3001: The Final Odyssey Short Guide

3001: The Final Odyssey by Arthur C. Clarke

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Contents

Characters

The main character in the novel is Lieutenant Commander Frank Poole. In 2001: A Space Odyssey, Poole is apparently killed as the computer, HAL, takes control of the spaceship Discovery. Dave Bowman seals Poole's body in a small space pod called a "hibernaculum," and sends it off into the unknown. In 3001: The Final Odyssey, Poole's pod is detected near the fringes of the solar system and is recovered by a "space tug," pulled from its duty of wrapping ice-laden comets to be sent toward Mars or Venus. Poole is brought back to life by means unspecified, and is slowly oriented to the life and times of the year 3001.

At Star City, Poole is medically monitored by Professor Anderson, and must slowly adjust to normal daily activities.

Since he has been in space nearly a thousand years, he resides in a section of Africa Tower having lighter gravity than the surface of the Earth. The physical stresses of returning to walking, talking, eating, and sleeping pose few difficulties in the long run. The psychological effects of awaking to a society almost a millennium more advanced than Poole's own take more adjustment. At first, his education comes through blended archaic television documentaries. Subsequently Poole accepts the Braincap which is standard for the world of 3001.

In early stages of adjustment, Poole feels quite isolated. Massive losses in data some centuries prior to his recovery have cut off the possibility of tracing any of his old family connections. And while his guardians can supply floods of information about the social and technical changes of the past, they also realize Poole's need for human discourse and contacts. Dr. Indra Wallace, a historian who is electronically affiliated with Cam bridge University, gives Poole periodic historical and cultural updates. Although Poole forms a strong friendship with Wallace during his reorientation, they do not settle into the roles of lovers and parents until after Poole has grazed through a series of casual sexual encounters with women screened from among the thousands who hope to meet the celebrity astronaut from the past.

In Poole and his integration with Fourth millennium society, Clarke renders as much depth of character as a reader will find in the novel. Enough details about thoughts and actions are provided to advance the plot, yet like most characters Clarke sketches when writing alone, Poole offers readers a somewhat superficial personality. His passion is space exploration. He admits yearnings for old family connections. He is said to have dated a variety of women before settling into relationship with Indra Wallace. Then, after fifteen years in the family unit, Poole leaves with the usual generalization that Indra and he will always be good friends, and they will still do things together for the sake of the children. The intense conflicts which erupt in everyday life among real human beings seem about a light year away from Poole's heart and mind. His strongest emotional response results when his first potential lover rejects him because he is a circumcised male. Regardless of the family relationship with Indra Wallace and the children, the

significant relationship in the plot is Poole's working contact with his former crew mate, Dave Bowman.

Bowman functions in 3001 as a disembodied mind, an occasional projection or hologram beamed into the presence of Poole to convey or receive information.

Bowman's consciousness seems blended with that of HAL, the computer of the space ship Discovery on which Poole and Bowman had served in 2001. Functionally a part of the alien sentience operating in the monolith system, Bowman knows a considerable amount about human activity in the solar system, and makes some inferences about the nature and intentions of the alien civilization monitoring humans from five hundred light years away. The aliens, operating through the monoliths implanted on Earth, the Moon, and Europa, had ignited Jupiter to form a second sun in the solar system and had fostered the new sulphur-based creatures in the seas of Europa. From the human perspective, the alien force has the power to create and to destroy entire star systems. Poole and the Europa Committee succeed in disrupting the function of the monoliths only because the Bowman-HAL consciousness is still sufficiently self-aware to choose to work against the more powerful system that uses it. "Halman" accepts a set of Trojan Horse computer programs into the alien system. The disruption triggers the withdrawal of the monoliths and their power to alter human progress. The heroic human race will continue shaping its own destiny, pushing at the frontiers of knowledge on its own.

At the last, the Bowman-HAL sentience returns to Poole in a datacube for long term storage. Infected with Trojan Horse programming, the abstracted personalities must wait till future programmers can devise a scan-and-clean program to purify their code and allowing them to resume function among humans and their evolving technologies.

