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Tim Burton's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory: A Fairy Tale between Tradition and Subversion

MAGNARD Joséphine. *Tim Burton's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory: A Fairy Tale between Tradition and Subversion*, sous la direction de Mehdi Achouche. - Lyon : Université Jean Moulin (Lyon 3), 2018.
Mémoire soutenu le 18/06/2019.



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Master 2 Recherche Etudes Anglophones

**Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*:
A Fairy Tale between Tradition and Subversion**



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Year 2017-2018

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this Master's dissertation is to study to what extent Tim Burton plays with the codes of the fairy tale genre in his adaptation of Roald Dahl's children's book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964). To that purpose, the characteristics of the fairy tale genre will be treated with a specific focus on morality. The analysis of specific themes that are part and parcel of the genre such as childhood, family and home will show that Tim Burton's take on the tale challenges the fairy tale codes, providing its viewers with a more Tim Burtonesque, subversive approach where things are not as definable as they might seem. The analysis will be majorly centered on Tim Burton's movie and will count many scenes and still examinations. Some points will nonetheless be made about the original text and the first movie adaptation (1971) as a way to reinforce or contrast Burton's own interpretation.

Key Words: Fairy Tales, Burton, Dahl, childhood, family, morality, Wonka, Charlie, greed, father, subversive, liminality.

Le but de ce mémoire de fin d'année est de montrer dans quelle mesure Tim Burton joue avec les codes du conte de fée dans son adaptation du roman de Roald Dahl *Charlie et la Chocolaterie* (1964). L'analyse se portera donc sur les caractéristiques du genre avec une attention particulière portée sur la morale. L'étude de différents thèmes incontournables du conte de fée comme l'enfance, la famille et le sentiment d'appartenance, permettra de montrer à quel point l'adaptation de Tim Burton remet en question les codes du genre en offrant aux spectateurs une vision plus Tim Burtonesque et subversive du conte, où les choses ne sont pas aussi bien définies qu'elles en ont l'air. L'analyse se portera presque exclusivement sur le film de Tim Burton et sera composée d'études de scènes et d'images provenant du film. Le roman et la première adaptation cinématographique (1971) seront néanmoins utilisés afin de renforcer et contraster cette argumentation.

Mots clés : Conte de Fée, Burton, Dahl, enfance, famille, moralité, Wonka, Charlie, cupidité, père, subversif, liminalité.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would particularly like to thank my Supervisor, Mr Achouche, for helping me write this dissertation. Thank you for always encouraging me and believing that I would do something great. Thank you for the interesting conversations we had on cinema and sharing your passion with me.

I would like to thank Cristina Massacracci, one of my teachers of Film Studies that I had last year in London. Thank you for guiding me when I was overwhelmed with stress and questions, thank you for advising me on my topic and always offering your help even if I was no longer officially your student.

I also would like to thank my family and friends who had to cope with my very stressful self, my moments of doubts and discouragement, but also for showing interest in my subject and believing in my capacities.

A special thank you to my many readers Stella Rofi, Raphaëlle Sabouraud, and Sari Imai to have read my hundred pages even if you had a very busy life and taken the time to give me interesting feedbacks on my work that allowed me to make it better.

Finally, I would like to thank my father for reading to me every night when I was a child and introducing me to the world of Roald Dahl. And to my loving grandmother who took me to see *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* at the cinema when I was ten, and, without knowing, introduced me to a fantastic movie director that I had the greatest pleasure working on these past few months.

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INTRODUCTION

It seems rather unlikely to meet anyone nowadays who would not have heard, read or seen a fairy tale. Indeed, being thousands of years old, fairy tales have gradually established themselves as a canonical genre loved by young and old alike. Coming from the oral tradition, they were mostly seen as *folk tales*. They were mainly renditions of common beliefs and experiences. They were told by gifted tellers to bring “communal harmony” and a sense of “mission or *telos*” (Zipes 1995: 22). With the apparition of the printing press and consequently greater literacy in the 15th century, fairy tales developed significantly. Not only did the form, the themes, the mode of production and reception changed but the single category of folk tales offered a variety of other types of tales like legends, and myths, fables and fairy tales. One thing relevant to notice is that fairy tales, as they are understood nowadays, were originally only a sub-category of folk tales. They were known as magic tales. And it is only by the end of the 17th century with the French that the fairy tale – *conte de fée* – appeared and became a recognized literary genre on its own. Writers such as Charles Perrault, The Grimm Brothers or Andersen became landmark authors of the genre and their written productions have travelled through the ages. Still in the late modern period, the presence of the fairy tale genre cannot go unnoticed. Being part of children’s literature, classic fairy tales still remain a major genre being read by parents to their children. An activity very much to their liking as they are able to share a common experience of reading, having been read to the same fairy tales when they were themselves children. In addition to its oral and written traditions, the fairy tale genre seems to have made most of its appeal in the visual realm. Indeed, the seventh art appears to have succumbed to the fairy tale mania.

The classic written fairy tales have been greatly translated on screen throughout time, being modified in the process to suit the expectations of the period. One of the key figures who adapted well known classic fairy tales in the 20th century such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1812) by the Grimm Brothers or *Cinderella* by Charles Perrault (1697) was Walt Disney, whose adaptations were marked by innocence and sweet fantasy. Along with these classic fairy tales, one could also notice the adaptation of modern fairy tales. There is one figure in particular, that has marked the 20th century with his marvellous modern tales and whose popularity was such that most of his books were turned into movies: Roald Dahl.

Indeed, before JK Rolling’s *Harry Potter* (1997), Roald Dahl’s children’s books dominated the children’s book market. Three years after Dahl’s death in 1993, a survey by the *Young Telegraph* newspaper was carried to know which books were children’s favourite. As

Catherine Butler and Ann Alston observe in their book *Roald Dahl*: “8 of the 10 titles, including all of the top five were written by Dahl” (1). Similarly, in her book *Deconstructing Roald Dahl*, Laura Vinas Valle points out to several more recent surveys carried by *Books for Keeps*, a children’s book magazine online and *Book Trust*, an independent British literacy charity, according to which 40000 adults and children voted Roald Dahl as children’s favourite author in 2000 and Dahl’s characters Charlie, Matilda, Mr Fox and the BFG were children’s favourite fictional characters in 2009 (1). His popularity was not reduced to the British market. Indeed, his books for children were originally published in America before being published in more than 50 countries in 55 languages (Mangan 39). Although most of his books have become bestsellers, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) is the one that received most attention, praise and criticism alike.

It tells the story of Charlie Bucket, a poor little boy who lives in a dilapidated hut with his parents and four grandparents. Charlie, just like any children, has a great love for chocolate and candy; however, his low status prevents him from eating more than one bar a year as his birthday gift. Charlie happens to be living close to the most wonderful chocolate factory of all, and one day, the chocolate maker, Willy Wonka launches a contest putting golden tickets inside his chocolate bars. The five children who find the tickets will be invited to a private visit of his factory and offered a lifelong supply of chocolate. Four bratty children and their parents alongside Charlie and his grandfather Joe are the lucky winners. During the visit, Veruca, Violet, Mike and Augustus reveal themselves to be rude, spoilt and disobedient children being consequently punished for their actions. Charlie, the most obedient of all, is the ultimate winner, becoming the heir of Wonka’s factory. Bringing together many characteristics of the fairy tale genre, Dahl’s story offered great entertainment to his readers as well as useful lessons.

His appeal being such that in 1969, Roald Dahl agreed to turn his book into a movie. *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* came into being in 1971. It was directed by Mel Stuart; the script was written by Roald Dahl, and Gene Wilder was picked to play Willy Wonka. It received mixed reviews. *Daily Variety* saw it as ‘cynical and sadistic’ (qtd. in Mangan 60). Roger Egbert, one of the critics of the *Chicago Sun Times* thought that it was “the best family film [he had] ever seen in four years on this job, and probably the best film of its sort since *The Wizard of Oz*”. For him “It is everything that family movies usually claim to be but aren’t: delightful, funny, scary, exciting and most of all, a genuine work of imagination” (*Ibid*).

Roald Dahl’s *Charlie* was not made into one but two movie adaptations, the last version having been released rather recently in 2005. Indeed, the 21st century movie industry is still

very much influenced by the fairy tale genre. A great number of movies are actual modern re-adaptations or remaking of fairy tales. One could think of Catherine Hardwicke's *Red Riding Hood* (2011), Joe Roth et al.'s *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), Robert Stromberg's *Maleficent* (2014) starring Angelina Jolie as the lead protagonist or more recently Bill Condon's rendition of *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) starring Emma Watson as Belle. The TV series as well focused their attention on the fairy tale genre with *Grimm* (Stephen Carpenter et al. 2011-2017) or *Once Upon a Time* (Adam Horowitz et al. 2011- ...) which success at the box office led to the renewal of the shows into several seasons. Curiously, the once sanitised fairy tale versions of Walt Disney appear to be gradually challenged with the darker adaptations directors like making nowadays. The addition of violence and sexual hints, for instance, give the tale a somber tone that is far from the Walt Disneyfied movies but that, in a way, comes closer to the original written tales which are mostly dark and dreary. And who could best epitomize this shift in the fairy tale genre than American director Tim Burton and his neo-gothic universe? Indeed, Tim Burton has managed to create a unique style in the Hollywood industry, borrowing from both tendencies: lightness and humour balanced with darkness and fear. It seems as though Burton came as the perfect candidate to make another adaptation of Dahl's book.

One paying close attention to Roald Dahl and Tim Burton will quickly realise that they have many things in common which turned their 'collaboration' into something very natural. Tim Burton and Roald Dahl experienced a difficult childhood that did not leave them indifferent. On the contrary, it played a significant role in shaping their perceptions of the world. They both felt estranged from society at a very early age. Roald Dahl had to suffer many injustices when he was at school. Receiving repeatedly violent corporal punishments for crimes he had not done, Dahl gradually started questioning the "absolute" authority of the adult figure over the child. He called into question society's beliefs according to which adults being the eldest should be taken as respectable figures whose words and acts must always be considered legitimate and never challenged. In one of his writings entitled *Lucky Break*, he tells his readers about some life experiences that transformed him and pushed him to be a writer. His childhood spent at boarding schools remains one of the experiences that marked him the most. He remembered those days as "days of horrors of fierce discipline, of not talking in the dormitories, no running in the corridors, no untidiness of any sort, no this or that or the other, just rules, rules and still more rules that had to be obeyed. And the fear of the dreaded cane hung over us like the fear of death all the time" (189). The distrust he grew from his experience developed itself in his literary work. As one of Dahl's critics, Mark West observed: "In almost all of Dahl's

fiction--whether it be intended for children or for adults--authoritarian figures, social institutions, and societal norms are ridiculed or at least undermined" (qtd. in Royer). Dahl's anarchic vision of life promoted in his books for children did not go unnoticed and provoked many reactions. Mostly disliked by adults and teachers who took his writings as personal offences and as bad examples to be given to children, it is nonetheless his singular take on life that turned him into a child's favourite.

Similarly, Tim Burton's early life was quite dark. He felt misunderstood by his family friends and society as a whole. He hated preconceived ideas passed on by society and was firmly against the idea that one must conform to society's standards to be accepted and valued. According to him:

Society tries to suppress any creativity and passion an individual may feel, while at the same time a particular culture is enforced upon [him/her], almost suffocating any creative urges [one] may possess. Because of this [...] individuals need 'a certain kind of strength and simplicity' in order to break through the enforced cultural framework. (Page 10)

When he was working at Disney, his drawings were rejected as being not good enough. Society's absolute power over what is said to be "good" or "bad" was something he felt very strongly against. In his own words: "If you go into a classroom and see children's drawings, you don't go, 'Oh that's better than the other', it's kind of an even playing field, but as you get older, society tells you, 'That's not a good drawing'. A lot of kids get to an age when they feel they can't draw – and that happened to me – and that's simply not true" (Christie).

There seems to be a common wariness about society bringing the two men together. They are both outsiders who use their work to challenge authority by exposing society's woes and darker sides of humanity, something that is extremely present in the fairy tale genre which does not censure violence and darkness to show what society is capable of. Indeed, in a similar fashion, Dahl and Burton's work have received many criticisms. Adults refused to accept that their books and films were suitable for a young audience considering that it was filled with violence, rudeness and darkness¹. However, as rightfully pointed out by Burton in an interview,

¹ The issue on whether or not Dahl wrote unsuitable tales for children is tackled by Johnathan Culley, Dieter Petzsold and Mark West. Similarly, many articles were written to question the suitability of Burton's films for young viewers. A few were published by The Week Staff, Olivia Youngs, Eric Eisenberg.

cruelty has always been part of children's books and movies. Fairy Tales have never hidden their darker parts and they are still very much liked by their young readers. In his words:

I always find that kids can take quite a lot and that they're quite intelligent. And I find that adults, as they get older, kind of forget what it's like. Even with Disney movies. They think they're all light and airy-fairy and yet from *Snow White* on, *The Lion King* and everything, death is very present. They've been killing animals for years. [...] I can understand that, getting into protective mode [once you become a parent] or whatever. But at the same time, I don't know how you can forget that *Snow White* was scary and *Pinocchio* was scary. I was even watching *101 Dalmatians* and it was like 'boil em', skin em' beat em' bash em' over the head, kill em!' And I guarantee you now that if that line was in a Disney film they would freak out. (Eisenberg)

According to one of the experts of children's literature and fairy tales, Maria Tatar: "children, as most adults, are generally fascinated rather than frightened by cruelty and violence" (qtd. in Ahrens 2). Roald Dahl and Tim Burton seem to be well aware of that fact. Violence and darkness are appealing to their audience because, not only is it thrilling but it can also be comical and very satisfying to see bad people being rightly getting what they deserve (i.e. the greedy children in *Charlie*). In addition to those reasons, there seems to be a psychological benefit to it as well. Bruno Bettelheim in his book *The Uses of Enchantment* explains that depicting violence and scary events is very cathartic for the child reader.

Without such fantasies, the child fails to get to know his monster better, nor is he given suggestions as to how he may gain mastery over it. As a result, the child remains helpless with his worst anxieties – much more so than if he had been told fairy tales which give these anxieties form and body and also show ways to overcome these monsters," he wrote. (120)

This idea of catharsis is made even more efficient in Dahl's books because of his specific understanding of the child figure. Dahl was aware of the difficulties children were facing during childhood. As he once said in an interview: "If you want to remember what it's like to live in a child's world, you've got to get down on your hands and knees and live like that for a week. You find you have to look up at all these bloody giants around you who are always telling you what to do and what not to do" (Alston). Hence, Dahl's books were made to entertain the reader but also to give him a safety valve, a way of escaping and dealing with his

everyday life. Having the ability to put himself in the child's shoes, he depicted in his books a universe seen through the eyes of the child figure. In that world he exposed all the things children deemed unfair or difficult to handle such as the power of adults over children in the institution of the family and school. He said out loud what every child is thinking but is unable to express in real life. Children are not powerless individuals that adults can shape as their convenience and living a child's life is hardly restful. Similarly, Tim Burton gives voice to the powerless child-adult figure in his movies, through which he allows the misunderstood viewer to identify with. The child reader/viewer is not to be perceived as an innocent and naïve creature in need of protection. On the other hand, he/she is never completely child-like or adult-like. This is one of the reasons why Burton was drawn to *Charlie*. In his words: "I responded to *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* because it respected the fact that children can be adults. It was one of the first times you had children's literature that was a bit more sophisticated and dealt with darker issues and feelings. Very sinister things are a part of childhood" (Caesar).

Everything exposed so far seems to have been showing that Tim Burton is the right director to adapt Dahl's work. Thanks to their allegedly common personalities and anarchic views of the world, both individuals form a perfect "match made in heaven", according to Johnny Depp (Waugh 177). As previously noted, *Charlie* had already been made into a movie in 1971. However, despite Roald Dahl's participation in the making of the movie, it was not seen as a faithful adaptation of the book, which is one of the reasons why Dahl himself didn't like it. In a similar fashion, Burton repeatedly said in interviews that he didn't like the movie and he also found it "sappy" (*Ibid*). It gave then Burton the perfect opportunity to make a new adaptation that would be closer to the original source text. Some of the first movie fans dreaded Burton's new take on the book thinking he would remake the movie. However, as Burton explains in an interview "None of us felt like we were remaking the movie. We always felt we were trying to make the book" (Woods 186). In his words: "I wanted to get a feeling of the essence of the book and try to hit that as best and as purely as we could-not try to overcomplicate it and try to make it 'Charlie's race against time', or whatever" (Salisbury 2006: 225).

Tim Burton's desire to stay very close to the text did not keep him from putting his 'Burtonesque' mark as well. In addition to his obvious gothic aesthetics, his deep contrasted colours, his dark and light humour, Burton also added to the original plot, themes he is very fond of, and that happen to be essential ingredients in the fairy tale world: dark childhood and problematic family relationships. He decided to add a new subplot in order to bring a deeper understanding of Wonka's character. In his own words: "You want a little bit of the flavor of

why Wonka is the way he is," declares Burton, "Otherwise, what is he? He's just a weird guy" (Mark). Through the use of flashbacks, Tim Burton gives the viewer a glimpse into the chocolate-maker's difficult past. Wonka is depicted as a powerless boy, subdued to his terrible dentist father's will, who will not let him have any candies or chocolate. He seems to be deprived of all the fun and innocence childhood's stage is deemed to be about. Here, Burton takes the opportunity to bring Dahl's story to his own home where sons are misunderstood, and father-son relationships are marked by utter tension. Burton never feared that his addition would be problematic being certain that it was "in the spirit of Dahl's work" (qtd. in Kraenbuhl 151).

It seems that Tim Burton's modernisation of the book and specific addition, Willy Wonka's difficult past, calls into questions the traditional fairy tale form used by Dahl and applied to some extent by Burton. Indeed, in his adaptation of the book, Tim Burton remains faithful to the fairy tale genre giving his viewers a Manichean vision of society opposing Good versus Evil and encouraging his viewers to draw lessons from it. However, Tim Burton's rendition of Willy Wonka challenges the codes of the fairy tale when he chooses to remove the simplified characterization of the protagonist and to replace it with a deeper psychological dimension. Through the character of Willy Wonka, Tim Burton celebrates the undefinable, the in-between, that goes against the very basis of the fairy tale expectations that tends to categorize everything. This none-categorisation or liminality finds its completion in the institution of the family, that is after all, at the heart of fairy tales and a theme that is overtly present in Burton's work. With this in mind, one could wonder to what extent Tim Burton plays in his adaptation of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* with the codes of the fairy tale genre.

The first chapter of this study will give its readers a theoretical background on the three areas the study is based on. First, considering that Roald Dahl's *Charlie* is a children's book, it would be first worth understanding what children's literature is, to whom it was addressed, and which particular purpose it did serve: entertainment? education? Since the focus of this study is on fairy tales, a closer look will be laid on this particular genre, showing that it was overtly present in the past and continues to be used in the recent times with a more subversive approach. Considering that the corpus of this study is a children's Hollywood movie, it seems then relevant to work on the Hollywood movie industry making movies with children and on childhood according to a fairy tale angle. A special attention will be given to the role of the Walt Disney studio and that of director Steven Spielberg, two indispensable figures in that domain. Finally, this first part will end with the heart of this study: the American director Tim Burton. In order to understand better his take on Dahl's novel, one will be given the opportunity

to enter Burton's filmographic world as a whole with his particular aesthetic and repetitive motifs, but most of all his influence drawn from the fairy tales that is present in most of his movies through a specific atmosphere, well known themes such as childhood, family relationships, the quest for oneself and once home amongst others.

