiant response which closed scene **11**. Though there is something of the self-consciously burlesque in the articulation of Alice's response, which demonstrates that she has not completely lost her head, still there is a palpable sense of a giving way. Alice is submitting a little to Szavost's lures. Intoxicated by drink and intrigued by speech and spellbound by the velocity of the dance, Alice is yielding somewhat to the amorous moment. The memory of the Naval Officer, the rapture of that other encounter, is possibly not far from her thoughts. And as Alice's last word is articulated just as the spectator has become dazzled if not *transfixed* by the fluent film art, her word "Fascinating" is a superlatively apt observance which has a layered ring to it.

The common word "fascinating" just here will tolerate a further examination. Most generally speaking, the word "fascinating", as used in everyday speech, has the signification of "interesting, well-nigh irresistibly so." Yet the word has other, and more primary, senses to it, as indicated by the OED. The word derives from *fascinum*, "spell", "witchcraft". According to the OED, the principal meaning of "fascinate" is, "to bewitch, enchant, to lay under a spell"; next, "to deprive of the power of escape or resistance;" "to enslave the judgment of;" and only its final definition is, "to attract and 'hold spellbound' by delightful qualities." Merriam-Webster's (American English) Collegiate Dictionary (Tenth Edition) follows a similar line. But by virtue of its use in everyday speech, the word "fascinating" has been somewhat drained of a rigorous significance, its quality seems to have suffered from colloquial overuse. For example, a quotidian dogfood commercial, say, can be as "fascinating" as a close-up glimpse of the icy surface of the Jovian moon Europa. The essence of "fascinating" has become to a certain extent enervated. (As Jack Torrance relates in *The Shining*, Stuart Ullman's account of the murder of Charles Grady's family will leave Jack's wife "absolutely fascinated"—a phrase which is spoken by Jack with preposterous insincerity.) As indicated by the dogfood example above, the word "fascinating" can have a strong or weak bias according to its use. Due to its flexibility as determined by everyday speech, there can be something flat, something hollow, to the ring of the word "fascinating." As spoken by Alice, the word maintains the tenor of *ambivalence* which resonates throughout her flirtations.

(And then there is this extract from *Lost Gods*, by John Allegro: "The Latin *fascinum*, from which our 'fascination comes', meant not only 'bewitching', but was the proper name for a god whose emblem was an erect penis, and is related to the Greek word for 'sorcerer', *baskanos*.)

The use in EWS of "fascinating" is excellent, as it is as comprehensive a use as possible. Each and all of the meanings of "fascinating" as indicated above have significance in the context of **13**, significance both with respect to Alice and to the spectator who are together *held spellbound* by consummate style. "Fascinating" as used by Alice is one more in the long list of self-reflexive components of EWS. Finally, but definitely not least of all, there is an intriguing aspect of the word "fascinating" which is very much relevant to EWS—its (quiet) suggestion of *danger*. [Such as: OED, sense 2a: "To cast a spell over with a look, said *esp.* of serpents."]

Just as the "v" in "virginity" is the punchy center of the dialogue of **13**, what could be called the sonic climax, so there is at one point in **13** a specific movement in and of the frame which is **13**'s visual climax. It occurs throughout the three seconds or so of the pregnant pause in the dialogue where the dancers look to be floating. There is to the spinning-illusion an *undulatory* quality which intensifies the effect of the whole. Verily is it one of Kubrick's masterstrokes. It is a gorgeous effect arising from the congruity between the movement of the dancers, the movement of the camera, and the rhythm of the Ballroom tune, "Chanson D'Amour". Though it is a tall order trying to capture in print the magic of film art, let us press on anyway. At Alice and Szavost's pregnant pause, the thrust of the musical tune culminates in a three note progression played by lush strings. The shift from one note down to the next and then up is performed legato, also *legatissimo*, "as smooth as possible". The first and last notes are drawn-out notes and swell in volume amorously. The tune just here sounds excellently *romantic*, and its culmination hits the ear in two waves. As each musical swell arises, the moving camera glides a tad closer to the dancers then recedes; similarly, and at the same time, the dancers perform a swaying movement in the direction of the lens. These various elements working in tandem produce an undulatory effect that can be described as *luscious*.

The fluidity of the dancers suggests the drift of celestial bodies. The rotary movement of **13** keeps the background in motion so that the decorations on the Ballroom walls periodically pass through the frame. These decorations include large stars, one of which will fit spectacularly well with Alice's pose in **18**. The stars pass by behind Alice's head with a cyclical concurrence. There is something dreamy, if not heavenly, about these orrery-like transits and occultations.

There is a small detail in **13** that is a very fine touch. Though lodged in the fuzzy-focused background, *Nick Nightingale is visible at his piano*, following through with the Ballroom tunes. In **13** Nick is obscured but scrutable. There is something fitting in the fact that Nick, who is allied with the enigmatic sexual goings-on at Somerton, is visible in **13** alongside the enigmatic, sexually forward Szavost. The one, Somerton, is connected thematically in some greater or lesser degree to the other, Szavost. Virtually hidden, Nick Nightingale is an esoteric detail in **13**.

Is Szavost a "man of quality"? Is he a put on? To this there can be only one answer: Szavost is, as he is presented, and nothing more. Not enough is revealed of Szavost to identify in him a personal reality. He is not by any means a *personality*. His character remains ever indeterminate.

The spectator of EWS is missing out on a lot. As is Alice, as suggested by Szavost in **13**.

#### [The theme of "missing something" in EWS]

Ideally this would be joined to the topic, "Unanswered Questions in EWS". Below is a list of the three obvious lines of dialogue which express aloud this aspect of *the condition of failing to comprehend* what is happening in EWS. As for a discussion of this entirely integral topic, it will be withheld just here.

1. Gayle to Bill: "But I bet they work too hard. Just think of all they miss." (**14**)
2. Bill to Nick: "Nick, I'm sorry. Is there something I'm missing here?" (**60**)
3. Bill to Ziegler: "Well, Victor, maybe I'm . . . missing something here." (**129**)

#### 14. Another Corridor - Ziegler mansion - Night

[Gayle and Nuala walk each side of Bill, their arms linked through his.]

With respect to "Aspects of (a) Romance", in scene **13** Szavost fast approaches the very heart of his *seduction*. Similarly, by the end of **14**, Gayle and Nuala are going to *proposition* Bill straight out. (And Szavost's proposition to Alice follows in **15**.)

Gayle and Nuala's propositioning of Bill near the end of scene **14** is a pivotal moment in EWS with respect to the film's sexual themes. **14** exposes a cognitive duality between experiencing personally a gust of concupiscence and *watching others experiencing this gust*. Between these two is all the difference in the world. The perspective a spectator attains of lust when watching it from afar can be a sheer one. When seen from afar, the pangs of sexual desire and the effects of lust as evidenced in the behaviour of the lustful can look silly and extravagant, and the players in the sexual drama might come off as faintly ridiculous. (For a brazen example, consider Gene Wilder's love for the sheep in Woody Allen's *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex*.) For the person who is lost to lust, however, perspective often becomes blurred; ordinary concerns lose their ordinary proportions as the satiating of lust becomes paramount—if not an obsession, however fleetingly so. Lust feeds off itself and for the duration of its hegemony is its own justification, whether its intentions can be supported rationally or not. Lust blinds the lustful to all but lust. Alternately, watching others lost to concupiscence can be eye-opening, a perspective gained that is *at the expense of* sexual desire. Seen from afar, lust loses its straight face; and lustful behaviour looks absurd.



