

“*The Shining*: a pattern of camera direction with respect to the Gold Room”

A letter to a friend, written by J. S. Bernstein

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I feel like talking about one shot in Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining*.

The camera is tracking backwards down a corridor alongside the Gold Room and eventually arcs right travelling through open doors into the Gold Room and continues tracking in a sure line left-to-right, its gaze taking in the wide area of the ballroom’s interior, and finally slows to a halt by the bar near a corner of the ballroom.

We experience this steady, fluid camera movement early in the film, during the tour that Mr. Stuart Ullman gives Jack and Wendy (with Bill Watson accompanying) on “Closing Day”. The four of them are walking down the corridor alongside the Gold Room with the camera tracking backwards keeping pace with them; Mr. Ullman leads them into the showpiece of the Overlook Hotel and the camera stays with them without a cut, moving with them as they walk left-to-right, taking in the high-ceilinged sight. The camera has shifted gracefully into the adjoining location via its own set of open doors. The Gold Room is speckled here and there in the background with members of staff distributed among the layout of tables. In the foreground, Mr. Ullman, Jack, Wendy and Bill Watson are eventually met at the bar by Danny, Susie (Mr. Ullman’s secretary), and Mr. Dick Halloran. Let’s call this first incarnation **A1**.

Of the one shot that is **A1** I am stressing four distinct elements: (1) the relationship of camera to corridor; (2) the relationship between camera and open doors of the Gold Room; (3) the left-to-right track along one end of the Gold Room coming to a halt at the bar; and (4) the seamless flow from one element to the next.

It’s almost like seeing double: The latter phase of **A1**’s movement, the left-to-right track to the bar, is almost at once repeated in this first Gold Room scene: Wendy notices her young son Danny walking in through the open doorway, and the film cuts back toward the entrance and repeats the left-to-right tracking camera movement of just moments earlier as Danny, holding hands with the Secretary, is led across the carpet of the Gold Room to his parents, who are standing with the others by the bar. Let’s call this

repetition of the left-right movement **A1+**. (Hereafter when I speak of **A1** I am also by default recalling **A1+** as well.) This fluid left-to-right straight track along one end of the Gold Room, from open doorway to bar, looking towards the dance floor and stage on the opposite end of the ample room, will be experienced not twice but four times in the film, reaching its culmination during the July 4, 1921 party.

**A1**'s camera movement (the backwards track along the Gold Room corridor; the fluid movement through the doorway; the track left-to-right through the Gold Room coming to rest at the bar on the far side) is never repeated exactly, but its spirit resonates a number of times throughout the film.

We next see this camera movement—that is to say, a similar movement, a variation thereon, a ghost of the original—let's call this second movement **A2**—when Jack, stressed after his hideous dream in the Colorado Lounge of chopping Wendy and Danny up into little pieces, further bewildered upon awakening at the discovery of Danny's beating (occurring in room 237 during Jack's dream) and assailed by Wendy's accusation that Jack must have been responsible for Danny's distress (a repetition of the bad scene three years earlier—a primal scene—unseen except for its resonance here—when Jack dislocated Danny's arm)—Jack, stressed from this triple-fold turbulence, stomps down the corridor alongside the Gold Room fuming in a private hell, thwacking at the air in the direction of the camera as if he's so sick of being who he is he's bent on tearing himself out of this confining situation, raging to tear through the Overlook, to tear through the camera lens, tear through the celluloid, tear through the pixels, emancipate himself from the image, from the frame, to escape to a new psychological state, to be free!—As the scene begins the camera is waiting almost halfway down the hall for Jack to emerge into view from the left, then proceeds tracking backwards along the corridor ahead of Jack as Jack approaches, watching him as he fumes existentially; then as Jack moves to the Gold Room entrance the camera changes direction, moving in and panning right and coming to a halt when Jack passes the entrance sign of text and photos (The Gold Room The Unwinding Hours (typography in red) (and is it just me or is that the spitting image of Jim Morrison with a tambourine in the picture on the left?)). The camera, stationary now, remaining in the hallway, peers through the open door as Jack walks into the Gold Room and switches the lights on. Then comes a cut to Jack walking left to right traversing the depth of the ballroom, swallowed up in its eerie ambience, the camera tracking with him,

but as Jack is lagging in energy so the camera starts to lag behind Jack, coming to a halt somewhat behind him when Jack reaches the bar and stops to consider the sight. This left-to-right track, after the cut, rejoins the movement of **A1**. **A2** is a two-shot echo of the one-shot continuous **A1**. In the Gold Room Jack will spend a few minutes crying in his beer—actually Jack Daniels whiskey—to the ghostly Lloyd. Pathetic sight: a sap pouring his heart out to a bartender.