The second chapter will tend to prove in which ways *Charlie* fits the genre of the fairy tale, encompassing most of its expected characteristics: time, space, structure, characters, violence, magic, ordeals and quest etc. Being a modern fairy tale with a cautionary flavour, *Charlie* answers to the fairy tale didactic requirements, exposing the children's bad behaviour and the punishment they receive in order to deter the viewer to repeat the same mistakes. Through this analysis, one will be able to see in which ways Tim Burton modernises Dahl's text in order to make at the same time a criticism of modern society, exposing problems of education, and its urge for change. As probably expected, *Charlie* will then be analysed in comparison to the other children. He will provide the viewers with an example of how one should behave to be accepted and valued, answering thus to the fairy tale need for goodness versus evil.

The last chapter will show how Tim Burton goes beyond the traditional fairy tale structure without forgetting its influence nonetheless. Willy Wonka will be at the basis of the analysis, as he embodies the Burtonesque character *par excellence*. The consequences of a traumatic childhood with an overtly-strict father will provide elements to understand better Wonka's liminality. Indeed, Willy Wonka is the embodiment of subversion since he defies all categories, being neither good nor bad. He is the peripheral protagonist as his place of residence, his way of dressing up, his way of behaving and his particular child-adult state will demonstrate. Finally, one will see how the director's departures from the book allows him to bring a deeper light on the fairy tale's most important message on the role of family as an essential factor in a person's acceptance of oneself and the other. Defying the expected role of the fairy tale passive hero, Charlie, having much more of the adult than the child in him, will bring Wonka – the more child than adult figure – to realise the importance of embracing oneself to be able to recognize the value of family. Through their collaboration, they will help each other to grow up and help the audience to regain hope in the institution of family and the importance of education in today's society, messages that are very much apparent in fairy tales.

1. CHILDHOOD: LITERATURE AND CINEMA

1.1 Children's Literature

a. Childhood and Children's Literature

Critic Roger Sale once declared: "Everyone knows what children's literature is until asked to define it" (qtd. in Gubar 209). There is a lot of truth in this. Indeed, the term 'children's literature' itself is already problematic and can lead to much confusion. Does the possessive (children's) indicate 'for', 'by', 'of', 'belonging to'? Those terms are difficult because they carry with them many possible meanings. Indeed, when one calls a certain type of literature 'children's literature', does he/she mean a literature aimed at children? made by children? depicting children and their experience as kids? read by children? Is children's literature really children's literature if it is written, published and bought by adults? In his book *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature* (2008), Perry Nodelman explains that defining children's literature has been the task of much criticisms throughout its history and it is still an issue much debated upon (133-244).

It may be generally thought that children's literature is a literature that depicts children and that is addressed to them. Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* suits that definition since it portrays children and is directed towards them. However, the study of the gradual establishment of a 'juvenile literature' proves that even if labelled for children it has not always been addressed to them and its content has changed to fit the adult's vision of childhood. Indeed, it is worth mentioning that the concept of what is a child and what one considers to be childhood has changed throughout time. Depending on the culture or on the era, the figure of the child is defined differently. The experience of childhood is not fixed and universal, on the contrary it is malleable, and it changes across times, places and cultures. This idea is clearly exposed in the words of Stephen Wagg: "childhood is socially constructed, that is, it is what particular members of particular societies, at particular times and in particular places say it is, there is no single universal childhood experienced by all." (1)

In the Middle Ages, the traditional view that was held by adults was that children were essentially little adults. The most famous proponent of this theory was a French social historian named Phillipe Ariès. He wrote a popular and controversial book entitled *Centuries of Childhood* (1960) that has been dominating debates on the history of childhood ever since.

According to him, childhood is a modern invention and “in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist (qtd. in Gittins 37). During that time, adults and children were considered equals. Parents did not worry too much for their children’s well-being and development, according to Ariès. Why would then, a specific literature for children be needed? Indeed, with no recognition of the child as a separate being, there was no real literature for the young.

It seems then somewhat logical that with the evolution of the concept of childhood and the child, the need to create a literature specifically addressed towards children appeared and changed throughout time. Indeed, it is a social construct that changes amongst cultures, as Cunningham observes (qtd. in Rata 237). What has now been accepted by many is that children’s literature is made of several recurrent characteristics that would make it an independent genre. Perry Nodelman supports this idea by saying: “Children’s literature is not just literature written for children in mind, nor is it just literature that happens to be read by children. It is a genre, a special kind of literature with its own distinguishing characteristics” (qtd. in Nodelman 1981: 22). Hillman finds five recurrent features in this type of literature that are: “typical childhood experiences written from a child’s perspective, children or childlike characters, simple and direct plots that focus on action, a feeling of optimism and innocence, a tendency toward combining reality and fantasy” (qtd. in Nodelman 2008: 189). To these categories McDowell adds:

Generally shorter books, that favour an active rather than a passive treatment; the usage in children’s books of dialogue and incident, rather than of description and introspection; children protagonists are the rule; the usage of conventions; the story develops within a clear-cut moral schematism ignored by adult fiction; children’s books tend to be optimistic rather than depressive; language is simple and child oriented; plots are presented in a distinctive order; probability is often disregarded; these books present an endless usage of magic, fantasy, simplicity, as well as adventure. (qtd. in Hunt: 45)

However, some books are labelled as children’s books, but they do not display these characteristics. As British critic John Rowe Townsend wryly notices: “surely *Robinson Crusoe* was not written for children” (qtd. in Karin Lesnik Oberstein 15) and the main characters in books like *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) or *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) are not children, they are not childlike, and they do not depict traditional childhood experiences. Nonetheless, they are often considered children’s books.

Books entered the children's literature category when it best suited adults' needs. In the Middle Ages, children and adult lived as equals, according to Philippe Ariès, thus: "there was no clear dividing line in the Middle Ages between adult and children's literature" (qtd. in Hunt: 45). Children were exposed to the literature of the community. At that time literature *per se* did not exist since stories were orally told. Children heard tales through oral tradition. Storytellers would tell tales of Robin Hood or King Arthur, myths that would be passed on from generations to generations. Later on, Puritans believed that children were born in sin and had to be cleansed. It was thus necessary to show them the right path in pushing them into reading the Bible and books promoting Puritanism. Fables served a valuable pedagogical role.

b. Fables

Not part of children's literature originally, the fable was nonetheless used to educate children. Indeed, their simplicity and short format was deemed to suit a young readership. Fables promoted morality above all else, showing children how to become good citizens. They offered a didactic message that taught young readers right from wrong, using mostly animals as characters due to their strong appeal on children. *Aesop's fables* (1484) advertising morals and lessons was published in English in the late seventeenth century. Though originally targeting adults, fables were used for the education of children. According to Marc Soriano in his article "Fable" in *Universalis*:

At a time when teaching was strict and mainly done in Latin, the often-illustrated fables of Aesop and his imitators were quickly identified as remarkable school material. Aesop, having been published since the beginning of printing, took his inspiration from many other versions of animal tales or glosses: Fables from Aphthonius, Babrias, Avienus, Abstemius, Faerne. In high schools, students were asked to translate these Latin and Greek fables, and they were also invited to rewrite them and exaggerate them developing the "circumstances", "arguing" about them, discoursing on their "morals." (my translation)²

² « À une époque où l'enseignement est austère et se fait essentiellement en latin, les fables d'Ésope et de ses émules, souvent illustrées, sont vite identifiées comme de remarquables instruments de travail scolaire. Ésope, diffusé dès le début de l'imprimerie, s'enrichit de beaucoup d'autres versions de contes animaliers ou de gloses : les fables d'Aphthonius, de Babrias, d'Avienus, d'Abstemius, de Faërne. Dans les collèges, l'enfant traduit ces fables latines et grecques, mais il est invité aussi à les refaire, à les amplifier en développant les « circonstances », à « argumenter » à leur sujet, à disserter sur leur « morale » » (<https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/fable/>)

John Locke believed in the power of books to instruct but delight at the same time. He advised young audiences to read *Aesop's fables*, as, according to him: “[Not only were the] stories apt to delight and entertain a child”, but they also afforded “useful reflections to a frown man” (Cosslett 10). The protagonists were typically not children but animals who would take on human features. Anthropomorphism was seen as necessary to heighten the child’s entertaining reading experience (Burke & Copenhaver). David Lister observes that while working on the translation of the Greek fables into English, he noticed that: “Many of the never before translated fables were coarse and brutal. And even some of the most famous ones had been mistranslated to give them a more comforting and more moral tone” (Lister). Despite being “savage, coarse, brutal, lacking in all mercy or compassion” (*Ibid*), these fables have gradually become part of children’s literature partly because of “their verbal brevity and their visual appeal” (Joanne 4). They have also reached the screen, with Walt Disney’s productions amongst others.³

c. Fairy Tales

Similarly, another literary genre known as fairy tales has made its way into children’s literature; not being originally part of it. Indeed, when talking about fairy tales today, one might think about funny, magical stories perfectly adapted to children, but it was not originally the case. Darkness and cruelty were part and parcel of the genre and that is something Roald Dahl has made a great use of in his book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, turning it into a modern fairy tale.

Fairy tales are rooted in oral tradition and they only appeared as a written literature and ‘legitimate’ genre for educated classes in the 17th century in France. Madame d’Aulnoy is the one who first coined the term, using it for the title of her books *Contes de fées* et *Nouveaux Contes de fées* in 1697 and 1698. She introduced the genre into literary salons, which was very well received and made it very popular. Her tales were not primarily addressed to a child audience, dealing with contemporary topics that would be most likely understood by adults. According to Jack Zipes:

The *contes de fées* are secular and form discourses about courtly manners and power. The narratives vary in length from 10 to 60 pages, and they were not all

³ Marc Soriano expands on this point stressing the fact that cinematographic use of animals have retained a different meaning than that of the fable. « Donald le Canard et Mickey la Souris se sont révélés des héros ambigus. Dans des scénarios qui semblent anodins, ils distillent et banalisent un individualisme cynique et sans scrupules, très éloigné de l’humanisme fondamental de la fable » (*Ibid*).

addressed to children. Depending on the author, they are ornate, didactic, and mocking. In the period between 1690 and 1705, the tales reflected many of the changes that were occurring at King Louis XIV's court. (xxiii)

It is one of Madame d'Aulnoy's contemporaries, Charles Perrault, who turned the fairy tale into a literature aimed at children with his *Mother Goose Tales* (1697). In *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy tales*, JoAnn Conrad argues that:

In his *Histoires ou contes du temps passé (Mother Goose Tales)* [...] Perrault established the persistent connection between these tales, an audience of children, and the female, peasant tellers. [...] Perrault's simple prose, in an imitation of an imagined folk speech, was praised subsequently in the 1812 preface to the Grimms' *Kinder – und Hausmarchen* as being authentically derived from oral sources, and, in a circular fashion, became the standard for the signs of authenticity and orality. This purity and authenticity located this text clearly in the Grimms' Romantic rhetorical sphere, and yet, Perrault was also insistently didactic, summing up each tale with a short moral. His simple language, in circular logic, also came to be seen as suitable for the developmental level of children, as opposed to the longer, more complex, and elaborate prose of his contemporary female authors. (184)

Surprisingly, even if oriented towards children, his fairy tales were very dark and cruel. The stories of childhood were filled with brutality, violence, sexuality and taboo topics. John Locke himself stood against the reading of fairy tales saying that: "[it was crucial that books do not fill children's heads] with perfect useless trumpery or lay the principles of vice and folly" (Cosslett 10). However, these tales were not depicting violence for the sake of it, but rather to warn and teach its readers about the dangers of life. Perrault presents his written work with a pedagogical scope and intends to instruct and entertain at the same time.

For instance, in Charles Perrault's version of *Little Red Riding Hood* (1697) both the lovely young girl and her grandmother end up being eaten by the wolf. The ending moral makes it obvious that the wolf stands for any man who approaches girls wandering alone in the woods. In *The Uses of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim studies the tale as a journey from childhood into adulthood when the child loses her virginity and reaches sexual maturity. Childhood innocence is embodied in Red who is described as "sweet", "pretty", "little". When she walks into the wood she is free and close to nature "gathering nuts, running after butterflies". Red's

innocence and purity is robbed from her once she is eaten (raped) and thus no longer a child (forced into womanhood).

This brutal loss of childhood innocence is transformed by the Brothers Grimm. In their version of the tale, both Red and her grandmother are saved by a huntsman who kills the Wolf. In her article “Why grown-ups still need fairy tales” Marguerite Johnson argues: “as time progressed, and Christian morality intervened, the tales became diluted, child-friendly and more benign.” In this tale, the mother warns her child about the dangers and as a consequence her virtue is protected. Here, the adult has a significant part to play in the protection of childhood’s sacredness. Although tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood* or fables like *Newbery’s Pretty Pocket Book* (1744) are addressed to children, they are the written product of adults. Then, what is being depicted is not childhood itself but the adults’ vision of it.

d. The Influence of the 18th Century Vision of Childhood on Children’s Literature

Adult’s perception of the child significantly evolved in the end of the 18th century and consequently, so did children’s literature. During that time of industrialisation, childhood itself came to be seen more and more as a protected period of education and enjoyment. Childhood became romanticized and sacred. The first fifty years of the 19th century was the peak of Romanticism. It was a literary, artistic, cultural movement that reacted against the Enlightenment ideal of scientific rationality, embodied most of all in the Industrial Revolution. According to Humphrey Carpenter:

To the typical writer of the Enlightenment, a child was simply a miniature adult, a chrysalis from which a fully rational and moral being would duly emerge, providing parents and educators did their job properly. There was no question of children having an independent imaginative life of any importance, or of their being able to perceive anything that was invisible to adults. The only necessity was for instruction to be poured into their ears, and the only argument was about what sort of instruction it should be. (7)

This strict vision of the child and its education was transformed with the Romantic views of children that they perceived as a force for goodness, especially close to God. Children’s literature was most about the ideal child full of innocence, goodness and frankness. Being innocent, the child needed care and consideration to properly grow into a good citizen.

Jean Jacques Rousseau showed concern for the balance between freedom and authority and rejected the idea of the potential evil supposedly inherent in children's natural impulses supported by the Puritans. On the contrary, he thought that children were born good, with a unique perception of things freed from adult prejudice and bias. Adults should not only protect children but also learn from them (Goldstone 795). Rousseau's work *Emile, or On Education* (1762) explains his vision on education and the innocent status of the child born into the world before being contaminated by society. This idea is well summed up in his opening line which declares that "Everything is good as it comes from the hands of the Maker of the world, but degenerates once it gets into the hands of man" (my translation)⁴. Rousseau creates an imaginative boy, Emile, and follows his growth from birth to adulthood raising him according to his own method of education. The child is allowed to develop naturally: in nature and following his own naturally healthy instincts.

This innocent vision of children paved the way for a literature that would create a world 'for children only'. In the late 19th and early 20th century, "Children were considered carefree, devoid of responsibility, enjoying a time to romp with elves and sprites. They were given their own special part of the house (the nursery), their own clothes, food, toys, and equipment. Adults were seen as a separate species, lumbering giants who lived in another world, one stodgy and gray" (Goldstone 795). Children became specific individuals who needed a specific literature to suit their needs. That time became known as the Golden Age of Childhood and Children's Literature. There was a significant blossoming of children's books as they are known today. They kept a didactic façade, teaching children right from wrong; however, with an intense preoccupation for entertainment. A source of pleasure that is mostly provided by a focus on the realm of imagination. One of the most famous books of that time was written by Lewis Carroll. This English mathematician wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), one of the landmarks in children's literature. According to Gerald P. Mulderig: "In the twentieth century, the nonsensical world of Carroll's Wonderland has been contrasted with the said, serious, didactic world of other mid-Victorian children's books, and Alice has emerged as an apparently radical departure from the traditions of juvenile literature before 1865" (320). Writing a story revolving around an innocent child, Carroll puts entertainment at its maximum, drawing the reader to a world of wonder without, nonetheless, forgetting morality. The character of the Duchess exclaims that "Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it" (70). In this respect,

⁴ "Tout est bien sortant des mains de l'Auteur des choses, tout dégénère entre les mains de l'homme." (1).

morality is no longer taking the upper hand over explicit delight, the reader needs to make an effort and dig into the novel to find it.

Child readers were brought to wonderlands such as Alice's Wonderland, Dorothy's Oz or Peter Pan's Neverland. According to Goldstone, these were "place[s] of fairy power, of hope, of innocence, and where adults, stodgy and musty as they were, could be found when needed" (795). With their focus on the figure of the child, their love for imagination and wonder and even magic, these authors do not seem to be very far from the fairy tale tradition. Morality is also present but takes on a different angle, a more subversive one.

e. Subversive Children's Literature: Entertainment and Morality

Indeed, in the 20th century, the vision of the child and what was expected of him drastically changed. Children have to face apprehension, experiencing a more savage reality than before. Being a child in the modern world does not have to be a specifically pleasant experience. Some authors really started sympathizing with the child and the difficulties he/she had to overcome in his/her everyday life such as growing up, bearing parents' authority amongst others. They wrote subversive texts offering a way of escaping their everyday anxieties. As Alison Lurie explains in her article "A Child's Garden of Subversion":

Some of these books like *Tom Sawyer*, *Little Women*, *Peter Pan*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* [...] *The Wizard of Oz* [...] were the sacred texts of childhood, whose authors has not forgotten what it was like to be a child. To read them was to feel a shock of recognition, a rush of liberating energy. These books, and others like them, recommended - even celebrated - daydreaming, disobedience, answering back, running away from home and concealing one's private thoughts and feelings from unsympathetic grown-ups. They overturned adult pretensions and made fun of adult institutions, including school and family. In a word, they were subversive.

However, being subversive did not keep them from also providing morals or valuable life lessons to their child reader on growing up. In her quest to go back home, Dorothy learns how to become self-reliant. From Peter Pan's experience, the reader is taught that everyone has to grow up eventually.

Alice can be understood as a metaphor for the experience of growing up physically but also mentally. She learns how to apprehend the crazy adult world through her innocent eyes.

Indeed, in an interview for the Oxford University press, the specialist in children's literature Peter Hunt explains that the *Alice* books are about "children and adults", they are about "the child's view of the adult world where adults always are right, always have their own archaic rules, are all actually, in the child's view, raving mad". According to him, "Alice negotiates this world of wonderland looking at these adults and as it were facing them down by her own clear eyed, sensible, basic understanding of what is right and what is not right. And the adults around that kind of scatter or disappear in their own nonsense" (Miller 1:32-3:05).

