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Silence in Adventure Games and Space
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As video and computer games have evolved from the simple objective of the collection of as many points as possible before losing, into something of a more complicated nature, the narrative structure has become increasingly similar to the style found in films and novels. The graphics of games have become more and more realistic, bringing with it reactions of both worry and wonder. Sound too has also evolved into a significantly more sophisticated form, starting out as catchy chip-tunes beeping out of a mono-speaker to a full-fledged surround experience, with orchestrated music and real life sounds weaving into a mix that can sound incredibly convincing. Every now and then though, there is something in a game that sticks out, namely silence. If a game becomes silent for a period of time it often gives us pause; it is then a moment to take in the scene instead of being bombarded with musical cues. When it comes to literature, silence is more problematic, as silence is largely a cinematic tool, mostly connected to the lack of sound or dialogue. In my research, I analyze *2001: A Space Odyssey*, by Stanley Kubrick, along with its novel version by the same name, by Arthur C. Clarke, as well as *Machinarium*, a point-and-click Adventure Game for the PC developed by Amanita Design. My goal is to examine the relationship between the printed text, and film mediums and the interactive medium of computer games. I aim to investigate how silence is represented in printed text and film, and how this has affected the narrative of adventure games.

The classic point-and-click adventure games by developers such as *Sierra Entertainment* and *LucasArts* are quite easy to associate with other more literary narratives. They adopt many techniques from film and printed texts in order to produce engaging storylines. Games such as *Monkey Island* contain large amounts of text, used to describe the game world and its objects, as well as the events that take place in it. While the graphics are very much part of the nostalgia that many gamers experience when discussing or reading about the game, it is usually the story that most remember. The story itself is a highly imaginative and mostly hysterical one, with a main character who is very easy to identify with. As a story with so much text in it, it might therefore be tempting to compare it to a printed text. Julian Kücklich in his essay *"Literary Theory and Computer Games"* claims: "While it should certainly not be the aim of literary studies to assimilate computer games in such a way, we must keep in mind that by simply stating that a narrative element exists within them, these comparisons are implicitly made"(4). The interactive nature of a video or computer game makes it somewhat contradictory to the medium itself to make it reliant on a narrative. Some theorists mean that the two cannot possibly be combined in a satisfactory way, while others mean that a joining of the two is natural. This battle between narratologists and ludologists (ludology being the study of play and gaming culture) has somewhat abated by now, and as Kücklich claims in his essay "Perspectives of Computer Game Philology*,"* "many theorists have now turned to individual aspects of digital games, rather than working on an overarching theoretical framework." It is in other words necessary to take a step back from the traditional and common subject of discussion when discussing games, and move into a more focused task, in this case the studying of *silence* in games in relation to films.

Dennus Kurzon makes an attempt at identifying the characteristics of silence in his book *"Discourse of Silence"*. In it, he deals with silence in many different contexts, and starts

with dissecting the very title of the book, asking "what *is* a "discourse of silence"? As he sees it, there are two perspectives from which you can look at the "discourse or silence":

> "(1) A modal perspective of silence, which integrates grammatical, semantic and pragmatic analyses, involving a discussion of the interpretation of silence as an integral part of a conversation, almost exclusively in terms of the question-answer adjacency pair. (2) The syntactic perspective of the transitivization of silence, in which an agent has the power to impose silence on other persons"(3).

He looks at the meaning of the word "silence" from a grammatical perspective as well as a philosophical, using popular novels and even the Bible itself as subjects of discussion. His broad and in-depth look at the very building blocks of the word and its meanings is therefore of value within my research. As he notes in the early chapters of the book, the meaning of silence seems to be a divided one, and he makes an effort to distinguish between the different sorts of silence that exists. His background in philosophy gives the more linguistic chapters an interesting twist. What begins as a simple definition of silence of what he calls "non-speech", soon transforms into an issue at many levels, where the type of situation that the silence has appeared is of great importance. He argues that the many forms of silence also carry with them different meanings and ways to interpret them, therefore further complicating the matter of distinguishing its identity. His very broad investigation of silence is central to my analysis, as I am comparing two different media within my analysis.