Dr. Theodore "Ted" Khan believes there is something wrong in the wiring of the human brain that makes humans nasty and brutal—a belief that seems a recasting of the Judaeo-Christian notion of "Original Sin"—yet he links the distortion only to "Religion," and not to the even more pervasive abuses of power in political life that have often sent people even of similar religious beliefs to kill one another for the sake of a favored language, for the sake of skin color or racial group, for the sake of nationalistic or imperialistic "patriotism," or for the simple lust for power over others. Khan strongly believes the Bowman-HAL consciousness can answer Khan's questions about the origins of life in the universe and the distortions he sees in human nature, and he urges Poole to attempt contact with them.

Social Concerns

Arthur C. Clarke uses 3001: The Final Odyssey, the last novel of the "Odyssey"series, to sketch a Utopian humanity taking charge of its own destiny. Humans have come close to perfection in individual health, welfare, and opportunities for education and achievement. Humanity is collectively expanding Earth's usable habitat, is working to reshape the environs of Mars and Venus for eventual colonization, and is alert to any threats from outside forces.

In his characteristic sweeps of generalization, Clarke offers a grand view of human progress and survival. Recovered from a "hibernaculum" or space pod en route out of the solar system, Frank Poole, one of the casualties when the computer HAL took over the ship Discovery in 2001: A Space Odyssey (1982; see separate entry), is returned to Earth's Star City. As Poole's elite caretakers orient the resurrected astronaut to their advanced society and its history, Clarke delivers visions of fantastically improved technology and social patterns, yet only rarely touches on their steps of development, and often ignores engineering, medical, sociological, and psychological ramifications of the fictional advances.

The society which has revived Poole in the year 3001 not only has spread out across the solar system from Earth, but also has built a massive wheel, Star City, parallel to Earth's equator, and connected to the planet by four towers, one each in Africa, Asia, America, and Pacifica. Much of Earth's population lives in the towers.

A reduced population resides in cities still on the planet itself. Poole, as a spacefarer, has no questions about the engineering challenges of constructing foundations for towers that reach into space. He is amazed, though, that the elevators within the towers can traverse hundreds of miles in minutes and yet compensate for gravitational forces so well that the passengers barely sense any movement at all.

Within the towers, environments of forests and gardens, deserts, and urban neighborhoods of many historical and futuristic architectural designs thrive.

Within living units, walls can display scenery of any known environment past or present, or art of any known society, accompanied by natural sounds or music as desired. Environmental controls—in terms of architecture, urban planning, and personal choices in social groupings, arts, and entertainment—seem practically perfect. While Poole hears that problems of pollution have been solved, he pays scant attention to whatever methods of waste management have kept the new, improved culture from poisoning itself and in its now-purer Earth.

By the year 3001, space travel has not actually originated from the planet's surface for four centuries. Space craft work from the outer rim of Star City.

Given that Star City extends out into regions that the earlier human society had filled with working satellites and thousands of pieces of space junk, Poole asks his guide, Dr.

Indra Wallace, about problems that satellites and traveling detritus pose for the structure. She states that a massive clean-up program cleared the region. Also, Earth and other inhabited sites in the solar system are protected from meteor threats by the Space Guard program that monitors all detectable entities approaching the solar system.

Residents of Star City consume synthesized food and drink. While Poole enjoys the variety of menu, his palate senses the many flavors are slightly dull. His guardians explain that synthesized meals are far less expensive than "corpse-food." Animal products had become economically impossible to raise and process. Thus Clarke poses a society which has essentially turned vegetarian (or "synthetarian"?).

Individual education and collective social progress in the culture of 3001 have been radically improved by broad acceptance of the Braincap. Most people elect permanent hair removal to ease their use of a sophisticated helmet that allows intake of massive amounts of information and images. Clarke poses the development as positive in several respects. The preliminary scans needed to adapt a human to the Braincap programming allow detection of mental aberrations, and most persons prone to criminal behavior can be identified and treated prior to committing antisocial or criminal acts. Those who still go undetected and manage to violate laws can be sentenced to periods of "control" only vaguely mentioned by Dr. Indra Wallace, who explains that the process has allowed elimination of prisons entirely.