The third example—**A3**—of this camera movement comes not long after **A2**, just as **A1+** came fast on the heels of **A1**. As **A3** begins the camera is positioned in much the same place as at the beginning of **A2**. **A3** is the shot of a terrified Wendy rushing down the corridor with baseball bat in hand frantic to find Jack: The camera is tracking backwards ahead of her, moving faster than the backwards track of **A2** but at pretty much the same speed as **A1**. Camera tracking backward, Wendy sees Jack and an open door of the Gold Room; then, similar to the move-in-and-pan-right movement of **A2**—but not an exact copy, because in **A3** the camera doesn't move in—the camera pans right with her then halts as she rushes into the Gold Room (a whip-pan, coming to a severe halt (Kubrick's camera can stop on a dime) on a vantage through the open doorway). The camera will remain stationary outside the doorway like **A2** rather than arc inwards into the doorway as in **A1**. The perspective of the open doorway in **A3** looks analogous to the through-the-open-doorway perspective of **A2**. [The next shot, of Wendy reaching Jack slumped over the bar, will shift the perspective at the bar from right-left to left-right (from over Jack's left shoulder), the only time we see the Gold Room from that angle. The angle is claustrophobic: visual representation of Jack's dead-end feelings: we see a rather bland bleak sullen unadorned corner of the Gold Room; also a cash register (what hell it is "making ends meet"; also, later on, Halloran will be murdered a moment after passing the Cashier's office).]

**A4** is the night of July 4, 1921: Jack comes calmly down the corridor after stomping off clamorously from a cowed Wendy and distressed Danny and the camera movement of his entering into the Gold Room is an echo of **A1**. When the shot begins, the camera is waiting stationary at the far end of the corridor for Jack to approach—waiting farther down the line than as at the beginning of **A2**, stationary rather than already-in-motion as in **A1** and **A3**, waiting by an open doorway as if the camera is readied in place conscious of where Jack is going to wander, as if Jack could go nowhere else. The camera then

tracks left-to-right, moving in an unbroken cut sideways through an open doorway, its own open doorway, similar to **A1**—but moving laterally in, not via an arc—, accompanying Jack’s movement from corridor to ballroom. One resonance between **A4** and **A1** is that both are at face value upbeat and happy times; **A2**, **A3** and **A5** aren’t. The left-to-right sideways camera track through the open doorway is a primary link between **A1** and **A4** and the fluid track left-right through the ballroom to the bar completes the correspondence. Jack enters the Gold Room, is greeted by the doorman, and proceeds to make his way in a line from left-to-right and comes to rest in a chair at the bar where Lloyd is serving drinks to the well-turned-out guests. Jack is dressed in his late-1970s clothing. Jack’s presence in the ballroom during this 1920s party is an experience of time travel. Time travel makes us think of the twenty-first century man in the eighteenth-century room in Part IV of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Like that visionary *2001* sequence the Independence Day party in the Gold Room is a reflective experience. (By the way *The Shining* is also obviously a “space odyssey”.) Consider the camera movement. That the camera is tracking left-to-right, looking sideways as it were on the action, ‘flattens’ the action of the Ballroom scene, gives it ‘distance’, makes it look almost two dimensional in the manner of a tableau of *Barry Lyndon*; a museum piece; a moving painting, a mirage (that’s movies anyway right?); the spectator is kept apart from this celebration, the camera moves along what seems like the sidelines, keeping resolutely to a straight path skirting the thick of the action, looking on as if from a cautious distance;—passing behind green fronds of potted plants;—compare this ‘flattening’ of the three-dimensional experience of bodies in architectural space to the fluid forward and backwards movement of the camera at other points of the film which ‘opens up’ the environment (Danny’s quick pedalling of his Big Wheel for example or indeed the backward tracking shots down the corridor alongside the Gold Room). Think for a nanosecond of the visual difference between a platform video game such as Donkey Kong and a virtual reality game like Quake 3. We can imagine a vivification of the July 4, 1921 party via close-up camera work, maybe quick pans from side to side as Jack takes in the sights, or think of Scorsese’s characters walking through, not alongside, the crowd in the nightclub in that virtuoso steadicam sequence from *Goodfellas*; rather, Kubrick chooses an icy camera peering steadily from a distance (feeling of vague sinister surveillance).