As Humphrey Carpenter declares in his book: *Secret Gardens: A study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature*: "children's fiction at the beginning of the twentieth century celebrates childhood as the ideal state, while in the second half, it is about teaching children to grown up" (216). Children at the end of the 20th century are expected to become more responsible, they have to gain more autonomy and act upon their own life. They are no longer sheltered in their world of fantasy and are taught about reality as harsh as it might be (Goldstone 796). Being referred to as the most "outstanding 20th century children's writer" (Vinas Valle 1) especially with his novel *Charlie* that was deemed "the most important 20th century novel" (*Ibid*), Roald Dahl suits well this category. The author does not lie to his child reader, on the contrary, he wants him/her to be faced with the realities of life: death, violence, abandonment, etc. turning him into a child's favourite but most often an adult's enemy.⁵ Jonathan Culley defends Dahl's gruesomeness since it is anchored in the folk and fairy tale tradition, thus making it more acceptable.⁶ And, accordingly, just like fairy tales, Roald Dahl's books teach his readers valuable life lessons to grow into a good adult. A few of them might be: be evil and you should be punished, be nice and you should be rewarded⁷, read and you will get anywhere in life, watch TV and you will become stupid (*Charlie* (1964) and *Matilda* (1988)), have good thoughts and be kind this is where beauty lies (*The Twists* (1980)), be brave and dare doing things because it is what brings most satisfaction (*Danny and the Champion of the World* (1975)), do not cast anyone aside, difference is what makes you special (*Fantastic Mr Fox* (1970), *Matilda* (1988)) and the list is still long.

⁵ In the first chapter of her book *De-Construction Dahl*, Laura Vinas Valle focuses on the reception of the author's children's books amongst the critics and the public dealing on the concepts of suitability and unsuitability.

⁶ To have a deeper view on Dahl's literary influences, one could read Jonathan Culley's essay: "It's about Children and It's for Children--But Is It Suitable?" (1991).

⁷ One could think about the two despicable aunts in *James and the Giant Peach* (1961) being crushed to death or Mr and Mrs Twit in *The Twists* (1980) being glued upside down to the floor of their house by the monkeys they liked illtreating or of course the fate of the evil children in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964).

In the end, isn't it what children's literature is all about? A balance of entertainment and education? As Mills explains in his book *Childhood Studies: A Reader in Perspectives of Childhood*: "When children's literature began as a separate genre around the seventeenth century, its sole purpose was didactic. Since then, we have learned to celebrate guilt-free childhood and explore ambivalence" (71). Today, Children's literature is not just about pure pleasure or pure teaching, but a mixture of both. It is enjoyable because it is most of all a source of fun which triggers laughter and makes the reader's imagination run wild. However, it is also very much about educating its readers about the world around them. It seems to be an efficient means to pass on morals and life lessons in a playful way, teaching the reader on which type of adult he/she has to become.

1.2 Childhood and Cinema

In the 20th century, the book market expands majorly and children's literature for all ages flourishes in diverse forms (children's picture books, magazines) and genres, becoming a very successful commercial business. It was indeed the case in the United States with the publication especially of many modern fairy tales such as Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) or Dr. Seuss *The Cat in the Hat* (1957), being the most famous. It does not come then as a surprise that the cinematographic industry should focus on the child audience and produce many fairy tale movies. Hollywood is of course the dominant industry at the time, and that is why the focus of this presentation will be on Hollywood films exclusively, films dealing with the theme of childhood and portraying children. As Noel Brown explains in his book *Children's Film: Genre, Nation and Narrative*:

Hollywood has been the world's most prolific and the most influential producer of children's films since the early days of cinema. *The Wizard of Oz*, *E.T.* and the *Harry Potter series* are amongst the most profitable films ever made and, the products of a single studio. The Walt Disney Company- have become virtually synonymous, in the minds of many consumers, with the children's film itself. (35)

a. Walt Disney

Indeed, when talking about childhood in films, the Walt Disney Corporation is an inevitable topic. For many, the Walt Disney Studios have become synonymous with the childhood delight of watching animated movies. Once specialized in family entertainment and

becoming famous with its reworking of traditional fairy tales and cartoons, the Walt Disney company has today spread its influence worldwide. One important thing to mention is that Walt Disney, the man, started producing short movies in the twenties but he never actually directed any full-length movies. He nonetheless became a major reference in American culture as a whole. After the tremendous success of their first feature length animation *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (David Hand et al., 1937), Disney's ascension grew beyond the field of animation and became a culture in itself. "Disney invaded not just the movie theatre but store product lines, the American home, and even national consciousness" (2) explains John Wills in his book *Disney Culture*.

Disney culture is everywhere, from the moment one "engage[s] with Disney media, from watching ABC television or Marvel movies to purchasing a Frozen figurine from the Disney Store or frequenting a Disney theme park (Wills 4). One may wonder why Walt Disney's studio did become such a significant influence. It seems to come down to the promotion Walt Disney, the man, makes of an ideal America at a time when uncertainty was mostly reigning. Walt Disney offered society a way of escaping difficult realities.

Disney magically whisks people away from their daily toils and transports them to new worlds and places. It meets a mass desire for flight. As revelers at Coney Island amusements fled the urban pressures of New York City in the early 1900s, the company has offered reprieve from the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War, and the War on Terror. (Wills 37)

Walt Disney was said to bring happiness to the world "sprinkling pixie dust on things" (*Ibid*). By doing so, he appeared as a fatherly figure, taking great care of his American children.

Walt provided a fatherlike, protective role to people living in uncertain times during the mid-twentieth century. Disney served as the nation's family man, welcome in every home, comforting to every child, and protector of all things good about the country. Hedda Hopper for the Los Angeles Times simply called him the "All-Year Santa Claus." Known affectionately as Uncle Walt, Disney promoted simple happiness as his philosophy. He provided an appealingly sentimental, nostalgic, and good-natured take on the world. (Wills 27)

The medium through which he gained most popularity and was able to pass on his romantic vision was his children's animation. According to Wills, Walt Disney's pixie dust transformed and renewed with varying degrees. "Sometimes, the technique amounts to little

more than rebranding or repackaging existing sources [...] On other occasions, the transformation can be fundamental: the end product little resembling its origin” (Wills 38). That is actually what he has been doing with most of his children’s animations, most of them being originally European literary fairy tales. *Snow White* came from the Brothers Grimm, *Peter Pan* (Clyde Geronimi et al., 1953) from J.M. Barrie, *Cinderella* (Geronimi et al., 1950) from Charles Perrault, *Alice in Wonderland* (Clyde Geronimi et al., 1951) from Lewis Carroll and *Pinocchio* (Hamilton Luske et al., 1940) from Carlo Collodi, to name but a few. Walt Disney was sometimes referred to as a “modern Hans Christian Andersen” despite it being denied by Walt Disney himself in an interview with Elsa Schallert in 1937. In his world: “Oh no, Andersen was the originator. We’ve only taken the memories of our childhood and recreated them for the screen” (Schallert qtd. in Wills 53). A recreation that majorly involved a simplification of the narrative, an addition of new protagonists and adjuvants, an introduction of a comical and musical dimension and a greater focus put on emotions.

Walt Disney gave a more fantasist and romantic vision of the original source that nonetheless kept the certain dark side found in fairy tales. Indeed, even if Walt Disney produced animated feature films that portrayed naturally good children and animals (Pinocchio, Dumbo, Mowgli, etc.) he did not want to hide – to a certain extent – the realities of life from children. As Richard Hoffer points out: “Disney, for all his pining for a perfect world (embodied in his depiction of a turn-of-the-century Main Street), did not entirely ignore the authentic. He did kill Bambi’s mom, remember. He did permit, perhaps encourage, the occasional sense of danger” (Hoffer 2005). His innocent worlds are always filled with villains and evil creatures. They can take the form of wicked step-sisters and step mothers in *Cinderella* and *Snow White*, evil queens (Maleficent from *Sleeping Beauty* (Clyde Geronimi et al., 1959), Queen Grimhilde from *Snow White*, pirates (Hook from *Peter Pan*), ferocious animals (Scar from *The Lion King* (Rob Minkoff et al., 1994) or Shere Khan from *The Jungle Book* (Wolfgang Reitherman, 1967) amongst many others. In his essay “Deeds rather than words,” Walt Disney expresses what he wants children to understand from his work:

Life is composed of lights and shadows, and we would be untruthful, insincere, and saccharine if we tried to pretend there were no shadows. Most things are good, and they are the strongest things; but there are evil things too, and you are not doing a child a favor by trying to shield him from reality. The important thing is to teach a child that good can always triumph over evil, and that is what our pictures attempt to do. (Walt 7)

Indeed, teaching the child viewer is one of the goals of Walt Disney's work. Just like old fairy tales Walt Disney's productions retained a didactic side, passing on morals and life lessons through his films. According to John Wills: "The company has promoted a range of fundamental notions and ideals through its movies: universal love, good conquering evil, and simple happy endings. It has also pushed a range of cultural and social values: a Protestant-style work ethic, absolute morality and traditional family roles" (104). Being targeted to children, his movies had a significant educational role, teaching their viewers how to behave and know right from wrong.

As Annalee R. Ward observes in her book *Mouse Morality*: "Disney is a central storyteller in our society, aiming its messages at families with children. And families have responded with overwhelming acceptance of Disney products and, by implication, Disney messages" (2). His movies tackled many societal issues from hunting, to animal imprisonment and rights, race and gender. The death of Bambi's mother, shot by a huntsman is still remembered nowadays as a shocking scene that led people to take actual actions and fight against hunting (115). Similarly, having been accused of promoting a "white capitalist" society, mostly portraying white American heroes and heroines (Rojek qtd. in Wills 3); the studio brought more diversity and racial balance to his films. For instance, the Native American leader heroine Pocahontas or the African American heroine Tiana, the Chinese heroine Mulan and the Middle Eastern heroes Aladdin and Jasmine etc. Another issue that was dealt with was the restriction of the feminine roles as good passive heroines. Indeed, if one thinks about Cinderella, Snow White or Aurora, these princesses are the embodiment of "facile, anxious, and helpless homemakers" (Wills 123), all being rescued by the male figure, the prince. However, if one focuses on princesses from the 1990s such as Ariel, Pocahontas, Mulan or today's princesses such as, Tiana, Merida or Elsa, it is obvious that their roles have changed, taking much more control over their lives and thus denouncing stereotypical feminine roles. Children watching those movies are then given, at an early age, some ideas on what society thinks and how it works, leaving the child with a certain idea of what they must think about the world.

Fairy tales provide a strong line of moral conduct to its readers and Walt Disney promotes it, in a lighter way. Keeping the focus on *Charlie* in mind, it might be relevant to focus one's attention on Walt Disney's rendition of the Italian fairy tale *Pinocchio* (1940).

Pinocchio is an adaptation of Carlo Collodi's tale *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (1883) ⁸. Originally very dark, the story was changed, modernised and adapted by the Walt Disney studios. As Nathaniel Rich explains in his article "Bad things happen to bad children", Pinocchio is in the source text the worst child of all.

Collodi describes him as a "rascal," "imp," "scapegrace," "disgrace," "ragamuffin," and "confirmed rogue." [...] Pinocchio's bad behavior is not intended to be charming or endearing. It is meant to serve as a warning. Collodi originally intended the story, which was first published in 1881, to be a tragedy. It concluded with the puppet's execution.

Walt Disney's version is as one might remember, much more cheerful and less violent than the original text. In the same article, Nathaniel Rich mentions that:

Disney became so frustrated with Collodi's story that he halted production. It was unsuitable for children, Disney concluded: Pinocchio was too cocky, too much of a wise guy, and too puppet-like to be sympathetic. Finally, a compromise was reached. Pinocchio's wish would be fulfilled from the start. He would not be depicted as a puppet after all but as a real boy, and a gentle, winsome one at that.

As previously noted, not only did Walt Disney give to the story a Disneyfied look but it also gave it an American side adding "a chatty insect with Chaplinesque behaviors" and "a wish granting Blue Fairy resembling Jean Harlow referenced US glamor girls of the period" (Wills 55). Despite its softer rendition, Walt Disney's version of the tale retains the didactic scope. Pinocchio's story teaches its viewers many lessons on how to be a good boy. One must not lie, one must go to school, one must not talk to strangers on one's way to school, one should listen to one's parents' orders... Children who do not follow those rules are punished as illustrated at the end of the movie when the bad children are turned into pigs. This focus on good and bad children and the punishment consequently received is very similar to what *Charlie* depicts.

⁸As a reminder, Pinocchio tells the story of Geppetto, a woodcarver whose desire to have a little boy is so intense that he gets his wish granted by the blue fairy turning his wooden puppet into a living wooden boy that he calls Pinocchio. Pinocchio leads the life of a normal boy, going to school and making friends. But, he gets into trouble after deciding not to follow his father's orders bringing him many misfortunes. He is nonetheless turned into a real boy after learning his lesson.

Similarly, the particular focus on the relation between the father and the son is again very relevant when dealing with Tim Burton's version of *Charlie* as will be shown later on.

b. Steven Spielberg

John Wills argues that "The Disney label was synonymous with family fun, childhood and, the American Dream" (2). When Walt Disney died in 1966, many directors started also working on this particular theme. As Neil Sinyard argues in his book *Children in the Movies*, "childhood is the great universal theme" (7). It has been the focus of many great directors in the history of cinema: "from Bergman to Spielberg, from Tarkovsky to Charles Laughton" (*Ibid*). Indeed, Steven Spielberg started making films around the time Walt Disney died and he was quickly considered as Disney's successor, having "the soul of a Walt Disney and the heart of a Peter Pan" (qtd. in Schober and Olson 4). Just like Walt Disney, Steven Spielberg made very successful movies that hit the box office. Moreover, he worked on Walt Disney's favourite theme of childhood and made movies with children and for children.

In today's filmic climate, Steven Spielberg strikes a Walt Disney-esque figure in his portrayal of childhood innocence, a focus which has secured him a wide audience. Indeed, Spielberg has become the new voice of children in film, giving young actors significant parts to play in his films. For instance, six-year-old Drew Barrymore in *E.T. The Extraterrestrial* (1982), four-year-old Cary Guffey in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), amongst many others. He showed very early his capacity to work with young actors. In addition to putting children actors in his movies, he also made movies about children's experience of the world. His vision portrayed in his movies are mostly imprinted with his own difficult childhood as he himself expresses in an interview:

I use my childhood in all my pictures, and all the time. I go back there to find ideas and stories. My childhood was the most fruitful part of my entire life. All those horrible, traumatic years I spent as a kid became what I do for a living today, or what I draw from creatively today. (Breskin 76)

His movies will thus be coloured with recurring themes that are now known as Spielbergian: "broken families, flawed father and mother figures, children under duress, and attempts by people to recuperate nuclear families" (Schober and Olson 1). In his films, Spielberg will keep on calling into question the place of the child in an adult world through broken families. In his first feature-film, *Sugarland Express* (1974), Spielberg focuses on a

mother who convinces her husband to evade prison in order to retrieve their baby left at the child welfare. This family is far from ideal and the parents are two childish antiheroes. Their dream of a family reunion does not happen and they both end up in prison. Similarly, Frank Abagnal, Jr. in *Catch me If you Can* (2002) runs away after his parents' divorce. He spends his life stealing and escaping the police who wants him behind bars. Going to his mother at the end of the movie and witnessing her with her new family just reminds him of what he will never have again.

One may point out that Spielberg's attention, laid on the theme of family and broken homes, draws him very close to the fairy tale genre. Indeed, having spent his childhood watching Walt Disney movies, as he explains in an interview to promote his movie *The BFG* (2016) (Inside the Magic 0:00-0:36), it does not seem surprising that he should be influenced by this particular genre. Spielberg's most famous success at the box office *E.T.* (Box Office Mojo).⁹ holds a special place in this category. Indeed, the movie tackles the familiar fairy tale theme of the broken home and the character's aspiration at finding it back. The alien E.T. is by accident abandoned in the woods by his family and the whole movie centers on his quest to go home. Similarly, Elliot tries, also symbolically, to find his way back into his 'home' that has been greatly affected since his father decided to leave them behind and start a new life in Mexico with his new girlfriend. The dinner sequence at the beginning of the movie shows how the father's decision had a significant impact on the family. It affected the mother who cannot talk or hear about him without crying but also the children, especially Elliot, the second child of the family. Misunderstood and alone, Elliot is the alienated child in the family. Only recognized by his brother and his friends as 'the kid brother' and having no real connection with his mother who spends her time with her last child, Gertie, Elliot is alone. He then represents the "child's response to the widespread familial fragmentation taking place in America" (Jackson 167). The only way both E.T. and Elliot manage to find their way back into their respective homes is by working together. Elliot finds in E.T. his surrogate father who will help him bound with his family again. Thanks to E.T., Elliot reaches maturity, wisdom and self-confidence and of course a place back into his family. Having grown up, he needs to let go of his alien friend who symbolically represents his childhood. Childhood is here a state of mind, a fantasy, a memory that Elliot has to accept leaving behind to embrace his future.

⁹ BoxOffice Mojo ranks *E.T.* at the first place with \$435,110,554 life time gross in theatre.

One thing that is worth noticing is that besides dealing with fairy tale themes, Spielberg also refers to already existing fairy tales in his movies such as Peter Pan in *Hook* (1991)¹⁰ or Pinocchio in *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001). And, he does not allude to the original fairy tale sources from Perrault or the Brothers Grimm, but rather to the Walt Disney's version. According to Jack Zipes, this seems to be a common phenomenon nowadays. In his essay "Breaking the Disney Spell", he explains that:

Walt Disney cast a spell on the fairy tale, and he has held it captive ever since. He did not use a magic wand or demonic powers. On the contrary, Disney employed the most up-to-date technological means and used his own "American" grit and ingenuity to appropriate European fairy tales. His technical skills and ideological proclivities were so consummate that his signature has obfuscated the names of Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and Carlo Collodi. If children or adults think of the great classical fairy tales today, be it Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, or Cinderella, they will think Walt Disney. (Zipes 21)

The power of Walt Disney's imprint on the fairy tales genre is illustrated by Steven Spielberg whose fairy tale references are that of the Disney studios. It is especially present in *Close Encounter of the Third Kind* in which the director makes direct allusions to Walt Disney's Pinocchio. In his essay "From E.T. to A.I. : The Evolution of Steven Spielberg's Science Fiction Fairy Tales", Mehdi Achouche looks closely at the Waltdisney-esque fairy tale quality of the movie saying that in the original theatrical version of the film, the expository scene opens on: "A close-up of a Pinocchio music box, the character of Pinocchio spinning while the instrumental version of "When You Wish Upon a Star", which opened the 1940 Disney version of the fairy tale, is playing [13:37]" (133). Similarly, at one point in the movie, the father Roy "insists in taking his family to the theatre to see Disney's Pinocchio" (*Ibid*).

Spielberg also drew inspirations from Pinocchio when shooting *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001), in which the little boy is not a wooden puppet anymore but a robot. The movie is a rendition of both Collodi's version and Walt Disney's. In an article from the BFI, Paul O'Callaghan explains:

¹⁰ Peter Pan is also explicitly hinted at in *E.T.* and so is Pinocchio in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. To have a deeper analysis of them both, one might want to read Mehdi Achouche's Essay "From E.T. to A.I.: The Evolution of Steven Spielberg's Science Fiction Fairy Tales".

While Carlo Collodi's rather brutal original novel is referenced and quoted throughout *A.I.*, tonally the film is much closer to Disney's altogether more charming animated adaptation. This exquisitely rendered tale of a wooden puppet's quest to become a real boy remains one of the Mouse House's finest efforts, inspiring wonder and fear in equal measure, and delivering a thoughtful meditation on what it means to be human, alongside a spot of occasionally stern moralizing.

