

Letters in response to the WSWS review of A.I. Artificial Intelligence

19 July 2001

To the WSWS,

Thank you very much for your *A.I.* article.

Mr. Spielberg has many fans, but I agree with your stating that his “ideology” is not really any more progressive than the rest of American film production.

[Stanley] Kubrick did dislike humanity sometimes, but there is a difference for me: Kubrick was an artist, his movies show very well his passion. He may have been naive sometimes, but he was a poet: he tried to know himself and others better, he tried to evolve, and he was obsessed with his art and the impact it had on society as a whole.

I am sure that Mr. Kubrick’s art shall still be remembered in 100 years, at least by scholars, whereas Mr. Spielberg will exist only if a corporate machine uses his name as its brand. But I don’t believe this will happen: Mr. Disney was weird politically but he had a true vision and a true style, something unique Disney Inc. could build on. This should not happen with Spielberg.

So, one more bad movie on the way.... What about distribution of European movies in the US?

With compliments,

PB

France

16 July 2001

Thank you for this insightful article on *A. I.* The film upset me. I had this image of getting into a cab and not knowing if the driver was a robot or a human being. There are actors who are robots, not human. Maybe this is an old theme, but it brought up the notions of false emotions and the film played with me. It used false feeling, i.e., robotic induced simulation of feeling to evoke my feeling, i.e., towards the mother-child pair, the “lost child,” etc. So much of Hollywood is all format in how the film is designed to evoke the fullest emotion and there I am, the viewer, being manipulated

and I know it and I still feel for the robot child.

This movie, for me, was a horror film. The use of the ultimately human capacity for imagination, gone awry.

LZ

16 July 2001

Dear Sir;

Congratulations to Mr. David Walsh for his incisive and amusing dissection of Mr. Steven Spielberg’s latest offering *A.I.*

I did not exert the mental effort to analyse the film from a social/political perspective. I simply know that I walked out of the theatre (before the movie finished; I could take no more) extremely angry that I had wasted \$5 and two hours of my life watching an exercise in self-indulgence and metaphysical musings about “human nature”. The whole film invoked a sense of alienation and loss of hope, which I think is what Mr. Spielberg intended.

Now understand that I have disagreed plenty of times with the reviewers of WSWS about the ultimate aim of films and the media. You may rightly take me to task for this, but oftentimes I go to the movies just to see beautiful people living in lovely homes driving shiny cars and maybe just to see and hear a “ripping good yarn”. *A.I.* was none of these things. Until I read Mr. Walsh’s analysis, I couldn’t quite put a finger on why the film was so banal and distasteful. As he correctly points out, this film and the majority of films coming out of Hollywood reek of the dissolute and self-indulgent culture of the super-rich; those who make such films, those who act in them and those who sell them. They are far removed from any notions of how ordinary people live and hence are incapable in any way of reflecting the aspirations of ordinary people. Their gall in preaching about global warming, pollution and such is exceeded only by their ignorance about the real causes of these problems.

Once again, kudos to Mr. Walsh and to WSWS
“telling it like it is”!

AH

17 July 2001

Mr. Walsh,

Your review of *A.I.* was excellent. After seeing the movie (and disliking it intensely), I have read several industry reviews of it, good and bad. But yours was the only one that put into words what I felt. This was a movie in which everything that was ABSENT had the palpable presence of an attack. It was series of arrows pointed at empty holes. Technology has failed us —> techno society is unchanged. Love is crucial —> an illusion of it will do. The film is literally designed to have the audience stumble into these holes and break their intellectual legs. Hopefully your review will prevent a few such injuries.

MW

17 July 2001

I think it unfair to totally rip Kubrick, he has made some truly magnificent films. (I would particularly think you'd appreciate *Dr. Strangelove*.) From your description *A.I.* sounds like a disappointment, and once I heard Spielberg was the director I was exceedingly disinterested (not to mention surprised about the collaboration). Your review was mostly informative and enlightening, but I definitely could not flow with the disparaging remarks made about *2001* (for example). That movie is a real head trip, and makes you think about a lot of things, but goes a lot deeper than “social relations” which appear at least at first glance to be the extent of socialist analysis into human nature. The fact that the setting takes place in some sort of quasi-dystopia where human interaction is nearly robotic and the people are surrounded by huge vacuous oceans of outer space should tell you that the focus of the movie is going to be on something different than simple social relations.

Social relations are certainly a foundation of society, and I wholeheartedly seek to improve our situation, but why must WSWS.org constantly belittle as “mysticism” things that go beneath this? *2001* takes a scientific/mystical look at human consciousness and our problems with technology and basically deals with fundamental issues of who we are and what all this stuff around us is. Socialism *may* be the correct form of social relations but this does not mean a political

viewpoint holds any sort of philosophical trump card.

Personally your downfall in my eyes is the discounting of “mysticism” and the questions that run even deeper than social relations. This is apparent in your criticism of *2001*, and your strange interpretation that the dream child at the end was a “new man” who would save us.... I think that the point is that it is the SAME MAN, who lies at the birth of consciousness from the distant past to the distant future.... That same little embryo lost amidst the swirling stars of the galaxies.... Even this amazing moment of mystery and intrigue is subjected to your dogmatic analysis? That is pretty disappointing. I share your desire to create a social system that more favorably caters to the interests of humanity and our planet in general (I am unsure what it is), but I must object to what seems to me to be the religious orientation of your world view. However I do enjoy your site and will continue reading every day.

DS

17 July 2001



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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