Machinarium is an adventure game that goes against the "norm" of its genre, by lacking text entirely. *Machinarium* relies on its compelling visuals and the curiosity of the player to let the story unfold. Communication is done through animated thought-bubbles which depict past events, each time giving the user a bit more background for their character, and no speech or text is involved. In the game, the user is not presented with any introduction

to the game world or any of the problems the player should aim to solve; instead the user is simply dropped into the world to explore it. Since many elements from cinema and even written novels can be found in the adventure game-genre it is easy to draw comparisons intermedially, which is why I choose to highlight an example that somewhat defies the standards that have become associated with the genre through the years. In the game there are several instances within where almost all sound fades and the player is left in silence and contemplation. The silence acts as a way to deepen the experience narratively, where the player is drawn into the situation on another level to connect with the character they play. In addition, there is no regular text-based interaction, otherwise a standard for the genre, and in instead are visual thought-bubbles that appear as one interacts with another character. As with any other visuals, these are open to interpretation, and are not explained in any detailed way. What we witness feels like but a glimpse of the story, and we are free to imagine all the details for ourselves. Silence, therefore, is not only a *lack* (of sound in most cases), but also contributes to the narrative in a meaningful way, increasing the sense of immersion and connection a player feels with the game world.

In *2001: A Space Odyssey,* the film, there is an extensive use of silence in a number of scenes. Kubrick was known for creating films which were a bit peculiar in terms of the traditional Hollywood style, and "*2001*" is no exception in that regard. With the very long takes, and the low amount of verbal communication, he makes it easy to connect with Bowman, one of the main characters, as he makes his way to his goal far away from our planet. It is a truly alien world we get to experience with him, and it becomes clear what a tremendous amount of stress and trauma a human being is subjected to once he is forced into complete isolation with the rest of humanity. With an increasingly paranoid, as well as murderous, artificial intelligence as his only companion, when his crewmates meet their demise one after one, he is truly alone in his endeavor. The film has since its release become a

classic among film watchers, and the novel has often had to remain in the shadow of the giant that is *"2001",* but how does it compare on the subject of silence? Quickly glancing through the text, a first impression would be that it looks surprisingly busy compared to its film counterpart. Silence in a printed text versus silence in a film presents vastly different options. Lack of sound is perhaps the most common tool used in a film to express silence, but one may also investigate how this is executed in the novel. In a traditional novel, there is less room for artistic silence in the way it is presented in a more cinematic experience. Because of the close connection between the film and the novel, Kurzon's more literary analysis of silence is especially interesting to look at when working with *2001: A Space Odyssey.*

The literary heritage of adventure games make them an interesting research subject, as the influences from traditional printed texts are more defined than in other types of computer games. *Machinarium's* departure from the standard text-driven adventure games makes it even more intriguing to analyze in terms of the subject on silence. As an exception within its genre, it provides an interesting example of how much can be preserved in terms of narrative in an entirely text-less game. Even though it does away with text, it still feels and plays just like any other adventure game in most regards, but I argue that the depth of the narrative reaches a far deeper level with the exclusion of text. As the imagination of the individual player takes the place of the writers that generally produce the script of this type of games, each player will have a different perspective of what exactly it was that took place in the game. This type of narrative relates to that of a purely cinematic experience, in this case *2001: A Space Odyssey.* I claim that films such as this have influenced the structure of the point-and-click adventure game genre, with a focus on what differentiates the types of silence one encounters in Kubrick's film and in *Machinarium.* As a film with close ties to the literature, *2001* is an interesting object of analysis.

At first glance, *Machinarium* looks like the average point-and-click adventure game. Much of the focus has often been put on the graphics and the written story. As they evolved from purely textual adventures and was given a graphical interface, the visuals became second in the order or importance. Both characters and worlds have become increasingly believable and the technologies for creating the games continuously improve. All of these elements combine to make the player's experience richer and more interesting. But who decided one needs need to *add* something to improve it? In the first chapters of his book, *Discourse of Silence,* Dennis Kurzon struggles to define the different sorts of silence. He goes from graph to graph, each revision coming a bit closer to a result he believes is most accurate. Beginning by contrasting silence with speech, he relates silence with other types of communication between humans. *Machinarium* is a game of few words, one might say, both in the way the game presents itself to you, and in the way it is structured. Not only is the game unusually quiet in terms of sound effects, but the game never tells you much in advance either. Mostly the user is left alone to figure out where to go next and what item to use where, and accompanied by this is a relative lack of sound. This is something of an experience of loneliness. And just like Kurzon realizes early in his book, silence can take many forms.

