

# An Esoteric Analysis of Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999)



*"I always enjoyed representing a slightly surreal situation in a realistic way. I have always had a penchant for fairy-tales, myths and magical stories. They seem to me to come closer to our present-day experience of reality than realistic stories, which are basically just as stylized."*

– Stanley Kubrick<sup>1</sup>

*Eyes Wide Shut* is a film that failed to live up to film-goers expectations. An edgy thriller that made statements about upper echelon decadence, it fell somewhat flat at the box office, while the film curiously utilized the “real-world” sex life of Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman as a doorway bridging the threshold between reality and fantasy; and as we shall see, this theme emerges earlier in other Kubrick films. *Eyes Wide Shut* is based on the 1926 Austrian novella *Traumnovella* (Dream Story) by Arthur Schnitzler, Kubrick adapted the surrealist story to modern times, employing the same Freudian and class critique in the original, but with the film we find not just a statement concerning the power elite that run the show, but the darker side of the human *psyche* and the theme of ritual initiation. Critic Kaus Rainer comments:

The film and the novella are to be reconsidered by means of an exemplary juxtaposition. The marital drama from the turn of the century possesses a present-day relevance which, despite liberalization, the breaking down of taboos and changes in moral values, has not lost any of its intensity [-] the yearning for intimacy in a satisfying relationship, but also its simultaneous endangering by our unconscious desires, feelings and fantasies. Arthur Schnitzler, a medical doctor by profession, was admired by Freud for his knowledgeable descriptions of psychic processes. They were not friends, but had great respect for each other. It is said that it was only the children of Freud and Schnitzler, who played together with each other, who gave occasion for correspondence between the two.<sup>2</sup>

The “show” Kubrick wants to draw our attention to is both the film itself, as well as *reality*: Kubrick wants viewers to realize that The Occult Empire reality is run, like a show, by the showmasters behind the veil of the videodrome. The viewer will not only be forced to reflect upon the decadence of the Eastern elite establishment, but embark on a shamanic revelatory journey wherein viewing the film itself becomes homage to present social hypocrisy, as the film is a would-be voyeuristic step into the sex lives of others. In this regard, it functions as an initiation mirroring the desire of the individual to both pass judgment on the taboos contained in the film, while simultaneously attending its showing. One is, in a sense, participating in the ritual, even if from afar through the magic of the screen. In this regard, it is Bill Harford (Tom Cruise) who will represent the average film-goer. While most reviews of the film focused on socio-political factors, none have considered the initiatory aspects as a framework of interpretation.

The average film-goer is watching because he or she is curious about Hollywood secrets and the lives of the stars, exemplified in the endless racks



STANLEY KUBRICK (1928-1999): American filmmaker, director, screenwriter and producer. Frequently cited as one of the most important filmmakers in history, and often considered the greatest. A demanding perfectionist, Kubrick paid special attention to details, especially in sound and music in film. Kubrick is known for iconic classics like *Spartacus*, *Lolita*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *The Shining*, and *Eyes Wide Shut*.

of Hollywood gossip rags at your local grocer. Of course, “Average Joe” also likely went to get a glimpse of Nicole Kidman’s backside, and while this may seem crude, Kubrick intends the viewer to realize his hypocrisy in such an action, given that most will morally assess the film’s secret society cult in a negative fashion. *Eyes Wide Shut* is thus a descriptor of the ocular handicap of the *spiritual* vision of the audience, as well as Bill Harford in the film, none of which truly grasp themselves, the human *psyche*, its weaknesses and the socio-political power base embodied in the oligarchy that rules our world. The power base is not, according to Kubrick’s film, the average politician or wealthy doctor or lawyer in New York. Indeed, this is precisely Kidman and Cruise’s characters’ status: they are unwitting inductees. Thus throughout the film, the viewers eyes are wide *shut* to the reality of the power structure, just as Kidman and Cruise’s characters, until the end, with veil removed and eyes “opened,” as they state. Noting the film’s surrealism as a “waking dream,” critics Walker, Taylor and Ruchti explain the symbolic technique of the opening sequence:

A young blonde woman stands there in a black sheath dress, back to us. Even clothed, she radiates an aerobic tension. At any second, one feels she could explode into the erotic. Suddenly, she lets her dress slither to her feet and, for a fleeting moment, is brazenly naked. Then: the screen blacks out, as if an eyelid had closed reflexively to mask what the retina had glimpsed. Exposure and denial, temptation and retreat: such are recurring motifs of what follows. The very title Kubrick gave his film implies it: *Eyes Wide Shut*.<sup>3</sup>

From the outset, the film employs occult symbolism, showing Mrs. Harford (Nicole Kidman) half-naked, but with more at work here, since she is situated between two pillars. These are, in my estimation, the doorways to the initiation, the twin pillars of Jachin and Boaz of Solomon’s Temple.



The two pillars figure prominently in Freemasonry as the entranceway to the divine, or transcendental planes or spiritual worlds. Masonic philosopher Albert Pike comments on the pillars and their relationship to gender, sexual relations, nature and oppositions:

Unity is Boaz, and the binary is Jachin. The two columns, Boaz and Jachin, explain the in the kabalah all the mysteries of natural, political and religious antagonism. Woman is man’s creation; and universal creation is the female of the First Principle. When the first principle of Existence made Himself Creator, He produced by emanation and idea Yod (point)... Reversing the letters of the Ineffable Name (of God), and dividing it, it becomes bi-sexual, as the word Yud-he or Jah is, and discloses the meaning of much of the obscure language of the Kabbalah, and is the Highest of which the columns Jachin and Boaz are the symbol. “In the image of the Deity,” we are told, “God created the Man; Male and Female he created them:” and the writer, symbolizing the Divine by the human, then tells us that the woman, then contained in the man, was taken from his side. So Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom, was born, a woman and in armor of the brain of Jove; Isis was the sister before she was the wife of Osiris, and with Brahm, the Source of all, the Very God, without sex or name, was developed Maya, the Mother of all that is.<sup>4</sup>