Indeed, one could find in Spielberg's movies a didactic aim. As previously noted, Walt Disney may soften the dark realities of the source fairy tales; however, he retains its moral reach and in a less explicit way, so does Spielberg. In the words of Mehdi Achouche: "E.T. is about a child abandoned by his father who learns about the importance of "home", of staying and of "being good", as E.T. enjoins the children before leaving [105:22], delivering the traditional moral expected of a Disney-esque fairy tale" (139). Spielberg's film *The Gremlins* (Joe Dante, 1984) may also be interpreted as having a didactic scope portraying the paradox the child represents being good and bad. A father buys his son a Mogwai, a Chinese pet that embodies both the natural innocent child and the demonic child. In essence, it is small and loving and cute, but it can easily become monstrous, violent and abhorrent. The Mogwai could stand for the child's two-fold personality. He is both good and bad; liked and dreaded.

The focus of this presentation on Steven Spielberg specifically, can be explained because of the key role he retained in the historical context of the time. Indeed, in the 1980s, children's films for children and with children were produced a lot, they offered adventures and great entertainment. Spielberg's movie *The Goonies* (1985) for instance, is the perfect illustration giving its viewers a panel of children very different from each other, allowing its children's viewers greater chances at identification.

Chunk is the spirited fat kid whose mind seems to be always on his next sweet snack; however, he also reveals his inner goodness and compassion for others; Mouth exhibits intelligence and maturity; and Data, perhaps the most unique of the bunch, is a closet inventor who, at the appropriate moment, unveils his newest technological creation. (Jackson 172)

In order to save their suburban neighbourhood from demolition, the children decide to join forces to find a lost pirate treasure that could help them stop the destruction of their beloved place. By the end of the movie, the children have managed to do what their parents could not:

they have earned enough money to save their neighbourhood. In their quest for the treasure, children prove to be much more than innocent and vulnerable children. They are courageous, determined and intelligent children, “their image combines precocity and innocence” (*Ibid*). Additionally, most of the movies produced during this era were fantasy movies. George Lucas and Steven Spielberg had a tremendous impact on the growth and development of these movies in the 1980s. In his essay “Fantasy, Childhood and Entertainment”, James Walters declares that: “Both directors made fantasy a legitimate commercial enterprise thanks to *Star Wars* and *E.T.* They helped to provide a financial platform upon which fantasy films could not only exist but could prosper due to studio confidence in the popular and commercial vitality of such projects” (81).

Why choose to make such movies at this particular period of time, one may wonder. He writes that the focus on the child figure in the movies could be explained with the historical context. The post-Vietnam war movies “feature a characteristic lightness of touch” (77) because “they divert attention from the realities of the war that has just been fought or provide remedies to the anxieties and misgivings that the conflict brought about” (*Ibid*). A return to childhood’s innocence “provide[s] an antidote to uncomfortable truths [...] and a film like *E.T.* would seem to be a key text, detailing straightforwardly a child’s struggle against dangerous, repressive adult authority figures” (81). Spielberg promotes a return to childhood that has been lost in the uncertainty of the previous years. It could be one interpretation for his movie *Hook* who depicts Peter Pan, several years after he has left Neverland, now a father of two. Peter has forgotten his identity because he has lost his innocence and inner child. He has stopped believing. The movie deals with Peter’s recollection of his old child self, a return to the origins where his innocence and love of life were unspoiled. Similarly, in *E.T.*, Spielberg shows that even as an adult one is able to retain some child-like wonder. In *Children in the Films of Steven Spielberg*, Adrian Schober links the adult figure of Keys in *E.T.* to “the Wordsworthian ideal of the adult who has not lost touch with his child-like self, whose awareness of childhood as a special state has been carried forth into adulthood” (Schober and Olson 6).

In this context of fantasy, appropriation of childhood and specific dramatic focus on the child, it does not seem utterly surprising to see the apparition of a new director in the Hollywood movie industry called Tim Burton.

1.3 Tim Burton and Childhood on the Screen

a. A Unique Thematic and Aesthetic Signature

American film director, producer, animator, drawer and writer, Tim Burton is said to have contributed towards the American film industry for four decades, influencing many other directors (Indie Film Hustle). Even if he grew up in a specific Hollywood context, as previously outlined, he nonetheless managed to stand out from the others and embrace a style very much of his own. According to Edwin Page, Tim Burton “bec[ame] one of only a few directors who have managed to create independently-minded and truly personal films within the Hollywood studio system, Woody Allen and Stanley Kubrick being other such directors” (28).

Curiously, it is relevant to mention that Tim Burton did start his career as an apprentice animator in the very influential and popular Walt Disney Company. Living in Burbank, California, Tim Burton grew up in the heart of the entertainment industry. Indeed, Burbank was the location of many film studios such as Walt Disney, NBC and Warner Brothers. Being a huge fan of cinema, having the opportunity to work with the master of animation was a dream come true to Tim Burton. However, his experience was not as successful as he had expected it to be. Indeed, very soon his typical macabre drawing style became incompatible with that of Disney. He recalls what a nightmare it was to draw the lovely foxes in *The Fox and The Hound* (Richard Rich et al., 1981). “I couldn't draw those four-legged Disney foxes. I just couldn't do it. I couldn't even fake the Disney style. Mine looked like roadkills,” he said (Salisbury 2000: 9). His atypical style appealed nonetheless to Disney executive Julie Hickson and head of creative department Tom Wilhite. They both encouraged him to continue his short films and even gave him financial support to make short animated films such as *Vincent* (1982), *Hansel and Gretel* (1982) and *Frankenweenie* (1984). It is worth pointing out that from the start, Tim Burton seems to have had an affinity with the fairy tale genre. A genre that he reworked with his own particular style turning the characters from *Hansel and Gretel* into an all Asian cast. His subversive look on things might have originated from his childhood.

Commonly known to have had a difficult childhood, feeling out of place in his suburbs and within his family; Tim Burton grew into a shy and introvert person who would rather spend time alone in his room drawing or at the movies than be with his friends. The genre he liked most of all was that of horror. He developed a great admiration for one of the very famous horror actors of the time called Vincent Price. This admiration was translated into his movies.

The first short film he directed, *Vincent*, was a tribute to his idol. Besides the obvious reference contained in the title, Tim Burton asked Vincent Price to narrate the story. He asked him again to appear in another one of his movies i.e. *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) in which he played Edward's father.¹¹ Moreover, he had a particular affinity with monsters that he liked more than heroes whom he deemed 'emotionless' (Page¹² 13). Conveniently, Tim Burton used the myth of Frankenstein as a basis to make his short film *Frankenweenie* in 1984 in which a smart young boy brings his dog back to life and used the figure of Dracula as an inspiration for *Dark Shadows* (2012). In an interview with Mark Salisbury, Burton confesses that: "Every kid responds to some image, some fairy-tale image, and I felt most monsters were basically misperceived, they usually had much more heartfelt souls than the human characters around them" (3). These words seem to reflect very well the ideas he had behind the creation of his characters.

The Burton-esque style lies a lot on his embrace of characters providing an "emotional depth" to the movies. The characteristic protagonist is an outcast just like the director himself who said in *The Times* that he "felt different ... [he] felt like a foreigner in [his] own neighborhood and in [his] own country". His main protagonist suffers alienation, he/she is often awkward, gauche, naive or simply misunderstood.

As Mark Salisbury observes in the introduction to the revised edition of *Burton on Burton*: "Burton's characters are often outsiders, misunderstood and misperceived, misfits encumbered by some degree of duality, operating on the fringes of their own particular society, tolerated but pretty much left to their own devices" (1). Indeed, in each of Tim Burton's films one can find a "freak", a peripheral protagonist that is standing out from society. One could think about Edward, the Penguin, Batman, Ichabod Crane, Ed Wood, Alice, Lydia etc. Each and every one of these characters play a singular role in the movies. They all feel as outcasts, aliens in their community which is why they live far away from the city and the crowd. Edward, Wonka, Vincent, the Maitlands, Barnabas Collins all live on mountaintops overlooking the city. Their habitations retain the gothic aesthetic very dear to Tim Burton. They are dark gothic castles or factories (in the case of Wonka) which are supposed to be telling of their dark personalities. The isolation is heightened by the visuals used to depict the mansions. First the habitations are all black, lifeless with dreary sculptures. Moreover, they are often filmed in a

¹¹ Just like Vincent Price, Burton's choice to have picked Christopher Lee as Wonka's father, and using his voice as voice-over is not a meaningless decision since Christopher Lee is known to have played the role of the villain in many movies, the most famous being Count Dracula in sequence of Hammer Horror films.

¹² To avoid any confusion, Page is the last name of the author called: Edwin Page.

slightly low angle shot and in a low-key lightening which help reinforce their imponent dimensions and their dreariness (fig. 1, 2, 3).



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Besides living in gloomy, gothic dwellings in the peripheries of the city, the characters also have a gothic and dark physical appearance which associates them with the figure of the freak, the monster. Their costume and make up give them an eerie and eccentric look. They have very pale white faces, dark big eyes and wild black hair. They wear black outfits might it be leather, black and white stripes, lace etc. They are often shot in low key lighting with their faces frequently lit translating their isolation within the darkness of the image (fig. 4, 5, 6, 7) Edward and the Penguin are cast aside even more due to their unusual body parts. They both have weird hands; the penguin has pincers and Edward has steely scissors. To put it even further, Edward is not a human being *per se*. He was not conceived by two people, but he is the product of his father's invention only.



Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

These protagonists' dark look especially stands out when they have to leave their place, to face the real world. This is made extremely clear in *Edward Scissorhands*. The suburbs at the bottom of the hill stand in drastic contrast with Edward's gloomy world. Indeed, while the castle and Edward's look are very sinister, the suburbs and its inhabitants are very colourful (fig. 8).



Figure 8

A play with colours is created between the inhabitants and their houses showing their desire to conform to the accepted norm. There is no personality expressed through their clothes or houses because they are all equivalent. As Deborah Knight and George McKnight observe in their essay “Tim Burton, Johnny Depp, and the Fantastic”:

Characters dressed predominantly in pastel colors are frequently set in relation to complementary colors in their surroundings, such as a woman wearing teal-colored trousers watering the grass who is framed in shot-counter shots by houses painted robin’s-egg blue and pink [fig. 9/10]. The skirt of a child is color-coordinated with the color of a house she cycles past. The Avon lady, wearing a purple outfit and carrying a blue case, approaches a greenhouse identical in color to the one across the street- whose hallway is blue. (200)



Figure 9



Figure 10

Another feature that makes these protagonists unique and thus differ from the expected norm consequently pushing them away is the jobs they have and the beliefs they hold dear. All the outcasts in Burton’s films have singular jobs or skills. Edward is an eccentric stylist cutting animal and human hair but also trees and glass. Beetlejuice is an untrustworthy ghost who helps dead people killing living people. Ichabod Crane is a detective and a scientist, something very uncommon at the time the movie is set. Willy Wonka is a marvellous chocolate maker who

creates magical candies. Sweeney Todd is the best barber in town and the best killer at the same time etc. All these characters have specific beliefs that are not accepted in the world they live in, which consequently isolates them. Ed Wood is disliked by people because he is an unusual filmmaker who works against the mainstream Hollywood film production. Ichabod Crane is taken as a fool by his community because he wants to rely on scientific facts and reason in order to prove the guiltiness of someone, instead of believing in spells, charms and witchcraft.

Due to their appearance, their jobs and beliefs they are dreaded and rejected by others; however, these protagonists are mostly victims of society. Deborah Knight and George McKnight believe that: “they are merely subjects to a fate that has befallen them” (207). Batman, the Penguin, Willy Wonka and Edward have been abandoned still children. Sweeney Todd has had his family taken away from him for no good reason. Barnabas Collins has been turned into a vampire and locked away in a coffin by a witch because he fell in love with someone else. Often as a consequence of their early trauma, they retain a childish side and become child-adult figures. In his essay “Johnny Depp is a Big Baby! The Philosophical significance of Tim Burton’s Preoccupation with Childhood Consciousness”, Mark Walling points out that “Burton directs [...] a sense of childlike wonder and playfulness into the fabrication of several adult leads played by Johnny Depp” (73). Edward Scissorhands is a teenager stuck in an adult body. Left alone very early on, he has to experience life by himself. He finds in Peg his missing mother. She is going to look after him and provide him with care and motherly affection. She repeatedly heals his wounds and helps him dress up. She reassures him when he feels threatened or does not know how to react at a specific situation. For instance, she tells him not to worry about the neighbours who are coming for the barbecue because they will all love him. He just has to be himself [32:58]; hence teaching him life lessons at the same time.

Edward embodies the natural child promoted by Rousseau. He is naturally good and he marvels at everything that he hasn’t seen before. Just like a child he cannot control his emotion when seeing for the first time a boy playing on a Slip’N Slide. Pointing at him he almost cuts Peg’s face with his scissors. Here again, Peg takes on her motherly role by showing understanding and reassuring him saying “You go ahead and look. You have every reason to be excited” [16:03]. Fitting Rousseau’s idea, the child is naturally good and it is society which corrupts him. It is indeed the case in the movie. Society brings Edward mischief. Edward’s innocence leads him into a trap made by Kim’s boyfriend, breaking in into a house. Similarly, his innocence prevents him from getting the sexual hints Joyce keeps sending him. And after

being frightened by Joyce's striptease he simply tells the Boggs that "She took off her clothes" [1:00:43], a sentence that shows how little he understands from Joyce's true intentions. Edward is pure, but society will provoke his downfall. Edward is not the only child-adult man in Burton's movies. Indeed, Edward Bloom, just like the carefree teenager with a wild imagination prefers living a life of fantasy rather than accepting its dull reality. Similarly, for Willy Wonka and Beetlejuice, life is about pleasure and having fun and not about taking responsibilities. Batman might appear as the responsible adult figure who fights against evil; however, at the same time he likes dressing up and playing with the last new gadgets available.

All those protagonists are wrongly prejudiced against and destroyed by members of society casting them as too monstrous to live in the community. However, in many ways, these 'freaks' reveal themselves to be much more human than any others. Edward's difference is what will bring happiness and a breath of fresh air into the gossipy and superficial town. Ed Wood's singular style might not be accepted by most in the Hollywood industry, but, he is actually the only one proving that film industry can be something else than artifice and embellishment. It can also be about showing reality as it is, however ugly or unperfect it could be. This point could be illustrated with the scene in which Ed Wood asks one of his actors to go through a door but this latter gets stuck in it due to his large shoulder span. Instead of reshooting the scene properly, Ed Wood prefers leaving it as it is because it represents the true reality of the situation. In his words: "It's fine, it's real" [57:03]. For Deborah Knight and George McKnight:

Ed Wood is replete with characters whose identities mark them as different from the conventional or the norm. Bunny (Bill Murray), who is openly gay, wants a sex-change operation. Ed Wood, though heterosexual, initially conceals his identity as a transvestite, especially from his girlfriend Dolores (Sarah Jessica Parker). [...] The conventional or norm in the film is represented by the mainstream studio system, by the Baptist Church and its members, and also by Dolores, who is finally unable to accept Ed as a transvestite. It would be easy for viewers to dismiss Ed, his filmmaking, and the film's various characters as aberrations, but Ed Wood is a celebration of differences and of the individual's determination to live by his or her own vision and identity. (201)

There seems to be an obvious humanist discourse behind Tim Burton's movies. He exposes society's woes and corrupted mentalities and its consequences on pure innocent individuals. He rehabilitates the figure of the outcast, the figure who stands out from the crowd;

giving him/her a moral and a humanity that overcomes that of most inhabitants in the world they live in. Curiously, this pattern is very commonly found in the fairy tale genre. Indeed, there is always originally a protagonist rejected by society because of, for instance, its ugliness (*The Ugly Duckling* (1843)) that reveals itself to be, in the end, the most virtuous of all.

b. A Subversive Take on Fairy Tales

It seems that, Tim Burton has had a penchant for folk and fairy tales as soon as he started working in the movie industry. As previously noted, his interest for this specific genre was established very early when he was a Disney intern. He made a version of *Hansel and Gretel* (1982) and *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp* (1986). However, his gruesome visions of the tales casted him far away from the idealised animated-fairy tale movies promoted by Disney. Leaving the studio, Tim Burton was now able to freely experiment with concepts and protagonists that had been refused to him before. His first feature long movie *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) is a clear example of the way Burton used a popular fairy tale and transformed it, to go beyond the clear-cut Manichean vision it originally offered.

The plot of Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* seems to draw inspirations from *Beauty and the Beast*. Despite Burton's assertion that his movie was influenced by a drawing he made as a child, about a person who can't touch but wants to (Salisbury 2000: 87), *Edward Scissorhands*, retains some key features of the fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast* (Gary Trousdale et al. 1991). However, as one may now expect, Tim Burton's take on the tale differs from the original one, encouraging "new perspectives on the fairy tale genre and society through cinematic experimentation" (Zipes 2000, xxxi qtd. in Ray). In his rendition of the tale, Burton plays on gender reversal between the Beast and the Beauty, giving the Beast a Beauty role and the Beauty a quite brutal personality. In that way, Burton appears to be following the traditional fairy tale message that one must not judge a book by its cover and that beauty is found within.

In Walt Disney's version of the tale, Belle's father is a merchant who leaves the village to go sell his inventions. Unfortunately, he ends up lost in the woods and takes refuge inside the castle of the Beast. Taken as a thief, he is made prisoner. Similarly, Peg Boggs comes to Edward's (the Beast) mansion in order to sell him her beauty products. Peg takes on the role of the trespassing merchant father. However, in Burton's version, the Beast does not trap the father in his castle but on the contrary, the father figure or here, Mrs Boggs takes Edward with her. Beauty does not come to the Beast's castle to save her father; the Beast is directly brought back to Beauty's home.

Curiously, Edward is both Beast and Beauty. His beastly side is made obvious with his gothic appearance and his dangerous scissors. In one scene Edward sees Kim going off to her boyfriend and it drives him insane. Out of anger because he is impossible to keep his emotion in check, Edward goes back to his basic animal instincts and starts scratching the walls of the house [1:11:15-1:11:42]. At the same time, Edward is, repeatedly being made up on his face to cover his scars, he has rather long dark hair¹³, and a feminine soft voice. Above all else, he is made to sleep in Beauty's bed, the first night he comes into Peg's house. Moreover, just like Belle who is the pure and victimized heroine in the fairy tale, Edward becomes the innocent and abused hero of the story. Belle might originally have switched her father figure for a new one (the Beast's), Edward has also replaced his father figure (Vincent Price) by a new motherly one (Peg). As Brain Ray mentions in his essay "Tim Burton and the Idea of Fairy Tales": "On a broader level, Edward's physical journey from his gothic-style mansion into the suburbs of Burbank also coincides with a psychological one toward maturity and inner completion, goals usually reserved for Belle" (202). Indeed, through his journey, Edward gradually becomes aware of his 'specificity' as he realises how differently people behave when he is around. He also experiences a wide range of feelings as he acknowledges his love for Kim i.e. anger, jealousy, powerlessness, love. It can be put in stark contrast with his lack of feelings when seeing his father die of a stroke. Edward does not really understand what has just happened, staring at his father and trying to touch his face with his blades. He then looks at the blood on his scissors without any expression on his face [1:26:15- 1:26:56]. As he tells Peg at the beginning: "He [father] never woke up" [14:52], a sentence that shows his lack of understanding of the true situation. After living in the suburbs, Edward is able to think and feel, he even goes as far as killing someone to protect the woman he loves, thus regaining his beastly character.

