Shining Cinematography

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 throughout the movie.

Symmetry is used throughout the entire movie, John Alcott, the cinematographer decided to use this because the almost perfect symmetry creates a surrealistic feeling and gives the audience a sense of anxiety because this level of symmetry doesn't occur naturally. One of the scenes in which symmetry is used heavily is the scene where Danny is riding through the Overlook Hotel on his tricycle, the camera makes the audience focus on Danny instead of the surrounding where everything in symmetrical, so the effect is delayed in a sense as the audience slowly begin to focus less on Danny and more on the surroundings and they notice how those surroundings look almost mirrored and perfect which creates a sense of dread.

Another scene where symmetry is used heavily is in the scene with the Dawson twins. Once again, the use of symmetry in the scene disturbs the audience and this time the effect is stronger because these are actual people who are standing and acting symmetrical doesn't occur in real life situations and the effect of this on the audience is that it gives of a surreal effect.

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 can 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 can 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.