Many aspects of games can be compared to films, and more and more elements have been picked up and used in games. While the narrative structure of adventure games have always been quite advanced in comparison to other genres, they have also borrowed heavily from films, especially with the move to graphically based interfaces. The story of the *Monkey Island*-games, some of the, if not *the*, most popular point-and-click adventure games of all time, was heavily inspired by the rollercoaster ride *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and the game has numerous similarities to the film series, starring Johnny Depp, sharing the same inspirational source. Some fans even consider the first film an adaption of the games for the

big screen. Dominic Arsenault explains in his thesis "Narration in the Video Game" his view

on the connection between games and films:

> "interactivity is based on causality (the game system must not give a completely
>
> random response to an action) and temporality (necessarily, the action must precede
>
> the reaction). We can then conclude that as far as action is concerned, games and
>
> stories share the same requirements and are thus naturally fit for mixing: it appears
>
> difficult, if not outright impossible, to think of a game that is not based on causality,
>
> temporality and conflict. That is why the main actions of stories are easily translated in
>
> a game system" (39).

It is however important to note that interaction is what separates the two mediums. And

without a charismatic main character, you would think you are taking a risk by removing this

character's most powerful tool to communicate, namely its voice.

By silencing the protagonist, you can allow the player to decide for themselves who

the character really is. At the end of his book Kurzon concludes: "Beyond speech is not

silence, since silence is an alternative to speech. Beyond and within pragmatics is semiotics"

(130). Within video games, this concept has been quite common. Many of the very popular

and critically acclaimed video games since the dawn of the industry have featured silent

protagonists. These silent main characters have early shown that silence indeed *is* an

alternative to speech, not a lack of it. While in the beginning it might have been a solution

born out of the lack of proper memory space and technology to produce believable sound or

text-based dialogue, it is a phenomenon that has stayed long after the technical limitations

were solved. Perhaps the most obvious example is Nintendo's *The Legend of Zelda*-series,

where the protagonist still in the most recent entries for the series is portrayed as a silent one.

Even though something as fundamental as a voice is missing in the characters, we are still

capable of understanding them. And perhaps it is exactly this silence that does make certain characters so compelling. This is of course highly dependent on the narrative itself, but the fact still remains that it is a trend that does not show any sign of becoming less common. As Kurzon's concluding paragraph argues: the context decides how one makes sense of silence.

In the case of *Machinarium*, and in many other games, it is helpful to also consider whether the silence we experience is diagetic, or non-diagetic (diagetic sound being sound that has an origin in the story world, and non-diagetic sounds coming from outside the story world). The world of *Machinarium* seems to be fully functioning and very much alive, and the thing that sticks out, in comparison to many more organic worlds in other games is the silence. It is a world of machines, machines which in many cases seem to have been built to fulfill a specific purpose. There are vacuum cleaner robots, electrician robots, even bartender and musician robots. The maker of these is someone the user never gets to meet, and somehow it doesn't bother the user, it is simply not important to them. And in this world of purpose-fulfilling machines, there is of course no need for unnecessary, superficial conversation. One has to pose the question: Are these machines also aware of the silence we as players experience? It certainly doesn't seem that way, at least not in *Machinarium*. The robots themselves seem in the nearest oblivious to the fact that their world is eerily quiet. Maybe the speech bubbles we see are mere fragments of the conversation that actually is taking place between the robots? If one looks upon the silence as non-diagetic in this way, it further implies that the player is an alien of their world, that we are visitors, who will leave shortly after our arrival. One is not meant to understand everything one experiences.

In his essay, "Perspectives of Computer Game Philology" Julian Kücklich discusses the fact that many literary theorists regard games as "lesser forms of hypertext," relating it to the another theorists claim that "the development from text adventures to graphic adventures

was interpreted by many as a sign of the genre's decline." According to Phil Goetz, the author he quotes many fans of the text-based adventure games complained about this change in the genre. The simplified stories, as well as the focus on graphics, were something that they didn't like; they wanted back the games of old. What is often forgotten in this context is often the *sound*. Sound also went through a big change in the same period, a change that meant a lot for ambience in games as we know it today. Diagetic sound in the first adventure games that stepped away from the standard text-based formula were reserved for speech, as well as the rare sound effect, but most sound-emphasis was placed on the music: non-diagetic music. This holds true for the *Monkey Island*-games. Looking at the series, diagetic sounds have increased in abundance as the series progressed, in pace with the advances of the technology that was available. *Machinarium* therefore does something especially interesting in removing speech. Even though ambience has become more common in the genre, speech has always been part of the equation, and a big one at that in many cases.