The average person using the Braincap can download information and entertainment in greater volume and intensity than any other mode can provide. The system has caused injury and death to millions over several centuries due to severe overloads self-inflicted by persons addicted to certain forms of stimulus. Still, Braincap has raised educational levels of the general population significantly, and has, in particular, eliminated antisocial behaviors ascribed to religious fanaticism.

Poole gets no significant comments about top leadership or government structure in Star City or the other inhabited areas of the solar system. Indra Wallace tells Poole that her doctoral thesis focused on "Collapse of the Nation-State: 2000-50." In the Fourth Millennium, political systems can be run through cybersimulation to check viability before actual implementation. Clarke injects occasional capsule opinions on systems of rule. Communism he characterizes as a system which could have worked had microchips been available for human implants in the time communism was a growing political force. He presents democracy with some necessary limits on individual greed as the most practical governmental system. In total, though, the story line and its situational descriptions offer very few explanations as to how human government, the economies of Earth and its apparent colonies, and its research outposts actually function. A reader might construe this as a slight echo of the old Marxist contention that, once "new human beings" were perfected through the discipline of the dictatorship of the proletariat, government structure could wither away. More likely, though, the lack of description of government results from Clarke's overriding concern with the venturers in society who keep pushing away from Earth toward the stars.

In this novel more than some of his earlier works, Clarke gives focused criticism of religion as a negative force in human society. Dr. Theodore Khan, a character important in the later plot development, is a good friend of Indra Wallace who styles Khan as "angry at God." Khan tells Poole that he studies the "psychopathology of Religion." In prior novels, such as Cradle (1988; see separate entry) and in the Rama (The Garden of Rama, 1991; see separate entry) series, Clarke has previously set in play "science versus religion" debates through use of characters with differing views— some religious, some agnostic or atheistic or humanistic. In 3001, however, Ted Khan's antireligious rhetoric is stronger and longer than any of the countering or moderating views offered by other characters.

Techniques

Readers do not approach a Clarke novel expecting the lush style of William Faulkner. They will find no surprises in 3001: The Final Odyssey. Chapters are typically short, some little more than two pages long, and others being three, five, or seven pages. A few stretch to eleven or twelve pages. The chapters are themselves grouped in five sections with their own section titles. When the plot carries Poole back into space, communicating indirectly with Indra Wallace and others by long distance telecommunication, several chapters consist of "messages" sent and received via the correspondents' electronic "personal secretaries." In this mode, Clarke echoes the early beginnings of the English novel in which stories were composed of a protracted exchange of letters, to form an "epistolary novel."

To keep the story in a present-day reader's perspectives, Clarke makes many allusions to documented events and social developments. He also uses fictional allusions as a way of filling in the history that Poole has missed between 2001 and 3001.

Some allusions show up in chapter titles.

As an example of all three factors, Chapter Eight, "Return to Olduvai," uses the name of the gorge in Tanzania where twentieth-century paleontologists Drs.

Louis and Mary Leakey first excavated remains of paranthropus, a form of anthropoid ape. Clarke builds on the reference by citing a discovery in the year 2513: another alien monolith buried several meters below the level at which the Leakeys had worked. Also, when touring a magnificent biome in Asia Tower with Indra Wallace, Poole discovers the gardeners are not robots but trained raptors, and reflects on seeing Jurassic Park movies which date from the twentieth century.

On numerous occasions, the novel involves allusions to or quotations of Christian scripture and parallels to traditional Christian imagery. As Chapter Fourteen closes, for example, Poole looks out from the space ship Goliath at the curve of Star City, the extension of habitat encircling Earth and perpetually under construction. He reflects that "it was awe-inspiring to think that the human race had now set this sign upon the heavens." Both the building of towers that "reach to the heavens" and the phrasing "set this sign upon the heavens" derive from Old Testament stories. The former resonates with the story of the Tower of Babel which the ancient Hebrew tradition used as an explanation for the existence of separate languages and the dispersion of humans in squabbling groups across the known world. The latter echoes the portion of the story of Noah in the Book of Genesis. When the Great Flood subsided, the story goes, a rainbow appeared in the sky, "set as a sign in the heavens" that such devastation by flood would never happen again.