And Theosophist C.W. Leadbeater explains:

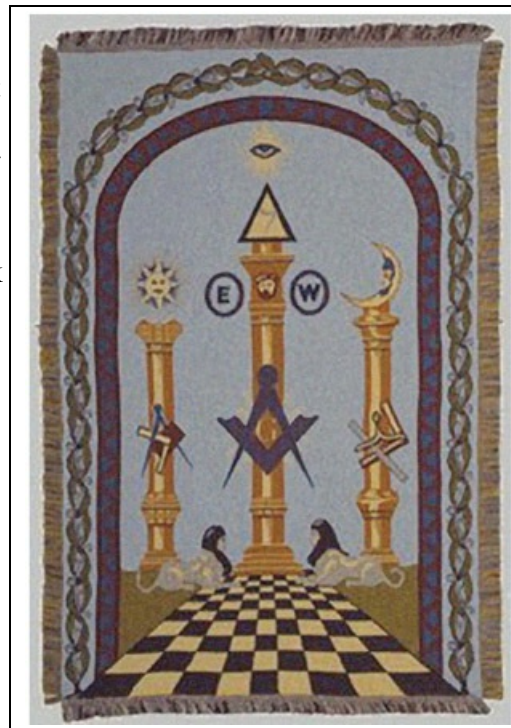
They [the pillars] also form the portal to the mysteries by which souls ascend to their divine source; and it is only by passing through them at that the sanctuary of man’s true godhead may be reached, the divine splendor which when aroused in the depths of the heart indeed establishes its dwelling place in strength and stability.<sup>5</sup>

As we will see, the course of the film’s narrative shares this same preoccupation with sex rites, initiation and ultimately the issue of the dissolution of the moral strictures of the middle-class Harfords as they pass beyond the gates of inhibitions. We also see that the intensity of the ritual orgy and its homosexual eroticism aims precisely at both hermaphroditism and the return to the primordial void of chaos through the attempt at overcoming all oppositions through sex magick. The viewer is also being led about, entering between the pillars from the vantage point of the viewing camera, penetrating the “mysteries,” to peer into how the cryptocracy governs from the shadows (yet paradoxically, Kubrick intends us to understand that most eyes will remain wide shut).

Mired in marital frustrations related to sexual intimacy, the Harfords prepare for a bourgeois party hosted by Victor Ziegler (Sydney Pollack), Doctor Bill Harford’s wealthy patient. It is significant that the setting is Christmas when the initiatory

procedure takes place, functioning as a kind of anti-traditional religious/anti-Christian statement. Known for his impetuous attitude, perfectionism and temper, Kubrick's perspective was that all details are crucial and significant – the placement of everything is deliberate, often fraught with symbolism. These opening sequences give a sense of anxiety and foreboding, foreshadowing the coming temptations for both Bill and Alice that call into question their marital fidelity.

As can be seen in the poster for the film, mirrors are consistently present, classic symbols of the inner world of the *psyche*, as well as portals to other worlds. Kubrick intends, I think, to show us that the characters in the film are mirrors of each other, as well as mirrors of the viewing audience. The symbolism of mirrors also occurs in *Alice in Wonderland*, as well as *The Wizard of Oz*, and both figure prominently in *Eyes Wide Shut*. Both stories are influenced by occult teachings, notably L. Frank Baum's commitment to Theosophy and the teachings of H.P. Blavatsky (which are the basis of the story), while Lewis Carroll of *Alice* fame preferred photographing young girls and attempting to attain ESP.<sup>6</sup> Carroll's taste for cultivating young girls may be applicable here, since *Eyes Wide Shut* includes the theme of pedophilia (as many Kubrick films do, most notably *Lolita*). Critic "Stephan" elucidates:



We can celebrate Kubrick's casting genius in Kidman's riveting performance. Her persona is ideally suited to the text of the original novel. In the book Schnitzler continuously describes his female characters as "a young and charming girl, still almost a child..." or "quite a young girl, possibly fifteen years old, with loose blonde hair hanging over her shoulder and on one side over her delicate breast." Eighteen months ago it would have been unacceptable to examine Kidman's "baby-doll" little-girl sexuality.<sup>7</sup>

And Author Jamie Hanshaw comments on *The Wizard of Oz*:

The author of *The Wizard of Oz* was a Theosophist, claiming inspiration from the story from a spirit who gave him the magic key to write the tale, which was published in 1900. The books were to be a theosophical fairy tale, incorporating the ancient wisdom of the mystery religions. The word "Oz" is important to all Thelemic magicians as it is not derived from children's books, but from gematria. In Hebrew, the word is spelled with the letters Ayin and Zayin and adds up to 77. According to Aleister Crowley, this number represents magic acting on the world of matter. It can be expressed as 1, the grand number of ritual magic, multiplied by 7, the number of manifestation (7-11).<sup>8</sup>

Though commenters on *Eyes Wide Shut* have posited connections to mind control and MKUltra, the CIA's sub-project associated with hypnosis and control of the psyche through hallucinogens,<sup>9</sup> I think keeping the analysis on that level misses the point (though this theme is present). A more holistic approach would be to use such stories as allegories or metaphors for transformation. The metamorphosis of initiation into the "mysteries" on the part of Bill, Alice and the audience. All three stories have theosophic undertones and symbolism, and thus constitute initiatory tales, even to the point of recommended reading (of *Oz* and *Alice*) by Aleister Crowley for aspiring magicians.<sup>10</sup>

When the Harford's arrive at the party, we see a clear symbol of what kind of initiation they are going to undergo – the Left-Hand Path;<sup>11</sup> as we see from the inverted pentagram.