This point may need no substantiation whatsoever. Consider anyway how in EWS Bill Harford will very nearly put his life on the line in his drive to find a fleeting satiation of his lust. (Bill's lust is not simple, there are various psychic components that find their nexus there; but certainly sexual desire is a predominant factor in his decision to visit the Masked Ball at Somerton.) Seen from the outside, Bill's behaviour throughout EWS is at times faintly ridiculous. But to Bill, who is experiencing it all from the inside, his concupiscence is a deadly serious matter.

Thus have we intimated a twofold essence of lust. Lust, if not all sexual behaviour, can be both *serious* and *ridiculous* simultaneously—it all depends on the perspective. (For a transparent example of this in EWS, consider the closing dialogue exchange of the film. What Alice says to Bill regarding sex is both deadly serious and undeniably funny simultaneously. **ALICE: “There is something very important that we need to do as soon as possible.” BILL: “What?” ALICE: “Fuck.”** Serious, because of both the fundamental genetic demand of reproduction, and the cultural importance of conjugal love. Funny, because it was in large part due to Bill's sexual frustration that he got himself into what transpired in EWS in the first place. That is to say, for Bill a good shag would be the best medicine - an admittedly amusing prescription.)

What has just been said here relates to many parts of EWS, not just **14**. How this relates to **14** specifically will be explained in due time below.

Scene **14**, like scenes **12** and **13** before it, is of one shot only. Its running time is close to two minutes or so. For a bit more than half of the duration of **14** the camera is moving; it is a tracking shot backwards with the camera facing the three characters, moving at walking pace in front of them. Walking slowly, the three characters proceed down a corridor and enter into a large hallway where the camera slows to a halt ahead of them. The rest of the scene plays itself out in front of a stationary camera. The large hallway is that wherein Bill and Alice first met Ziegler and his wife at the beginning of the party-at-Ziegler's sequence in **6**. The camera movement of **14** is calm; the camera tracks down one hallway, its path tracing a straight line, and then the camera curves into the large hallway where its pathway traces a second straight line before its movement ceases altogether. The patterning of the frame of **14** is based on horizontals and north-south verticals. Hence, as should be obvious by now, **14** is quite a contrast in form and movement from **13** (and **16** as well), insofar as those latter two scenes are based on circles and streaming movement. In **14**, as in **12**, there is, of course, a relationship between the regulated, logical personality of Bill and the coolness of the camerawork. Just as in Alice's dancing scenes with Szavost the fervid camerawork conveys her impassioned nature.

Just here is a recapitulation of observations made earlier concerning the precision shot composition of EWS.

As designed by Kubrick, the composition of certain frames (their patterning and movement) serves to express visually (with assistance from the audible) essences of the personalities of particular characters, most often Bill. What looks casual and unimportant in the frame (such as, say, Xmas decorations, bed sheets, cds and videotapes, wallpaper, a bookcase) is more likely planned and designed with intent toward the activation of significant cognitive effects. It seems safe to say that there is less scholastic detail in a Kubrick film than in most other films. *Most everything caught in the frame, no matter how minor its presence, has been allowed by Kubrick to abide there as such.* What is visible in EWS has had to pass through the psychology of Kubrick first. By virtue of a detail being there, in the frame, that detail, no matter what it might be, has a role of whatever degree of importance to play. What looks minor in the frame might not be for that reason inconsequential. This is just as Kubrick's exacting eye has designed it. In EWS details act in harmonious concert to produce a highly developed whole. The technique of EWS is exceptionally *finished*. If the film style of EWS can be likened to a form of poetry, it is definitely not free verse. Whatever is the example of the most intricate metre, that is to what EWS is to be accurately compared.

As scene **14** gets underway, a new musical selection commences. The tune is “Old Fashioned Way” and is heard only softly. It is a relevant title. There is indeed much that is old fashioned about the party-at-Ziegler's sequence. It has already been pointed out that the wide-angle view of the Ballroom in **7a** has the dreamy character of a memory. The dancing in the Ballroom has a “classic cinema” and a “golden

oldies” feel to it. To expand on this particular point, a suitable monograph to look for would be, something along the lines of, “Ballroom Dancing in Hollywood Cinema: a Compendium and Commentary.” Such a monograph would be eminently helpful just here. Dance sequences in non-musical films as well as in musicals have been a staple of the cinema since its beginnings. Of course, the classic tunes—“I’m in the Mood for Love”, “It Had to be You”, “When I Fall in Love” (15 - 17), “I Only Have Eyes for You” (17)—contribute to the feeling of “yesteryear” that pervades the entire sequence. There are further aspects of the party-at-Ziegler’s sequence which give the whole a retro feel. Funnily enough, it is a Laurel and Hardy film which helps to bring out these aspects. In Laurel and Hardy’s *Our Relations* (1930s), there are spoken two phrases which are exactly those spoken in the sequence of EWS under discussion: “Crying his eyes out” and “You haven’t changed a bit”. These two phrases, obviously popular expressions from at least sixty years ago, contribute to the retro feel. Also, in *Our Relations* one male character gently thwacks another male character on his torso, right where the arm meets the shoulder—very much in the spirit of the affectionate pats that Bill and Nick trade. It seems that the types of Bill and Nick’s pats are likewise “blasts from the past.” The examples given just here—the Ballroom itself, the tunes, bits of dialogue, social gestures—have expressed the point that *there is definitely an old fashioned way about the party-at-Ziegler’s sequence.*

A discussion regarding Kubrick’s superimposition of discrete time periods in the party-at-Ziegler’s sequence and in the Masked Ball at Somerton sequence will have to be written at a later date. (The Masked Ball is the supreme example, wherein no less than a half-dozen different time periods are superimposed one upon another simultaneously.)

Also, and as has yet to be discussed, the matter of *memory*—of the persistence of the past in the present—predominates the narrative of EWS.

(From beginning to end EWS seems to be a compendium of classic Hollywood cinema. Only one other example just here: from scene 129—ZIEGLER: “She was a junkie. She OD’d. There was nothing suspicious. Her door was locked from the inside. The police are happy. End of story.” *Here, word-for-word, Ziegler could just as well have been talking about the death of screen goddess Marilyn Monroe.*)

(The discussion of scene 12, above, identified a series of points relevant to 14, which for that reason should be read before the following.)