The basic plot of 3001 works as a secular parallel to a basic summary of Christian tradition. While Christ is posed in Christian doctrine as resurrected from the dead in order to atone for humanity's sins and to qualify believers for eternal life in a blissful

heaven, Poole, in 3001, is posed as resurrected from the dead to become the contact between human society and the Bowman-HAL consciousness which has already transcended material existence, and has already seen a limited portion of some great beyond.

While the Christian doctrine points to an empty tomb and a joyful eternity described with various images of city, royalty and faithful souls among supernatural beings, the 3001 pattern ends with Poole and his human society looking forward to a richer life in the material world, and the Bowman-HAL consciousness confined to a data cube infected with the set of Trojan Horse programs that won humanity its independence—and the data cube is consigned to the top-security Tycho Vault— in effect, a tomb—on the moon.

Appropriating familiar terms and images from the traditions connected with an anthropomorphic view of God, Clarke sets them to use in ways that focus on the expanding capacities of humankind.

Interestingly enough, while this resists some Christian authoritarian perspectives on the role of humans in the universe, it resonates well with certain Jewish interpretations of Old Testament stories that construe the ancient heroes as growing increasingly independent of the Creator.

Just as Clarke's thrusts of imagination posit technological leaps without often examining the necessary incremental discoveries of materials and methods that could produce them, so too his portrayal of "Religion" as "The Madness of Mankind" is hedged with only modest acknowledgment—in Indra Wallace's discussions with Poole—of timeless art, architecture, and music arising from religious inspiration in many traditions, and with admission of some intellectual contributions of Jesuits in the Roman Catholic tradition. In so doing, the novel displays a spirited but simplistic branding of religious traditions. Even as Clarke gives little sense of governmental structure in the "modern" culture of the novel, he fails to acknowledge the power of the tribe over the individual, that long-standing tradition of supporting governments with military traditions, governments that sometimes adopt or support a certain religion over all others, and that sometimes target certain races or religions for subjugation or extermination.

To the extent Ted Khan and other characters evince cultural trends in their advanced society, they show a selective reaction to abuses arising from or within religious groups, and repeat twentieth century antireligious cliches without addressing the appearance of violent, irrational behavior in all the other social and political contexts in which it arises. In fact, Clarke draws Khan with "true believer" intensity in his opposition to religion, and allows him the propagandist's ploy of the rhetorical "false dichotomy"—approaching a complex subject with only two options—the speaker's view, or the "wrong" view. Unfortunately, for all the tribute given to rational use of the intellect in his Sources and Acknowledgments at the close of the novel, Clarke himself indulges in the false dichotomy form of presentation, too: One may be religious OR sane, but not both. So doing, he excludes the possible "middle term" of "non-rational" experience that many

other serious thinkers would group with the options of "rational" and "irrational" states of being.

Thus, he employs the same logical fallacy of argument that many a religious leader (and many a modern advertiser, and almost every human in an argument) has used, setting up a favored "us" or ingroup with "correct thought" against a "them" which suffers "incorrect thought."

Clarke is at his best when he interprets scientific matters to a popular audience.

In 3001, he again draws both on imaginative leaps from current science and technology, and from published materials, popular and professional. Chapter Four of the novel, "A Room with a View" poses a good example. Poole first sees the Earth from an observation room, miles high in Star City's Africa Tower.

The chapter itself comprises six pages of text. In his background comments for that chapter, Clarke takes up four pages with discussion of his 1982 meeting with Yuri Artsutanov, a Russian engineer who proposed laying a cable between the earth and a satellite in geostationary orbit, a summary of the discovery of buckminsterfullerene (C60) a tubular form of carbon stronger than diamond, synthesized at Rice University, the potential that C60 would allow construction on the massive scale of his fictional Star City, and so on. His comments on sources combine conversational summaries of meetings with scientists and futurists, mentions of newspaper or magazine articles, as well as full bibliographic citations of technical and theoretical articles in professional and academic journals.