*The Shining* is not a movie that concerns itself with cheap-thrills and Boo! Amusement park things that go bump in the night. Obviously. The horrors in *The Shining* are of the

fabric of everyday reality. (For example: as an abrupt side note: not to be gone into here: emotional dysfunction: familial discord: societal entrapment: instinctual violence: madness: 'world views': addiction: cyclical absurd history.) In the July 4th Gold Room sequence we are meant to *reflect* on the ultimately indecipherable and grievously indifferent phenomenon called Time. Cosmic Time. Temporality. The world of 1921 is dead and gone. The gorgeous psychedelic turbulent 60s of Jack's rise to prominence is dead and gone. Generations wither, all living things die . . . Contemplation of Time is a cerebral horror. Time is itself a monster that swallows up all things eventually, even itself. Contemplation of Time and Space, if authentic and determined, leads to Speechless Terror. Time and Space are the ultimate in Horror. Living through real life is a true Space Odyssey that is far more terrible than any Fictional Spooky Scenario. Before all day and night terrors, before all real and fictional terrors, Human Consciousness is itself the Primary Terror. From consciousness, and not from anywhere else, comes murder. Consciousness can recognize the groundless ground of Thought. Eternal death isn't as terrible as the wide-awake comprehension of our finite selves, isn't as terrible as beholding the incomprehensible phenomenological mystery of the open space . . . . (I think here by the way of Marion from *Eyes Wide Shut*: "I've been more afraid of the way it was actually going to happen than his death itself.") (I don't even have to say that the ballroom party leads us backward to the vanished world of *Barry Lyndon* and the postscript to that film; and thence forward to the two parties of *Eyes Wide Shut*.) The July 4th 1921 party in the Gold Room hits me with more force than any shock of a deformed Jason Voorhees launching himself out of Silver Lake at the climactic end-point of *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Part 1*, or is it Part 100 . . . The speechless terror comes from being fully awake, philosophically sharp as a tack, contemplating the abyss of What Is. . . . Art can wake you up . . . it's one way to awaken . . . art can wake you up to terror as well as to beauty . . . being awake is wonderful too . . . ("Time is a celebration amid the greatest horror. Enjoy the possibles, amid the greatest pain. Death is the death of possibilities. And yet right now we still have time . . .") (Re: the photograph that ends *The Shining*. Happy days of the madman.)

In **A4** when the camera comes to a halt beside the bar the camera placement is reminiscent of that of the end of **A1** and the shot directly following **A2**. When Jack finally rises from the bar (after a shot-reverse-shot construction echoing the first Jack-Lloyd meeting) and moves a little further into the ballroom, the camera follows Jack