In 14 Bill looks to be embarrassed by riches. Nuala has her left arm linked in Bill’s right and Gayle has her right arm linked in Bill’s left. The three are positioned side by side and are framed straight on. As the three of them proceed on their way in their walk and their dialogue, Bill has to turn his head one-hundred-and-eighty degrees to look at Gayle and then at Nuala. In the event Bill is looking very pleased, like a kid with two hands in the cookie jar. Here Nuala looks excellently coy. She will gently smile at Bill’s attempts at humour, that is all. When Bill gives Nuala a long look, as Gayle says, “They always seem so knowledgeable”, Nuala only looks back just as Bill begins to look away. This shy gesture of Nuala’s is perfectly winsome, and straight out of *The Coquette’s Handbook*. Gayle, on the other hand, is on the offensive, she is single-handedly keeping the conversation alive. She will laugh at Bill’s humour, but only half-heartedly, in the manner of a nudge to keep him responsive. Gayle is the dominant and Nuala is—for most of the time—the submissive. Perhaps that is why Bill seems to take a shine more to Nuala than Gayle, as evidenced by that admiring look he gives Nuala, a look long enough to express how interested he is becoming.

Speaking of the dominant and the submissive: Whereas in their scenes together Sandor Szavost is taking the lead with Alice in their dance, just here it is *Gayle and Nuala who are leading Bill* - to somewhere specific in Ziegler’s mansion.

Watching EWS might be dangerous. In the scenes with Szavost EWS is confronting the inner lives of wives. In the scenes with Gayle and Nuala, it is husbands who are confronted. Both confrontations can lead to a destabilization of time-honoured certainties regarding married life. Couples watching EWS can become unsettled by what the film presents as subjects. Pressure is put on the concept of monogamy, and the institution of marriage trembles. *In the party-at-Ziegler’s sequence, EWS is itself of the manner of Szavost and Gayle and Nuala.* In these scenes EWS prompts the spectator to confront assumptions and certainties regarding the state of being married. Here, *EWS is as insinuating as the three tempters.* In the party-at-Ziegler’s sequence EWS *seduces* the spectator to *surrender* to its personality; but as the film proceeds to shake the foundations of certainty, so the spectator, if having yielded, can end up being left reeling—somewhat in the

manner of an overdosed Mandy. Like a one night stand with a stranger, like any seduction, encountering EWS might be *risky*.

**GAYLE: “Do you know what’s so nice about doctors?”** Just as Gayle has the first line in **12**, so here too she speaks first. She is taking the lead, insinuating herself into Bill’s good graces, on the offensive. Gayle’s use of “nice” is, like her use of “kind” in **12**, precious, congenial; there is a dainty ring in the usage of those two words. **BILL: “Usually a lot less than people imagine.”** Once again, Bill is mistaking humility for flirtatious banter. Bill is not lost to the moment, as Alice becomes with Szavost; rather, Bill, by being so self-mocking, is making plain that he is very much in his self, a little champagne has not effected his departure from his characteristic reserve. Is it slightly disturbing that Bill is being so self-effacing over and again? What can his modesty reveal but an underlying disquiet, something close to a disaffection with his self? In this situation Bill’s self-effacements are not charming; submissive, rather, and leaden. **GAYLE: “They always seem so knowledgeable.”** This is a saucy and provocative statement which suggests that Dr. Bill knows his way round the female anatomy. Just as Szavost in **13** makes it crushingly plain what is on his mind by his use of the word “virginity”, so Gayle in this line is similarly revealing a will bent on sex. In this line the sexual intent of the two young women breaks through. **BILL: “Oh, they are very knowledgeable about all sorts of things.”** In this, say, tennis game of flirtation Bill has just hit the ball with alacrity back over the net. He is a bit straightlaced, but he is also curious. And the “very” in “very knowledgeable” is superfluous and sounds faintly ridiculous. The irony is that Bill seems very unknowledgeable and unpractised in flirting. **GAYLE: “But I bet they work too hard. Just think of all they miss.”** The point of what Gayle says here is *the exact same point made by Szavost in 13*: life is passing Bill and Alice by and they are missing out on too many available delights. It is an enticing line; Gayle suggests Bill think a moment - about sex, about sex with them. Gayle is attempting to provoke Bill to lust. Also, it is interesting that, while Szavost attempts to persuade Alice to his way of thinking by alluding to the limitations of marriage, Gayle attempts to get to Bill by speaking of the limitations of his work. And then there is another, and different, resonance to this line of Gayle’s about missing things. The theme of “missing something in EWS” has been alluded to above; Gayle’s line has a resonance with respect to the ongoing meaning production engineered via the perspective of the spectator. Using logic alone, the spectator is not going to be able to make comprehensive sense of the primary thematic elements of EWS. It has been written above that what is seen of a film is always a limitation of what can be seen of the film. The spectator decides to watch a film and apprehends it by way of ordinary common sense. (Logic is to be equated with common sense and with doctorship.) But EWS is going to confound common sense, EWS presents themes which logic alone cannot make perfect sense of. To approach EWS with an ordinary common-sensical manner of watching a film is to thereby *miss a lot* of EWS. This is the weaker of the two resonances in Gayle’s line. The primary meaning conveyed in Gayle’s line is the somewhat somber observation that life is streaming by but is not being lived to the full. The living can never fully experience living. **“Just think of all they miss.”** - meaning, Bill is to some extent squandering the precious gift that is his life.

By now the three characters have passed through a doorway to enter into the large hallway. The framing of the shot is such that, as the three of them proceed into the midst of the hall, the Xmas tree standing in the doorway behind them is positioned directly behind Bill. The bright coloured lights of the tree correspond, here as elsewhere in EWS, to Bill’s suddenly excited inner life. **BILL: “You’re probably right.”** What Gayle has just said takes the feistiness out of Bill somewhat; he says his line without concerted charm, as if he were very slightly miffed. As if Gayle just there touched a nerve in him. Bill’s sudden lack of mettle segues into: **BILL: “Now, where exactly are we going . . . exactly?”** With this line Bill smiles and laughs; it is the second of Tom Cruise’s “Hollywood handsome” moments in EWS. It is one of Bill’s brightest, toothiest moments in the film. Bill has ceased to want to play and now, like someone eminently logical, wants to know the score. “Exactly” being repeated twice is similar in feel to Szavost’s “absolutely certain” and “I’m sure” in **10** - it smacks of determined rationality. The repetition of “exactly” is a revelation of the methodical manner of Bill’s inner life; Bill is a man who clings to certainties. Bill holds up his open hands to punctuate his line; his arms shift and the two young women begin to slip their arms out from his. **GAYLE: “Where the rainbow ends?”** This line has a humour about it, as metaphors for sex usually do; if not said exactly right by Gayle it would have sounded ridiculous. In the event it sounds more tempting than silly. **BILL: “Where the rainbow ends?”** Bill entertains Gayle’s provocation with an amused and thoughtful aspect. For the moment he does not seem to know exactly how to proceed. To repeat what he is told is to stall for time as his understanding rushes to catch up. (Bill is going to directly repeat back words he is told twenty-four times in EWS.) The three characters slow to a stop, as does the camera. **NUALA: Don’t you want to go where the rainbow ends?”** Here Nuala suddenly comes alive not only in the

seductive articulation of her line but also with a visually dynamic movement—she tugs on Bill’s right arm. **BILL: “Well, now that depends where that is.”** Bill is being cautious here; he surely knows what the drift of the exchange is but he responds with *resistance*. In his tentative response Bill is buying time as he computes the proceedings. It is a slightly ridiculous line insofar as it is obvious that the “end of the rainbow” is Gayle and Nuala. As alarm bells start to ring, Bill plays dumb, in order to forestall a decision regarding surrender. Then Gayle moves in for the kill. **GAYLE: “Well, let’s find out.”**

This next point is only an attempt to describe the most beautiful directorial touch in scene 14. It is a somewhat subtle concern which - of course - would best be observed by watching it; just here, however, we are constrained by words.

