

arts

Script flaws technically brilliant 'Shining'

By Tom Moore

Stylistically Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* is very impressive; nevertheless, *The Shining* is a very confused movie. In what *Newsweek* deemed "the first epic horror film," Kubrick mixes humor, horror and metaphysics for fairly disastrous results. It's not that Kubrick shouldn't have tried to intertwine all these elements in the film, but he could have come off much, much better.

cinema

With frenzied music on the soundtrack through most of *The Shining* you expect something horrible or exciting to happen in the film almost any second, but the movie mostly just plods along for its two hours and 20 some minutes.

However, there are two genuinely horrifying classic sequences in the film. The first is when Jack Nicholson, who plays a writer baby-sitting a resort hotel in the mountains for the winter, goes into Room 237 to see what has frightened his son. What Nicholson finds is first highly erotic, but soon turns into a sickening image of the grotesque, so wretched that all in the audience must turn their heads away from the screen.

The second classic sequence is when Shelley Duvall, who plays Nicholson's wife, begins to read the novel her husband has been working on. Other than these two sequences *The Shining* doesn't deliver any scares.

The Shining is pretty funny in parts, especially the scenes where Nicholson is drinking with a ghost in the big ballroom of the hotel and the parts when Nicholson first begins to pursue his wife and son with an axe.

But Kubrick's cold and removed tone camouflages many of his intended jokes. Strange stuff that must appear funny to Kubrick is presented with no concern for the film's audience and in such a bizarre and detached manner that it simply falls flat. Kubrick's sense of humor is especially evident in the final stages of Nicholson's madness where he staggers around slobbering, his face and body twisted into a witless parody of those murderous maniacs in Grade D horror movies.

Kubrick always has tried to make films that will cause his audiences to think a bit after they've seen them. In *The Shining* Kubrick attempts to examine reincarnation, ghosts, clairvoyance, the persistence of evil and the old oedipal conflict between father and son. The points

that Kubrick tries to make are so muddled that no one has any idea what he's attempting to say.

Kubrick tries to make it seem that everything that goes on at the hotel is the product of the conflict between Nicholson and his son and that it's the conflict that eventually drives Nicholson loony.

Kubrick suggests that the ghosts in the hotel are only the projections of the hysterias of Nicholson, his wife and son.

But then Kubrick turns around and suggests that the ghosts are real and that the hotel is an evil spot. In the past one of the hotel's previous caretakers murdered his family and there have been other sinister goings on in the place since it was built. In a conversation Nicholson has with a ghost and in the film's final frames Kubrick suggests that Nicholson has

always been at the hotel. The trouble with all this conflicting and confusing gobbledygook is that it's so vague and dopey it's hardly worth pondering.

The same things wrong with Kubrick's film are what's wrong with Stephen King's novel. In the past, with the exception of *A Clockwork Orange*, Kubrick has reworked almost totally the books he films. *Dr. Strange Love*, for example, was a non-comic novel. In reworking his material in the past Kubrick has managed to get most of the kinks out, but he wasn't able to do this in *The Shining*. The plot barely is reworked and what's been changed is for the worse.

The Shining is the biggest film disappointment so far this year. Yet despite its flaws it's a movie that should be seen for its technical brilliance. Just don't go expecting much more.

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DOONESBURY

by Garry Trudeau

Panel 1: "NOTHING THESE AND EVER SEEN PREPARED HIM FOR THE EXPERIMENTS IN OPEN SEXUALITY HE HAS TO WITNESS THIS NIGHT AT THE SHIPSTONE NIGHT." (6-4)

Panel 2: "ONLY A FEW FEET AWAY, SEXUAL PICKERS WERE BREAKING NEW GROUND, PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF HONEST, OPEN COMMUNICATION BEYOND THE OUTER REACHES OF ACCEPTED SOCIAL BEHAVIOR." (6-5)

Panel 3: "TALESE BENT UPWARDS WITH THREE OF HIS FELLOW REVOLUTIONARIES, AND FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL HOURS FLOUTED COMEDY. SO PROFOUNDLY DID HE BECOME WITH HIS SLIGHT PEEVISH AGAINST THE CENSORS AND CLERICS, HE FAILED TO HEAR A NOOK." (6-6)

