# Arthur C. Clarke, "2001: A Space Odyssey," And NewSpace

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With the passing of Arthur C. Clarke, I felt the need to watch 2001: A Space Odyssey, which was based primarily on his 1948 short story "The Sentinel." When the movie was released in 1968, I was eleven years old and my father took me to see it. While I had no idea what the movie was about, I was enthralled during the first space scenes when The Blue Danube Waltz accompanied the voyages from Earth to that magnificent space station, and then from the station to the Moon. Years later, I've come to appreciate the NewSpace vision embodied in this incredible movie.

If you've never seen the movie (what planet have you been living on?), or it's been a long time, what better way to honor Mr. Clarke than to watch it now? For those who haven't seen it in a long time, recall the scene where the ape tosses the bone into the air and, as it falls toward the ground, you are instantly transported to the future and the bone has become an orbiting weapon. Then, queu the music, and the waltz begins. Soon you see a small spaceship moving toward a distant space station, and as the ship and station converge and match rotation for docking, the music fills your ears and stirs your soul as these two magnificent machines come together with the same grace as a room of 19th Century majestically attired waltzing couples. And on the side of the spaceship it says... not NASA, but Pan American. That's right, a corporation-owned-and-operated vehicle is carrying passengers to the space station. During a scene shot inside the Pan Am space clipper we see a flight attendant walking down the zero gravity aisle, and a close-up shot of her floor gripping shoes reveals the Pan Am logo on the sides. It was 1968, well into the Apollo program, and the movie didn't show a single NASA-logoed spaceship, spacesuit, or space anything.

It gets even better. Once Dr. Heywood Floyd disembarks from the space clipper and is walking along a corridor in the space station, do you remember what's in the background? A Hilton Hotel sign (perhaps a registration desk). When he completes a video call to wish his daughter a happy birthday, we see the AT&T logo at the end of the transmission.

Douglas Trumble, the special-effects genius of the movie, continued the NewSpace vision in his 1972 movie Silent Running. Earth's last forests are orbiting the planet in huge cargo-carrier spaceships, and, again, they are not NASA vehicles. One of the huge ships has the American Airlines logo on it, and there are other corporate logos on the other ships.

The power of science-fiction is that what one person imagines, others often create. Dreamers and engineers, sometimes the same person, but often not. And so it is with NewSpace.

P.S.: If you think C3PO and R2D2 are just oh so cool, do you remember Huey, Dewey, and Louie in Silent Running? Talk about personality; they played poker... and cheated.