

Stanley Kubrick was a very influential and controversial director. His films were noted for their unique cinematography, attention to detail and an inspired use of music scores. Kubrick covered many genres, including horror, comedy and science fiction. Kubrick was a perfectionist; he took painstaking care with each scene and working closely with his actors. Some of his trademarks included using classical music, surreal editing and his use of the steady cam.

Element one- Cinematography

Stanley Kubrick was noted as a director on the forefront of his art, his films and his production techniques were ahead of his time. Kubrick's use of the steady cam is no exception to this. *The Shining* was one of the first feature length films to use the steady cam. Stanley Kubrick decided to incorporate it into the film because it put the audience into the action, or in this case horror. During the scene in *The Shining* where Danny comes across the twins in the hallway, we follow Danny to this meeting through the eyes of the steady cam. Kubrick used this steady cam to put the audience in the perspective of Danny. **This increases the tension and suspense, also it adds to the surprise when the twins appear. We turn the corner as Danny does which is shocking because we feel all the horror the character is feeling** (1). This use contributes to the overall horror of the film which is often referred to as one of the scariest movies in cinema. The film's use of the steady cam popularized its use in feature films such as *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*.

Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* was a very surreal film with surreal and unusual camera movement and techniques. During the scene where the primates encounter the monolith for the first time Kubrick uses a series of camera shots to draw us into the scene and give insight to the characters (primates) feelings. As the primates scatter the camera jumps to an extreme wide shot, then as the primates gain interest and courage to get closer to the monolith so does the camera. The camera changes to a long shot of the main primate, 'Moonwatcher', circling the monolith. **Finally, as Moonwatcher's curiosity compels him to touch the monolith, the camera changes to a mid-shot. This transition of shots helps us understand the primate's initial fear, curiosity and eventual connection to the monolith. Kubrick used this collection of shots so the audience could connect with the primates. The effect of this camera work helps the audience's emotional investment in the film and care about future events** (2).

Both these scenes' cinematography are used in drawing in the audience into the scene. Kubrick is a clever director and knows for a film to succeed the audience must be emotionally invested in the characters and events. Kubrick's camera work certainly achieves this and not through the conventional point of view shot.

Element 2 - Editing

2001: A Space Odyssey has possibly the most famous jump cut of all time, however there is another jump cut within the film that is not as impressive but still worthy of discussion. The encounter between the primates and the monolith ends suddenly with a jump cut to a shadow being cast on a barren desert. This sudden cut demeans the previous scene making it seem as though it was nothing, however the scene seems very important as it sets the rest of the film in motion. Kubrick did this to show that the first step of mankind was simply the first brick in the wall. The first step holds value however the jump cut shows that without future steps the first one is pointless. This contributes to the film's idea of human progression and how we never stop. One step is meaningless to us so we must strive for more, however

as we see further into the film, we can progress so far that it's dangerous. The jump cut teaches the audience that they should savour and appreciate every little progression they have before it jumps away.

In many of his films Kubrick uses subliminal messages to influence the audience. In *The Shining* Kubrick employs this trademark to incite terror in the audience. During Danny and the twins meeting we see flashes of the twins butchered with blood and an axe on the floor. We only see these flashes for half a second but this is what makes them terrifying. Kubrick uses the quick flashes to almost subliminally scare the audience. We don't see the image long enough to analyse it and understand it, but we see it long enough to register a connection to the corpses and blood. The flash gives us an outline of the scene and the audience fills in the rest in with the worst they can think of. Kubrick used the 'fear of the unknown' and 'assuming the worst' of humans to increase the horror of the scene. This is how the human mind works and Kubrick knew and exploited it. These subliminal images contribute to the scenes terror and unease (3). This technique was used in Robert Rodriguez's *From Dusk Till Dawn*. The audience sees flashes of this time a raped women; this has the same effect as the flashes of the twins. *From Dusk Till Dawn* uses quicker flashes which in my opinion are far more effective because they exploit the 'assuming the worst' part of the human brain. However it is most likely that *From Dusk Till Dawn* got its influence from Kubrick's *The Shining*.

Kubrick's editing style seemed to differ between films. This is interesting because many other aspects of his movies are similar. Both *2001* and *The Shining* have very different pace and editing techniques. Perhaps this is because Kubrick never directed the same kind of film twice. He was always switching genres and other aspects of his films. This is what made Stanley Kubrick the most influential and diverse directors of his time.