

How horror in stephen kings novel



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I decided to compare the novel of “ The Shining” by Stephen King to the Film directed by Stanley Kubrick. By reading the book carefully and watching the movie I have noticed that some of the colours used by Stanley Kubrick are different from the ones in the book.

I have few examples defining this statement, First of all the red VW in the novel is yellow in the film, The snow-cat in the novel is yellow but Kubrick decides to make it red in the movie. The last example I have noticed is that Jack’s yellow ball in the film is Danny’s Red ball in the Novel. As we can see the colour yellow and the colour red are inverted and this choice Stanley Kubrick made is not random in fact he uses this sort of unusual reflection of these two colours because mirrors are an important symbol in the movie. Stanley Kubrick has made many more alterations of the novel to make it more interesting for the viewer of the movie. It is quite obvious that he couldn’t change and reverse everything. For examples most of the names were kept the same and places were only reversed in a very cunning way.

Most of the thing were just changed in fashion for example the cold planetary in the novel becomes a storeroom in the film. In this cold pantry everything is stored such as cups, plates and food while in the storeroom contained just food. Some other differences I have noticed are for example that Durkin’s Garage in the movie, is Durkin Conoco in the novel. Stanley Kubrick decides to make some characters say things instead of others for example Jack mentions the Donner party and cannibalism in the movie while it is Wendy who mentions it in the novel.

Kubrick also decides to make the viewers see things that are not shown in the book for example the fact that Danny sees the Grady girls while Danny in the book doesn't. Sometimes is the opposite readers are shown things that viewers are not, the fact that Danny doesn't see Tony in the movie while in the novel he does. This is because Tony is not in Danny's body in the novel but he is the film he is. Other differences that can be found are the room number for the forbidden room is different in the novel is 217 and in the film is 237. Also the reason for which Danny is lured to the door of the room is different in the movie it's the ball taking Danny to the door while in the novel it's his curiosity. In the movie Wendy is portrayed as an unpolished brunette while in the novel she is described as a smart blonde woman.

A very important symbol in the novel is the elevator in the novel and it is used a few times by the Torrance Family. In the movie the family doesn't use it at all. This choice Kubrick makes is due to the fact that he probably doesn't feel that the elevator in the movie gives the same effect that a stair would give. The word "Redrum" is one of the most important symbols in the books and the novel the only thing is that it is portrayed in a different way.

In the film "Redrum" is on a door and Wendy sees the word murder in the mirror while in the novel "Redrum" is in a mirror and Danny sees the word murder in a glass clock dome. This choice may be done by Kubrick because written on the door for the viewer it is much more terrifying than written on a mirror. An important object used in the movie is the axe used by Jack, this is different from the novel because he actually has a Roque mallet. The choice to substitute the Roque mallet with the axe is due to the fact that the Roque mallet is less scary than the axe and the viewer in this way gets more into

the part and is terrified by the sharp object. A strange thing that I have noticed is that the axe in the movie actually appears in Jack's hand and we don't know where he got it from while we know that the Roque mallet in the novel was given to him by Grady. Jack in the movie uses the axe to open the apartment door because he wants to kill Wendy while in the novel he simply uses the key the difference is that the audience will get really terrified because it takes time for Jack to open the door with the axe rather than the key.

During a fight in the movie Wendy hits Jack with a baseball bat and in the novel she uses a wind bottle, I don't really get the reason for changing this because I believe it would have been the same more or less. A very important thing is that in the Novel Jack hits Danny while he does not in the film and I believe the choice was made to emphasize the strength of love and especially father to son love. Stanley Kubrick decides to make all these changes just because some of the things written by Stephen King would not look good on the screen. Kubrick had to make the movie entertaining and especially scary given that it is a horror movie. I prefer the movie to the book strangely this is probably because I am not an avid reader and because the book I believe is kind of predictable and most of the things that happen in it did not really scare me. The movie was different it actually gave me some tension in some parts and since it was so different from the book it was unpredictable.

I have read on an article that Stephen King was not happy with Stanley Kubrick's work and this is because too many things were changed. It also explained that in Kubrick's film most of the actions committed by the

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characters or most of the objects or scenery is the reverse of what it is in the book. I have learnt that he uses this reverse technique that I have only noticed with the colours before reading the article because mirrors and reflection is one of the themes of the novel. (The Shining, 2008. Why did Stanley Kubrick change so much from the novel?.[online] Available at: [Accessed 10 May 2011])This choice Kubrick has made is in my opinion fantastic and imaginative and gave the film something more than the book.