

CAP – Final Essay

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (Tim Burton, 2005.)

Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (Mel Stuart, 1971.)

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The story of Wonka's factory is a tale that is admired by many children and adults around the world. The novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Ronald Dahl was the first rendition of this story that soon blossomed into two films with two separate directors. The novel, and both films, produce a story about a boy's adventure to obtain a close look at the infamous chocolate factory owned by Wonka. The story begins with a contest held by Wonka; five golden tickets were placed in an assortment of millions of chocolate bars. The main protagonist Charlie obtains the golden ticket along with four other individuals. He and the other children experience the joys and horrors of Wonka's chocolate factory and Wonka himself throughout the film. By the end, it is revealed in both films that Wonka needs a successor to his factory. Although *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Tim Burton and *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* by Mel Stuart depict a similar storyline, Tim Burton offers more critical analyzation by continuously establishing the lower-class dilemmas that Charlie faces.

When analyzing both films cinematic elements, it is evident that Tim Burton focused more on making the film enjoyable for all audiences. This is evident in the first initial minutes of the film when the audience first see's the chocolate factory, Charlie's city, and Charlie himself. The use of mise-en-scene, dark color tones, and gothic architecture attracts the audience and gives them a hint of the underlying conflicts at play in the film. The scene begins with a long

shot of Charlie, gazing over the factory as red Wonka trucks pass him. The camera then moves closer to Charlie, going from a long shot, to a medium closeup shot. The camera then cuts, offering an establishing shot of Charlie running while capturing his house, the buildings around him, and the chocolate factory. The first two shots were used to establish Charlie's dedicated interest in Wonka, while also capturing the unknown darkness that surrounds his love for the factory. The audience sees a dramatic use of dark colors; and a dramatic use of red to represent Wonka. Dark bricks are used on every building, the trees visible on screen are dead, and dark clouds are used as snow falls over the city. In contrast, Tim Burton uses a bright red color for Charlie's coat and the Wonka trucks. Tim Burton uses this color to show that Charlie only seeks enjoyment through Wonka's creations. While everything around him is captured in a dark manner, the director wanted to show that Charlie may only seek happiness through Wonka. This is further demonstrated in the establishing shot capturing Charlie's house and his city. In this shot, the director chose to make Charlie's home the farthest from the chocolate factory. Furthermore, the director also chose to make the buildings surrounding Charlie's home as congruent, and identical as possible. While it is shown that all the people within Charlie's city live an almost identical lifestyle, Tim Burton wanted to exaggerate the socioeconomic differences between him, his family, and the rest of society. It is displayed to the audience that Charlie's ability to enjoy life is limited, especially when Charlie's city is portrayed in a way where everyone abides by materialism.

In one scene from *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* by Mel Stuart, the audience witnesses Charlie's family unbothered by their poverty, the audience also sees that Charlie's family is comfortable with the materialism culture that wealthy families possess. This is seen when the family is watching television and the first golden ticket winner, Augustus Gloop is

announced. The scene begins with all the elders on the bed shouting 'Happy Birthday' to Charlie as his mother hands him his first birthday present. After opening this present, the scene ends with Charlie receiving a Wonka bar from his grandfather. He opens the chocolate bar and blurts out that he won the golden ticket but then immediately says he was joking. In this scene, a point of view shot is offered from one of the grandparents, and an over the shoulder shot from Charlie as he is opening his chocolate bar and discussing with his family. The director used these shots to establish the happiness these characters possess solely through family. Almost as if they are insensible to the hardships that come with their status. In this scene, Mel Stuart also establishes this with the use of mise-en-scene and lighting. The scene from the beginning is well lit, the light is pouring in from the windows and reflecting on the characters faces. The house is tiny; however, it is spacious, neat, organized, and comfortable for all characters on screen. This element also contributes to the audience's observation that there are no current dilemmas presented in the film. Although Charlie's family is impoverished in both films, Mel Stuart fails to focus on this crucial attribute that makes the film enjoyable for all audiences. Therefore, minimal analyzations and interpretations can be made towards Mel Stuart's intent, and how the scenarios in this tale can contribute to a real-life lesson.

