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Politics thru Film – Spring 2006  
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### **Dr. Strangelove Journal – Movie Review**

Dr. Strangelove, Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb is an excellent level one, or “A” film. The technical production was done with great skill. The airplane shots were realistic. The opening shot of the two air planes in flight (one is receiving fuel from the other) is graceful, while at the same time a bit obscene as it resembles dragonflies mating. This dark sort of humor underlies the entire movie.

Dr. Strangelove is a dark film, in content and also production. Ripper’s office scenes are dimly light, and the scenes in the war room are very high black/white contrast. Visually, all the scenes were composed and framed in an artful way. All the shots were interesting. The art direction and set design was well thought out and simplistic, which made it highly successful. The war room, with the large circular table, the ominous overhead light, and the “big board” was just enough to give you the sense of how ridiculous strategic military decision making could possibly become. The cast was amazing in this film, especially the man who played three characters. He was entertaining and witty.

There were three movies inside the movie that were all completely separated and isolated, yet integrated into the main narrative. The dialogue was darkly hilarious. The conversations between then president and Demitri were childish and competitive. The flight captain with his country accent was telling of how such massive responsibility (such as dropping the nuclear weapon) was delegated to ordinary, common people. His loyalty was undying, and the scene with him riding the nuclear weapon like a bull was frightening, as it demonstrated a sort of psychotic enjoyment for what he was doing.

This film was significant politically because it was made during the Cold War era when there was palpable fear that nuclear obliteration was on the near horizon. It was a cynical representation of the Cold War, and illustrated how seriously threatening nuclear war is, as well as the fact that it could be rained down on the entire planet by a small number of ignorant morons holding such massive capabilities.

In the end, this film concludes with a bleak and dismal reality – total destruction of the earth by nuclear weapons. It does not paint a rosy picture that all is not lost and humanity can be saved. To the contrary, it shows how callous people can be (the Russian Ambassador setting off the nuclear weapons system). It leaves you with the feeling of impending doom, and the sense that nuclear

warfare should not be taken lightly. Nor should it be assumed by society with harebrained schemes that survival is a possibility (mine shaft dwelling for 100 years, etc...).

Would I watch Dr. Strangelove again? YES. This is a wonderful film that makes a definite statement about society and war using humor. It is dark, while at the same time beautifully shot. The ending montage of nuclear explosions is ironically presented in a beautiful and graceful fashion that leaves you with a disjointed feeling.