However, the tale of *Beauty and the Beast* is very much focused on Belle's experience as well. Kim's role is also very significant in Burton's film, yet, it differs a lot from what one might remember of the intelligent, pure and extremely kind Belle. Indeed, Kim is self-centered, rude and mean to Edward. She shows very openly that she is afraid of him. Her reaction of dread when she first sees him in her bedroom is very telling [41:30]. She avoids him as best as she can. She criticizes him with her friends and lets Jim (her boyfriend) use Edward to break into a house and take the plea for it. In a way, just like Edward who has a Beauty side to him, Kim has a beastly side. Similarly to Belle who saves the Beast from the community coming to

¹³ This look can remind one of Lydia's appearance in *Beetlejuice* (1988) driving Edward even closer to the feminine figure.

kill him. Kim, as the beastly hero, finally takes agency in order to protect the “princess” (i.e. Edward) she loves by telling a lie to the community at the end of the movie. Here again, Tim Burton changes the fairy tale expectations and he goes even further choosing to remove the fundamental fairy tale happy ending. The Beast is not transformed into his old prince self and they do not marry and have children. Even if Burton seems to follow the traditional fairy tale message about misleading appearances, his choice not to give both characters a happy ending might suggest that contemporary society is unable to accept it and still has a long way to go before realising that ‘beastly individuals,’ i.e. different individuals can be fully approved.

Edward Scissorhands is not the only movie by Tim Burton that is greatly influenced by the fairy tale type. Indeed, most of his movies retain fairy tale themes and motifs, the most important of which is that of family, and broadly speaking, home. In most fairy tales, the hero’s relationship with his or her family is problematic. If one thinks about Walt Disney’s animated fairy tales, families are always deconstructed. Children are mainly orphans as it can be seen with Pinocchio, Peter Pan, Mowgli, Aladdin and Tarzan. Some have a single parent who dies as seen with Snow White and Cinderella, which leaves them with their cruel step-mothers. Prince Charming and Prince Phillip have single foster fathers and Ariel, Jasmine, Belle and Pocahontas have single fathers. According to Helga Benediktsdóttir, “The fairy tale hero’s relationship with his or her family is often the origin and cause of the action of the tale itself” (7). Little Thumb is abandoned with his siblings in the woods by his parents, Snow White is also left in the woods by the huntsman, Cinderella is made into a servant by her stepmother etc. These heroes are made to leave their home or decide to leave their broken home in order to “fulfill a task, to bring about a disenchantment, or simply to see the world (Lüthi *The Fairytale as an Art Form and Portrait of Man* 136)” (*Ibid*). Tim Burton’s heroes also have dysfunctional families. Batman, the penguin and Willy Wonka are abandoned by their parents. Lydia in *Beetlejuice* is not really integrated in her family. She is the gothic outcast child whose “whole life is a dark room. One big dark room” [21:12]. Her mother spends her time worrying about her art and making a good impression on her guests. Her father never wants to be bothered with anything, he is also very much focused on his job. Neither of them believes her when she first tells them about the ghosts living in the attic. Sweeney Todd has his family taken away from him and he is sent to prison for no valid reason so that the judge can marry his wife and adopt his daughter.

This idea of broken home is best represented in the distorted relationship between the father and the son. In fairy tales, the focus is put mostly on the daughter and father relationship.

The heroes or heroines have lost their mothers and live now with their fathers only or with their fathers and cruel step mothers. In Burton's world, most male characters have a difficult relationship with their fathers. This relationship is very often depicted in flashbacks that visually translate the dreary aspect of the relation. Edward remembers the death of his father before his eyes and how he was thus left alone to survive in a world he does not know [1:26:15]. Charlie's questions trigger Wonka's flashbacks about his childhood and the dreadful relation he had with his father. The world portrayed in his memories stands in drastic contrast with that of the fantasy world because of its somber style and gothic aesthetic.¹⁴ Ichabod is repeatedly brought back to his past with flashbacks depicting the way his father killed his wife. As Brian Ray notices:

Ichabod's history [...] unfolds through a series of violent and disjointed scenes that possess clear stylistic differences from the rest of the film. Cuts between shots in these flashbacks [...] are often sharp and jarring. Close-ups are quick and gruesome. These scenes are also devoid of dialogue. (211)

Big Fish (2003) holds a special place in Burton's filmography because it was made at a difficult time for the director who welcomed his first child into the world but lost a father. The movie, originally based on Danny Wallace's novel *Big Fish: A Story of Mythic Proportions* (1998), was a poignant rendition of the relationship between a father and a son. It dealt with the dream of a man who tries to reconnect with his dying father. Making this film was a way for Burton to think back on his own bad relationship with his dad who was still 'quite magical' (Fraga xix).

If the father figure did not bring mischief to the hero at least it was embraced by the hero himself. Indeed, both Sweeney Todd and Ichabod Crane become father figures to their orphan *protégés* i.e. Toby and young Masbath. There is, in Burton's movies, an obvious need to recreate a sense of home and belonging. A motif that is also very characteristic of the fairy tale. Snow White finds in the seven dwarves her children and finally finds her prince charming making her dream family a reality. Similarly, Cinderella finds in her animals her children and in the prince her husband. The Penguin in *Batman Returns* (1992) is the archetype of the fairy tale hero who is abandoned as a baby by his parents, not in the woods but in the sewer. Just like Mowgli in *The Jungle Book* (Wolfgang Reitherman 1967) he is adopted by animals, i.e. penguins, and he becomes their father figure and master.¹⁵ However, his dearest wish is to find

¹⁴ A more detailed analysis of the flashbacks will be dealt with later on.

¹⁵ Curiously, that familial and power relationship between the hero and his said children is also present in *Charlie* with Wonka and the Oompa Loompas.

the truth about his parents. In his own words: “I wasn’t born in the sewer you know. I come from [pointing at the window] ... like you. And like you, I want some respect. A recognition of my basic humanity but most of all, I wanna find out who I am by finding my parents, learning my human name. Simple stuff that the good people of Gotham take for granted” [20:44- 21:10].

Sweeney Todd’s dream is to be reunited with his long-lost family that is why he comes to London in the first place. However, Burton being who he is, the fairy tale denouement is not a happy one since the Penguin learns that his parents are dead, and Sweeney Todd kills his own wife and almost his daughter. Edward had a glimpse at a family life with the Boggs but ends up alone. Only Ichabod Crane and Lydia seem to have found their sense of home again. At the end of the movie, Ichabod goes back to his hometown accompanied with his, one might expect, wife to be, Katrina Van Tassel, and their adoptive son, young Masbath. Similarly, Lydia finally finds peace in her home becoming the spiritual daughter of the Maitland. The once upon a time gothic lonely suicidal girl has now found joy in her life, she has given up her gothic look for a more student like outfit and a less eccentric hair style. She is cared for and looked after as the Maitland’s inquiring about her tests result express. The unhealthy joy she found in the sight of scary insects and everything related to death is in a way still present in the forms of her surrogate ghost’s parents but here they bring her stability and good fantasy.

In addition to using fairy tale motifs in his movies, Tim Burton also adapts several folk and fairy tales from literary sources in his own subversive way. Indeed, the director has adapted *Sleepy Hollow*, a tale that “straddles the border between dark parody and pastiche” and “provides adept commentary on authorship in fairy tales and folktales” (Ray 207). *Sleepy Hollow* (1820) was originally written by Washington Irving but his version was majorly influenced by American German and Irish accounts of the headless horseman legend. Accordingly, Burton takes on a free interpretation of these stories and intends to break the Disney spell. One might be aware that a version of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* was made into an animation movie in 1949 by Walt Disney. Burton wanted to “come to terms, so to speak, with Disney’s version, which is dominated by a chipper, sing-songy narrator and slapstick comedy” (212). In a scene from his movie, Tim Burton makes references to the Walt Disney version as a way to criticize it. In the Walt Disney version, at a Halloween party, Ichabod is told the legend of the headless horseman who cuts his victim’s head off if they find themselves in the woods during Halloween. In order to go back to his house, Ichabod has to ride back through the dark woods. Scared to death, he rides alone in the woods, imagining that animals such as frogs and crickets call his name. He is finally chased by the headless horseman through

the woods, falling down his horse and even finding himself riding the headless man's horse [25:19 / 25:45]. This chase is also rendered in Burton's version. The dreary atmosphere is present with the frogs calling the hero's name, flash of lightings, fog and wind. However, Burton seems to be clearly mocking the Walt Disney version, choosing not to put the real headless horseman after Ichabod but Brone, one of the citizens in Sleepy Hollow who hates Ichabod and decides to scare him off by imitating the killer [30:17]. Far from being an homage, according to Brian Ray:

[Burton tries to] mock Disney's supposed ownership of the tale. In some fairy tales, a magician may reverse or break a spell by reading it backward—a verbal mirror, so to speak. Through mirroring the cartoon, Burton breaks the Disney spell. Those who tried to erase Irving are now “forced to witness the grim spectacle of the Horseman's true menace.” (Kevorkian 2003: 30 qtd. in Ray14)

One of Burton's most flagrant fairy tale movie is his 2003 feature-long adaptation of Danny Wallace's novel *Big Fish: A Story of Mythic Proportions*, called by Burton *Big Fish*. This movie encapsulates every expected ingredients of a fairy tale. First, the story is a rendition of the hero's tale. On his dying bed, Edward Bloom tells his son about the fantastic life he asserts having lived. One might know by now that fairy tales were originally, orally told. Thus, the importance of oral storytelling is the key to get the most of a fairy tell reading experience. This is something that is very commonly used in Burton's cinematography. One could probably remember that Edward Scissorhands's narrative is a bedtime story told by Kim, who has become a grandmother, to her grandchild. Similarly, one discovers at the end of *Charlie* that the whole film was actually a tale delivered by one of Wonka's workers. By explicitly showing on screen the narrators, Burton points out to the very artificiality and magic of the act of storytelling, that only lasts the time of a movie.¹⁶ *Big Fish* tackles tensions that are at the basis of fairy tales like the relation between fantasy and reality. The vision of Edward's world stands in opposition to that of his son. In Edward's imaginary life, a play on drastically different

¹⁶ This artificiality is also furthered by Burton's systematic framing devices that construct his films in a similar way, making on obvious link between the beginning of the story and the end. This repetitive structure is presented through similar camera movements or similar shots. For instance, in *Corpse Bride*, the film opens on Victor, sketching a butterfly [00:38] and it ends with Victoria vanishing into butterflies [1:12:58]. The camera movement in the opening credits of *Ed Wood* brings its viewer through a window and inside a house where an open coffin can be found. The Coffin opens itself and Criswell, sat inside, addresses the viewers before lying back again [start -1:30]. At the end of the movie [2:02:20- 2:02:44], Criswell reappears inside the coffin, addressing us again before lying back once and for all, the camera slowly zooming out. For more details and examples on this point one might be interested in reading Deborah Knight and George McKnight's essay “Tim Burton, Johnny Depp, and the Fantastic”.

colours is made to increase the magic essence of his telling. As Le Blanc and Odell observe in their book *The Pocket Essential Tim Burton*: “Big Fish employs both schemes (garish use of colour or darkness) in order to emphasise the fantastic nature of Edward’s stories – dark and ominous for the scary wood contrasting with impossibly vibrant colours during his first visit to Specter” (22). His world is filled with magical misfits like a giant, two headed girls or a witch. But in Edward’s world difference is never a bad thing, on the contrary it is accepted and celebrated. According to Le Blanc and Odell:

The most sympathetically portrayed protagonists are those who differ from the norm – be they awkward, gauche, naive or simply misunderstood. Big Fish subverts the misanthropic hero pattern, as the affable and gregarious lead acts as a catalyst to bring those who are on the fringes of society into his fold, rather than being an outcast himself. (16)

To this fantasy world of misfits and wonder stands William Blood’s world. Edward’s son is the opposite of his father. He is a journalist who collects facts and cannot believe in his father’s nonsense. Here lies the major conflict between the fairy tale’s ability to tell the truth or to lie. This boundary between reality and fantasy is one of the director’s trademark. In an interview with *Express* Tim confesses that to him “fantasy is reality” (“Down the Rabbit”). It is very common to see in other than *Big Fish*, characters living a dull reality and entering an exciting world of fantasy (*Alice*, *Miss Peregrine*, *Charlie*). In *Tim Burton*, Jenny He observes that: “the normal world is exposed as claustrophobic and suffocating while the “topsy-turvy” world is colourful, imaginative, and revelatory, and often turns out to be more logical” (20-21).

No better movie could illustrate that point than Burton’s adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. Indeed, speaking about Burton and fairy tale, it would be very unlikely not to refer to Alice. Alice’s world is marked by Victorian conformity and rules, she is the outcast heroine who refuses to marry because she has been asked to, who tells the truth to people’s face even if it is not polite, who aspires for more than a life of passivity and chores as expected of a woman at the time. Alice’s fall into the fantasy world comes as a liberation. Burton’s version of Wonderland is a modern rendition of Carroll’s original story. In her article “Tim Burton’s Fairytale Worlds”, Kate Warren mentions that “Burton’s Alice takes iconic characters and fragmented elements from Carroll’s texts and merges them into a profoundly original interpretation”. Indeed, the once upon a time very colourful and cartoonish Wonderland is now an ‘Underland’ in “dark disarray” (*Ibid*). It is still a fantasy land filled with magical creatures but coloured with Burton’s touch. The eccentric Mad Hatter has now a longer and

more developed tragic part. He is the archetype of the Burtonesque original character: he is emblematic of the fantastic. According to Deborah Knight and George McKnight, it is shown thanks to:

The Hatter's wild orange hair and popping eyes; his skin colour; the gap between his teeth; his changes in voice and accent, mood, and emotion; his coat; his ability to create a dress for the suddenly shrunken Alice in the teapot; the hats he creates for the Red Queen—all rejected, of course; his own hat, which seems to have its own existence; his wrist pincushion, from which he draws a pin to stab Stayne (Crispin Glover) during the battle; and of course, his dance—the “futterwacken.” (212)



Figure 11

Similarly, the bloody Red Queen in Burton is “an amalgam of two of Carroll’s creations, the Queen of Hearts and the Red Queen” (Warren). She also retains some Burtonesque in her appearance with her small size and her enormous disproportionate head (fig.11). The actress playing the Red Queen, Helena Bonham Carter confesses in one interview promoting the movie that she loves dressing up in everyday life and asks nothing less than being completely changed to embody a new character (Yrinis 0:34 -1:10).



Figure 12

Tim Burton completely re-interpreted the protagonist of the White Queen, tuning her into a symbol of purity and goodness but at the same time with a touch of craziness and love for darkness when it is deserved. Her look stresses this tension with her white pale face, hair and gown contrasted with her dark lip stick (fig.12).

For Kate Warren, Tim Burton’s *Alice* turns Carroll’s original text into a “reinvention of Wonderland that is ominous, psychedelic and haunting”. If some fans agree that Burton’s version is “slightly darker and more adult” (Child), some others seem to think the contrary deploring Burton’s choice to have collaborated with Walt Disney. In her movie review “Tim Burton’s *Alice* is a bad marriage between Disney and Goth”, Annalee Newitz rejects Burton’s reworking of the tale that she deems too Disneyfied. In her words: “This is Wonderland for the early twenty-first century: war-torn, dark, and full of monsters who actually bite. But the

ugliness and horror evaporate quickly, leaving behind one of those saccharine stories where everybody urges the heroine to do something brave by standing around smiling encouragingly at her” (Newitz). This assumption seems to have spread among critics and fans of Burton even before *Alice* was released. In a review on Burton’s latest film *Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children* (2016), Tasha Robinson observes that:

There's a sense, watching Burton's movies since 2003's *Big Fish*, that he's lost touch with the kind of humanity he brought to his earliest films. [Previous characters] all had real pathos to go with the wacky humor and frantic slapstick. But too many of Burton's films take place in their own frozen time loops, where the action wheels spin frantically, and Johnny Depp mugs ferociously¹⁷, but the characters don't develop in any significant way. (Robinson)

Similarly, it appears that since then, Burton’s didactic messages have been exposed in a more explicit way. Even if some didacticism could have been understood in his earlier films such as *Edward Scissorhands*. From the way mean teenagers manipulate and people reject the innocent Edward, one could have grasped that good people act differently and accept the other despite his/her difference, just like Peg does from the start. As expressed by Mark Walling: “Burton hopes to show that it is not the naive, natural artist who needs to grow up; rather, the fault lies with a society that has matured into a world that is intolerant and vicious because it gave up the broader consciousness of trust, honesty and make-believe exhibited in Edward” (77). But with *Charlie*, Burton directly states what is good and what is bad. He gives his child viewers a clear- cut view of what is to be followed and what is not. The mean characters are mocked, and the good ones are glorified and rewarded. It seems like the recently made father, Tim Burton, has given in to a more traditional fairy tale rendition but with a remaining touch of subversion.

¹⁷ Burton’s trademark is his “extended creative family” (Burton cited in Fraga xi), in other words the people he chooses to collaborate with to make his movies. The three very frequent regulars are Johnny Depp with whom he made eight movies, Helena Bonham Carter for seven movies and composer Danny Elfman for all of his movies apart from *Ed Wood*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Miss Peregrine*.