from behind; in the event Jack remains on the sidelines of the revelry because Delbert Grady endeavours to spirit Jack away for a man-to-man talk in the Red Bathroom. (The Red Bathroom (blood) of course reminding of room 237's bathroom, which is predominantly green (nature) fringed with gold (sunlight); and then the white bathroom where Wendy is almost killed (in *Eyes Wide Shut* the colour white relates to sickness and death (oblivion)); and then there's the pink, white and green bathroom in Denver (neat colour-amalgamation of the other three bathrooms) where Danny has his first alarming visions (elevator of blood: the wound that cannot be stanchèd; the Grady sisters; Danny screaming in terror while hidden in the aluminium cabinet in the service hallway perpendicular to the main hall where Halloran gets axed to death by Daddy.)) (Bathrooms are uncanny, they're where the beastly and the rational coincide in a truce; visually they're a powerfully suggestive symbol. Bathrooms concern a basal condition of Being: they relate to the fundamental in what is human, the elemental prior to the institution of reason and the geometric template of sanity. Bathrooms are imprinted with a memory of the *entirely other*.) Two time periods are seen to be superimposed in **A4**, as Jack strolls into the party from yesteryear. Which then, at that time, is a memory, is it 1921 that's remembered wistfully, or is it 1980, or, by the time we get to the Red Bathroom, 1970, what? At the Overlook ordinary clock time evaporates like a mirage, as atop Mann's Magic Mountain. It always fascinates me that those partygoers from the summer of 1921 will be laying eyes on a Jack looking spruce in a tux (think of the film-closing photograph again), while we in the audience see him ('shine him?') in his ordinary clothes. That different time periods are superimposed in this sequence leads me to imagine a more dynamic phantasmagoria for Wendy to experience later on—"Great party, isn't it?"—while she runs through a wide-awake labyrinthine Overlook searching for Danny; a more dynamic, not necessarily a better, so this thought I have isn't in the manner of a speculative rectification of a flaw in *The Shining*; anyhow I think that Wendy could experience a horrible combinatorial explosion of discrete elements: the hotel suddenly becoming packed shoulder-to-shoulder with persons from every conceivable time that the Overlook has been open for patrons, and hell, why not before that time too!—Perhaps even marauding Native Americans seeking to avenge past wrongs.—A spate of separate histories from many different decades meshing simultaneously together, memory and desire overlapping, overspilling in a mania like a Ginsberg poem or like the uncanny elevator of blood streaming unstoppable (emblem of the infinite wound: perhaps the most chilling image in the film? (Is the infinite wound conscious thought?)).

(Maybe this speculative phantasmagoria sounds kooky, carnivalesque, non-scary.) (My kinetic idea would be balanced by the dour shots of the cobwebbed skeletons in the Main Entranceway.) This thought that I had a couple years before *Eyes Wide Shut* was released led me to immediately appreciate one aspect of what Kubrick was doing in the Masked Ball sequence in his final film: he was superimposing many different time periods (I saw Renaissance Italy [1] in the masks and Red Cloak; old-time Vienna (Schnitzler) [2] in Bill's situation, 1996 or so NYC [3]; middle east of the past [4] in the ogee (pointed arch) of the Main Hall; also middle east or ancient world or wild tribal land [5] in the ceremony of the women in the circle; and then the carvings on the columns of the Main Hall looked for all the world from afar like Egyptian hieroglyphics [6]. There will be other resonances—there's a guy in a Napoleon mask reminding us of the salacious excesses of Bonaparte's Paris—let's not forget the time of watching the film, the time of the spectator.)—Kubrick superimposing these half-dozen time periods during the Somerton sequence in *Eyes Wide Shut* I saw at the time (first viewing) as a culmination of the Gold Room technique in *The Shining*. (It is in the Red Bathroom where three time periods at least coincide.)

Anyhow Kubrick's technique in **A4** is to have us reflect on what we are watching, not to get us off voyeuristically or whatever other way on the action. The fact of Time itself hits us hard; we are led to wonder about a fundamental universal concept, not react unthinkingly to a specific cinematic action. *The Shining* is as philosophically resonant as *2001*, which embodied such ostensibly anti-cinematic concepts as cosmic space, cosmic time, human and artificial consciousness, evolution of earthly species, Meaning—leading to an audience's ecstatic reawakening to the All, to behold the earth as if for the first time, to be revitalized, to experience Life as if for the first time, to be reborn to the wonder and the mystery. . . .

Consider by the way how the shot of icy Jack immobilized in the hedge maze at the end of *The Shining*, his eyes upraised in parody as it were of a religious ecstasy,—very much recalling the lost look Jack shows upon swallowing his first alcoholic drink after “five miserable months on the wagon”—reminding also of Alex's addlepatented beatific expression in his last close-up in *Clockwork*,—Icy Jack's look makes us think of the living Star Child gazing into the eyes of the spectator at the end of *2001*. . . but wait! In *The Shining* there is a coda: cold and hot: “The duality of man” (Joker from *Full Metal Jacket*):

We get a close-up of Jack's face smiling from a photograph: but he's no Star-Child: innocence to experience . . . . We know what nightmares swirl behind those winsome eyes and under that winsome smile. . . .

