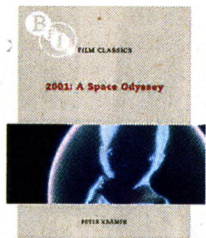


**2001: A Space Odyssey**, by Peter Krämer (BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, £9.99)



According to movie historian Peter Krämer, Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* is one of the best films ever made. Kubrick worked on the "film-story" with science-fiction author Arthur C Clarke for more than three years. In this excellent addition to the BFI's Film Classics series, Krämer lovingly explores the genesis of both film and novel, as well as the film's reception and cultural impact. Intriguingly, he argues that *2001* was "an optimistic antidote to the apocalyptic conclusion of *Dr Strangelove*". Apparently, Kubrick made some dramatic last-minute changes to the film just before its release. In his quest for a "non-specific" ending, he dropped the voiceover narration, a prologue of interviews with scientists, and closing shots of the aliens. The specially composed score was also ditched in favour of avant garde and classical music. The result was deeply mysterious, even incomprehensible, but as Krämer shows, through its "very alienness" the movie was a transformative experience: "Kubrick turned *2001* into a filmic monolith."

**PD Smith**