Themes

A basic premise of Clarke's science fiction is that the universe produces life.

For better or for worse, life develops and evolves. Rudimentary life forms evolve into sentient beings. Sentient beings develop technologies which enable them to either destroy themselves or, eventually, to grow beyond the need for material bodies and into some form of higher consciousness which becomes one with the essence of the universe. Aspects of this premise are implied or stated in Clarke's prior stories. They are explicitly summarized in the first chapter of 3001.

The human race is portrayed as either "seeded" or "cultured" by some alien race which roams the universe fostering other life forms. This pattern presents humans as a lesser type still fighting to progress toward better control of its environment and its capabilities while it is monitored and occasionally manipulated by the alien civilization. Humanity risks termination by the aliens if the race makes too little progress or wreaks too much destruction.

Dave Bowman, absorbed by the alien system, could be considered "evolved" to the postmaterial status Clarke uses in his fiction as the ultimate goal of a civilization, but the human race in general has not made the leap to the nonmaterial.

Bowman was taken over by the alien system. Thus, defying the alien power shows the essential independence of the human mind and spirit.

With the theme of progress, Clarke builds the premise that organized religion is insanity, more destructive than positive.

Most of the several characters populating 3001 have little to say about matters of religion. Preparing Poole to meet Ted Khan, Indra Wallace makes remarks that moderately cushion or counter Khan's strong point of view. Unlike some earlier Clarke novels, however, 3001 brings no other character differing with Khan into the action with force equal to his.

In the culture of 3001, old religious traditions have largely faded away, and social conformities generally spread through use of the Braincap. The word "God" itself has grown to be a repulsive reminder of primitive religious oppression and warfare. People of the 3001 era commonly hold a generalized belief in a Creator or Prime Cause. "Theists" believe there is no more than one God, and "Deists" believe there is no less than one.

Society sorted through the names of gods from many past religions before settling on the Latin "deus" and the Greek "theos" as the least objectionable ones. Doctrinally, people believe, Indra Wallace says, "as little as possible."

The population of Earth at the planet's surface has stabilized at a sustainable size.

However, this fact is again conveyed through quick generalization with no comment on the how society achieved the stabilization. Thus, the plot presumes a society in which casual sexual encounters apparently carry no medical or social liabilities.

Key Questions

In his long writing career, Clarke has consistently offered his readers grand visions of the great beyond, and imaginative developments extending from both the known and the possible. Science fiction done well often combines science writing and sheer fantasy. In 3001: The Final Odyssey, Clarke closes the Odyssey tetralogy with a good mix of the real and the speculative. Yet the bold concepts of change in technology and social patterns his works pose often leave many unanswered questions about what might actually lead from present realities toward the Utopian future.

1. The first chapter of 3001 describes the work of a race of beings which eventually evolved past the need for flesh-andblood bodies or even sophisticated machines to contain their consciousness. As Clarke describes these superior beings, do they work as scientists managing experiments in laboratories? How efficient and attentive are they to the races they nurture? Should they be monitoring more closely and intervening in the evolutionary cycle more immediately? Why should humans worry about the control of the unseen master race?

2. By the time Poole is again active in space travel in 3001, how many alien monoliths have been found in the solar system? Where are they located? What do humans learn —or guess—of their functions? Why do the monoliths disappear?

Does their removal guarantee that humans are free of any future alien control?

3. The planet Jupiter has a diameter approximately 86,000 miles. Its rotation around the sun takes almost 12 earthyears, and its mean distance from the sun is 483 million miles. Earth's mean distance from the sun is 93 million miles.

How realistic is the premise of Jupiter igniting and serving as a sun to its own satellites? Could the scenario Clarke has used in the Odyssey novels occur without causing changes in the orbits of the rest of the planets? Could it occur without changing light levels, cycles of day and night, tides and climatic conditions on earth?