Notice by the way in this coda to *The Shining* that the time period of this final shot of the camera tracking forward through the Main Entranceway through a doorway and up to a photograph in the midst of a display of photographs—I say, notice that the time period of this coda is indefinite. Maybe it takes place in a weird un-time, if that means anything, I'm just improvising here. We cannot be sure when really this final shot takes place in the “reel time” of the filmic universe: it certainly doesn't take place immediately upon the departure of the Torrances from the site because, for one thing, there are protective sheets draped over the furniture, a detail that clashes with the look of the Torrance's Overlook. This final track in to the photograph of July 4, 1921 might have taken place long after the Torrances' spell in Colorado, or maybe long before . . . . ? (And is it only me or are others as well fascinated by some of the people in the photo: these figures from the past, who are they? What are their stories? . . . We will never know them.)

(Side note: Kubrick's separate works, and I am thinking primarily of his late period starting with *2001* (but *Strangelove* and its predecessors can fit here too), interlock together, as Shakespeare's separate works interlock together, so that one work informs the next, and the multiform body of work can be taken as one many-sided magisterial production; *2001* is the mighty pivot work that ‘sets’ the mind of the spectator to comprehend the films that follow. Obviously. (Need an example as an introduction to this theme? Simply consider some beginnings and endings as evidence of links that join the separate films: close-up of the Star-Child as the last shot of *2001* and close-up of Alex as the first shot of *A Clockwork Orange*; the resolute linear trajectory of *Barry Lyndon* segueing into the wild weird unstable airborne hovering of *The Shining's* beginning (which of course leads back to the psychedelic images of the unknown planet landscape in Pt. IV of *2001* . . . )) If one's mental molecules aren't interwoven intimately with *2001* then the truest powers of Kubrick's works will not be activated. If a person is unable to recognize on his or her own the visionary power of *2001*—unable to come to the realisation that it is one of the Great Works of World Art—then it will be no surprise for that person to misunderstand every Kubrick film that followed. Without a comprehensive reckoning of *2001* a person will not have his vision sharpened sufficiently to behold with perfect



clarity the complexity of Kubrick's subsequent films. Why am I writing such elementary lines? I'm straying from my one intention, to talk about one shot in *The Shining*, or, rather, to talk about *a pattern of camera direction with respect to the Gold Room . . .*)

[Damn I'm being called to eat.]

I am just easing into my chair here after a hearty meal and I'm thinking of an **A5**, which is an inversion of sorts on **A1-4**. **A5** is Halloran walking down a corridor flanking the Main Entranceway; he's just come back to the Overlook after too many hours of travel by plane, car and snowcat; the camera is tracking backwards as Halloran walks cautiously forward on his two feet; the carpet underfoot is the same as on the Gold Room corridor, the location looks like a corridor leading to the Gold Room corridor,—but instead of the character and the camera arcing right into the Gold Room, the camera moves in and pans *left* (as opposed to the moving-in-and-panning-right of **A2**) and follows Halloran as he walks into the Main Entranceway and toward his death (right by where Jack in his first moments inside the Overlook at the beginning of the film breezed close to the camera upon walking away from the front desk and then looked up at a series of steps (which a woman was descending), where, in this murderous later moment of the film, he will descend from, to hide behind a pillar with the entrance to Mr. Ullman's office on one side of the pillar and the model of the hedge maze on the other side). **A5** is a fuzzy visual echo of **A1-4** (a mirror image as it were: when I say 'mirror image' I mean enantiomorphic).

**A5** has another predecessor besides **A1-4**. The second shot of the section 'A Month Later' is of Wendy in her blue bathrobe pushing a three-tiered cart holding Jack's breakfast along the same stretch of hall that Halloran will take on his last walk; let's call this shot **aa**. In both **aa** and **A5** the camera movement begins similarly: a backwards track facing the character moving forward. (Also, in both shots the camera's first position is virtually the same.) When Wendy turns to her right through a set of open doors entering the Main Entranceway the camera executes a movement that is analogous to the through-the-open-door arcing movement of **A1** (and reminiscent to the through-the-open-door lateral movement of **A4**): in **aa** the camera arcs left through its own set of

open doors and, without a filmic cut, accompanies Wendy who exits the corridor adjacent to the Gold Room corridor and moves into the Main Entranceway where the camera proceeds to track right-to-left alongside Wendy. So far **aa** is virtually a mirror image of the camera movement of **A1** as well as being a predecessor of **A5**. **aa** then proceeds to trace a movement all its own, the camera changing direction gracefully (panning left while also moving diagonally left) to end up almost stationary in the midst of the Main Entranceway facing the direction of the vantage point Halloran will have in his last moments alive.