The "speech" bubbles in *Machinarium* fulfill an important role. Instead of implementing the typical text-based interaction you see in most traditional point-and-click games, Amanita Design have opted for a more unique approach. By using animated short films that are shown in the bubbles they let the player fill in the blanks. It is commonly said that a picture is worth a thousand words, and in this case that is definitely true. An image is far more open to interpretation than a text. As most of *Machinarium*'s characters remain silent, except for the occasional animated bubble, the player is left to make sense of the narrative on their own. It is this feeling of loneliness that silence often provokes that makes the game so interesting, and the speech bubbles are an important part of this. Dennis Kurzon makes a relevant point, using Ingmar Bergman's *Tystnaden* (*The Silence*): "[the two characters] finally break the silence, firstly by both being able to appreciate the music, and secondly by both understanding the one word they have in common, which is "muzik."

Music- non-verbal but auditory communication – knows no frontier" (114). This statement is also applicable to visual communication, the kind that *Machinarium* often uses. Where visual cues have replaced the more common auditory ones, but still remain satisfactory. Players are able to understand, and relate to the characters, despite the lack of any verbal- or textual communication. In some cases the interaction is accompanied with something one might argue is verbal: a slight noise coming from within the robots, but it is nothing more than humming, and by no means anything coherent. And yet they make perfect sense.

Making sense of silence can be somewhat tricky though. Kurzon presents three different modal interpretations of silence:

"unintentional "I cannot speak"

intentional – internal (willingness): "I will/shall not speak"

– external: "I must/may not speak" " (44).

In the case of *Machinarium*, the silence in the game should be categorized as unintentional. The way the game treats the silence of non-player characters gives it a feeling of innocence. Innocence in the way that one feels (at the very least slight) pity for many of the robots you encounter during your adventure. There is something inherently sad about the stories told within the game, for they are several, and one never stays with the same problem for any longer period of time. It all revolves around the crime-spree of a robot gang called the "Black Cap Brotherhood, " and most of the bubbles that tell the story are about the various mischievous acts committed by this collection of sinister robots, with a final plot of blowing up a tower in the mechanical city all the robots inhabit. Along with the mood-setting music, silence is what mediates this sadness that is present throughout the entire game. This silence takes on the role of ambience in this game. Ambience usually means the opposite, the addition of sound to make a scene feel more authentic or to create or enhance a specific mood. The

exclusion of ambience in various places conveys a feeling of urgency, that ambience often is *included* to enhance.

In *Film Art: And Introduction*, Gary Rydstrom, a sound editor, explains his views on ambience:

> "[Sound] doesn't have to be in-your-face, traditional big sound effects. You can especially say a lot about the film with ambiences – the sounds for things you don't see. You can say a lot about where they are geographically, what time of day it is, what part of the city they're in, what kind of country they're in, the season it is. If you're going to choose a cricket, you can choose a cricket not for strictly geographical reasons. If there's a certain cricket that has a beat and a rhythm to it, it adds to the tension of the scene" (284).

Just like Rydstrom argues that film ambience holds an important role, the same is true for game ambience. As a result, silence could be looked upon as a step back in development. But, as Rydstrom also claims in the quote above: sound doesn't have to be "in-your-face, traditional sound effects", in fact the removal of said sound can act as an enhancer for the elements that *are* present. Silence can have many uses, and *Machinarium* is a good example for showing some of them. At one time in the game, the player enters an elevator. When you enter this frame, the sound from the previous, quite loud area, immediately disappears, and you are struck by the silence of the small room. The room is sparsely furnished, but the player's eyes are drawn towards the small panel on the side that seems to be malfunctioning. Were the scene of the same character as the one before, with many ambient sounds surround the player's character, this small malfunctioning panel might have easily been missed. Of course, the relative lack of objects to interact with arguable helps a lot as well, but the loss of

sound does affect the situation in a significant way. This is a good example for how silence also can enhance the visual elements present.