As has been pointed out, the camera comes to a halt during the dialogue exchange. The three characters stop walking and stand in place, *but they do not stop moving*. Gayle is on the right side of the screen, and Nuala is on the left side; and Bill is caught in the middle. As Bill says **“Where the rainbow ends?”** he bends a bit to his right side with his hands opened in front of him. Gayle is still clinging to Bill’s left arm. Just as the camera comes to a halt and the characters stop walking, Gayle slowly tugs Bill to his left, away from Nuala. As Nuala is holding onto Bill’s right arm, his right arm stretches out straight as he inclines toward Gayle. Then Nuala pipes up with her line and tugs on Bill’s left arm, drawing him slowly back toward her. Just as the camera halts, the *movement* is transferred to the movement of the characters who sustain the pace of the movement of 14. *It is a seamless transition in the pace of the movement*. Exceptionally well choreographed, it is a virtuosic directorial touch that enraptures the eye. The shifting of the movement of 14 from straight ahead to side to side contributes to the eyecatching effect. The movement of the characters, so easy and smooth, has the feel of the slow swells of a serene ocean. The visual trend of the scene just here can be described as *deliquescent*.

The *rainbow* is an integral feature of EWS, but how it is used in the film would necessitate not just a list of its uses but an *analysis*. Here, at any rate, is the list. (1.) Every scene in EWS uses the six colours of the spectrum, to a larger or lesser degree. (For example, with the exception of skin colour, orange is most often seen only as a small Xmas light or as a colour in a painting in the background.) (2.) Gayle and Nuala’s provocation. (3.) “Rainbow dots” (blurred coloured Xmas lights in the background) play a significant role in four shots. (4.) Of course, the name of the costume shop is Rainbow Fashions; and white lettering on the front of the shop reads, “Under the Rainbow”. (5.) Inside Rainbow Fashions, a neon rainbow is visible over the room with the glass wall wherein Milich’s daughter is first seen. So much for the list. It almost goes without saying that *The Wizard of Oz* is inevitably evoked by Gayle and Nuala’s allusion to the rainbow, which lends a lightly fanciful feel to their dialogue.

So Gayle, dead-set on a tryst with Bill, moves in for the kill with: **GAYLE: “Let’s find out.”** As she is saying it, Harris, Ziegler’s personal assistant, walks up to them and promptly interrupts, puncturing the mood. If the *sinister air* of 14 hinges on two aspects of the scene, which both come near the end, one of these aspects is this line of Gayle’s. As heard, Gayle’s line has a fascinating complexity to it. It sounds sexually alluring but it also—and more so—sounds *out of a Hammer horror film*. Gayle’s articulation just here has a menacing tone; her move can be likened to a lion’s paw descending on its prey. Here we have returned to what was said earlier regarding how lust can sound both serious and ridiculous simultaneously. Gayle’s line was the motivation for the raising of that point. When heard from the outside by the spectator, there is something unconvincing in Gayle’s provocation, it sounds *suspicious*. The business of Harris walking up just as Gayle speaks is an effective undercutting of the mood. The abrupt appearance of Harris suddenly abstracts the spectator from Gayle and contributes to the bringing out of the suspicious undertone. Harris breaks up the charmed atmosphere, and from that point on the echo of Gayle’s *ominous* provocation persists until the end of the scene. **HARRIS: “Excuse me, ladies.” [to Bill] “Sorry, Dr. Harford. Sorry to interrupt. I wonder whether you would come with me for a moment? Something for Mr. Ziegler.”** Harris is well over six feet tall and has the well-groomed, chiselled appearance of a male model. He is holding his right wrist at his abdomen, a formal pose displaying effectively his superiorly starched, cuff-linked shirt sleeve and his elegant watch. Harris is doused in the atmosphere of beauty and money. **BILL: “Oh . . . umm . . . fine.”** Harris’ interruption is a perfect deflation of the moment. And someone of the stature of Bill is not to keep someone like Ziegler waiting; when someone rich tells you to jump, then, if you’re not of equal financial worth, you jump. **BILL: [to Gayle and Nuala] To be continued?”** Indeed are Bill’s sexual adventures in EWS going to be continued; hence does Bill’s line have a humorous cast to it, and is reminiscent of Ziegler’s words in 6, “I’ll see you in a little bit.” And as Bill departs from Gayle and Nuala there is a palpable sense that Bill has been saved, he has *gotten away* from some sort of *danger*.

**[Harris leads Bill across the hall and up the marble staircase.]**

The ominous feel of **14** is sustained at the end of the scene by the looks that Gayle and Nuala trade as Bill is led up the staircase. Gayle's look is especially significant, and contributes to the second sinister aspect of the scene. Gayle dominates the right side of the screen and Nuala dominates the left side; they are the twin pillars of the shot. As they are positioned to extreme right and left, their looks can easily be missed by the eye of the spectator. As Bill recedes in the frame, Gayle gives Nuala a hard, disappointed, well-nigh evil (?) look. What is evoked by Gayle's malevolent look is this question: could it be that Gayle has been hired to seduce Bill, and as her seduction has failed, so she is now mightily disappointed? Her look is too hard to be considered the mere frustration of a flirt thwarted. What underscores this *creepy moment* of **14** is the sound of laughing guests coming from elsewhere in the mansion. A similar sound of overheard laughter began this scene **14**. The laughter overheard in **14** is distant and sounds dream-like. Laughter frames **14**, yet what happens in **14** does not insistently evoke any audible laughter from the spectator. To put it colloquially, **14** is more funny strange than funny ha-ha. Exactly like Szavost's scenes with Alice, and exactly like many scenes in EWS to follow, **14** is both straight-faced and funny at the same time, with the former prevailing. The distant laughter heard at the end of the scene, distant enough to drain away any of the sparkle the laughter might have had, serves as a contrast to Gayle and Nuala's discontent. The laughter just here has a dual operation: it serves to highlight the young women's discontent, and it also works with them, contributing to the sinister air of their comportment. The end of **14** is a virtuosic moment of EWS. In scene **14**, *Kubrick conflates seduction with risk*. A noticeable sense of paranoia persists. Sex is given an inauspicious connotation. And this *sinister air* is a perfect segue to the slightly seedy proceedings regarding Ziegler's seduction of Mandy in one of Ziegler's bathrooms, of all places.

**[Up and down in EWS**

This heading relates to *staircases* and to *floor levels*. The first five examples here are considered the most significant.