Though my energy is flagging I must comment by-the-by on three more specific shots from early in the film which are predecessors to the shots **A1-5**. Perhaps I should have mentioned this earlier. The fluid left-to-right steadicam tracking movement along the sidelines of the Gold Room as seen in **A1**, **A2** and **A4** is reminiscent of three camera moves that occur earlier than **A1**: (1) the first interior shot of the Overlook Hotel, in the first section “The Interview”, is a left-to-right track along the Main Entranceway, looking toward a corridor leading to the Gold Room; the camera follows Jack, who has just entered the hotel, to the front desk; (2) the first interior shot of the Overlook Hotel in the second section “Closing Day” is a left-to-right track along the Main Entranceway looking toward where Halloran is going to experience his death, directly anticipating **aa** as well as the **A** shots; and (3) the right-to-left track of the camera along one end of the Colorado Lounge, gliding the length of the space from elevator to a fireplace, during Jack and Wendy’s tour of the Hotel, also in “Closing Day”. Definitely these three shots resonate as well in the experience of **A1-5**.

I am choosing here to come to a provisional end of this first survey of the camera movement of **A1**. I’m stopping in the manner of shrugging my shoulders at the whole pursuit of attempting a synoptic commentary of Kubrick. Writing this is kin, in my mind at least, to dissecting something organic: and I never liked the smell of formaldehyde. In Bergson’s phrase, this is “a snapshot view of a transition”. I just don’t want to express myself any clearer or further on this subject. It’s not laziness so much as reticence. I feel better leaving the CONCLUSIONS for others to articulate out loud. However, I have described something simple and shapely that can be taken away from this: I have communicated that in *The Shining* there are eight shots which coincide in a relatively

specific stylistic way, so that when you see one of these shots, the other seven resonate in the mind (like the sound of sympathetic strings).

I hope I don't have to hear people accusing, but Hey! How come you didn't talk about this, that, or the other thing! *Now that's really important!* I said at the beginning that I wanted to talk about One Specific Thing: One Shot of *The Shining*: **A1** which I described as a template: as the inauguration of a micro-pattern: as the first instance of a linked sequence of shots that is spread throughout the film. *The Shining* is full of such patterns.

. . . Echoes . . . Memories . . . Caught in the patterns . . .

P.S.

How sinister Kubrick makes the rectilinear look! Chaos and dread embodied in rational-mathematic-architectural principles. The tension between the two—the logical and the dreamy—which (look again!) are one: the material world. (Overlook Hotel: ha! Seeing and not seeing (“Overlooking a beautiful outdoors mountainous panorama”—meaning seeing; but also “missing what is right in front of your face”—meaning not seeing: dual process of simultaneous unconcealment/concealment signified in the one word/phrase “Overlook”).) Also tension between forward/backward tracks (head-on views) and left-to-right or right-to-left tracks (sideways views). Tension between camera movement and camera stasis (the shot-reverse-shot interviews in “The Interview”; also in “Closing Day”: “Do you know how I knew your name was Doc?”). The organic tension of the self-enclosed space; the by-product of psychic repression as a result of the self-organising system of the rational (re: “Civilization and its Discontents”; “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”): up against the tension of the dizzying wild open space of the opening credits, the weirdness of the Void inside and out. The Void, where up and down and left and right and man is the measure of all things mean nothing in particular. Tension inside and out. Wild world stripped of people and word-thought. Tension everywhere—! No way out!—but out for good! What terrible knowledge consciousness brings! Ceaseless flow of consciousness breeds monsters. Ceaseless flow—of blood—streaming from beyond the closed doors of the elevator . . . closed doors . . . elevator? . . . (Alice in *Eyes*: “. . . to the