Machinarium also portrays a world that has seen some use. It is a world where many things are beginning to fall apart, and we can even see some robots in the process of restoring certain parts of the mechanical city to a functioning condition. In some parts of the city it even feels like a world that is dying. The very opening of the game features something that looks like a robot graveyard, and as a graveyard in our world, it is a silent place. There is not much movement there, with lifeless robotic bodies spread across the ground. As players make their way out of the graveyard, after having reassembled their own body, they will time and time again come across small fragments of a time that is passed. One scene even features a classic arcade hall, where of course the machines look fittingly ancient, and are in less than flawless condition. This feeling of death, or stillness, as the more fitting word might be for a world of robots, is always present, in one way or another. If the player had not stumbled upon some of the locations during the game, it feels as if they would have been left undisturbed, never to be touched again by a sentient being. The sad, dusty grey screens of the arcade machines and the cold dark eyes of the robots in the graveyard all ooze this sense of stillness and emptiness. Just as the case of the speech bubbles, the silence of these places inspires us to imagine. It sets our imagination free, and we immediately start to wonder what these places once might have been.

Machinarium seems to do the impossible. It seems as its emptiness somehow *fills* it. One imagines and thinks upon the world, one becomes immersed with it and explores it in the true sense of the word. Where other games would present players with a lengthy presentation at the beginning of the game, *Machinarium* simply opens its gates and throws the player in there without any warning. It somehow manages to bypass the sense of distaste that many feel

about a linear narrative in a game, by not explaining much about it. Kücklich writes: "irrelevant narrative elements are clearly considered an aberration in narrative theory, while it is quite usual for the player of a computer game to be confronted with seemingly irrelevant information" (4). When first trying to take in the world of *Machinarium* it might indeed seem like it is filled to the brim with mostly irrelevant information. The highly detailed art style, with its incredible density might seem daunting at first, but after one breaches the surface one realizes that these irrelevant details, brought to attention by the silent atmosphere, are what really makes the world feel alive in the game.

2001: A Space Odyssey is a story of many silences. Much like *Machinarium,* it uses silence as a device to affect the experience in many different ways. Kubrick worked together with Arthur C. Clarke, a writer, but also a futurist, and as such, *2001* has a very scientific premise. Clarke assumed that the nature of space pointed at it being devoid of sound, which also made it into the film, and it stands in contrast to many other films taking place in a space environment, in that its depiction of space is silent. Gone are the loud sound effects and in its place is something far more realistic and minimal. The rendition of space in *2001* is an eerie and lonely place, and viewers are encouraged to think for themselves in this piece of unusual science fiction. When Poole is seen flying by outside the window of the Discovery, nothing is heard, and as he tunnels through empty space, constantly shrinking in size, the silence is even more tangible. The loneliness of space and the death it means for us human beings as soon as our equipment fails to do its job. As Bowman rushes to Poole's rescue, he soon realizes that it is too late, but he still proceeds to catch him with the hook-like hands of the pod. One witnesses Bowman, soon to be alone survivor of the expedition, as he picks up his one human companion's lifeless body, and all of this is done in complete and utter silence. The desperation and sadness that Bowman expresses through his silence is quite gripping, and it is

the silence which makes it as strong as it is. The low word count is one of the things in the film that contributes much to its mood and tone.

The central character for the films third part, HAL 9000 shows that he is in most power when he is silent, as he refuses to answer Bowman when he asks him (it?) to open the doors, and let him in. Just before this, when Bowman and Poole are discussing what to do with HAL, in case he is malfunctioning, he reads their lips and finds out that they are plotting against him. In his silence, HAL is a vicious little piece of technology. There is however a fundamental difference in the silence in the two scenes. In the lip-reading scene, Bowman and Poole are unaware of the fact that HAL uses his silence to spy on the two, and therefore, Bowman is caught red-handed when HAL reveals he knows he is planning on disconnecting him. In the former example however, Bowman repeatedly checks his instruments in the pod, to ensure that HAL can hear him, and therefore he knows HAL is withholding his answer. As Kurzon discusses, distance in a conversation can be opened by silence like this. In conclusion of the paragraph, he also notes:

> "paradoxically, although the addressee wishes to signal non-presence by his or her silence, for the addresser or observer this silence is indicative of the addressee's actual presence. By remaining silent when expected to speak, the addressee is in fact drawing attention to him- or herself" (19).