ALEISTER CROWLEY (1875-1947): British occultist and founder of the religion of Thelema, Crowley believed himself to be a prophet guiding the world into a new aeon or age, known as the Aeon of Horus. A practitioner of ceremonial and ritual sex magick, Crowley was also an asset of MI5, British Intelligence, according to Dr. Richard Spencer in *Secret Agent 666: Aleister Crowley, British Intelligence and the Occult*.



Ziegler, we discover, has invited the couple to his parties frequently seemingly under the auspices of eventually getting them to participate in the secret orgies. There are two parties, we learn; not just the tame Christmas ball, but an “after party,” at another location, and of a much darker nature. Harford’s old college buddy, Nick Nightingale (Todd Field), “accidentally” stumbles into Bill, as they discuss the fact that Nick plays piano for both parties. Intrigued, both Harfords resist the temptation to sleep with other people at the Christmas ball, yet undoubtedly have the desire given their own marital problems. However, what we have begun to suspect is that these events are not randomly occurring, but rather that it has all been organized. It is not accidental. Nightingale was chosen precisely because he is an old friend of Bill’s. Interestingly, Bill is then propositioned for a threesome with two beautiful British girls who drop hints they are of noble descent (“Nuala Windsor”), offering to take Bill “where the rainbow ends.”

Alice simultaneously finds herself drunk, dancing as she is seduced by one Sandor Szavost, a wealthy Hungarian who drops quotes from Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* on bedding married women. Szavost may be a veiled reference to Anton Szandor LaVey, the founder and High Priest of the Church of Satan. I think this symbolic reference is alerting the perceptive viewer that we are ultimately witnessing an upper echelon Satanic cult. It is also interesting to note that the original novella was written about a couple who undergoes the same experience in upper-class Austria around the turn of the century, since neighboring Bavaria is the origin of the actual historic Order of the Illuminati.<sup>12</sup>



**ANTON LAVEY (1930-1997):** American author, musician and former carnival performer turned occultist. LaVey is most well known for founding the Church of Satan in San Francisco in 1966. LaVey is also known for authoring the *Satanic Bible* in which the organization’s philosophy and rituals were codified. Describing itself as skeptical and atheistic, the Church of Satan professes belief in individualism, Epicurean hedonism and exaltation of the self.

Interrupted from the erotic temptation, Bill begins to develop suspicions about his client: The elite Ziegler appears to be enmeshed in shady deals, with connections to both hard drugs and sexual dalliances with beauty queens. Mandy, (Julienne Davis) one of the bevy of beauties that flock around Ziegler, overdoses at the party (in the midst of sex with Ziegler) and Ziegler calls upon Bill to rescue him from the scandal, ultimately to see if Bill can “keep quiet” about the affair. Mandy is curiously spoken of as “asleep,” while above her is a portrait of a nude woman in the same pose, as if to allude to the film’s thesis of a thin borderline between fantasy and dream, and Bill’s reality as a planned synchronicity. Not only this, Alice will undergo a similar incident while lying in bed, half asleep, mumbling and mouthing dream revelations to Bill about the orgies. Diagnosing Mandy as stable, Dr. Harford aids by checking her pulse and advising she cannot continue her feral lifestyle: What we don’t know is whether the overdose was an attempt on Mandy’s life, a real overdose, or a staged event to test Bill.

Next, we see the Harfords going about mundane activities following an intense argument between Alice and Bill regarding sexual fantasies and attraction outside of marriage. Rejecting Bill’s flimsy arguments, Alice exasperatedly corners Bill on his hypocrisy and naivety about women in not admitting he was tempted at the party. Alice confesses to Bill she was once tempted by a naval officer and, for a split second, was willing to throw away both husband and child for a night of pleasure. Bill, noticeably distraught, will begin his path of seeking extramarital affairs as a result of this heated dispute. The curious symbology in this scene is the inverted pentagrams in the background on the drapes:



As Alice moves about through the condo we see images of gateways and gardens, indicating again that this is a film about subconscious desires and initiation. Gardens also bring to mind Eden, and the expulsion of Adam and Eve due to sin; or, it could refer to their coming initiation into the “garden of the gods,” so to speak, as Bill and Alice are soon to experience the underworld in overworld. Noting the meaning of the garden in perennial symbology, scholar J.E. Cirlot explains:

The garden is the place where Nature is subdued, ordered, selected and enclosed. Hence it is a symbol of consciousness as opposed to the forest, which is the unconscious, in the same way the island is opposed to the ocean. At the same time, it is a feminine attribute because of its character as a precinct. A garden is often the scene of processes of “Conjunction” or treasure-hunts-connnotations which are clearly in accord with the general symbolic function we have outlined.<sup>13</sup>



Meanwhile, Bill has taken leave to visit a patient who has passed away, and determines to begin his languorous escapade for an extra-marital affair. His patient’s daughter has a crush on him and makes a pass, and an antsy Bill quickly exits (though he begins to waffle in his fidelity). Bill here begins to suspect marriage is a shackle for others, too, as Sandor had tried to convince Alice. Listless, Bill roams the night streets looking for sexual fulfillment, passing several hookers and sex shops. Harassed by a group of frat boys who (for no apparent reason), call him a homosexual, Bill’s resolve to cheat is strengthened as we almost get the impression sex is a social obsession everyone is

experiencing but Bill. Wandering further in his malaise, a gorgeous prostitute named Domino (Vinessa Shaw) propositions him, inviting him up to her apartment.<sup>14</sup> Bill concedes, and steps down for a bit into the world of the lower class, finding that sex here functions as a commodity.