1. Bill goes *up a marble staircase* to Ziegler's bathroom (**14**).
2. Bill goes *down a (red-lit) staircase* to enter into the underground Sonata Cafe (**60**).
3. The Mysterious Woman *goes up a marble staircase* with Mr. Napoleon Mask at Somerton (**80**). And is later seen *up in the balcony* of the Marble Hall when she surrenders herself to save Bill (**86**).
4. Bill goes *up a flight of stairs* to enter into Sharky's, where he will read of Amanda Curran's death (**120**).
5. The morgue where Bill scrutinizes the dead Amanda Curran is possibly, if not probably, *underground* - as many hospital morgues are indeed downstairs in the basement. (**125**)
6. Bill and Alice's apt. is on the *fifth floor* (its number is 5A).
7. Bill gets out of an elevator onto *an above ground floor* to enter into the reception area of his Surgery (**20**).
8. Bill gets out of an elevator and crosses a lobby to the Nathanson's apt. which is on the *seventh floor* (its number is 7G). (**37**)
9. Domino lives on the *ground floor* of her apt. building, which has a stoop (**47**). (The number of her apt. building is 265.  $2+6+5=$  unlucky 13.)
10. Rainbow Fashions is on the *ground floor*, and has a stoop (**63**).

11. Gillespie's is on the *ground floor* (91).

12. The lobby of Hotel Jason is on the *ground floor* (93).

13. In the Toy Store in **134** the *floor level cannot be determined*. A sign "Elevators" is plainly visible at two points. With respect to the floor plan, it cannot be ascertained whether the Harfords are up or down.]

#### [Bill's repeating of words in EWS

Bill directly repeats back words that are said to him twenty-four times in EWS.

1. "Where the rainbow ends?" (14)
2. "Heroin and coke." (15)
3. "Where I'm coming from?" (33)
4. "What then?" (33)
5. "Come inside with you?" (46)
6. "The password?" (60)
7. "He moved to Chicago?" (61)
8. "Private?" (83)
9. "The password for the house?" (86)
10. "Get undressed?" (86)
11. "Round two or three." (91)
12. "He checked out?" (93)
13. "Five o'clock this morning?" (93)
14. "Scared?" (93)
15. "You got all those right?" (105)
16. "You have no idea?" (116)
17. "She may not even be coming back?" (116)
18. "You don't know?" (116)
19. "You don't quite know how?" (116)
20. "HIV-positive?" (116)
21. "She died this afternoon?" (123)
22. "You had me followed?" (129)
23. "A hooker?" (129)
24. "A fake?" (129)

(And in the last scene of EWS, Alice, in what can thus be considered an intimate gesture, repeats Bill twice —"What do I think we should do?" and "Forever?")]

#### 15. Int. Bathroom - Ziegler mansion - Night

Scenes **15**, **16**, **17**, and **18** (the last four scenes of the party-at-Ziegler's sequence) are the thematic and dramatic culmination of the sequence, with scenes **15** and **17** (the scenes in Ziegler's bathroom) being the heart of the sequence as a whole.

*Ziegler's bathroom* is an extravagant affair. It looks as roomy and as comfy as a parlour. There are plush chairs, an antique-type wooden table, large paintings on the walls, a wood-panelled recessed window, even a fireplace. Humorously, the architecture of Ziegler's bathroom approaches a *magnificence*. Having an absence of a lived-in quality, this bathroom is obviously one for guests. The shower is a transparent cubicle in the midst of the floor plan; someone taking a shower there would be in plain sight, almost on show (in the manner of a department store window), and the suggestion of this (showering as voyeuristic performance) contributes in its (titillating) way to the proceedings. Two toilets are in the far left corner. Lower value colours predominate in this locale. These lower value colours help to bring out with full force the radiant white of the walls. Large wooden panels on the walls are painted a deep (bluish-) green, the

colour of the sea's depths. As the scene commences this *deep-sea-green* strikes the eye of the spectator; the colour looks different in tone from what has come before. The deep green has a maturity akin to the look of aged wine. It would be difficult to try to characterize the extraordinary force this deep green has as it is unconcealed to the sight of the spectator. Strong contrasts in value and chroma, as well as in hue, between **15** and the scenes immediately preceding, contribute (obviously) to the forceful effect of **15**'s colours. It was mentioned in "Colour in EWS: a partial lexicon" that of the six colours of the spectrum, green is the rarest in EWS. The dark marble mantle of the fireplace is supported by two carved mermaids, the scaly bodies of which are painted blue. This blue (to screen-right) is mirrored in the blue window drapery that overhangs the window (screen-center) and in a blue cologne bottle on a shelf under the mirror beside the toilets (screen-left). This "under the sea" theme of the decor of Ziegler's bathroom is taken up by the pacing of certain scenes of EWS, most specifically scene **80**, where Bill is led down the red-carpeted corridor of Somerton after being kissed by the Mysterious Woman; in that scene the movement is so slow it all looks happening underwater. (And it has already been pointed out that Szavost's smooth movements give his comportment the feel of moving underwater.) Over the fireplace is a large rectangular orange-red painting of a naked woman (orange in skin colour) pregnant and reclined back with her legs opened. The background of the painting is a magenta red, its vividness reminiscent of a portrait by Van Gogh. It is a florid painting, which would be the most eye-catching sight in the room when seen from the vantage point of the toilet seats. Ziegler's bathroom says: wealth. And the shower cubicle and the sexy painting say: hedonism. The ornateness of it all reminds of the richly appointed public bathrooms of ancient Rome. There is something garish to Ziegler's bathroom in its conflation of the dignified and the bestial. Still, taken strictly at first glance, the bathroom has a sort of authority to it, which has to do with the elegant wood panels and the deep green, which as a colour looks *noble*. The only other use in EWS of a similar green is the colour of the tricorne hat of the Sinister Figure who nods to Bill from the balcony of the Marble Hall at Somerton.

It becomes plain that Ziegler engineered his seduction of Mandy to take place in the bathroom. It does not seem to be the case that, amid the intensity of amorous fumbblings Ziegler and Mandy just happened to fall upon the bathroom as the closest available nook in which to conceal themselves. Details that become visible include a bucket of champagne on the ledge of the recessed window, a glass of champagne on the wooden table, and vials of heroin and a syringe on a small side table beside the comfy chair wherein an ailing Mandy is slumped. These details, especially the champagne bucket, seem to indicate that the seduction was planned rather than a spur of the moment act. The fact that the whole seduction took place in a bathroom lends a meanness to the proceedings. Is not a bathroom the least romantic room in a home? Here, Kubrick makes the opulent look *seedy*.

After Bill has entered in, a new Ballroom tune is heard to have begun downstairs, "When I Fall in Love", which is played to sound wonderfully romantic.

Ziegler's bathroom is as it were the inner sanctum, a sort of a "throne room" wherein is revealed the heart of the "Aspects of (a) Romance" play-within-a-play. *Hedonism* has led to *danger*, *surrender* has led to *abandonment*. In the party-at-Ziegler's sequence, EWS leaps from a sexual proposition (**14**) straight to post-coital dawdling (**15**), skipping over a view of coitus. What happens in Ziegler's bathroom embodies *post-coital blues*. Also, *the selfishness of the sex act*. What is revealed (in Ziegler's behaviour in **15** and **17**) is the (male view of) the disposability of sexual partners. Ziegler has used Mandy as an instrument to please him and when all is said and done he could not care less about her. The evidence in **15** is such that it seems that Ziegler continued to have sex with Mandy even after she fell ill (which is tantamount to copulating with a sleeping woman: can we call it rape?). Then, after Mandy comes round (in **17**), Ziegler says only thirteen words to her and, indifferent, turns his back on her. They had (a sort of) sex, and she means nothing to him. Here, sex is presented as a cold act, *a selfish act*. Two join in sex but the two ever remain each a one. Sex is two seeking to unite as one but inherently failing; one is going to be hemmed in within the limit of sensations arising out of one's own unconscious; and the sex act in a way is like two stones knocking together. *What happens in Ziegler's bathroom between Ziegler and Mandy personifies the existential solitude that exists as part and parcel of the essence of the sex act*. The event with Mandy has a *doleful* feel. In Ziegler's bathroom, hedonism wears a frown. The heart of the party-at-Ziegler's sequence is a sombre one.