And this holds true for the conversation between HAL and Bowman in the pod, as Bowman tries to communicate with his computer companion aboard the ship, he knows for sure that he should be heard by him, yet he seems to not be. When HAL finally does answer, it becomes clear that he was reluctant to answer in the first place, and his final phrase "Dave, this conversation can serve no purpose anymore. Goodbye", after which he promptly stops

responding to Bowman's cries to him. In this case, HAL clearly used his silence as a way to exercise power towards Bowman.

As mentioned above, Poole and Bowman decided to hide away in one of the pods in order to escape HAL's omnipresence aboard the ship. It is a Big Brother-like situation, and it causes great discomfort for the crew. In the presentation of the HAL 9000 computer, he is said to be a technological wonder, close to being human, even surpassing its human creators in some regards, but as the ominous black screen at the beginning of the film suggests, something isn't right. The computer shows its first sign of weakness, when he incorrectly reports that a part of the ship will malfunction within 72 hours, urging the crew to switch out the faulty piece of machinery. Before this, the only things one has experienced of HAL were of a positive nature.

In the novel written by Arthur C. Clarke, one is given a very thorough description of almost everything. What one sees in Kubrick's film though is something very different. As Irena Paulus notes in her essay *"Stanley Kubrick's revolution in the Usage of Film Music: 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)":"*It is interesting that Kubrick never (apart from the movie's title) mentions the year 2001. So we do not know if Dr Heywood Floyd had touched the monolith or if the Discovery (18 months later, says the intertitle) has begun its mission to Jupiter in 2001" (9). It seems Kubrick was far more willing to let the audience form their own opinion and idea of when and what exactly happens in many of the scenes of the film. It could of course be argued that this lack of descriptions is to the benefit of the viewer, as some things are quite impossible to imagine, had one not read the novel beforehand. It becomes quite apparent that the two were written and released almost simultaneously for a reason. Without the aid of the novel, many of the dividing points of the story and even some of the crucial moments, such as the psychedelic ride at the end, are vague and difficult to make sense of.

But if one were to look at the story as an art piece instead of a science fiction film, the silence and odd choice of music starts to make more sense, and instead of being focused on facts (like Clarke's novel) the film's openness becomes its whole point. *2001*, the film, becomes an exploration, rather than an explanation, and is therefore both more vague and more free in terms of interpretation by the individual audience member.

In the very beginning of Arthur C. Clarks novel, one is confronted with silence; the first of many. The ape-men who inhabit the world that are presented in the first chapters of *2001: A Space Odyssey* has, like many other primates we know, no way of communicating with speech. Instead, they use their bodies' other forms of communication, mainly the non-verbal ones. As one proceeds through the story being told, the ape-men are presented with different problems they have to solve, which they generally *do* solve, albeit a bit crudely and sometimes with violence. Even though they seem to belong to various groups, there doesn't seem to be any greater sense of loyalty, ape-men between, but they still stick together in order to increase their chances of survival. What one has there is one of the basic forms of community. Translating this to film, the voice the ape-man in focus in the novel disappears, and it is reduced to a sometimes hysterical display of men in ape-costumes. That is however, one of the films strengths, compared to the novel. Without verbal communication, we are still able to follow what is happening, without any narrative voice of Moon-Watcher, as in the novel. Other than the text "The Dawn of Man" displayed before this part of the narrative begins, we are given no context. We are gradually introduced to the setting. Kubrick reveals small portions at a time, until the ape-men are presented to us on screen. They go about their regular business, and we are left to guess what their thoughts would be. It is a bold, not to say shocking, move, but a move that works, going away from the novel's more restricting structure.