Interestingly, the lower and upper-class attitudes in the film regarding sex are more or less synonymous, whereas only the upper-middle-class (Bill and Alice) are, and feel bound, by the legal obligations of marital fidelity. For Domino and the elites at the orgy, sex functions as a means of survival, pleasure and ritual enactment. More crucial symbolic imagery appears here with the prominent placement of books on psychology and sociology in Domino's apartment. Kubrick is undoubtedly making a statement on sociology – but not the one most people think. It's the true sociology of a world run, not just by oligarchical moneyed elites, but a cryptocracy of occult elites.<sup>15</sup> As a side note, it should be mentioned that Kubrick was well aware of the realities of global oligarchic hegemony; his daughter, Vivian Kubrick, has claimed the CIA met with her father in relation to his productions.<sup>16</sup>

Once again, Bill is interrupted from his adultery and bows out of Domino's offer, yet the placement of the masks in Domino's apartment functions as the first big key to determining that her meeting with Bill was not accidental. In an existential sense, the mask is symbolic of society as a whole, as Jean-Paul Sartre said, masking our true identities beneath the exterior facade we all erect. Notable too is Kubrick's critique of the social order in the film, the celebration of Christianity – there are Christmas trees and decor everywhere – yet it finds itself dominated by sexual obsession and consumerism, quite antithetical to traditional western religious concerns. Instead, the prevalence of masks in the film shows society as a fraud. Cirlot comments again on the confusion, mystery and anonymity within identity regarding the symbolism of the mask and its connection to sex magick:

All transformations are invested with something at once of profound mystery and of the shameful, since anything that is so modified as to become "something else" while still remaining in the thing that it was, must inevitably be productive of ambiguity and equivocation.... Frazer has noted some peculiar types of masks used in the initiation ceremonies of some Oceanian peoples.... The mask, simply as a face, comes to express the solar and energetic aspects of the life process.<sup>17</sup>

But beyond that, Kubrick wants the viewer to see that those who really run things are masked – they constitute a secret team of wealthy, upper class who remain in the shadows. This is another clue that Domino is not a real hooker – she is part of the secret society and an actor (hence the masks in her apartment), and is being used to reel Bill in, just like Nick Nightingale. Most whores are not adept academic students of psychology and sociology.

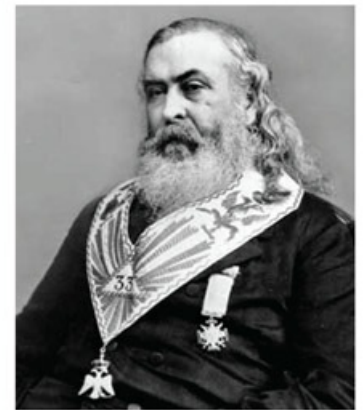
Again disgruntled, Bill exits Domino's and wanders into a nightclub where Nick is playing. Distracting himself with the performance, Bill engages Nick after the show to tell him about the after-party; the second party Sandor had mentioned to Alice where Nick plays piano "blindfolded." Albert Pike notes the meaning of the blindfolding of the "profane" initiate, seeking entrance to the mysteries:

This condition of blindness, destitution, misery, and bondage, from which to save the world the Redeemer came, is symbolized by the condition of the candidate, when he is brought up for the first time to the door of the Lodge ... this is symbolized by the candidate's being brought to the light, after which he is obligated by the worshipful master, who in that is a symbol of the Redeemer, and so brings him to light...<sup>18</sup>

Intrigued, Bill decides to sneak in after tracking down a cheap mask and costume at the only store still open. The password, Nick tells Bill, is "Fidelio," bringing to mind the theme of marital faithfulness constantly in question. Quite clearly, Nick has purposefully told Bill the password to pique his interest. Ironically, the name of the shop is The Rainbow, recalling the hints at a set-up the sexy British nobility who propositioned Bill mentioned – that he can find what he is after "at the end of the rainbow." This obvious Wizard of Oz reference makes clearer the psychological games that are being played with Bill, just as the mirrors we see full of Alice suggested Alice in Wonderland. Still oblivious to these organized synchronicities, Bill remains blindfolded like Nick, yet not with a literal blindfold. Bill's blindness is to his own naivety and ignorance concerning himself and the world around him. All the clues are before him, that he is being led like a lamb to the slaughter, should he choose to see it. The events are Bill's initiation as he tested regarding his "fidelio," faithfulness either to his wife, his ambiguous sense of middle-class morals, or, ultimately, to the cult – hence, the password. It should be noted as well that the cult retains these sexual magic elements, where the profane seeker is in darkness (eyes wide shut or blindfolded), in which only the hierophant or cult leader can enlighten, remembering that light is a prism or



J.E. CIRLOT (1916-1973): Spanish poet, art critic, mythologist and musician. Cirlot's interest in symbolism and symbology led to his interest in Sufism, Kabbalah, and Eastern Philosophy. Ranked amongst symbologists like Rene Guenon, Carl Jung and Mircea Eliade, Cirlot is best known for his *Dictionary of Symbols*.



ALBERT PIKE (1809-1891): Attorney, writer, Confederate Officer and masonic philosopher, Albert Pike is the author of one of the most important, foundational masonic texts, known as *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (1871). Pike was influential in the Confederacy and remained Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite for 32 years.

rainbow. The rainbow is also a symbol of the disregard of sexual inhibitions in relation to the rainbow flag of the homosexual movement. However, the sexuality in the film's perspective is not about liberation, but even subtly implies that Mr. Milich (Rade Serbedzija), the costume owner who is connected to the cult and also acting on their behalf in his exchange with Bill, prostitutes his own underage daughter (Leelee Sobieski) for money (to the Japanese businessmen and presumably to the cult).