As scene **15** begins, Ziegler is standing beside Mandy who is slumped completely naked in a plush deep purplish-red chair. Ziegler is stooped, zipping up his fly and he starts at the knocking at the door. Just here Ziegler looks as comical as he is going to look in EWS. (In films, men zipping up their flies often look ridiculous, such as the wealthy cigar-chewing Texan in Oliver Stone's *Nixon*.) Ziegler looks for the most

fleeting of instances like an oaf caught out in some mischief. At that moment he has no stature, he looks silly. But, with fly zipped, and standing upright, Ziegler again falls into place, and as he strides toward the bathroom door, he looks, bare-chested but with his black suspenders in place, his authoritative self again.

Ziegler will tell Bill that Mandy has been in her moribund state for **“Maybe five minutes, six minutes. Something like that.”** It is a line which can be taken for evidence that Ziegler carried on with his sexual relations with Mandy even after her alarming symptoms overcame her. Five to six minutes would have given Ziegler more than enough time to get his clothes on—if he had been ready to. It might be tenuous, but the zipping of his fly being stressed in the scene seems to suggest that Ziegler continued with his exertions (losing track of time) and only when he was finished did he send the summons for Bill. There is also humour in this line arising from the whiff of a signification of the (ordinary?) duration of coitus proper. (As Szavost tells Alice in 16, “We won’t be gone long.”)

When Bill asks Ziegler the ailing woman’s name, Ziegler replies, **“Mandy . . . Mandy.”** It is interesting, the way Ziegler says the name, and that he repeats the name. It is as if Ziegler at first does not remember Mandy’s name, and only then recalls it. Or, Ziegler is uncomfortable in revealing Mandy’s name to Bill, but divulges it anyway. Whichever is the case, there is definitely something strange in the way Ziegler answers Bill here.

The number of shots of 15 has been determined above as fifteen. Of the seven other scenes in the party-at-Ziegler’s sequence, only one other scene even comes close to this number of shots, and that is 17, which has eleven shots. The scene with the third most shots in the party-at-Ziegler’s sequence is 11, which has only three. The five other scenes each have two or less shots comprising them. The quicker pace of the editing of 15 lends a liveliness, if not a tension, to the scene. Moreover, the editing serves to inscribe the divisions between Bill and Ziegler. As Bill asks questions and Ziegler answers them, the camera cuts from one to the other, keeping them apart. Ziegler is seen all by himself in close-up—as Szavost, Gayle and Nuala all are not. Ziegler is seen alone in close-up five times in 15. That Ziegler is given his own close-up signifies his status in EWS as a man of weight and authority, as a character of importance. What adds interest (and humour) to his close-ups is the fact that Ziegler’s head is framed in the midst of the orange-red painting of the reclining nude pregnant woman. Ziegler’s mouth is exactly in the spot where the woman’s legs are open wide. The forceful red and Ziegler’s significant framing are highly suggestive (of the Masked Ball at Somerton; of a psyche saturated with concupiscence).

The spectator is won over by Bill’s professional competence. He tends to Mandy with a dispassionate concern which rings true to physicians watching EWS. It is significant that in the midst of the carefree atmosphere of the party, Bill, out of all the guests, is constrained to act in a responsible manner. Whereas the others at Ziegler’s are lost to merriment, Bill is prevailed upon to be conscientious and businesslike. Hence there is a *bittersweet* feel to the business of Bill donning his physician role in the midst of the gay party, because it is a glimpse into the essence of the character of Bill, who is indeed scrupulous, upright, and staid, an essence that is too deep-seated to be eluded, even in the midst of a gay party. **BILL: “Mandy. Mandy. Can you hear me, Mandy? Can you hear me? Just move your head for me if you can hear me. Just move your head for me if you can hear me, Mandy. There you go, you can hear me. Can you open your eyes for me? Mandy? Can you do that? Let me see you do that. Let me see you open your eyes. There you go. Come on, come on. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me, Mandy. Good. Good.”** This is Bill’s longest monologue in EWS. There is something deep and fundamental to the theme of Bill’s urgent appeals to look at him. Young children are well-known to often demand that their parents look at them. (Recall Helena’s last line in the last scene of the film: “Mommy, look!”) Moreover, the theme of seeing sets bells ringing in the mind of the spectator, who is *seeing* EWS. Furthermore, that Bill is saying “Look at me” is significant insofar as the eye of the spectator can wander this way and that, and the character of Bill is urging the spectator to focus on him, to make *a life* the measure of EWS rather than an aesthetic. Even more, Bill throughout EWS is repeatedly going to want the opposite sex to look at him, to give him attention. Throughout this, “When I Fall in Love” is playing, excellently romantically, in the background. Bill is positioned very close to Mandy. It is an intimate encounter. If Mandy has indeed just been engaged in sex with Ziegler, then it would seem to be the case that there would be a smell of sex that Bill would be able to discern. *The smell of sex here will be impinging on Bill’s perceptions.* The smell of sex is here conjoined to the frailty of the flesh. There are three other scenes in EWS where smell might be seen to figure (see below). When Bill is urging Mandy to look at him by repeating that line six times with the utmost seriousness, the film style is suddenly *arresting*. Bill is seen in CU



in three-quarters profile; he is completely still as he speaks; the overheard music is very soft and fantasy-like; the pace of the cinematic moment is *rigid*. It is as if just there EWS is holding its breath. The next time such an arresting moment occurs in EWS is in **33** when Alice, poised utterly still, reaches the last part of her monologue about the Naval Officer. The force of the rigid feel of the CU of Bill is brought out all the more insofar as it is a strong contrast to the often fluid movement of the scenes preceding it. Bill's action here is an island of stability in the flux of the party. Bill repeating "Look at me" six times is a charmed moment of EWS that feels overwhelmingly pregnant with signification.

One of Kubrick's magnificent directorial touches occurs just here. It is Mandy's eyes. When she finally musters the power to raise her eyelids what is revealed is a total blackness, two sockets of blackness. It is a chilling sight and an unforgettable one.