Looking at this same scene from Tim Burton's perspective, significant editing techniques are used to build anticipation for the audience, and to convey the underlying hardships that Charlie's family must encounter. The scene begins with Charlie and the elders watching Veruca Salt on television being announced as the next golden ticket winner. As she is announced, both of Charlie's parents' storm into the house and ask Charlie if he wants to open his birthday present early. Charlie opens his present (a Wonka chocolate bar.) As he takes off the wrapping, the family huddles over Charlie and they start to watch and wait intently. It is revealed to the

audience that Charlie did not get the golden ticket. The scene then ends with Charlie splitting his chocolate bar and sharing it amongst his family. The camera smoothly cuts from a shot of the whole family on the bed, to a point of view shot from Charlie opening the chocolate bar, to a close up shot of the parents and grandparents. These three shots continue throughout the scene when Charlie shares his chocolate bar. In this scene, a significant amount of continuity editing is used to establish how materialistic possessions and gift giving are a luxury for Charlie's family. Tim Burton wanted to specifically capture the emotions of all characters to show the significant differences between poor and wealthy individuals outside of the film. At this point, the director has already established crucial character development for Charlie. This allows the audience to not only root for Charlie, but further understand the unpleasant quality of life impoverished individuals must endure. Moreover, looking at a scene from Mel Stuart's version of the film, continuity editing is also used to establish Charlie's conflicts. However, his conflicts are presented in a manner that creates minimal audience emotions. In the scene, the candy merchant is performing his musical while continuity editing is used to feature shots of children enjoying various candies and chocolates. The scene then ends with Charlie gazing into the candy shop from the street. While Charlie's emotions are captured intently, the audience does not feel as sad for Charlie when comparing this version of Charlie to Tim Burton's. Due to the lighthearted mentality that Charlie has around dilemmas in Mel Stuart's depiction, the audience believes that Charlie will pull himself out of any hardships. It is evident throughout the film that most scenes are oriented towards children. This is also seen in the first Oompa Loompa musical, editing software is used to minimize the shot to the upper right corner of the audience's screen, leaving a large blank space for colorful and bubbly subtitles for the musical. The use of subtitles on the screen, colorful font, and changing the actual resolution of the film shows the director's approach

to make the film as wholesome as possible. When imagining this technique in Tim Burton's version of the film, it would completely contradict the director's purpose for making the film. The goal for Tim Burton was to make an enjoyable film while creating vast audience interpretations, while Mel Stuart focused solely on creating the most enjoyable film for children.

Within both versions of the film, various diegetic sounds are used to establish both directors' main intent. Within Tim Burton's version of the film, the Oompa Loompa musicals are used to discuss arising issues with children in this current age. Towards the end of the film, when Mike Teavee is confined within a television, a musical begins discussing the dangers of parents allowing their children to watch a significant amount of television. Throughout the musical, the instruments and vocals remain intriguing enough so that children and adults can understand it. Furthermore, the aggressive rock aesthetic of the song allows the musical to be enjoyed by all audiences. Although the director's inclusion of this musical can be considered comical, it produces less conformity amongst the audience when comparing Tim Burton's musicals to Mel Stuarts. Mel Stuart's approach was to include hit songs from the 1960's and 1970's. The use of these songs establishes Mel Stuart's intent to grant the audience whatever they wish, making them as comfortable as possible. While both films were effective in relating songs used in scenes to the current period in which it was filmed, Tim Burton's approach was far more successful towards giving the audience extensive analyzations and observations outside of the film.