The clue to knowing Milich's connection to the cult is the secretly whispered phrase his daughter gives to Bill about what to wear. After lithely rubbing herself on Bill, she explains his choice of gown won't do – he must specifically wear an “ermine cloak.” Ermine is classically a sign of heraldry indicating high-ranking peerage and royalty, particularly among British elites. This lets the viewer know she has attended the rituals and knows precisely where Bill is headed, thus revealing the entire costume shop scene as staged to lead Bill to the mansion. Nervous, yet desirous for adventure, Bill takes a cab to the mansion donning mask and cape, and successfully infiltrates using the password. Within the estate, we witness a solemn form of an initiation ritual where a

magic circle of gorgeous, almost nude women are inducted into the elite cult in a kind of mock Catholic mass, presided over by a figure resembling a Cardinal. The closest analogue in the real world would be something akin to a Crowleyan “Gnostic Mass,” or the OTO.<sup>19</sup>

Masked balls go back to ancient times, yet in the past few hundred years they have come to mark the party life of certain cadres of the upper echelons of power. Renaissance Britain had many masked balls, as well as France, and according to Vatican insider and exorcist, Malachi Martin in his famous book *Hostage to the Devil*, such ritual orgies certainly do take place.<sup>20</sup> Martin details an account of a black mass at a lavish estate purportedly attended by a transgender individual Martin claims to have exorcized (“Richard/Rita”), ominously similar to the imagery in Kubrick's film:

When the curtains parted, Richard/Rita could see a low altar table at either end of the pool. Above each altar there hung an ornament in the shape of an inverted triangle. At its center there was an inverted crucifix, the head of the crucified resting on the angle of the apex of the triangle. From the interior of the house he now heard the low peals of an organ. And someone was burning incense there, so the fumes drifted out lazily across the air, slowly twisting like blue serpents. Then the guests started to undress in an unconcerned fashion, each one dropping their clothes where they stood... As each pair handed on the chalice, they started to copulate following the rhythm of Father Samson, until all – men, women and Father Samson – were chanting and copulating in unison.<sup>21</sup>

After witnessing the ritual orgy, Bill is tricked into revealing his identity to all the masked attendees and is given the impression the cult is going to sacrifice him, until a girl steps forward to “ransom” herself for him. That human sacrifice is involved seems to be clear, as the woman offers herself to “redeem” him, mimicking the biblical doctrine of blood atonement.<sup>22</sup> I suspect this is Mandy from earlier in the film, due to her respect for Bill at having aided her; yet now she wants out of the sex slavery, even at the cost of her life. Her way out will be a redeeming death, as Bill later discovers her name in the next day's obituary. Note the similarity of the imagery in *Eyes Wide Shut* to the Rothschild Ball described earlier in Chapter 1 and the celebrations at the 40th birthday of Prince Pavlos of Greece, as well as revelations concerning French IMF Banker Dominique Strauss-Kahn's sex parties, as reported by the *New York Times*:

The investigation into the prostitution ring in Lille ultimately swept up 10 suspects, including Mr. Strauss-Kahn. They knew each other largely through their membership as French Freemasons, according to Karl Vandamme, a defense lawyer who represents Fabrice Paszkowski, the owner of a medical supply company who played a crucial role in organizing the sex parties.<sup>23</sup>

#### Author Terry Melanson comments:

“The Heaven and Hell-themed party was held at Prince Pavlos' £12 million London mansion, and participants were decked out in mask and costume suggestive of *Eyes Wide Shut*. “Ice sculptures of angels graced a marquee with room for 200 in the garden, which was meant to be Heaven,” writes Colin Fernandez of the *Daily Mail*. “Meanwhile, the swimming pool in the basement was covered over and decked out to resemble Hell, with stilt-walkers and erotic dancers.”

That they would choose to dress up in a particular way as to allude to *Eyes Wide Shut* – the definitive film portrayal of elite-Illuminati debauchery – is significant. Royalty, after all, more than any other class, are exceedingly familiar with their ancestry. Prince Pavlos – I'm sure he's aware – is a direct descendant of a documented member of the Bavarian Illuminati: Karl Landgrave of Hessen-Kassel (1744-1836). Likewise, guests Prince Michael of Kent and his kids; Prince Andrew; the Viscount of Linley, David Albert Charles Armstrong-Jones; and Crown Prince Haakon of Norway are all direct descendants of another documented member of the Bavarian Illuminati: Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg (1745-1804).<sup>24</sup>



Above, Left to Right: Lady Gabriella Windsor (daughter); Prince Michael of Kent (dad); Princess Michael of Kent (mom); and Lord Frederick Michael George David Louis Windsor (son). Below: Prince Michael of Kent, Grand Master of the Mark Master Masons



For a more hardcore example of this type of revelry, author Dave McGowan recounts the details surrounding the infamous Dutroux Affair, which involved human trafficking, European elites, murder and secret societies, as children and women were procured for orgies (and worse) amongst the degenerate elite:

Outrage continued to grow as more arrests were made and evidence of high-level government and police complicity continued to emerge. One of Dutroux's accomplices, businessman Michael Nihoul, confessed to organizing an orgy at a Belgian chateau that had been attended by government officials, a former European Commissioner, and a number of law enforcement officers. A Belgian senator noted, quite accurately, that such parties were part of a system "which operates to this day and is used to blackmail the highly placed people who take part..." As the New York Times reported, [Judge Jean-Marc] Connerotte "became a national hero after saving two children from a secret dungeon kept by a convicted child rapist and ordering an inquiry that led to the discovery of the bodies of four girls kidnapped by a child pornography ring ... [Nihoul's] parties not only involved sex, they included sadism, torture and murder."<sup>25</sup>

A shaken Bill takes his cab home to find Alice awakening, giggling and laughing, as if she had been drugged like Mandy. Informing her she was merely dreaming, to Bill's dismay, she begins to sob. He inquires about the dream and Alice replies:

"It was so weird, we were in a deserted city and our clothes were gone. We were naked and I was terrified and I felt ashamed. And I was angry because you ... rushed away to find clothes for us. As soon as you were gone it was completely different. I felt wonderful. Then I was lying in a beautiful garden stretched out naked in the sunlight and a man walked out of the woods. He was the man from the hotel I told you about – the Naval officer. He stared at me and he just laughed. He just laughed at me.... He was kissing me and then we were making love, then there were all these other people around us – hundreds of them everywhere – they were all fucking. And then I was fucking other men; so many I don't know how many I was with. I knew you could see me in the arms of all these men ... and I wanted to make fun of you, to laugh in your face. And so I laughed as loud as could. And that must have been when you woke me up."<sup>26</sup>

This is a clue that both Bill and Alice are being inducted into the cult, or that the cult has power over even Bill's wife, should they choose to use it. Either Alice has been drugged and doesn't recall the orgy, thinking it was a dream, or she is a willing part of the initiation process for Bill, insofar as she has already been brought in and her memories are repressed (and return to her in her dream state). Frantic, Bill attempts to track down the cult, returning to the estate, but is warned by a butler, letter in hand, not to inquire any further. Still desiring an affair and now perhaps curious about the cult's reach, he phones Domino, only to discover from her roommate she is nowhere to be found due to contracting "AIDS" (in other words, her acting role is complete). Bill once again sets to wandering the streets, only to find he is stalked by shadowy figures, beginning to fear he has nowhere to run. Perusing the newspaper he learns Mandy has overdosed, visiting the morgue to find out it is indeed her body and she has likely been murdered. Falling back on his last resort, Bill visits Ziegler who reveals most of the truth: He is indeed in the cult and was present the night Bill snuck in. Ziegler warns again not to investigate any further, while Bill remains speechless that his close friend is part of an elite sex magick cult – with the power to control events and kill when necessary. It

is also worth noting Ziegler's house is decorated with paintings of British aristocracy.

Ziegler reveals his knowledge of Nick's mentioning the cult and tells Bill he had him followed. Ziegler explains: "Bill, suppose I tell that everything that happened there, the threats, the girl's warnings, suppose I said all of that was staged. That it was a kind of charade. That it was fake? ... to scare the shit out of you to keep you quiet about where you'd been and what you'd seen."<sup>27</sup>

Bill tells Ziegler he saw Mandy's body and Ziegler reveals she was Bill's mysterious savior at the orgy – Bill retorts, what kind of charade ends with someone ending up dead? We discover the dark truth that it was a ritual killing. One question might be raised at this juncture, which is, why a sex-magick cult? As noted above, the symbolism has already conveyed numerous instances of pillars, pentagrams and *Alice* and *Oz* references, all of which culminate in the ritual orgy that hearkens to something overtly Crowleyan. There is also the hermaphroditic and alchemical union of opposites doctrine I mentioned above, that is believed to be overcome or transcended, in the sexual union. In the practice of sex magick, the goal of erasing oppositions is believed to be effected in the sex act. Traditionalist philosopher Julius Evola, echoing Pike's original quote at the beginning of this chapter, explains the attempt at overcoming dualities and effecting of the psychosphere through such actions:

The separation of the sexes is a special method of manifestation of the Dyad principle, which also conditions the division between spirit and nature, ego and non-ego. If there exists a metaphysical coincidence – and we have seen how Scotus Eriugena recognized it – then there may equally well be a relationship between the experience of transcendence through sex and a nondual state that permits a direct and extranormal action on the non-ego, on the outer web of events. Let us recall that in the classical and Platonic version of the myth of the original hermaphrodite, a power such that it struck fear into the gods and was attributed to that being before it was split.<sup>28</sup>



The magic circle.

And as regards the film's ritual orgy scene and magic circle coven:

Here it is a matter of the chakra or chains (literally, wheels) consisting of couples who perform ritual coitus together in circular formation. In the middle of the circle is the "lord of the wheel" or chakreshvara together with his companion, who officiates and directs the collective operation. An adept who has had perfect initiation is needed to perform this function. Overall, this is a collective and partly orgiastic evocation of the Goddess, as the latent force in the group, a force now aroused through the realization of acts and visualization of images by the individual pairs until a fluidic or "psychic" vortex is created and used in the operation. A similar method performed for the benefit of others is used in professional magic rites. Tantric chakra have been convened by princes for special profane purposes, such as propitiation of success in war.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, it is here we see the Crowleyan elements of Kubrick's film made evident. As for the purpose of sexual orgies in a ritual context, American historian and Calvinist philosopher, R.J. Rushdoony comments on the ancient pagan perspective of primordial chaos and ecstatic frenzy, perfectly applicable to the magical view of *Eyes Wide Shut's* cult:

In ancient fertility cults, which, as genetic faiths, enthroned the lowest as the primary, a ritual return to chaos was held to be the means of social regeneration. The fixed, lawful and rational were late and higher developments and hence less basic also seen as essentially sterile. Closeness to the primitive was closeness to creativity and vitality, and chaos itself was the principle of regeneration. Saturnalia, the primitive festival, orgies, rituals involving confusion in the form of incest, bestiality or perversion, were necessary rites and means of social regeneration. "In fact, the festival is presented as a re-enactment of the first days of the universe, the Urzeit, the eminently creative era." The rebirth of nature and the rebirth of society both require the return to chaos. "The festival is thus celebrated in the context of the myth and assumes the function of regenerating the real world."<sup>30</sup>

In the Thelemic view, the goal of the individual magus is the overcoming of all taboos, oppositions and dualities, a fitting description of both Bill, Alice and the cult. Occult researcher Dr. Stephen Flowers comments:



To understand completely what Crowley is saying we must refer to his general cosmology which is monistic: all apparent opposites are in reality unities. This is how Horus is united with Set. They are the light and dark opposites within the same unity. "The true magick of Horus requires the passionate union of opposites." This is clearly how, for Crowley, this is the Aeon of Horus, but its root formula is ShT (rendering Satan, Shaitan, Set, etc.). Here as elsewhere Crowley is using the familiar practice of antinomianism. In Liber V vel Reguli (Ritual of the Mark of the Beast) Crowley lays out his antinomianism and its practice: "This is in fact the formula of our Magick; we insist that all acts must be equal..."<sup>31</sup>



**THELEMA:** Religious philosophy of English occultist Aleister Crowley as dictated in his *Book of the Law*, where the central maxim is "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the law, love under will." Thelemites seek out their own true path in life, known as one's "True Will," with the intent of achieving concourse with one's Holy Guardian Angel, with the practice of ritual magick.

Bill returns home to find his lost mask on the pillow next to a sleeping Alice. In other words, we are to suspect either that Alice knows he was there, or she is telling him she is involved. Expressing intense sorrow, Bill breaks down weeping and tells her everything. It is within this scene we can see Bill giving the sign of secrecy, a masonic sign of faithfulness to the order borrowed in other sects, including those of Aleister Crowley. Significantly, it conveys the character of an oath – the hand on the chest with forefinger extended as shown in Richardson's *Monitor of Freemasonry*, page 86.



Oath of Secrecy  
Aleister Crowley giving the sign of secrecy.

Having endured their trial, Bill and Alice discuss their decision to remain married, following the confession. Remembering their promise to take their daughter Christmas shopping that morning, the couple continue their talk in the department store, where some pivotal, yet subtle events transpire. Another inverted pentagram is shown, a purposefully placed "Magic circle" game, as well as another display labeled "magic." The couple has now stepped into the magic circle and their eyes are no longer shut. They have been "illuminated" by the actions of the cult and are aware of the true power structure in the world. We had already seen a "magic circle" of women at the initiation ritual in the mansion. Crowley's personal secretary and fellow Golden Dawn member Israel Regardie notes, concerning the circle, (applying perfectly to Bill):

The principal symbol common to every operation is the Magical Circle. By definition this figure implies a confining space, a limitation, separating that which is within from that which is without. By the use of the Circle, the Magician asserts that within this self-imposed limitation he confines his labors; that he limits himself to the attainment of a specific end, and that he is no longer in a maze of illusion and perpetual change as a blind wanderer without aim, objective or aspiration...The Circle in which the magician is enclosed represents his particular cosmos; the conquest, self-inaugurated, of that universe is part of the process to attain complete self-consciousness.<sup>32</sup>



**ISRAEL REGARDIE (1907-1985):** Ukrainian Jewish immigrant who would become Aleister Crowley's personal secretary, eventually settling in the United States, where he developed an interest in yoga, Hinduism and theosophy. Regardie is known for his many commentaries and books on the beliefs, rites and rituals of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a secret esoteric society.

Undergoing this dark enlightenment, Bill and Alice discuss what to do next, opining they should be "grateful." Alice posits, "We should be grateful that we have managed to survive through all our adventures, whether they were real or only a dream." Bill asks if she is sure, to which Alice replies she will forgive one night of impertinence. "No dream is ever just a dream," Bill explains, and Alice responds that they are "awake now, and hopefully, for a long time to come." "Forever," they both say, yet "Let's not say forever," Alice retorts, "it frightens me. But I do love you, and you know, there is something very important we need to do as soon as possible – fuck," showing the intention to maximize their sexual potentialities, having been initiated.<sup>33</sup>



Alice and Bill are surrounded by pentagrams and the "Magic Circle."

Thus, the film functions on multiple levels, highlighting different issues of marital problems our society creates, with its decadence and veneer of Christianity, as well as its sexual issues, but that is only part of the story Kubrick wants to tell. The real story is the ritual journey of coming out of the dream state, with the result being the "awakening" to grasp the reality of the occult elite, the social power structure as it really is – rich elites who are into bizarre cults and aberrant sex magick. This magical surrealism as an initiatory rite is the true intention of the film.

The power structure is not merely focused around wealth and temporal power, but a particularly ritualized worldview that seeks to use the sex drive as a force for *metaphysical* power. Power over this drive allows power over the masses, and this is also the point of the Edenic imagery, including the *Alice in Wonderland* and *Oz* references – the transition both from a fantasy reality of the dream world and base sexual desires, into the fake world of the film itself (which is depicting reality!), as well as the transition from eyes shut, to awake. Not only is it supposed to be an initiation for the couple, the intention is to initiate the viewer, through revelation of the method, to the nature of this cryptocratic underground, assuming one is willing to see. Michael Hoffman explains this notion of revelation of the method from a British Intelligence perspective, as follows:



**MICHAEL A. HOFFMAN II:** American author, lecturer and revisionist historian. Hoffman is a vocal critic of Rabbinic Judaism and is the author of the alternative research classic, *Secret Societies and Psychological Warfare*, where the notions of "twilight language," ritual symbolism and Freemasonic subterfuge are emphasized.