2. CHARLIE: A TRADITIONAL FAIRY TALE

2.1 *Charlie* encompasses all the characteristics of the Fairy Tale Genre

Roald Dahl is considered a radically modern children's writer of the 20th century. His modernity can be found in his dark and humorous tone, his unexpected language and his original tackling of old genres. Indeed, Roald Dahl plays with folk tale conventions and gives his story a very fairy-tale like appearance. Anne Merrick saw *Charlie* as a story composed of "fairy tale and nursery rhyme ... [with their] robust, folk-qualities" (Alston & Butler 184). In order to understand how *Charlie* does conform to the fairy tale genre, it is first relevant to remind oneself what actually is understood by fairy tale. A fairy tale is "a story, often intended for children, that features fanciful and wondrous characters such as elves, goblins, wizards, and even, but not necessarily, fairies" (Literary Terms). It is characterized by its:

Simplicity of style, plot, character and setting; [its] penchant for abbreviated, climactic endings; the motifs of magic, animism, folklore, food, violence, animals; [its] attention to voice and language as a creator of reality; a predilection for wonder, for marvel, for entertainment woven from the twin threads of the serious and the playful. (Davidson & Chaudhri 134)

From this very condensed definition, it is now rather easy to see how Dahl's children's stories do belong to this category. Roald Dahl makes modern fairy tales, basing his stories on traditional fairy tale patterns and adding contemporary elements to it, helping in that way the child reader to relate more easily to what is being presented. Similarly, Tim Burton's adaptation of *Charlie* maintains this tradition, offering an updated version of the author's classic tale.

a. A Fairy Tale Atmosphere

Tim Burton quickly introduces the fairy tale dimension of his film through the use of snow in its opening. Just like in his movies *Edward Scissorhands* (1991), *Sleepy Hollow* (1999) or *Batman Returns* (1992), snow is being used; however, it is here serving different purposes. Snow is used in *Sleepy Hollow* to reinforce the coldness, literally and figuratively, of the town and its inhabitants. In *Batman Returns* it helps situating the film at Christmas time and brings magic and happiness in *Edward Scissorhands*. Similarly, in *Charlie*, "the image of snow is used very effectively to increase the fairy tale feel and the magic of the movie" (Page 211). Snow

falling has an enchanting and almost mythical quality to it. It brings one back to one's own childhood, to the experience of wonder one might have felt when seeing snow covering the earth and in that way creating a new landscape removed from everyday reality.

b. Time and Space

This idea of entering a world that is removed from reality is very common in fairy tales. Indeed, the time and space in which the story is set is vague. It is hard to pinpoint in which period of time the characters live and the place they inhabit. In the novel, Roald Dahl only mentions a “great town” (Dahl 4). The city's name is never given, bringing thus a sense of universality to the story. It could be happening anywhere at any time. Charlie's production designer explains that they have tried not to set the film in any particular place, the cars driving down in the middle of the road (Horn). Additionally, the industrial factory with the dark dreary streets reminds one of the Victorian era. However, the town could also bring one back to the Middle Ages since it is arranged like a medieval village, with lord Wonka's estate on top and the poor Bucket shack below. This feeling of universality is reinforced by the cast's varied accents – English, American, Irish – that contribute to the ‘any town’ feeling of the plot (Pulliam 105).

c. The Hero's Journey

In this unknown town adventures unfold that are organized in a simplistic way. Indeed, fairy tales follow an already defined narrative structure often known as “The Hero's Journey”. This notion was put forward by Joseph Campbell in 1949 and explained in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell noticed that stories such as myths or fairy tales follow, most often, a similar structure composed of seventeen stages. In his book *The Writer's Journey* (1992), screenwriter Christopher Volger proposed a simplified version of Campbell's pattern, reducing it to twelve stages¹⁸ (fig.13). For reasons of clarity, this is the version that will be applied to *Charlie*.

¹⁸ If one wants to read a clear sum up of these stages, they can be found in Stuart Voytilla's book *Myth and the Movies* (1999).

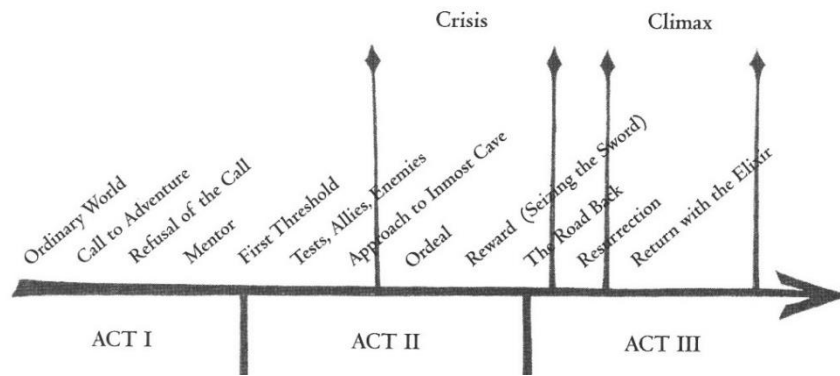


Figure 13

Being the hero of the story, Charlie will be analysed in relation to the “Hero’s Journey” structure.

Ordinary World: From the very beginning of the story, the voiceover describes Charlie as “an ordinary little boy” [04:17]. He is a poor boy living with his family in a dilapidated house. He seems to be living a difficult and dull life, going to school and eating cabbage soup everyday.

Call to Adventure: Willy Wonka, the owner of the chocolate factory organises a contest for five children, the prize of which is a tour in his fabulous factory, a lifelong supply of chocolate and much more. After several failed attempts, Charlie finds a ticket.

Refusal of the Call: Charlie does not want to go to the factory and would prefer selling the golden ticket to someone because as he tells his mother: “We need the money more than we need the chocolate” [30:44].

Mentor: Charlie finds in his grandpa Joe his ally and mentor since the grandfather has already worked for Willy Wonka in the past, he is the best individual to advise Charlie and come with him to the factory.

First Threshold: Charlie and grandpa Joe go together to the factory, going through the gate.

Tests, Allies, Enemies: Throughout the tour, Charlie is being bullied and criticized by the other children, casting them as his enemies. Grandpa Joe is the only true ally of Charlie. Willy Wonka is the one repeatedly testing the children’s self-control during the visit.

Approach to Inmost Cave: Charlie hasn’t given up to temptation once. He has proven to be a good and respectful boy. He thus wins the contest.

Ordeal: Charlie is being offered Wonka’s factory provided that he accepts to leave his family behind to go live with Wonka inside the factory.

Reward: Thanks to Wonka’s chocolate supply, the condition of the Buckets family improves greatly.

The Road Back: This may not directly apply to Charlie but still, it is Charlie’s rejection of Wonka’s offer that will make it very hard for Wonka to go back to his world of fantasy.

Resurrection: Similarly, the Resurrection process might probably fit Wonka more. Here again, thanks to Charlie's help, Wonka gets to reconcile with his father.

Return with the Elixir: Both Wonka and Charlie get what they want. Charlie accepts to live with Wonka and work with him because the latter finally agrees to let the Buckets move into the factory. Wily Wonka gains even more than an heir, he gains a new family. This very logical unfolding of the events allows the child to follow them more easily. Many adults having seen the movie actually complained about the simplified structure of the story.¹⁹ They found that the systematic punishment of the children, followed by the Oompa Loompas' songs removed all possible suspense. They nonetheless accepted it because it was after all a film adapted from a children's novel and targeted towards children. Consequently, things had to be presented in a simple and straightforward way to be understood by its young audience.

d. Flat Characters

The structure of the plot is not the only simplified element in a fairy tale. Indeed, protagonists are also meant to be easily definable, characterized by their nature. The novel does not open with the first chapter but with a description of the different characters, telling the reader exactly what to think about each of them. "Augustus Gloop is the greedy boy, Veruca Salt is the girl who is spoiled by her parents, Violet Beauregarde is a girl who chews gum all day long, Mike Teavee is the boy who does nothing but watch television and Charlie Bucket is the hero" (no page number). Even before reading the story, the reader is given the clues to make their understanding of the characters easier, which very likely influences their interpretation. These children have no characteristics other than the behavioural flaws they embody. In *The Uses of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim tackles this idea of simplification by saying that: "The fairy tale simplifies all situations. Its figures are clearly drawn; and details, unless very important, are eliminated. All characters are typical rather than unique" (16). It is indeed very easy to know who the bad people are and who the nice ones are. The fairy tale is always

¹⁹ Here are some of the reviews taken from Allocine.

Themistocle_480 : « on décèle facilement le schéma narratif d'un conte fantastique dans le film. Et c'est peut-être son point faible majeur : le scénario se révèle très prévisible. Qui n'a pas deviné d'emblée l'issue du concours, ou le passé de Willy Wonka en réfléchissant un tant soit peu ? »

Donedon : « La façon dont l'histoire est construite n'a rien de passionnant ni d'amusant, trop linéaire, sans surprise et répétitif. »

TotoJp59 : « Je ne suis pas totalement convaincu par ce Burton. La faute à un fil narratif assez lourd et surtout répétitif dans la seconde moitié du long-métrage (les chants notamment). De plus, les situations sont assez prévisibles (les "disparitions" de chaque enfant). »

characterized by Manicheism and evil is as present as virtue. “In practically every fairy tale good and evil are given body in the form of some figures and their actions, as good and evil are omnipresent in life and the propensities for both are present in every man” (*Ibid*).

e. A Manichean World

In *Charlie*, there is an apparent dualistic treatment of the characters, being good or bad, humble or cocky, poor or rich. The four annoying children and their parents are vain, disobedient and mean, contrary to Charlie and his family who are honest, righteous and loving despite their poor background. The protagonists are never ambivalent, as real people normally are. This simplistic vision of the world is actually that of the child. According to Bettelheim, this duality is very important for the child reader/viewer because by highlighting the opposite features of the characters, the fairy tale helps the child differentiating more easily one protagonist from the other. It is then very easy for the child to identify with the good character, the hero (Bettelheim 9).

Charlie, as mentioned in the list of characters, is the hero of the story. He represents all that is pure and good. Just like Cinderella, Charlie is raised from poverty by the essential nobility of his nature and the intercession of a fairy, known as Willy Wonka. Similarly, he lives in a cottage that is both expressionist (as it will be dealt with later on) and not so different from fairy tale houses, “the kind of place you’d expect to find three bears or seven dwarves living in” (Page 212). In *La Clef des Contes*, Christophe Carlier works on the figure of the hero in the fairy tale. He notes that:

One of the characteristics often noticed by theorists is the superficial and even simplistic personality of the fairy tale hero. Flat characters, one might say without psychological depth nor complexity, and fit to live in a Manichean world. Everything unfolds as if the fairy tale hero barely deserved interest or attention. He is, by the way, almost never described, or with one word only, an expression, or a superlative. (my translation, Carlier 61)²⁰

²⁰ « Un des traits souvent remarqués par les commentateurs est le caractère superficiel, voire simpliste du héros du conte. Des êtres plats, dirait-on sans épaisseur ni complexité, et bien faits pour évoluer dans un univers manichéen. Tout se passe comme si le héros du conte méritait à peine qu’on s’intéresse à lui, ou qu’on s’attarde à le considérer. Il n’est d’ailleurs presque jamais décrit, sinon d’un mot, d’une formule, ou d’un superlatif ».

Charlie is always defined as “small” (Dahl 2) or “little” (*Idem* 4/5). Aside from being a well-educated boy he does not have any marked personality. It is not for nothing that his surname is “Bucket”. Charlie is an empty vessel, a shell waiting to be filled. It is the reader who gives texture to Charlie by becoming him. In that way, Roald Dahl moves his readers into the story in a very straightforward way.

The hero might appear without depth, but it is then important to understand him not by who he is but who he becomes. “The person that is, first of all, reduced to his/her very physical appearance is a kind of experimental subject who is shaped and revealed by his/her own story [...] The ordeal allows the hero to reveal who he/she is, or to prove his/her worth” (my translation, 61).²¹ For instance, despite his poverty and vulnerable size, Tom Thumb is going to save his brothers and bring wealth to his family. By not giving in to temptation, Charlie will become Willy Wonka’s heir and thus save his family from starvation. In Tim Burton’s movie he will even do greater than that since he will also help Willy Wonka reconcile with his dad and make him realise how important family is.

f. The Quest for the Self and for Home

This quest for the self and one’s way back home is a very common theme in fairy tales.

In most written fairy tales, a character given as weak, simple, younger, disgraced – a being a child easily identifies with – overcomes hardships and finds his/her place in adult society. The hero leaves on a journey to face the world (in fairy tales, the obligation to leave home amounts to the same thing as the necessity to become oneself). He shows the child how to succeed by facing dangers with confidence, in other words in believing in one’s own worth. (my translation)²².

Here, Charlie is the main protagonist. He leaves home, helped by Grandpa Joe he overcomes Wonka’s trials in the chocolate factory, proves himself to be the worthiest of all and is able to find his way back home having gained maturity through his adventures. In order to

²¹ « Celui que l’on réduit d’abord à sa seule apparence est une sorte de sujet expérimental que son histoire forge et révèle [...] L’épreuve permet au héros de révéler ce qu’il est, ou de faire ses preuves ».

²² « Dans la plupart des écrits, un personnage donné comme faible, simple, plus jeune, disgracié – un être auquel s’identifie spontanément l’enfant – surmonte les difficultés et trouve sa place dans la société des adultes. Le héros part affronter le monde (dans les contes de fées, l’obligation de quitter la maison équivaut à la nécessité de devenir soi-même). Il montre à l’enfant comment réussir en affrontant les dangers avec confiance, c’est à dire en prenant conscience de sa propre valeur ».

achieve this, Charlie has no choice but to face obstacles. Bettelheim argues that it is a necessary step for the child to grow into a man. According to him, “a struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable, it is an intrinsic part of human existence – but that if one does not shy away, but steadfastly meets unexpected and often unjust hardships, one masters all obstacles and at the end emerges victorious” (Bettelheim 8). Fairy tales bring the child face to face with life hardships and basic human dilemmas. In writing his children’s stories, Roald Dahl never sugar-coats life and death. He takes his readers as humanly enough to be told the truth about the dark side of life and deal with it. Similarly, Tim Burton confronts, in his movies, viewers with one of children’s worst childhood fears, that of separation. He kills Edward’s father in *Edward Scissorhands* and depicts the abandonment of Batman, the penguin and Charlie. He also tackles another children’s fear, that of death, in his movie *Corpse Bride* (2005), turning death into something that must not be feared but rather embraced.

g. Violence and Fear

That is one of the reasons why fairy tales display violence and play with extreme feelings. When the Brothers Grimm wrote their folk tales, they did not remove cruelty. For instance, Cinderella’s stepsisters have their eyes pecked out by doves, Rumpelstiltskin rips himself in half, etc. Similarly, Charlie’s opponents receive a drastic punishment one after the other. Violet Beauregarde is deformed and turned into a giant blueberry, Augustus Gloop almost drowns in the chocolate river, Veruca Salt is almost eaten by the squirrels and quartered, Mike Teavee is shrunk and then elongated. Mel Stuart’s version of the punishment scenes were said to deviate from Dahl’s original text, portraying the punishments in a “cheesy, slapstick fashion devoid of the dark undertones of the source text” (Brown & Babbington 79). However, Tim Burton’s depiction gives to the scenes a very dreary tone, almost horrific. It is rendered for instance with the use of close-ups on Veruca’s hands and the marks she makes on the floor with



Figure 14

her nails as she tries to prevent her fall into the garbage chute (fig.14). It is also felt with Violet Beauregarde’s transformation as the purple colour spreads on her whole body.

As she realises what is happening to her, the camera makes a dolly out, leaving her alone in the shot. She is becoming a monster, and everyone steps back. This is reinforced by the clarity of the shot depicting Violet from behind and the blurriness of the background representing the other characters. She is on her own, isolated (fig.15) [1:03:18-28].



Figure 15

These violent endings are part and parcel of the fairy tale genre. Mean children have to pay for their crimes. This darkness is not just present to punish the characters, but it is also felt throughout the movie. From the moment the characters pass the factory's gate, the possibility of death is very palpable. The tension is already present when the characters stand in line



Figure 16

waiting in front of the gates. Just like in a scary fairy tale, the doors open by themselves and a voice coming from nowhere tells them to enter. It is interesting to see how they gradually walk into the shadows as soon as they approach the factory. The zoom in from outside the gates onto the characters frames them as though they were imprisoned (fig.16). To add some

dreariness to the scene, the joyful music is replaced by a mysterious and eerie church organ music [33:00- 33:43]. Tim Burton decided then to add a musical scene to introduce Wonka properly.

Even if the puppet show starts in a joyful way with many colours and singing that would make one think of Disney's "It's a Small World" (fig.17), it rapidly turns into a gory show. The many close shots of the puppets burning into flames, their eyes popping out, do inspire fear (fig.18). As Edwin Page points out: "everything at the factory seems bright and cherry, there is a hidden darkness. Though this sequence isn't in Dahl's book it is a very effective prelude to the vibrant yet sinister nature of the chocolate factory" (212).



Figure 17



Figure 18

To this overwhelming threat, Roald Dahl and Tim Burton find ways for the reader and viewer to dedramatize what is being depicted. They both use humour in a different way. Dahl's illustrator, Quentin Blake, makes black and white drawings that serve as a safety-valve for the reader. James Parker notes that: "Whenever the action gets too nasty, the tension is flared off in a hasty illustration; real suffering, in a Blake drawing, is impossible". Tim Burton opts for a deliberately funny and sarcastic tone found in the character of Willy Wonka. When the situation is very tense, Willy Wonka is always making a comment that would release the audience's fears. Here are a few quotes taken from the movie that could illustrate this point (fig.19/20).



Figure 19



Figure 20

Of course, one must not forget that it is a Tim Burton movie and consequently humour is not nice and innocent, but it also has some dark aspect to it.

h. Magic

Another aspect that would make *Charlie* enter the fairy tale genre is of course the presence of magical creatures, witches, ogres etc. However, none of these above appear in the book or movie. Instead, one can find near-magical beings such as Willy Wonka who is very much like a magician. Indeed, he uses his crazy imagination to create unusual candies that defy logics and can revolutionize the world. For instance, the chocolate candies turning into singing birds, the all eatable chocolate room from grass to trees and river or the three-course meal in sticks of chewing gum that will provide poor people with a cheap meal. Similarly, the Oompa Loompas seem to be magical little beings that live in a fairy land, whose existence is being denied, if one believes the words of Mike's father, a teacher of geography. It is also possible to find magical objects such as the great glass elevator, a television with strange powers, magic food and drinks or a chocolate landscape.

i. A Happy Ending

And what would be a fairy tale without a satisfying happy ending? Indeed, in fairy tales, the mean protagonists are punished, and the nice and loyal hero is rewarded. The powerless becomes powerful. Good always conquers Evil, leaving the reader with a positive view on life. Bruno Bettelheim notes that: “Far from making demands, the fairy tale reassures, gives hope for the future and holds out the promise of a happy ending” (34). Charlie has been rewarded for his goodness, he has become Wonka’s heir and thus, will never lack anything again. However, as shown in Tim Burton’s movie, happiness will not be found in material things but in people. The Bucket family might have won the big prize, they do not want to replace their old cottage with a new and more comfortable dwelling. At the end of the movie, one can notice that even if they moved into the factory, the Buckets kept their poor house intact (fig.21). Nonetheless,



Figure 21

warmth is felt inside the house with the emphasis put on the family dinner that they all share together, including Willy Wonka. The importance of family will be dealt with further on as well.

2.2 A Tale of Misbehaved Children who Get their Just Deserts

a. A Modern Tale serving a Cautionary Purpose

Charlie is often categorised as a modern fairy tale serving as a cautionary tale to teach readers, and here, viewers, a lesson. A cautionary tale is defined in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales* as “a narrative that demonstrates the consequences of wrongdoing and thus reinforces moral and behavioral norms” (Valk 170). It is meant to warn mostly children against the dangers of bad behaviour and thus serves as a pedagogical tool by teaching them about choices and consequences. *Charlie* provides a clear morality, in the form of reproachful verses sang by the Oompa Loopas. Through the children’s punishment one is left to understand what actions are not to be repeated if he/she wants to avoid problems. One must then, first and foremost, listen to Willy Wonka’s warnings about gluttony, gum chewing, over-permissive parents and television/video games addiction and learn from them. There is

thus an undeniable attempt at entertaining, but most of all at educating. Despite his obvious comic side, Roald Dahl is well aware of the didactic role he is playing with his children's stories. According to him, adults have a great need to civilize. "The adult is the enemy of the child because of the awful process of civilizing this thing that when it is born is an animal with no manners, no moral sense at all" (qtd. in Pearson). In the words of Alison Lurie, children are seen as 'savages' and 'uncivilized'. They belong to an 'unusual partly savage tribe' (qtd. in Cross 63). Childhood is consequently a distinct culture from that of adulthood and adults feel it is their duty to show children the right path to follow. Interestingly here, *Charlie's* morality is addressed as much to children as adults themselves. Children may be presented as little monsters, but they are, after all, the products of their parents' education and that of society's. Indeed, over-indulgent parenting is what partly led to children's misbehaviour in the tale.