What is the relationship between Mandy and the Mysterious Woman at Somerton and the dead Amanda Curran? Just here a treatment of this question will be by and large withheld. One can point to the end credits of EWS to learn that the character of Mandy is played by one actress, and the Mysterious Woman is played by another actress—which could be taken as a strong hint that the two characters are not the same woman. But as for Amanda Curran, she is not named in the credits, so she could be played by the actress who played Mandy or by the actress who played the Mysterious Woman or even a third actress. The published screenplay indeed identifies the dead Amanda Curran as Mandy, the young woman from Ziegler's bathroom. In *Ziegler's Bathroom* Mandy is seen to have a small mole on the left side of her face by the bottom edge of her nose. In the *Morgue (125)*, though, the spectator is never given a good enough look at Amanda Curran's face to be able to determine whether or not the mole is there. The face of Amanda Curran is seen from above only once and fleetingly, and for the most part she is presented in right profile, which, of course, effectively obscures from view the spot where the beauty mark would be. Mandy has long brown hair, as does the Mysterious Woman and Amanda Curran. Mandy's face is long as is Amanda Curran's. But the relationship between these three characters will ever remain a mystery, as EWS withholds all evidence which would determine without ambiguity who is who. Regardless of all this, in light of what comes later it is significant that the music played is "When I Fall in Love", because Bill is indeed going to fall for the Mysterious Woman, as for Amanda Curran.

### [Smell in EWS

There are four scenes in EWS where smell might be taken as playing a significant role with respect to Bill's character and the film's sexual themes.

1. In **(15)**, the smell of sex that would be on Mandy.
2. In **(39)**, the room in which Marion kisses Bill and tells him she loves him is the sick-room wherein Marion's father, Lou Nathanson, has died. The evidence is such that one can determine that Lou Nathanson has been in that room for at least two months. Hence the air in the room is going to be stale and tainted by the smells of the dying. The atmosphere in the room wherein Marion pledges her love to Bill is going to be oppressive, it is going to smell of death.
3. In **(79)**, Red Cloak waves an incense burner which sends purple-coloured incense into the air, spicing the atmosphere of the Masked Ball.
4. The *Morgue (125)* where Bill becomes spellbound by Amanda Curran is going to have an antiseptic smell.]

### NOTE to reader [1999]:

Sorry, but I am in a bit of a hurry now and so this has to be finished fast. I would have very much liked to append to this an essay on the relationship between EWS and Beethoven's *Fidelio*, which would be very interesting, but. . . oh well.

## 16. Int. Ballroom - Ziegler's mansion - Night

Here have we finally arrived at Szavost's propositioning of Alice. By virtue of its position following the seedy goings-on in Ziegler's Bathroom, Szavost's allusion to sex has a darker feel to it than it might have otherwise had. The floating sensation that is brought out by the dual movement of the dancers and the camera is excellent here, well-nigh narcotic in its seductive power. All of the four times Szavost addresses Alice in this scene include questions; Szavost, smooth operator, is leading Alice on with his questions, and drawing her close. The musical tune is still, "When I Fall in Love". **SZAVOST: "I love Victor's art collection, don't you?"** Obviously, Szavost and Ziegler must be a little more than just passing acquaintances, as evidenced by Szavost's use of Ziegler's first name. **ALICE: "Yes . . . it's wonderful."** But in her next line Alice is going to say that she has not seen Ziegler's sculpture gallery. It has been pointed out in the discussion of scene 6 that the Zieglers and the Harfords are not as it were "old friends", but they are connected through the professional relationship of Bill being Ziegler's doctor; this is to say, Alice might not have visited Ziegler's mansion except for these Christmas parties; thus, she probably does not have too much of an idea of what Ziegler's art collection is. Alice could be alluding to the artworks in vitrines which lined the corridor leading to the large hallway of 6 (and 14). The point of all this: is it that Alice, being dazed by dance and champagne, is just here going along with Szavost, as if pulled on a string? **SZAVOST: "Have you ever seen his sculpture gallery?" ALICE: "No, I haven't."** **SZAVOST: "He has a wonderful collection of Renaissance bronzes. Do you like the period?" ALICE: "Hmm . . . I do."** Alice articulates this in a fetching manner, with a winsome pose. **SZAVOST: "I adore it."** Szavost, seasoned flirt, knows that one way to a woman's heart is to agree with whatever she says. **SZAVOST: "The sculpture gallery is upstairs. Would you like to see it? I can show it to you. We won't be gone long."** Three points can be made here. (1.) Just here comes a tremulous pause during which Alice and Szavost are face to face, dancing, in silence. Szavost is waiting for Alice's answer. They are framed in profile, Alice's right and Szavost's left; the sharpness of the lensing brings out the angles of the profiles with stunning clarity, so much so that their faces both look like masks, like masks worn in ancient Greek festivals. Amanda Curran's face in the Morgue (125), seen in right profile, is also going to look very much like a mask. (2.) This is the only time in the scene where Szavost's line does not end in a question. (3.) Just as Szavost completes his line, Alice's face passes in front of vivid white lights; this interplay with the Xmas decorations is utterly wonderful here, it communicates the heady inner feeling that Alice is experiencing. **ALICE: "Maybe . . . not just . . . now."** Alice says this slowly. The spectator wonders just how close she was to capitulating to Szavost. One gets the sense that Alice could almost have gone the other way. As she says this Szavost's face cannot be seen straight on but his somewhat saddened expression is still somewhat visible. He looks hurt.

The theme of the renaissance is here articulated. Ovid was the strongest influence on the "English renaissance". The *Renaissance in EWS*, what it all means, will have to be analysed. Consider that in the room where Lou Nathanson lay dead, the first painting visible is a view of *Venice*. Scholars of the Italian Renaissance have determined that Venice was where the Renaissance reached its end. And then it is reported in the article, "Ex-Beauty Queen Dies in Hotel Drug Overdose" that the Hotel is named the Hotel *Florence*. And Florence is where the Italian Renaissance began. Furthermore consider the *Verona* Restaurant.

As for bronze statues during the Renaissance in Italy—"Donatello's *David* was the first monumental free-standing nude in bronze since classical antiquity. . . . Collecting of small bronzes by such patrons as Lorenzo de Medici, created a demand, satisfied by masters such as Pollaiuolo and Bertoldo in Florence . . ."<sup>3</sup>

## 17. Int. Bathroom - Ziegler's mansion - Night

**Ziegler: "Well, that was really one hell of a scare you gave us, kiddo."** This line is interesting because it can relate more to Ziegler's own situation than to Mandy. That is to say, if Mandy had died, a corpse in his bathroom would have inconvenienced Ziegler: and this is the real meaning of Ziegler's use of the word 'scare'. When Ziegler turns his back on Mandy following her admission, "Sorry," it is a crushingly cold act but entirely unsurprising: all too often men drop their female lovers as soon as the sex act is completed. "Love 'em and leave 'em," as the saying goes. As I pointed out earlier this scene exemplifies how all too often men exploit women heartlessly for their own sexual ends. (To repeat from above: *What*

<sup>3</sup> Footnote, 2010: I am sorry but I lost the bibliographical reference for this extract some years ago.