This demonstrates one of our simpler methods. Realizing that our activities will sooner or later come to light, we structure our activities so that as conspiracy researchers unravel them, they will release information in such a way that it mirrors our initiatory procedure. In this way, the more we are investigated, the more masses of people are psychologically processed by the people who seek to expose us. The meme that constitutes our structure is then successfully mimicked within the consciousness of those who investigate us. Success can then be measured precisely to the extent that our work is "exposed."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kubrick cited in Nelson, Thomas A. *Stanley Kubrick: Inside a Film Artist's Maze*. Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2000, pg. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Kaus, Rainer J. "Notes on Arthur Schnitzler's Dream Novella and Stanley Kubrick's film *Eyes Wide Shut*." University of Florida. 2003. Web. <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/ipsa/2003/Greenwich%20conference.html>

<sup>3</sup> Walker, Taylor and Ruchti. *Stanley Kubrick, Director: A Visual Analysis*. New York, Norton Company, 1999, 344. As will be shown, Kubrick will employ this same technique of blacking out the screen as a representation of the viewer's eyes closing or being in the dark in my 2001: A Space Odyssey analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Pike, Albert. *Morals and Dogma: Ancient and Accepted Rite of Scottish Freemasonry*. Richmond, VA, L.H. Jenkins Book Manufacturers, 1950, pgs. 772, 849.

<sup>5</sup> Leadbeater, C.W. *The Hidden Life in Freemasonry*. India, The Theosophical Publishing House, 1963, pg. 72.

<sup>6</sup> Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. New York, Penguin Books, 1998, pg. Xix. Conner, Miguel. "Alice in Wonderland and the Occult." *Examiner*. 26 March, 2010. Web. <http://www.examiner.com/article/alice-wonderland-and-the-occult>

<sup>7</sup> Stephan, "Corridors of the Marvelous: The Femme-enfant, the Doll Fetish, The Mask, and Alice in a Wonderland of de Sade." *Story of O*. Web. <http://www.storyofo.info/marvelous.html>

- <sup>8</sup> Hanshaw, *Operation Culture Creation*, Part 2, pg. 77.
- <sup>9</sup> Marks, John. *The CIA and Mind Control: Search for the Manchurian Candidate*. New York, McGraw Hill, 1980.
- <sup>10</sup> Conner, "Alice in Wonderland and the Occult."
- <sup>11</sup> Flowers, Stephen E. *Lords of the Left Hand Path: A History of Spiritual Dissent*. Texas, Runa-Raven Press, 1997, pg. 145.
- <sup>12</sup> Melanson, Terry. *Perfectibilists: The 18th Century Bavarian Order of the Illuminati*. Oregon, Trine Day, 2009. I am not implying the cult in the film is the historic Illuminati, as it was concerned with Enlightenment rationalism and egalitarianism, rather, the film's cult is a secret society concerned with sexual magick.
- <sup>13</sup> Cirlot, J.E. *Dictionary of Symbols*. New York, Philosophical Library, 1962, pg. 115.
- <sup>14</sup> "Domino" is an interesting name, since, as a member of the cult, the events in Bill's life are occurring in planned, determined sequence, like the fall of a line of dominoes. It also suggests the concept of a game, as if the secret society is playing mind games with Bill.
- <sup>15</sup> See Hoffman, Michael A. *Secret Societies and Psychological Warfare*. Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, Independent History and Research, 2001. Ramsay, William. *Prophet of Evil: Aleister Crowley, 9/11 and the New World Order*. Lexington, Ky, Winged Victory Books, 2012. Estulin, Daniel. *The True Story of the Bilderberg Group*. Oregon, Trine Day, 2007. Quigley, Carroll. *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in our Time*. San Pedro, CA, GSG Publishers, 1998.
- <sup>16</sup> Kubrick, Vivian cited in "Vivian Kubrick on the Insanity of Tyranny," Infowars. Web. 26 November 2013. Web. <http://www.infowars.com/infowars-com-exclusive-vivian-kubrick-on-the-insanity-of-tyranny-2/>
- <sup>17</sup> Cirlot, A *Dictionary of Symbols*, 205-6.
- <sup>18</sup> Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, 639.
- <sup>19</sup> Heimbichner, *Blood on the Altar*.
- <sup>20</sup> Heale, Elizabeth. *The Faerie Queen: A Reader's Guide*. Cambridge: University Press, 1999. Martin, Malachi. *Hostage to the Devil*.
- <sup>21</sup> Martin, 213-15.
- <sup>22</sup> See Lev. 17:11.
- <sup>23</sup> Carvajal and la Baume. "Sex Life was 'Out of Step,' Strauss-Kahn Says, but not Illegal." 13 October, 2012. New York Times. Web. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/world/europe/dominique-strauss-kahn-says-lust-is-not-a-crime.html?hp&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/world/europe/dominique-strauss-kahn-says-lust-is-not-a-crime.html?hp&_r=1). See also Wolff, Michael. "Dominique Strauss-Kahn and Our Paranoid Erotic Fantasies of Power." Guardian. 15 October, 2012. Web. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/15/dominique-strausskahn-paranoid-erotic-fantasies-power>
- <sup>24</sup> Melanson, Terry. "Illuminati Descendants Assemble for an Eyes Wide Shut-like 'Heaven and Hell' Bash." Conspiracy Archive. 20 June, 2007. Web. [http://www.conspiracyarchive.com/Commentary/Illuminati\\_Eyes\\_Wide\\_Shut.htm](http://www.conspiracyarchive.com/Commentary/Illuminati_Eyes_Wide_Shut.htm)
- <sup>25</sup> McGowan, *Programmed to Kill*, pg. 6-7.
- <sup>26</sup> Eyes Wide Shut, directed by Stanley Kubrick. 1999. Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, DVD.
- <sup>27</sup> Kubrick, *Eyes Wide Shut*.
- <sup>28</sup> Evola, Julius. *Eros and the Mysteries of Love: The Metaphysics of Sex*. Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1991, pg. 267.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 268.
- <sup>30</sup> Rushdoony, R.J. *The Messianic Character of American Education*. Vallecito, Ca: Ross House Books, 1963, pg. 337-8.
- <sup>31</sup> Flowers, *Lords of the Left Hand Path*, 143.