

Stanley Kubrick: Producers and Production Companies



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Abstract

This doctoral thesis examines filmmaker Stanley Kubrick's role as a producer and the impact of the industrial contexts upon the role and his independent production companies. The thesis represents a significant intervention into the understanding of the much-misunderstood role of the producer by exploring how business, management, working relationships and financial contexts influenced Kubrick's methods as a producer. The thesis also shows how Kubrick contributed to the transformation of industrial practices and the role of the producer in Hollywood, particularly in areas of legal authority, promotion and publicity, and distribution. The thesis also assesses the influence and impact of Kubrick's methods of producing and the structure of his production companies in the shaping of his own reputation and brand of cinema. The thesis takes a case study approach across four distinct phases of Kubrick's career. The first is Kubrick's early years as an independent filmmaker, in which he made two privately funded feature films (1951-1955). The second will be an exploration of the Harris-Kubrick Pictures Corporation and its affiliation with Kirk Douglas' Bryna Productions (1956-1962). Thirdly, the research will examine Kubrick's formation of Hawk Films and Polaris Productions in the 1960s (1962-1968), with a deep focus on the latter and the vital role of vice-president of the company. Finally, the research will move to examine the Jan Harlan years (1975-1999), a period in which Kubrick's production rate slowed markedly. The thesis utilises the methodological framework of the New Film History and draws heavily on archival material. It also develops the historiography of Kubrick, the American film industry, and the role of the producer, with significant critical engagement with the work of Peter Krämer, Robert Sklar, and Andrew Spicer. Asking what Kubrick's role was as a producer allows for a fuller understanding of the way in which he obtained control of his productions, as well as the industrial limitations and constraints in which he produced (or failed to produce) his films.

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