# Cinematography in The Shining

The Shining is a 1980 horror/thriller film directed by Stanley Kubrick and is based on a novel by Stephen King of the same name. The film uses many cinematographic techniques to convey a sense of dread and horror throughout it. The most prominent of these are the use of symmetry and steadicam.

**Symmetry:**
John Alcott, the cinematographer, uses symmetry heavily throughout the film. These are most prominent during scenes in which one of the characters, Danny, travels down the many hallways of the Overlook Hotel on his tricycle or whilst running through the the maze outside the hotel during the film's climax. The use of symmetry causes the audience's focus to be on Danny rather than everything else around him due to how the camera is positioned. This creates a feeling of dread for the audience because of how almost perfect and neat the shot seems. It's extremely unsettling for the audience. Additionally, the neat symmetry during the final chase scene further emphasises this sense of dread as it heavily contrasts with the chaos ensuing around Danny. Similarly, symmetry is also put to good use whenever the Grady Twins are shown in the film. The perfect positioning of the camera causes the main focus to be on the twins. They are what the audience's focus is mainly drawn to in the shot and here, they can observe how the twins almost seem to mirror each other due to the near perfect symmetry and thus creates more and more dread for the audience because of how unnatural the shot seems.



**Steadicam:**
The heavy use of steadicam in the film creates a sense of realism and is used to immerse the audience in the world of the film as well as reinforcing the unsettling feeling caused by symmetry. The camera is incredibly smooth and precise with its movements so it is able to keep the audience focused on the action during the film. A specific example of this would once again be Danny's tricycle scenes and the final chase scene in the maze. The camera is able to glide through the set and smoothly follow Danny as he cycles through the hotel and runs through the maze, keeping the

focus constantly on him as well as keeping the audience immersed in the scene because of how smooth the camera's movements are. It creates a really strong sense of realism for the audience. Additionally, steadicam also helps reinforce the effect that symmetry already created on the audience because of the camera's smooth movements. It would seem almost unnaturally smooth and add to the dread the audience would already be feeling.