In his version of *Charlie*, Tim Burton chooses to modernize Dahl's story, keeping the moral impetus intact but making it more efficient by adapting it for a 21st century audience. Tim Burton gives his viewers a satirical portrayal of a capitalist contemporary society that encourages overconsumption and thus significantly influences people's behaviours. What seems to be the major issue in today's society, as presented in Tim Burton's *Charlie*, is this unstoppable need to fulfil one's appetites and desires, however excessive that one might be. Wonka's contest reveals society's crave for a lifetime supply of chocolate and how far each and everyone is ready to go and find those tickets. These extreme measures (bribing, violence, counterfeiting) are condemned and give a very negative portrayal of the four lucky ones who get a ticket. Augustus, Violet, Veruca and Mike have all one thing in common, they are all greedy and in *Charlie*, greed only brings misfortunes and is condemned.

Augustus Gloop is the number one consumer in the literal sense of the term. He is obese and all he ever wants is to eat. It has become, according to his mother, his "main hobby" (Dahl 26). Veruca Salt wants to possess everything. She is a compulsive consumer who does not only "want" but "needs" material goods. She is given everything she wants and if not, she does not think twice before taking it regardless of what the others might think. Violet Beauregarde demonstrates oral greed when she puts a gobstopper into her already filled mouth. Her will to be the best at everything she undertakes is also a sign of her overwhelming desire 'for more' that is never satisfied. Finally, Mike Teavee is a metaphorical consumer of the media. He is only happy when he is playing video games and he finds a way to fulfil his craziest desire when he becomes part of the television itself. It is thus the characters' obvious lack of control and satisfaction with what they already have that Dahl and Burton identify as one of the sources of

their downfall. The characters consume and end up being themselves consumed by higher forces in the factory.

As previously noted, cautionary tales tell people what not to do. They follow characters who act badly and expose which punishment they have to suffer as a consequence. Each one of the four impolite children are products of capitalist society, which partly explains their greedy tendency, but they also are the result of over-indulgent parenting. Especially in the 21st century, problems of education seem to have become a burning issue provoking, in the movie, the children's fall. Over the past few decades, the child was no longer understood as a person that had to be defined in relation to the adult figure, but rather as a separate entity, endowed with specific skills and a voice to be heard. Specific laws were thus passed to protect the figure of the child and grant him/her the rights of any citizens as soon as he/she came into the world. In their dossier on « L'évolution de la place de l'enfant dans la société », the FAPEO declares that: "Today, the child is at the core of societies and families' concerns. He has become the axis of reference of the modern family" (my translation).²³ This focus on the child called into question the way parents had to act towards him/her. The child figure still needs to be protected but he/she is also an individual endowed with the same rights as any other. This duality revealed itself to be difficult to handle for the parents who either fell into paternalism and infantilism or on the contrary adopted measures that left the child with too much freedom and independence. Authority and discipline became consequently an issue. To what extent could parents demand something of their child?

Indeed, in the 21st century, parents start to question their rights of authority over their children and are more likely to let their children have their own way instead of imposing their will (Gulli). This parenting style was recognized by psychologist Diana Baumrind in the 1960s as being the "Permissive style". This parenting style was based upon two aspects of parenting behaviour that are: control and warmth (as opposed to conflict and neglect). The permissive typology was described as "high warmth coupled with low control attempts" (O'Connor and B.C. Scott 7). According to Diana Baumrind, permissive parents "are more responsive than they are demanding. They are non-traditional and lenient, do not require mature behaviour, allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid confrontation" (62). This style of parenting is

²³ « Aujourd'hui, l'enfant est au cœur des préoccupations des sociétés et des familles. Il est devenu l'un des axes de référence de la famille contemporaine » (12).

mostly used in the contemporary century thus turning the child into an “enfant roi”, in other words a “spoiled rotten kid”.

Augustus Gloop, the German greedy obese child, Veruca Salt, the never-happy over spoiled child, Violet Beauregarde, the proud, competitive and chewing gum addict and Mike Teavee the violent but savvy video-game addict are four spoiled rotten kids that are going to pay for their disrespectful behaviours. Through the analysis of each of the characters, one can have a view of today’s problematic vision of childhood that is no longer a time of innocence and purity but rather one of changing power relationships and fear. Tim Burton offers his viewers food for thought, showing them how wrong the character’s lifestyle and behaviours are, and thus encouraging them to act differently. This strategy, implicitly denouncing the bad characters and their behaviours to trigger reflection and promote change is an essential function of the fairy tale.

b. Augustus Gloop: The Obese Child

The first child to win the Golden ticket is called Augustus Gloop. He is defined in Roald Dahl’s list of characters in a negative way. He is “a greedy boy” (Dahl no page number, list of characters). By defining him with such a clear term, he almost becomes a personification which seems to be rather obvious if one considers his name. Augustus becomes a personification of gluttony, as can be understood from his surname “Gloop” which refers to “sloppy or sticky semi-fluid matter, typically something unpleasant” (Stevenson 744). His first introduction also casts him as a negative protagonist with his face being compared to “a monstrous ball of dough with two small greedy curranty eyes peering out upon the world” (Dahl 26). The choice of adjectives to qualify the boy, “monstrous” and “greedy”, with negative connotations, implies that Augustus is repulsive and thus not to be liked. Similarly, the juxtaposition of his distinguished first name Augustus, which means “majestic” and his comic surname “Gloop” discredits the character even further.

The first appearance of Augustus on screen confirms Dahl’s critical view on the protagonist, he is the greedy child *par excellence*. He embodies the 21st century obese child. In her essay “Childhood obesity: causes and consequences”, Krushnapriya Sahoo asserts that “childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century” (187). In 1971, finding an obese child or teenager was rare, however it became a common phenomenon by the 2000s (Sax 37). Before the 21st century, it was a natural thing for parents to decide what was for supper and if their child did not like it, they could go hungry. However, when parents

started to cede control to their children, food became a major thing children decided upon. Snack food such as chips, baked goods and candy were their number one choice. Augustus is one of those children. He is so addicted to chocolate that he does not unwrap the bars when he eats them in front of the newsmen, he is almost always presented on screen eating chocolate, he loses his mind when entering the chocolate room, eating everything he sees and ends up being himself ‘consumed’ by the chocolate he loves so much.



Figure 22

This still from the movie (fig.22) depicts Augustus' first apparition on screen. He is telling the newsmen how he found the golden ticket. One thing that is very striking when looking at the picture is the idea of abundance translated through rows of meat hanging from the ceiling, symmetric white lamps, black and white checkered floor, varied colours and of course the three chubby members of the family standing in the center. This sense of excess is heightened by the play on different lines and shapes. Symmetry is present with the hanging meat, the brown beams, the standing characters being vertical; the arches in the background, the lamps and the character's round heads being oval and the checkered floor. The gathering of all those lines and shapes gives us an idea of exuberance that clearly reveals which kind of world the Gloops live in.

Thus, excess does not seem to be only reserved to Augustus. Krushnapriya Sahoo points out to parental factors as being very influential for the kids to become fat. She says that "Children learn by modeling parents' preferences" (189). Generally, "parents serve as role models to determine what, when, and how to eat, based upon the surrounding food environment and cultural lifestyle" (Tzou 1465). In many ways, Burton's visual choices reveal, Augustus as

the product of his parents' union. They all have the same size, the same weight, the same colourful and striped clothes. Augustus is crazy about food, just like his father who has decided to become a butcher and his mother who could not help but filling her bag with chocolate in the factory [42:07].



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25

Augustus is always associated with dirtiness. During his interview, Augustus is portrayed in close-ups to highlight his monstrosity, the camera focusing on his round face, chocolate all around his mouth (fig.23). In the chocolate room he smears chocolate all over his face (fig.24) and he leaves the factory covered with chocolate, licking himself (fig.25). Dirtiness is often related to morality. According to Atkinson, in the nineteenth century, cleanliness was a “marker of moral worth” (qtd. in Van den Broeck 15). In some ways, Augustus's physical dirtiness reveals his moral dirtiness.

Curiously, some have come to the conclusion that immoral children are more likely to be obese than well behaved ones. In his book, *The Collapse of Parenting*, Leonard Sax explains that disrespect and obesity often go together. According to him:

The child who is most disrespectful is also the child who is most likely to become fat. A few studies have reported that children and teenagers who are defiant, disrespectful, and just plain bratty are more likely to become overweight or obese, compared with kids who are better behaved. (46)

Indeed, Augustus does not appear as the nicest child in the world when he purposely asks if Charlie wants some chocolate just to say to his face that if he wanted some he should have brought some [40:19]. A dirty mind is not accepted in Dahl's world and needs to be punished, in Augustus's case: almost drowned in the chocolate river he likes so much the taste of.

c. Veruca Salt: The Spoiled Rotten Child

The second child to find the golden ticket is the British, utterly spoiled rotten child Veruca Salt. As expected from a character coming from the fairy tale tradition, Veruca, like the other unruly kids, is a unidimensional character. She is the epitome of the all demanding and never happy child who always gets what she wants with her whims. It is a way of behaving that has become extremely common nowadays. As Elizabeth O'Reilly explains:

In the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries, the excessive emphasis on children's rights and respecting the child's feelings can sometimes be exaggerated and misinterpreted as letting the child have everything it wants. [...] Many parents and other child carers no longer have confidence in their right to have authority over their children; the fear of oppressing or inhibiting them is so great that their every whim is often pandered to. This can create a situation where the parent is fearful and submissive, and the child is able to take advantage and exert power. (37)



Figure 26



Figure 27

It is made very clear that the one who decides in the family is Veruca. She has so much power over her dad that he answers to all her prayers. He makes his workers unwrap millions of Wonka bars until one of them finds a ticket, he buys her every pet she wants, and the list is very long. It is relevant to look at the way Burton always films Veruca talking or shouting at her dad in a high angle shot (fig.26/27).

Normally, "The grammar of a high angle shot often yields an understanding within the viewer that who they are seeing on screen is smaller, weaker, subservient, diminutive, or is currently in a less powerful or compromised position" (Thompson and Bowen 41). Being a

child, Veruca is indeed smaller than her parents who must look down to talk to her. However, she does not seem to be weaker but on the contrary, more threatening. Filming in this angle makes her head, hair and eyes look bigger and one can feel the anger boiling inside her. If one considers some of her parents' scared reactions when looking at her



Figure 28



Figure 29

(fig.28/29), she seems to inspire fear rather than vulnerability. Through the use of high and low angle shots, the power dynamic between parents and the child seems to be reversed. The would be, powerful and strong parents, shot in high angle, look more vulnerable and afraid than anything else.

As Robin Berman observes in her article for TIME “How children have become their parents bullies”, “It used to be that kids were scared of their parents and now parents seem scared of their kids”. This growing phenomenon has been proven on August 2017 by researchers who surveyed 1,500 British parents, amongst which 56% admitted that their child had become the “boss of them and of the house” (Sun reporter). Conveniently with Veruca Salt, two thirds of them claimed that “daughters are bossier” (*Ibid*). The relationship between children and their parents appears to have shifted with children being seen but not heard to being heard and constantly satisfied. According to Robin Berman “Their (parents) hearts are in the right place; they want to be more attentive to their kids’ needs”. However, they get to confuse wants with needs, taking for granted that what the child is asking for is essential for his/her well-being. It is indeed what Mr Salt tells the journalists as the main reason why he made his staff look for the ticket. “Well, gentlemen, I just hated to see my little girl unhappy like that. I vowed I would keep up the search until I could give her what she wanted” [18:18]

Once with the ticket, the father proudly gives it to Veruca while her mother looks at her with fear. Her fear is very visible in her eyes and accordingly, Danny Elfman plays some low and threatening music theme as Veruca approaches her parents, translating the threat she represents. As could have been expected, she looks joyful for a couple of seconds and interestingly enough, the music lightens up for a while [18:50-56] allowing the viewer to release the pressure for a second as he/she wonders if Veruca will finally be satisfied since she got what she wanted. However, without answering them or even thanking them, she commands her dad

to get her a new pony, a directive that is here again heightened thanks to the complete stop of music [18:56-18:59].

This never-happy child encapsulates the main paradox of consumption. As Albert Hirschman notes: “the world we live in, is one in which men think they want one thing and then upon getting it, find out to their dismay that they don’t want it nearly as much as they thought or don’t want it all and that something else, of which they were hardly aware, is what they really want” (qtd. in Stavrakakis 95). This idea of knowing one’s true need is seconded by Blustein when he says that: “To give children what they need, however, we must rely on more than advice or persuasion, for children may not be aware of their needs, or may not want what they need, or may have no basis for deciding how their needs are to be met” (qtd. in O’Reilly :86). Veruca wants, without limit, to fulfil her immediate desires and by letting her have everything, her parents turned her into a self-centred, rude and demanding child.

In her article “Spoiled Rotten: Why you shouldn’t coddle your kids”, editor and writer Kori Ellis declares that: “A parent can show even a young child respect by the tone of their voice”. Tim Burton seems to make an obvious hint at this when he makes Willy Wonka discredit Mr Salt’s authority by imitating his voice, telling Veruca she cannot have a squirrel because “Mr Wonka is being unreasonable” [1:10:36]. Similarly, Burton appears to go beyond his criticism of bad parenting, when he also mocks the family’s upper-class status, showing their tendency at being very haughty with other people, taking great pleasure at displaying their wealth. This is for instance visible in Mr Salt’s comment to Mr Teavee saying, “He does not speak American” [40:11] (DVD Special edition), in other words British people are too distinguished to speak to middle-class Americans. It is also understood when Mr Salt tells the journalists and Wonka twice, that he is in the nut business. The pride he shows when talking to people is humorously challenged by the visuals (fig. 30/31). Both stills from the movie show how his face is surrounded by two symmetrical elements, as though he was wearing horns, discrediting him in the process.

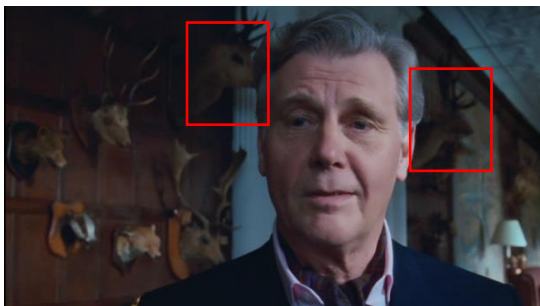


Figure 30

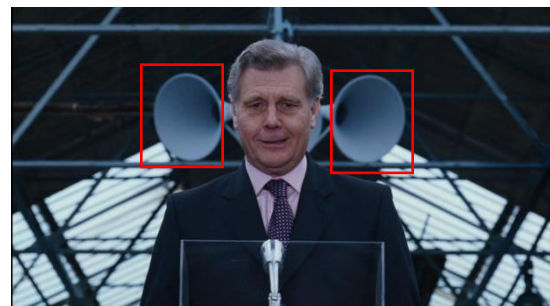


Figure 31

It is rather easy to understand from whom Veruca Salt gets her love for consumption and rudeness when you see her father. As June Pulliam points out in her essay “Charlie’s evolving moral universe: filmic interpretations of Roald Dahl’s *Charlie and the chocolate Factory*”: “The Salt family’s upper-class status in Burton’s film implies that Veruca’s outsized sense of entitlement does not derive solely from overtly indulgent parenting, but also from a world that permits members of her class to behave badly with impunity” (108).

The narrative explicitly condemns this attitude, Veruca and her dad falling down the garbage chute. In the final scene, they both appear covered with garbage, in other words, the final result of consumerism i.e. waste.

d. Violet Beauregarde: The Over Competitive Child

The last two children who win the golden tickets are more than ever products of the 21st century. Roald Dahl’s original versions of Violet Beauregarde is limited to her being obsessed by chewing gum and Mike Teavee is a passive and stupid child who is addicted to television. Burton’s reimaginings of the characters is anchored in contemporary society. In his article for the *New York Times*, A.O. Scott argues that: “Violet Beauregarde is not merely an obsessive gum chewer, but a ruthlessly competitive power-pixie with a matching mom and shelves full of trophies in her suburban Atlanta home”. This competitive side of her was not present in Roald Dahl’s book and is actually referring to one of contemporary society’s dark sides. As stated by La Fédération des Associations de Parents de l’Enseignement Officiel (FAPEO): “Today’s child must excel and succeed in all domains: school, extra-curricular activities, (winning the swimming prize, the piano contest, making his/her way as a lead dancer, ...), watching his/her weight, mastering the internet, ... and all of this as early as possible” (my translation).²⁴

The child is put under so much societal and parental pressure that he/ she is unable to enjoy a carefree childhood, some even say he/she is being robbed of his/her childhood. Violet’s main goal in life is being the best. Burton focuses on the world champion part of Violet’s character. Indeed, what drives her to find the ticket is her will to compete and win the mysterious grand prize offered by Willy Wonka. In a world where classes don’t mix (Mr Salt and Mr Teavee [40:11], where friendship is based on hypocrisy (Violet and Veruca [38:26]), where people do

²⁴ « L’enfant d’aujourd’hui doit être dans la performance et tout réussir : scolarité, activités extrascolaires (gagner le prix de natation, le concours de piano, tracer son chemin de danseur (se)-étoile,), faire attention à son poids, maîtriser Internet,...et tout cela le plus tôt possible » (14).

not mind stealing from Wonka to benefit from his creativity and take credit for his work; Mrs Beauregarde pushes her child at being individualistic and overconfident in order to succeed in life. Richard B. Davis sees Mrs Beauregarde as a representative of the “current trend of stage mothers who stop at nothing in order for their daughters to win the coveted prize, trophy, or title” (49).

It seems like Mrs Beauregarde acts as a pushy mother to help her child find her place in a difficult society where “individuals live under constant social observation, and their word and actions are viewed, assessed and judged by those around them” (Cobb 74). However, it is also possible to interpret her behaviour as an answer to her personal needs rather than her daughters. Judith Warner argues that “We like to think that the choices we make early on as parents [...] reflect deep truths about what’s best for our children. But they don’t. What these decisions do reflect, however, whether we want to admit it or not, are pretty deep-seated facts about ourselves”. Childhood is often a period of time, adults wish they could come back to (Nodelman 168) and not surprisingly, this feeling of nostalgia or not accepting to grow up is very present in fairy tales (i.e. Peter Pan).

Some parents find in their progeniture the opportunity to fulfil their own childhood desires, living through their child’s success. Missi Pyle, the actress playing Mrs Beauregarde, explains her character saying that: “Mrs. Beauregarde wants her daughter to have everything she didn’t. A self-proclaimed winner, she has instilled in Violet her own competitive spirit to the exclusion of any other thought” (Atlantis). In other words, the mother In her thesis about “The Child and The Adult in Contemporary Children's Literature, Elizabeth O’ Reilly quotes Paul Thompson who believes that most parents in the late twentieth century, purposely or not, “mould (try to) their children into exact replicas of themselves, ensuring that they perpetuate their own social norms and lifestyle” (170). This is most certainly the case for Mrs Beauregarde and her daughter who are very similar in many domains. First, they look alike. They have the same short blond hair, big green eyes and oval faces (fig.32/33).