4. Why does Poole serve as the contact with Halman, the Bowman-HAL consciousness absorbed by the alien monolith system? How much does Halman know about the alien operators of the monoliths? If Halman is so much like the aliens—possessing tremendous knowledge, free to move through space regardless of material forms—why does he choose to bring Poole information and ultimately cooperate with the humans?

5. When Clarke writes alone, his characters are commonly less detailed and less well rounded than when he works jointly with another author more attuned to the emotional complexity of a man or woman. Are Poole and Indra Wallace wellrounded characters?

6. If Clarke happened to co-author 3001 with a female writer, as he has often done with Gentry Lee, would there likely be more female characters? Would Indra Wallace be more complex or more dynamic? Would she fight to keep Poole from leaving her and

the children? Is Clarke essentially a male writer who sells to a male audience and delivers male expectations of female behavior?

7. Given that abusive manipulations of the human body and spirit by religious leaders and traditions deserve exposure and condemnation, does the fault lie within religion only, or do humans in general tend to live up to the old maxim Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely? In the twentieth century's First and Second World Wars, did the conflicts and the deaths of millions arise primarily out of religious differences, or more out of nationalistic, imperialistic, ethnic, and economic conflicts?

8. Through closing remarks in his extensive "Sources and Acknowledgments," Clarke supports his Khan character's condemnations of abuses of power by religious leaders and fanatic terrorism by religious fringe groups with references to Carl Sagan's The Demon-Haunted World (1995) and Andrew Storr's Feet of Clay: The Power and Charisma of Gurus (1996). In his "Valediction" at the very end of the book, Clarke directly assures his "many Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim friends" that he is happy that their respective faiths have contributed to their happiness and well being, then opines: "Perhaps it is better to be un-sane and happy, than sane and unhappy. But it is best of all to be sane and happy." In taking this position overtly, Clarke moves beyond his prior practice of embodying pro and con positions on faith and reason in his characters. Is Clarke assuming that all aspects of human experience and speculation are subject to rational analysis? Is he leaving room for a third category of "non-rational" experience as an alternative to the either/or of "rational" and "irrational"?

9. Twentieth-century societies struggle over various means of birth control and population control. The Peoples' Republic of China has followed a "one-child per family" policy for majority Han Chinese with certain subsidies available for the single child in a family and loss of such subsidies and related benefits for families having a second or third child. Real life in the United States in the 1960s through the 1990s has seen an increase in casual sexual activities correlating with an increase in unplanned pregnancies. In Chapter 13, Clarke states Poole, in browsing through a series of casual sexual relationships, simply needed "the occasional healthy, mindless exercise." By portraying a society in which Poole can engage in multiple casual sexual encounters apparently without any worries, is Clarke unduly ignoring issues of interpersonal relationships and population control in his society of the future? Should readers expect more attention to the actual medical techniques, social policies, and personal behaviors that produce a conveniently shrinking population in the future?

10. Education and entertainment for most people in 3001 seem to be achieved through the Braincap information and communication system. How does the system operate? Are there any physical or psychological risk in using a Braincap?

Does the novel indicate the Braincap has replaced school systems as they have been known in the twentieth century? Is a form of telepathic communication possible with the Braincap? Is the ultimate effect of the Braincap to isolate the individual user or to keep the user more connected to society as a whole?

Literary Precedents

As the critic Tom Moylan points out in Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination (1986), the notion of an ideal place or society somewhere beyond the known has existed in human traditions since ancient times: the biblical Garden of Eden, the Buddhist Western Paradise, the Norse Valhalla, Plato's Republic, and so on. Western literary tradition took specific focus on the ideal society with Thomas More's Utopia (1517). The late nineteenth century brought H. G. Wells's early science fiction and, from an American perspective, Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward 20001887 (1888). Wells produced works concerned with social progress such as his A Modern Utopia (1905). Wells's perspective on future society included total sexual freedom. Bellamy, sensitized by severe labor-management conflicts in his own time, proposed a society in the year 2000 which employed improved technology to better the lives of ordinary working people, projecting developments such as radio and television as part of an improved social order. Clarke's 3001 similarly assumes a casual view of sexuality and interpersonal relationships.