The non-diegetic sound in the initial credits of both films is not often analyzed, yet so much is conveyed in this small segment about the way the film will be carried out. In Mel Stuart's initial credits, shots of an actual chocolate factory are used while an ambitious and soothing orchestra is playing in the background. The use of an orchestra in this segment makes the audience feel satisfied and intrigued within the first few seconds of the film. It also gives the

audience the impression that the film focuses on enjoyment rather than conflict. In Tim Burton's initial credits, we are met with a robot boxing and wrapping chocolate bars, the orchestra playing in the background uses high pitch notes at a fast pace. Tim Burton immediately raises suspense in this initial segment solely through an orchestra. The contrast between both initial credits is evident. While Tim Burton previews the potential dilemmas in the film, Mel Stuart previews the film in the most positive manner possible. While Mel Stuart keeps the audience hopeful, Tim Burton diminishes this hope from the very beginning of the film.

In both films, different dialogues are used to center the film towards the director's message. While Mel Stuart includes lighthearted comedy and serene dialogue between characters, Tim Burton includes relatable and realistic dialogue and character reactions. This is evident within Tim Burton's depiction of Charlie winning the golden ticket. When Charlie wins the ticket and runs home, him and his family discuss selling the ticket for money. In Mel Stuart's version of Charlie winning, Charlie and his grandfather are immediately excited and ready to head to the factory, not thinking about the power that the ticket possesses. It is evident that Mel Stuart's targeted audience is children. While Tim Burton makes the audience feel depressed, and hopeless for Charlie, Mel Stuart continuously establishes an almost never-ending positive plot. Furthermore, there is never a moment in Mel Stuart's film where the audience emotions are dramatic. The director's intent was to portray the tale of Wonka and the Chocolate Factory with little to no underlying conflicts. However, in Tim Burton's rendition of this tale, the director uses dialogue to establish significant real-world messages that should be considered by the audience. Most of the dialogue between Charlie and his family include discussions about their wealth. Whether it's about what they're eating, employment, or making themselves happier, the director always finds his way to make the audience particularly interested in the family's socioeconomic

status. By doing this, significant character development is established, making the audience eager for Charlie's future success that might be presented at the end of the film.

Charlie and his grandfather are portrayed very differently in both films. While Tim Burton offers a backstory to Charlie's grandfather, showing his ability to be a hard worker and an outstanding individual, Mel Stuart rather develops Charlie's grandfather into a careless and blithesome individual. This is specifically seen in Mel Stuart's rendition when Charlie and his grandfather are in the chocolate factory. Throughout the course of the tour, they become careless and begin to break the rules, trying out the new inventions. Although Mel Stuart captured the significant enjoyment that the characters possess by the end of the film, Tim Burton would have never included this within his film, the respectful qualities that the director has built for these characters would not correlate with these specific actions. Moreover, while Mel Stuart shows specific actions like Charlie throwing the chocolate bar after winning the golden ticket, and breaking the rules in the factory, Tim Burton made sure that Charlie and his grandfather are perceived with the utmost respect and professionalism by focusing on their kindness and willingness to help others. This is shown in the ending scene where Charlie and his grandfather are the last contestants, it is also shown when Charlie splits his birthday present with his family. Overall, Tim Burton would rather focus on how the kindest and most respectable individuals are often on the lower side of the socioeconomic spectrum, while Mel Stuart focuses on how individuals should enjoy life to its fullest no matter the consequences. Both films have interesting lessons by the end of the film, however, Tim Burton offers more realistic life lessons that the audience can educate themselves from.

In conclusion, Tim Burton, and Mel Stuart's take very different approaches towards this tale. While Mel Stuart's goal was to fulfill enjoyment for children unable to understand lower class dilemmas, Tim Burton chose to include all audiences by focusing on Charlie's path towards success with the inclusion of real-life socioeconomic conflicts. Although Mel Stuart's version of the film was less enjoyable for me than Tim Burton's, both directors have done a successful job in bringing the novel to life in a passionate manner. Furthermore, both versions of the film should be further analyzed by directors and students looking to get a solid understanding of intriguing character development. Both films incorporate significant elements that make them memorable and noteworthy American films.

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