*happens in Ziegler's bathroom between Ziegler and Mandy personifies the existential solitude that exists as part and parcel of the essence of the sex act.)* Bill's words with Mandy regarding how she needs rehab has a feeling of rectitude and rightness about it. As Bill speaks, the white walls behind him are positively glowing; it is a fantastic effect to behold. There is something highly admirable in Bill's words with Mandy, he is *very right*. Of course, when Bill says, **"You're going to be OK this time, but you can't keep doing this,"** it is a line he could very well say to himself throughout EWS. At the end of the scene, Ziegler says, **". . . this is just between us, OK?"** This line has resonance insofar as it is not just between them; rather, it is being watched—by the spectator. Moreover, it could be said that Ziegler now owes Bill one, and will repay Bill with his concern as brought out in the conversation in the billiard room (129). Furthermore, it reminds us of how the sex act between Ziegler and Mandy would no doubt have been 'just between them'. For another thing, it is 'funny' that around the time that Ziegler says his line, "this is just between us", we see, on the left side of the screen, for an instant, as the camera tracks backward, a crew member reflected in the shower fixture behind Ziegler: so it isn't just between them! One more thing: when Ziegler tells Bill that "this is just between us", he means the two men—he says his line as if Mandy doesn't exist, yet more evidence that, as the saying goes, 'this is a man's world'.

### 18. Int. Ballroom - Ziegler's mansion - Night

This is the conclusion the party-at-Ziegler's sequence. As the scene begins Alice has her eyes closed and then as the music ends ("When I Fall in Love") she opens them, to discover herself with Szavost. It is as if Alice was drifting far away lost in her thoughts and then she discovers herself not in her dreamworld but with Szavost. What began as a playful flirtation culminates in Alice getting lost in her feelings. This is similar to scene 33, where Alice will begin to tell Bill about the Naval Officer just to show him up, but as she progresses she is going to get lost in the feeling of the telling and by the end she will be riveted by her own story.

As the encounter between Szavost and Alice comes to a close, a new tune commences, "I Only Have Eyes for You". It is faster paced than the song it follows. As Szavost tries to compel Alice not to leave and to promise that she will see him again, Alice's head is framed stark in the midst of a large star decoration. It is a beautiful effect. As Szavost pleads, their encounter becomes *romantic* for the first time. There is a touch of the fervent in Szavost's articulation, helped along by the faster pace of the tune.

When Szavost pulls Alice close to him for the second time and they gaze into each other's eyes, the violin of "I Only Have Eyes for You" punctuates the moment wonderfully well. Alice's profile is fascinatingly sharp here. It is a highly memorable moment, a 'climax' of the scene.

The last line of the party-of-Ziegler's sequence is: **ALICE: "Because . . . I'm married."**

Marriage: this is *the* thematic centre of the film, everything radiates out from this concept.

### 19. Int. Bedroom - Bill and Alice's apt. - Night

This is the last scene of Part I before the fade out. Part I begins in the bedroom and ends in the bedroom. Everything in between these two bedroom scenes is connected to this bedroom: *The party-at-Ziegler's sequence is a glimpse into the heart of marriage.*

Alice, naked, is looking at herself in the mirror and then Bill, naked, comes up beside her and begins to touch her. Alice eyes her husband with what looks like questioning eyes—as if she's sizing up his stature with the taller, broader Szavost in mind. There is a palpable sense of Alice being dislocated from her ordinary complacency. Visible on the left side of the mirror are no less than sixteen convex embellishments which mirror the main image—and an open, dark doorway—sixteen times. As the camera moves in and Bill begins to kiss her, Alice's face undergoes a mercurial transition, conveying different thoughts. Just before the fade out, the camera has zoomed in to a close up of the two of them, and as Bill is kissing Alice with growing passion, she on the other hand seems to get annoyed with his pushy attention. The nudge Bill gives Alice, which Alice seems to react negatively to, which takes place just as the camera zooms closest and just before the fade out, is another one of those sublime Kubrick moments when the actors hit their marks with

perfect timing. The music on the soundtrack is “Baby Did a Bad, Bad Thing” and the last line of the song heard before the fade out, as the camera is close on Alice’s face, is (something close to) “Did you ever want with all your heart and soul just to want to walk away?”

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## ADDENDUM MAY 2003

During the wonderful September and October of 1999 when I was fascinated by the newly released *Eyes Wide Shut*, I would jot down a series of numbered notes—whatever came to mind—following each trip to the cinema. After the fourth trip, I quit jotting down disordered notes and began writing the preceding document. If the reader of these pages wonders how my eyes and mind could have been so sharp as to notice, let alone remember, certain details mentioned above, my answer is that I began writing these Notes while I was still in the process of experiencing the film. When I had questions about certain aspects of the film, or if there were details which I wanted to remember but couldn’t, I would make a mental note of those and then visit the cinema for yet another viewing of EWS. As I said in the preface to the Notes I ended up seeing EWS seven times.

Among the most powerful memories I have of watching the film for the very first time are these six: (1) Feeling physically sick to my stomach in the minutes leading up to the beginning of the show, due to reasons including the role Kubrick has played in my intellectual development, his recent death and the dreadful and awesome knowledge that this would be the very last time we would be surprised by a new Kubrick film. (2) Extreme disorientation and discomfort following the end of the film, due specifically to the shock I felt at discovering how ‘faithful’ a translation of the Schnitzler EWS was. [For a year leading up to the release of EWS I had lived with Schnitzler’s novel *Dream Story* in the Otto P. Schinnerer translation (which I am convinced was the text Kubrick and Raphael used) and published by Sun & Moon Classics (now out-of-print) in Los Angeles.] That is to say, during my first viewing of the film, Schnitzler was close-up in my thoughts and Kubrick’s subtle effects were somewhat farther away. To be blunt, I wasn’t sure what the heck I had just seen. *A first viewing of a Kubrick film is only a formality to get out of the way so that you can watch it again and again and again.* (3) The virtuoso pacing of the film culminating in Part III which I felt ended abruptly in “mid-stream”. (As if akin to Dr. Bill switching off the Shostakovich musical selection in mid-swell at the beginning of the film.) I thought that the film could have gone on and on, that it had entered “the zone” that athletes fondly speak of. Interestingly, this feeling of EWS ending in mid-stream was lessened if not completely lost from the second viewing on! (4) The weird and uncanny effect of the spoken dialogue broken away from a view of the characters’ faces in the scenes at Somerton where characters speak from behind masks. (5) The weird and uncanny shot of a close-up of Dr. Bill’s hand (in leather glove) holding the white envelope with ‘Dr. Bill Harford’ printed on the front, with a glimpse of the blue gate of Somerton in the background. As with 3, so the uncanny effects of 4 and 5 were also pretty much lost from my second viewing on. (6) The beauty of the film grain (100% lost on DVD).

I think I should apologize for the breezy style of the concluding pages of the above Notes: I bristle when I notice what I glossed over or omitted: I am kicking myself that I didn’t throw all responsibility to the wind at the time and give the project my complete concentration until I made my way through the film from start to finish without any compromises. If only . . . ! (Reading this document over in 2003, it drove me crazy to keep seeing, ‘for more on this point, see below’—because in most cases alas there is no below!) My only defence is that at the time I realized that to continue on would have necessitated another month or two (at least) of concerted work—and not only was I exhausted but I had other projects and responsibilities which were screaming for my full attention. (It is hammered home to me right here and now how odious excuses-for-not-working are, even if these excuses are seen to be justified at the time.) I am presently immersed in a long-term writing project which, when completed, will free me up for a variety of pursuits, including the continuation of my “Notes on *Eyes Wide Shut*”, which will obviously be a book-length study.

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