Traditionally in film production a soundtrack matches what is seen on screen, something which is rare in *2001*. The usage, and non-usage, of "fitting" sound in the film seems oddly natural, something that might have been connected to the alien settings used in the film. As space is devoid of air there can be no vibrations from which sound could emanate, and thus the scenes where the characters are moving in space are mostly silent. One instead hears the sound the character focused on presently would hear in his place, or as in the case of when the scientists are approaching the monolith found on the moon, music is heard. It is therefore clearly divided in diagetic and non-diagetic types of sound. The music in the film is all in the non-diagetic category, whereas the film also employs a highly realistic sound effect library, with all other sound being diagetic. As mentioned before, the film cannot truthfully be called silent, as many of the musical pieces are at a quite high volume, as well as the breathing sounds. The manipulation of sound paired with different imagery, contrasting or matching each other, can have an incredible effect on the viewer. In this case, using a familiar piece of classical music, or a waltz contrasts the unfamiliar settings, as Kubrick opted for a non-traditional music score, composed specifically for the film, but for pre-existing classical music written outside the film production team. Not only did this lead to some controversy surrounding the composer intended to write the score for the film, a score which was later scrapped completely, but also lead to some viewers already having connections to the pre-existing music he chose. The classical pieces in the film seem quite displaced on occasion, and in the scene where the stewardess is bringing the food-boxes, it seems downright inappropriate. While the score Kubrick picked may at times be a tough match for what is shown on screen, it does give a good example of experimentation with the media form at the time it was made.

The film repeatedly uses silence combined with noise as a tool to draw attention to something. The hiss of the oxygen tubes in the scenes where a character is outside the

Discovery is at first very noticeable, but after a minute the breathing by either Poole or Bowman takes the place as most prominent, even though the sound level of the hiss never changes. When the scene is ended abruptly, the silence hits the viewer. This silence works as a way to emphasize what is shown in the scene after, as well as contributing to the drawn out tension of the spacewalk-scenes. In *Film Art: An Introduction*, Bordwell and Thompson state: "sound gives a new value to silence. A quiet passage in a film can create almost unbearable tension, forcing the viewer to concentrate on the screen" (270). The breathing of Poole and Bowman is after some time reduced to something similar to white noise and it helps stretching the time even longer in the minds of the audience at they sit and watch how slowly everything seems to move outside the Discovery. Even though the sound level of both the breathing and the oxygen hiss is quite high, in time one begins to perceive the scene as silent. Just as in normal life one considers a person silent, even though one can hear their breathing, in the same way one identifies the sound effects in the spacewalk scenes to be signs of silence. Dennis Kurzon examines the relationship between stillness and noise: "Although noise and stillness cannot be co-occurrent, movement and silence may be". And while normally breathing is not regarded noise, this scene makes an exception. The breathing one hears is what Bowman himself hears, and outside his pod is absolute stillness and silence. As Kurzon argues, noise and stillness is not present in the same spaces of *2001* either, the inside of the pod contains all the movement and noise, whereas the stillness and silence exists outside it. However, the scene is still perceived as silent, can in this case the noise be called *silence*? As in *Machinarium*, what silence *is* depends on the context.

It happens on several occasions that characters in the film communicate with someone back home on Earth. First it is Dr. Floyd that calls his home and talks to his daughter, and later it is between Frank Poole and his family, as well as between the crew and home base. The peculiar fact about these transmissions is that they are completely one-sided; they are

effectively monologues, monologues that are expected to be answered at a later date, much like a regular letter, or e-mail. It suggests that a greater distance is placed between the contact*or* and the contact*ed*. The fact that it was a conscious choice to make communication with Earth so primitive is boggling, as the time it was made was a time for experimentation in the science fiction-genre. It seems a deliberate effort was made in order to make the setting of the Discovery, and space too, as lonely as possible. Reminiscent of the machine city of *Machinarium*, and not unlike a grave, Discovery floats quietly through space, with most of its passengers sleeping, locked away in sarcophagus-like boxes until the arrival at their destination. In a way, this almost conservative science fiction, where the emphasis is oftentimes placed more on the *science* than the *fiction*, contributes to the immense feeling of loneliness and vastness that space has in this rendition of it.

The very first screen one gets to see as the film starts is a black screen. At the same time, music starts playing. The music is quite ominous and it suggests that what we are about to see is something horrifying. It sets the mood, and raises our expectations as we are given nothing but an auditory cue. Irena Paulus explains the opening black screen as way of calming viewers:

> "The main title functions as an announcement: Ligeti's Atmospheres is not an energetic or bombastic work (as is the major part of Hollywood music for the main titles), but because of the connection with the dark screen, it takes over the function of the announcement. It is the sign for moviegoers to stop talking and calm down, because the film is just beginning" (8).

