

PHI334 2001 A Space Odyssey Nov 17

1. **Humanity's Evolution and Existentialism:** How does "2001: A Space Odyssey" portray the evolution of humanity, and what existential questions does this raise about our purpose and place in the universe?
2. **Technology and Human Essence:** In what ways does the film suggest that technology both enhances and detracts from human essence and existential freedom?
3. **AI and Human Identity:** Analyze the character of HAL 9000 in the context of existentialism. Does HAL's development and eventual malfunction raise questions about the nature of consciousness and what it means to be 'alive'?
4. **Isolation and Existential Despair:** How does the film use the vastness of space to explore themes of isolation and existential despair? Discuss specific scenes that highlight these themes.
5. **Role of the Monolith:** The monoliths in the film are mysterious and provoke significant changes. From an existential perspective, what do you think they represent in relation to human understanding and the search for meaning?
6. **The Starchild and Rebirth:** Discuss the symbolism of the Starchild at the end of the film. How can this be interpreted through existential philosophy as a commentary on rebirth, transcendence, or the nature of existence?
7. **Human Agency vs. Cosmic Determinism:** Does "2001: A Space Odyssey" lean more towards a view of human agency or cosmic determinism, and how does this perspective align with existentialist thought?
8. **Existential Choice and Freedom:** In what ways does the film explore the concept of existential choice and freedom, particularly in the context of humanity's interaction with technology and the unknown?
9. **Search for Meaning in the Universe:** How does the film's portrayal of the vast and often indifferent universe challenge the characters' (and viewers') search for meaning? Discuss how this aligns with or challenges existentialist philosophy.
10. **Existentialism and Human Progress:** Reflect on how "2001: A Space Odyssey" comments on the nature of human progress. Does the film suggest an existentialist view that progress is intrinsic to human existence, or does it present a more nihilistic perspective?