elevator.”) . . . I think of the blue velvet drapes we cannot see behind at the beginning of *Blue Velvet* . . . (Elevator: up and down: the vertical: diachronic: harmony: stratigraphic: progress: brings you from a here to a there and then back again: stochastic movement within airtight determined framework: symbol of totality: Being: . . . ) (Actually it’s two red elevators side by side: doubling: twins.) . . . On the other side of the elevator doors, a wellspring beyond human ken . . . ? . . . a heart of the matter? . . . the elevator is a symbol that might be of a magnitude beyond even the terrible meaning of room 237 . . . (. . . we each of us have a closed door 237 inside our heads . . . step over the threshold, there human madness lies . . . When Danny is sitting on his big wheel and peers up at room 237 the shape of the closed brown door definitely recalls the Monolith . . . (What does Jack experience in room 237? DECAY MISTAKEN AS BEAUTY: [or: what is desired turns out to be so much rubbish: the death of the dream: innocence to experience: (and then the cutting laughter of the damned that strikes at the heart of reason: laughter is a mild fury where the civilized meets chaos: laughter quakes the foundation of logic: there is something abyssal about laughter: laughter requires no rejoinder, it is a dead end: in the form of merriness, or mockery, or exasperation, laughter is a crazy wind threatening to blow the whole doll’s house of reason away]): that’s life, in a nut’s hell . . . ) . . . I’ll say no more. . . .

This was an exercise in restraint. A passing thought I wanted to keep as a passing thought. *I wanted to point out evidence of a technique, for further study on the part of the spectator.* I am aware that my ‘discussion’ is oblique rather than sharp because I don’t totalise my data into an overall critical examination of the subject. (For example: ‘What can we gain from being aware of the correspondences between **A1** to **A5**?’ Or, “Okay, so *The Shining* is absolutely chock-full of all sorts of doublings and cross-references and resonances. So . . . ?”) Moreover this prose I have produced may be received as entirely convoluted, off-putting rather than inspiring. Of course any and all interpretations suggested will by no means be definitive or exclusive of other resonances! Obviously. One has to not voice a lot of things in order to voice something. I decided to keep mum on the music. I hesitated to describe the Gold Room carpet. Or the design of the bar in the Gold Room. Or the camera’s relationship to the bar. ‘Leave it to be discovered, scrutinised, appreciated,’ I ordered myself. Still and all, I couldn’t help myself. I needed a P.S. to let off a bit of steam. Scatter a few more seeds/fragments.

Writing this I was sometimes struck with Domino's thought from *Eyes*: "I'd rather not put it into words." On the other hand, rereading this I'm struck dumb with the crazed desire to add more! More! More! Sometimes I want to say everything I can about *The Shining* and Kubrick. It would take the writing of more than a few books to satisfy this unruly desire I suffer. And the point of writing it all down is . . . ? Maybe the key is to say as little as possible—offer hints, just enough to inspire the spectator to look again, look closer, and to discover and experience the Awesome for him- or herself.

\*

#### FOR REFERENCE

(A1) *Mr. Ullman, Jack, Wendy, and Bill Watson walk down the corridor into Gold Room and meet Danny and Mr. Halloran, in 'Closing Day'*. COMMENCES AT RUNNING TIME **23:55**; U.S. DVD CHAPTER **8**.

(A2) *Jack stomps in an internal fury down the corridor into the Gold Room where he interacts dolefully with Lloyd, in 'Wednesday'*. COMMENCES AT RUNNING TIME **1:02:43**; U.S. DVD CHAPTER **19**.

(A3) *Wendy jogs down the corridor into the Gold Room and finds Jack slumped at the bar, in 'Wednesday'*. COMMENCES AT RUNNING TIME **1:08:57**; U.S. DVD CHAPTER **21**.

(A4) *Jack strolls down the corridor into the July 4th 1921 ball in the Gold Room, still in 'Wednesday'*. COMMENCES AT RUNNING TIME **1:22:15**; U.S. DVD CHAPTER **23**.

(A5) *Halloran walks cautiously down corridor adjacent to Gold Room and turns into the Main Entranceway of the Overlook Hotel, in '4 pm'*. COMMENCES AT RUNNING TIME **2:07:28**; U.S. DVD CHAPTER **35**.