Panel 4: "TALESE LOOKED UP TO SEE FOUR MORE PICKERS." (6-7) "HAPPY STOCK, I HOPE." (6-8)

Panel 5: "OKAY, CAMPERS, MR. TALESE HAS GENEROUSLY CONSENTED TO FIELD A FEW QUESTIONS, SO WE'LL TAKE THE FIRST CALL NOW." (6-9)

Panel 6: "YES, MR. TALESE, I'VE BEEN ENJOYING YOUR EXERCISES, ESPECIALLY THOSE ABOUT 'PLAYBOY' AND 'HEF'. I WAS A BUNNY-IN-RESIDENCE AT THE MANSION WHEN YOU WERE DOING YOUR RESEARCH IN CHICAGO." (6-10)

Panel 7: "I THINK I SAW YOU AT OUR 17TH PAJAMA PARTY. YOU DIDN'T BY ANY CHANCE SPEND THE EVENING IN THE LIBRARY EXPERIMENTING WITH NON-JUDGMENTAL SECONDARY RELATIONSHIPS, DID YOU?" (6-11)

Panel 8: "NO, I WAS IN THE JACUZZI, ENAGING IN A REDEFINITION OF MORALITY." (6-12) "THAT WAS YOUR BOY, YOU WERE GREAT!" (6-13)

Panel 9: "HELLO? REVEREND SLOAN? IT'S PRESIDENT BAN SADR." (6-14)

Panel 10: "YES, MR. PRESIDENT. (DR. MANDARI) WILL BE BY SHORTLY TO TAKE YOU TO THEM." (6-15)

Panel 11: "HELLO, REVEREND? DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! HE CAN'T BELIEVE!" (6-16) "NEXT WEEKS THAT IS THAT YOU BELIEVE?" (6-17)

Panel 12: "HE DOESN'T HAVE THE AVIOLA'S BAR!" (6-18) "I DO, YOU GET OFF THE LINE, YOU RESIST!" (6-19)

Panel 13: "GOOD MORNING, REVEREND? ARE YOU READY TO GO?" (6-20) "READY AND WILLING, DR. MANDARI!" (6-21)

Panel 14: "WHERE ARE THE CAMERA CAMERAS?" (6-22) "CAMERA CAMERAS?" (6-23)

Panel 15: "YOU DIDN'T NOTIFY THE NETWORKS?" (6-24) "UH, NO, I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS GOING TO SEE THE NETWORKS UNTIL FIVE MINUTES AGO." (6-25)

Panel 16: "BUT I APPROVED FOR A MIBS TO MEET US THERE!" (6-26) "WELL, LET ME GET ON IT, HOW LONG DO YOU HAVE THEM FOR?" (6-27)

Panel 17: "HOW FAR ARE WE FROM THE NETWORKS, DR. MANDARI?" (6-28) "NOT FAR, BUT I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO WEAR A BLIND-FOLD." (6-29)

Panel 18: "A BLIND-FOLD? WHY FOR?" (6-30) "SECURITY, OF COURSE." (6-31)

Panel 19: "I'M SURE YOU CAN APPRECIATE HOW ANNOUSING WE ARE TO AVOID A REPETITION OF LAST MONTH'S ABORTIVE 'MISSILE' ATTEMPT BY AMERICAN TERRORISTS." (6-32)

Panel 20: "GOOD. THE FUTURE SAFETY OF THE..." (6-33) "HERE WE ARE, BESS, 45 DEGREES TO-CENTER, AMIRAB." (6-34)

Panel 21: "YOU'RE CERTAIN THIS IS IT, DRIVER?" (6-35) "YES, SIR. 45 DEGREES TO-CENTER, AMIRAB." (6-36)

Panel 22: "BUT THERE'S NO MIBS HERE." (6-37) "HAPPY THEY GOT LOST." (6-38)

Panel 23: "I BETTER GO IN AND MAKE SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT PLACE. YOU WANT HOPS." (6-39)

Panel 24: "BUT WHAT IF THE MIBS TURNS UP?" (6-40) "KEEP THE COM-VERSATION LINE, DON'T GET ON PULLDOWN." (6-41)

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Screenplay by LEIGH BRACKETT and LAWRENCE KASDAN Story by GEORGE LUCAS
Executive Producer GEORGE LUCAS Music by JOHN WILLIAMS

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