So by using a specific imagery (in this case a black image), and certain accompanying music, it is possible to force silence upon the audience. It is especially interesting to compare this to the later part in the film where this happens again. The difference at the later occasion

being that the text "intermission" is being shown in the middle of the black image. By adding this short simple text, this sign of silence is immediately removed, and instead implies the opposite: The intermission is the time for discussion and also the time of the viewing where the audience is advised to visit the restrooms and the like. Kubrick has here proved that silence can be important off-screen too, as he forces silence upon the viewers with his almost oppressive score and sound effects. Jesse Schell discusses the power of music in his book *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses*:

> "Restaurants use this method all the time. Fast music makes people eat faster, so during a lunch rush, many restaurants play high energy dance music, because faster eating means more profits. And of course, during a slow period, like three in the afternoon, they do the opposite. An empty restaurant often is a sign of a bad restaurant, so to make diners linger, they play slow music, which slows down the eating and makes customers consider ordering an extra cup of coffee or a dessert. Of course, the patrons don't realize this is happening — they think they have total freedom over their actions" (292).

Even though the film is so closely connected to the novel by Arthur C. Clarke, there are many differences to be found. Many of the silent scenes or takes in the film are not perceived the same in the novel. The film has done a lot of work in making the story feel a bit less dense, while abandoning the safety of textual and scientific descriptions. It can be experienced as a bit hard to take in at times, but in many ways, the openness of the narrative makes it an interesting subject of discussion, as different viewers might come up with completely different experiences, with the ending being the most discussed part of the film. As one travels through a sea of colours heading one's way, with patterns swirling back and forth, there is no description whatsoever trying to explain what one is seeing. One is thrown

into this rather abruptly after one has seen the monolith float around in space, and it ends up coming as a surprise. In this context, the silence in the scene might not be desirable for everyone, but it does however make the film more of an *adventure* to watch. The general silence of the film and its narrative makes it completely impossible to guess beforehand what every audience member will take out of it. It breeds discussions and causes people to think, which something that was overly explained would not have done in the same way. The experience becomes what one makes it.

The attitude of letting the users decide for themselves what exactly is transpiring in the story told was standard in most early video games. However, it stands quite clear that a more straightforward, cinematic approach to storytelling within games has now become the norm. There are numerous examples of this, experiences that offer something more alike an interactive film, rather than a "game." Many of these examples are popular, and critically acclaimed, and stand with impressive multimillion sales figures to prove it. *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots* is a game released for the Playstation 3 in 2008. Out of the estimated 20-30 hours of playtime, of which around 8 hours are so called "cut-scenes", or "cinematics": animated short films that often are used to further the storyline in games. That means between almost one third or up to one half of your total play time would be comprised by cut-scenes. It even says the game will offer a "Cinematic Experience" on the back of the box. This focus on extended cinematic elements in a game is addressed in "Introduction to Game Development": "If the cinematics are not integrated into the design as part of gameplay (e.g., to move along the story), you should seriously consider eliminating or at least relegating them to a small role outside of gameplay" (754). Even though the book has a whole chapter focused on the various cinematic techniques one might employ in the development of a video game, the very first paragraph of the chapter warns the reader about the pitfalls of using them.

In the great abundance of games which rely heavily on cinematics in order to tell a story, it is especially interesting when a game like *Machinarium* pops up. With its silence along with intricately hand drawn visuals, it stood out on an island of its own in the sea of special effects that is the video game market of today. The simplicity of game objective and execution definitely has much in common with its predecessors of the genre. In an interview, when discussing the declining popularity of point-and-click adventure games, Ron Gilbert, one of the creators of the *Monkey Island*-series claims:

> "It isn't that modern gamers don't have the patience for adventure games. Because, to me, one of the great things about adventure games is: when I'm playing a good adventure game it's really about this quiet contemplation. It's about *me,* sitting at the computer, having fun, *thinking* about this game. And I think a lot of adventure game puzzle solving happens when you're *not* at the computer."

He goes on to argue that when playing an adventure game, the player often takes a break, goes somewhere else, and thinks of how to progress in the game, while *not* playing the game. As part of a genre that over the years has borrowed extensively from cinema in order to tell more engaging stories, *Machinarium* proves that it is possible to use cinematic elements, such as silence, in video games, without detracting from the amount of interactivity of the game. *Machinarium*, much like *2001: A Space Odyssey* causes the audience to actively think about the experience they are having, letting their imagination do the work. Silence, in its many forms, opens up the experience to individual interpretation and encourages users to explore in their own way. In the hands of a skilled author, silence can have both controlling as well as liberating effects.

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