Like Wells, Bellamy and numerous other writers, Clarke sets a new, improved society in contrast with an older, more limited society. Where Wells drew on biological science and philosophy to project evolutionary improvements in future humanity, Clarke draws more on mathematics, physics, aquanautics and astrophysics for his extrapolations.

The contemporary reader should also consider for contrast, the work of several other science fiction writers of the late twentieth century, not as overt influences on Clarke, but as presenters of alternative approaches to similar Utopian interests or technologies. Joanna Russ, in The Female Man (1975; see separate entry), portrays a society in which use on an "induction helmet" evens out the work load in society and allows forms of social leveling and categorization, not unlike Clarke's Braincap and its effects in Clarke's 3001.

Also, Russ and other writers with feminist concerns work in far greater detail than Clarke ever manages on issues of interpersonal relationships and the relationship of an individual to the rest of society.

Ursula LeGuin's The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia (1974; see separate entry) focuses on the breaking down of walls and includes a "first race to travel the stars," the Hainish, who foster unity and harmony among diverse peoples.

Clarke's guiding race remains an ancient, anonymous, manipulating force, occasionally spurring progress of a promising species, and occasionally wiping out a disappointing one.

In Samuel Delany's Triton (1976), postwar Earth and Mars compete for economic advantage over former colonies spread out among the more distant moons in the solar system. Efficient computer management of data eliminates "class" and "status" as opportunities for gainful employment vary, and nearly everyone has some time "on

welfare" between jobs during a lifetime. Russ, LeGuin and Delany all posit a considerable degree of sexual freedom. In fact, Delany posits such advances in sex/gender change technology that any person may produce a child, and nothing limits sexual relationships. Thus, these writers move beyond the occasional generalizations Clarke offers on sexual freedom and make detailed portrayals of many ways a person may experience freedom in—or from—gendered activities, socially or biologically.

Related Titles

Clarke presents 3001: The Final Odyssey as the closing tale of a space tetralogy loosely connected by their tides, some of their characters, and some of their events.

He acknowledges overtly extracting and editing material for 3001: The Final Odyssey from chapters 18 and 37 of 2001: A Space Odyssey, and from chapters 11, 36, and 38 of 2010: Odyssey Two.

The characters Frank Poole, Dave Bowman and the HAL computer derive from 2001. Dr. Heywood Floyd, the lead character in 2061: Odyssey Three (1987; see separate entry) receives occasional references in 3001. However, though Floyd in 2061 was transformed from material state in the same fashion as Dave Bowman had been in 2001, Clarke does not include Floyd in the significant action of 3001.

Factors of setting—the monoliths discovered in the earlier novels, the rearrangement of the solar system with Jupiter flared into a sun, and the premise of Europa as forbidden planet with new life forms are consistent with the earlier Odyssey novels.

Clarke's early landmark Childhood's End (1950; see separate entry) employs the premise of more advanced species guiding human development on earth, and even mixes aspects of folklore and religious tradition by portraying the physical forms of the monitoring race as very like ancient perceptions of demons. The human race loses the bulk of its numbers in a cataclysm, but the surviving select youth are transformed into non-material beings able to traverse the universe at will, leaving material limits behind.

His more recent works, Cradle and the Rama series written with Gentry Lee—Rendezvous with Rama (1973), Rama Revisited (1989), The Garden of Rama, and Rama Revealed (1994)—work clearly with the pattern of humans as a species among others monitored and managed by a far superior alien civilization. They show quantitatively more races of creatures, some less advanced, some more advanced than humans, and all are controlled by a superior yet unseen civilization. The Garden of Rama, particularly, plays off the imagery of the Old Testament Garden of Eden stories.

Thus, while the actual story lines, the groupings of characters, and the chosen times and places vary in 3001: The Final Odyssey, Clarke reiterates his ideas about human evolution beyond a material state and to employ elements of religious language and imagery to build a humanistic view of evolutionary progress, still leaving the philosophical issue of whether or not there can be an ultimate Creator or Prime Mover for the universe somehow pushed to the limits of perception, yet ultimately neither confirmed nor denied.

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