Figure 32

Figure 33

Then, they always dress the same way (fig. 34/35/36).



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36

They have the same competitive minds, and both won prizes during their childhood as Mrs Beauregarde likes pointing it out in front of the journalists [22:23]. They both use strategies to get what they want. Violet is over-confident, saying to Wonka without flinching that she will be the one winning the special prize and looks afterwards at her mother to find her approval [37:06]. Mrs Beauregarde uses her charm [53:06] on Wonka, but unfortunately for her, he is more scared than receptive to it. It is made very clear that what drives Mrs Beauregarde is her child's success and nothing else. When Violet turns into a blueberry, she does not worry about her daughter's health but rather on her future incapacity at competing now that she is blue and big. In her own words: "But I can't have a blueberry as a daughter. How is she supposed to compete?" [1:04:15]. Similarly, their last scene together shows Violet enjoying her new flexibility whereas her mother cannot accept it because it does not change the fact that she is now blue. Tim Burton points out and subverts American modern society hooked on mini-miss contests or other competitive contests in which children are transformed into objects or mini-adults. An over-confident child who does not care for anything but herself inflates into a giant blueberry in need of dejuicing, or in other words, a big-headed child needs to lose some self-confidence.

e. Mike Teavee: The Video Game Addict Child

The last child, Mike Teavee has also been adapted to reflect more efficiently the current nature of children in the new millenium. No longer a TV addict but a video game addict; Mike Teavee embodies the new generation of savvy children who spend their time in front of a screen, playing violent video games. A.O. Scott observes that: "Mike Teavee's antisocial tendencies, fed by the television Dahl loathed, have been compounded by video games. Far from a couch potato, the boy [...] is a sociopathic embodiment of the currently vogueish theory that such entertainment makes children smarter". Indeed, in his essay "New media, new markets, new

childhoods? Children's changing cultural environment in the age of digital technology", David Buckingham reminds his readers of the current debate existing between scholars against the arrival of technology in children's lives and those in favour. Those against, mainly focus on the negative impact using new technologies, especially video games, can have on the child's behaviour. In their study on "The impact of violent Video Games", Craig Anderson and Waynes Warburton argue that excessive playing of video games leads to "attention deficits, impulsivity and hyperactivity" (60). Moreover, they believe that playing those violent games has a negative effect on "childhood aggression" (61). For them, "too much exposure to violent games increases the likelihood of aggressive thoughts, feelings and behaviors [...] It leads to desensitization to violence and also to decreases in pro-social behaviors and empathy" (*Ibid*).

All these negative effects can indeed be noticed with Mike's character. Mike's compulsive love for violent video games affects his way of behaving with other people and

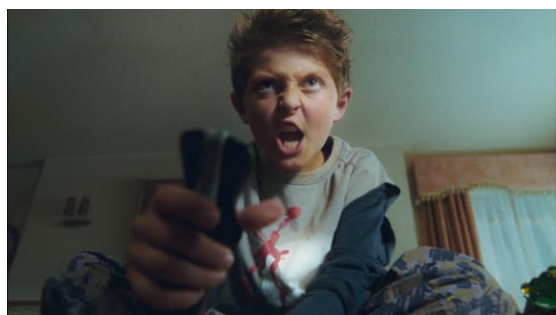


Figure 37

with the world around him. When playing, Mike is filmed in a medium shot (fig.37) which allows us to capture his violent facial expressions and his aggressive body language. Moreover, filmed from a low angle shot, Mike's dominance is heightened, and he looks more threatening. His face is half lit, stressing his dark side. His aggressivity is also present in

his way of talking. He repeatedly contradicts Willy Wonka, insulting his work that he sees as "a waste of time" [1:18:55] and Willy Wonka himself whom he calls "an idiot" [1:24:49]. Mike assimilates enjoyment with violence. When Wonka tells the visitors to enjoy themselves inside the chocolate room, Mike does not taste any candy but actively smashes open a pumpkin. To his father's disapproval, Mike replies: "Dad! He (Willy Wonka) said enjoy" [41:40]. As the actor himself confessed: "I was left out. I played the kid that didn't care about candy, so while everybody else liked candy and was pigging out, I was just destroying things" (Shen).

In order to prevent this extreme behaviour, scholars encourage parents to limit their children's access to new technologies. Control is key to save children's supposed purity. Children are seen as vulnerable individuals that are easily influenced and abused by what is shown on screen. Thus, Sanders comes to the conclusion that, "As with television, digital technology is being held responsible for the wholesale destruction of childhood as we know it" (qtd. in Buckingham 165). Roald Dahl encourages then to replace technology with reading that

he deems much more appropriate, bringing joy and broadening one's horizons. The Oompas' song provides the vehicle for the author's critique: television is a "monster" (162) that "rots the senses in the head! Kills imagination dead! Clogs and clutters up the mind! Makes a child so dull and blind [...] his powers of thinking rust and freeze! He cannot think -he only sees!" (*Ibid*). Tim Burton, once again, answers the fairy tale requirements as he provides his viewers with a moral message. He seems to agree with Dahl's statement, turning Mike's love for television into a nightmarish experience once he is teleported in the television and is almost killed. He is even sent to one of Alfred Hitchcock's most traumatic movie scenes. Indeed, this still (fig.38) from Alfred Hitchcock's cult shower scene in *Psycho* (1960) gives Mike's TV experience a slasher and thriller taste.

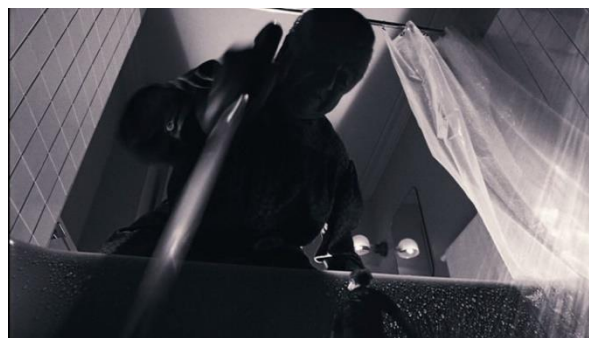


Figure 38

Nonetheless, when Tim Burton decided to modernize Mike Teavee's character he also added some new psychology to the protagonist that could go against Dahl's original anti-TV message. Addiction to television can cause serious damage, however Burton also shows how it might have had a good impact on Mike who proves to be very clever. This idea would actually be promoted by the pro-technology school. For them, children must embrace new media because it is seen as a source of empowerment. Buckingham himself sees new technologies as something that does not destroy natural human relationships and forms of learning, but rather as a means to liberate children's innate spontaneity and imagination (158). In the same essay, Craig Anderson and Waynes Warburton also stress the fact that although many disapprove violent video games, playing can still have helpful benefits. To name but a few, it can help "distract and relax children during painful medical procedures" (*Idem* 57), it can "enhance the spatial cognition abilities of players" (*Idem* 58), it can help improve social behaviors if the game involves participants, it can also be seen as a "powerful teaching tool" (*Idem* 59).

Mike Teavee does not seem to benefit directly from those advantages. However, he often proves to be endowed with a heightened intelligence. Indeed, it has been said that video

games can make children smarter. In an article for the *Washington Post*, T Rees Shapiro presents a study led by Yale professor Bruce Wexler that shows that video games make children more intelligent, especially helping them to perform better at math. According to him, “the program increases focus, self-control, and memory- cognitive skills essential for learning”. Mike is a little technology genius. He did not randomly find the golden ticket but used a very specific method that he explains to the journalists as follows: “All you had to do was check the manufacturing dates, offset by weather and the derivative of the Nikkei index” [23:06]. Similarly, he explains to Wonka specific scientific facts that would make his chocolate teleportation through television impossible: “It is impossible! You don’t understand anything about science. First off, there’s a difference between waves and particles. Duh! Second, the amount of power it would take to convert energy into matter would be like nine atomic bombs” [1:21:13].

Mike represents the all ‘knowing’ child who masters a realm that adults have difficulty grasping. Some have suggested a form of “role-reversal” between adults and children. Michael Wyness for instance, observes that nowadays: “adults becom[e] more dependent on their children when gaining access to an increasingly powerful economic media (117). Some adults seem to be overwhelmed by these new technologies as illustrated by Mr Teavee who tells the journalists that: most of the time! [He] [does not] know what [his son] ’s talking about [23:14]. His powerlessness is also visible since, contrary to his child, he never asks questions. He is almost always behind everyone in the queue. He ends up leaving the factory with a giant son who does not even appear in the frame (fig 39). This difference in size reinforced by the medium shot showing Mike’s dad from head to toe seems to work as a visual metaphor hinting at adults’ impossibility to keep up with their children nowadays, growing up too fast.



Figure 39

As a whole, Mike’s character as a representative of the “updated know it all [...] hyper-perfect modern media child” (Burkham qtd. in Davis) seems to be pointing at one of the

essential differences present in the concept of modern day childhood. In the 21st century, childhood is no longer about playing and being creative. As Michael Wyness tresses in his book *Childhood and Society*: “Technology is also said to challenge an important aspect of childhood, the notion of child’s play. [...] Play illustrates the centrality of childhood in that it locates children close to nature and thus closer to a pure and unmediated world of spontaneity, imagination and creativity” (114). Charlie is in fact the only child who hasn’t lost the ability to play and be creative, which of course, legitimises his place as Wonka’s future heir. Radoslaw Osinski in her essay “Willy Wonka as a Contemporary Dandy” notices that except Charlie, none of the children shows such a gift. In his words:

All the children are provoked by Wonka’s taunts and demonstrate their lack of potential for ludicrous behavior in the visited halls. Burton juxtaposes the creativity of Charlie’s games (he constructs a miniature replica of the factory out of toothpaste caps) with the uncreative, idle pursuits of the other character (Augustus’ gluttony, Mike’s violent computer games, Veruca’s insatiable desire to possess and Violet’s competitiveness in silly disciplines, such as chewing gum). The four children rejected by Willy Wonka are unable to truly enjoy anything: their stay at the wondrous factory only bares their selfish and calculating characters. (178)

Charlie could be interpreted as the beacon of hope for future generations. He might seem to come from another time in which childhood hasn’t been corrupted by modern problems but as Burton declares himself: “Charlie is living in the present, too: he has the feeling of every age, and his way of being is a tract that speaks of our modern world: he carries hope, all is not completely lost” (De Baecque 177). He then offers the viewer an escape from a quite dark image of contemporary childhood embodied by the four disobedient children and their permissive parents and provides an exemplary model to be followed.

2.3 Charlie: The Fairy Tale Hero Setting the Good Example

The traditional fairy tale presents a world in which Good and Evil cohabit. As mentioned in the first subpart, Evil always loses the battle against Good allowing in that way readers to learn lessons from it. Indeed, from the four impolite children, the spectator can learn that defying authority can bring a very limited satisfaction for a rather dark punishment. Cautionary tales explicitly condemn the mean characters and their bad behaviours, implying that they are not to be mimicked and thus deterring spectators to follow their lead. On the other hand, these tales also provide a counter example that is supposed to teach goodness and proper ways of conducting oneself. If the four sinful children clearly provide an example of misconduct that is overtly condemned, Charlie comes as a redeemer. He is presented as the exact opposite of the four unruly children, hence becoming the figure to be followed.

a. Hero and Identification

From the beginning of the novel, Charlie is labelled as “the hero”, a title which already distinguishes him from the other characters and gives him a positive appeal. It unconsciously affects the reader in his perception of the character. Indeed, it is common for the reader to identify with the hero rather than the mean character. Roald Dahl makes sure that it is actually what is going to happen with Charlie. One of the techniques he uses when the novel starts is orality. This technique is usually used in fairy tales. Indeed, oral storytelling allows the reader to be quickly captivated by what is being said and it helps him/her to enter easily inside the story as though he/she was taking part in it.

In *Charlie*, Roald Dahl tells the story in such a way that it seems to be unfolding in the here and now, in front of the readers’ eyes. He manages to produce this effect by using the present tense and proximal deictics such as “This (is Charlie)” (Dahl 2/3) and “These (two very old people are ...)” (*Idem* 1/2) to introduce the protagonists. He also creates an intimate link with the child reader by using illustrations to complete his text, stimulating in that way the reader’s senses. By living the story more intensely, the reader is more likely to relate to what is being shown since he/she is himself familiar with those characters that can remind him of his own family. Similarly, Quentin Blake’s simple drawing (fig.40) of



Figure 40

Charlie with non-specific features reinforces Charlie's relatability. His short hair, nice smile and simple outfit are common features that can easily be appropriated by the reader.

His name, Charlie Bucket, also refers to a common object that stresses his ordinariness and thus his identification with the reader. Tim Burton's presentation of Charlie completely validates what has been said so far. A voice-over narrator presents Charlie as follows: "This is a story of an ordinary little boy named Charlie Bucket. He was no faster, or stronger, or more clever than other children. [...] Charlie Bucket was the luckiest boy in the entire world. He just didn't know it yet" [4:01-34]. Charlie's ordinariness and special fate is made clear from the start and gives the viewer an opportunity to relate to the protagonist and think that such a lucky outcome (whatever it might be) could also happen to them. Charlie's appearance reinforces this idea, staying quite close to Dahl's drawing. The boy is small, thin, he is wearing plain clothes. He is standing alone in the cold and is unnoticed by the passers-by (fig.41).



Figure 41

b. Charlie is the Embodiment of Self Restriction

Just like the good fairy tale hero, Charlie is an ordinary boy who comes from a poor background. The simplicity of the life he is leading makes him stand out from the others and very likely shapes his modest and humble personality, allowing him to become the winner of Wonka's contest. Contrary to the other children whom give in to temptation and greed. Charlie is the opposite of over-consumption and excess. His life is marked by lack and restraint. His poverty does not allow him to eat chocolate as he wishes. He barely receives enough to eat each day (cabbage soup) to survive and is only given a bar of chocolate per year to celebrate his birthday. Charlie keeps his desires in check and has the ability to truly appreciate food when he is given the chance to have some. The other children receive food in profusion and do not even value it. Conversely, Charlie cherishes and savours the chocolate bar he is offered every year. Roald Dahl explicitly compares the bar to "solid gold" (7) showing how sacred it is for the boy. Similarly, his way of eating the bar is marked by delicacy and control.

He would place it carefully in a small wooden box that he owned and treasure it as though it were a bar of solid gold; and for the next few days, he would allow

himself only to look at it, but never to touch it. Then at last, when he could stand it no longer, he would peel back a *tiny* bit of the paper wrapping at one corner to expose a *tiny* bit of chocolate, and then he would take a *tiny* nibble—just enough to allow the lovely sweet taste to spread out slowly over his tongue. The next day, he would take another *tiny* nibble, and so on, and so on. And in this way, Charlie would make his sixpenny bar of birthday chocolate last him for more than a month. (Dahl 6/7, *my emphasis*).

The repetition of the adjective “tiny” stresses the strength and will Charlie shows, despite his intense hunger, at restricting himself and controlling his appetite in order to fully enjoy the texture and taste of the bar as he puts it in his mouth. What can be kept in mind from Charlie’s chocolate testing experience is efficiently explained in Benjamin A. Rider’s essay: “Epicurus and the Chocolate Factory”. According to him:

This story tells us two things about Charlie: First, he has an incredible amount of self-control! But, more important, he’s learned how to extract more pleasure from one small piece of chocolate than most children would have from mounds of candy. Because he does not get to enjoy this experience very often, he knows to be grateful for it when it comes. (10)

Tim Burton goes even further in the depiction of this scene, expressing the holiness of the experience and that of Charlie. The opening of the first chocolate bar comes as a very important instance in the movie. Charlie is sitting in the centre of the bed and he is surrounded by his family whose gaze



Figure 42

are only turned towards him (fig.42). Charlie’s central position on the bed about to share his chocolate with his family reminds its viewers of the Christ-like scene. His importance is stressed thanks to the light turned towards him and the white cover he is sitting on, making him stand out. Just like in the Last Supper, Charlie (Christ) is about to share the meal he loves most with the people he holds the dearest, his family. Charlie might not be crucified after this but if one recalls Dahl’s chapter 10, “The family begins to starve” (45), Charlie comes very close to death refusing to take his grandparents’ food. He sacrifices his own youthful health for the greater good of his family.

Charlie's moderation and selflessness are also expressed when he visits the factory and are highlighted all the more since they come as a deep contrast with the others who are self-centred and excessive. Their entrance in the Chocolate River room is very telling of their personalities, as the four characters and their parents cannot help but touch, devour, even destroy the chocolate landscape. However, Charlie and his grandfather first take the time to just appreciate the beauty of the room, in Charlie's words: "It's beautiful" [39:37] and we never see them eating anything except when they are being offered something. It is Willy Wonka who gives them a spoonful of the chocolate river, it is again Willy Wonka who asks Charlie to taste the chocolate bar from the television.

c. Charlie is Obedient, Passive and Pure

Charlie is a good boy who follows the rules and never questions authority. He always shows respect to everyone he meets, even the impolite children who purposely provoke or insult him. It is illustrated with his neutral reaction after Augustus openly provokes him pretending to be willing to offer him chocolate and Violet Beauregarde calling him a "loser" [42:02]. Charlie is the epitome of the fairy tale hero who is mostly defined by his obedience and passivity. It is relevant to notice that in the novel, Charlie is mainly the observer of what is happening around him in the factory. Verbs of perception such as "look" and "stare" are very commonly used when referring to him expressing his talent for observation rather than action. Similarly, in the few instances during which he talks (eighteen to be exact: page 74;80;81;82;89;93;95;99;101;117;124;129;136;139;165;167) he never judges anyone. On the contrary, when Charlie talks, he expresses his love and admiration for the factory. Most of the questions he asks Willy Wonka reveal his anxiety concerning the children's fate after being punished. In the factory, only seven-goal directed actions are performed by him and, as expected, two of them happen because he follows Wonka's orders to eat chocolate (151/99), three of them occur because he wants protection from his grandfather, taking his hand and legs (68/145/165) and the last two only show him as part of the group and not as an individual, doing the same actions as Wonka and his grandfather (122) Each one of the four brats has a strong personality that is most of the time encouraged by their parents. They never take no for an answer, take what they want and say out loud what they think even if it is inappropriate and disrespectful. They are active participants, and it is their transgression that bring their downfall. On the other hand, Charlie is merely an observer during the tour, he listens and learns from the others. He never complains nor criticizes anyone. He is compliant and thanks to all of these qualities manages to get out of trouble and win the special prize.

Burton's version of *Charlie* remains close to the novel, presenting the boy in a similar fashion. Charlie is also passive, mainly observing and commenting the beauty of the landscape. He does not show a strong personality, trying to blend in with the crowd, and contrary to the other children he does not showily introduce himself to Willy Wonka, while he is almost always portrayed behind the group of children. He always needs reassurance from his grandfather when he gets worried about the children's fate. However, one thing that Burton adds to the original story is Charlie's interest for Wonka's past, asking him several personal questions during the tour. The attention he gives to Willy Wonka is of course another sign of his selflessness and care for others. Nonetheless, by acting in such way he proves to have a more defined personality than in the book because he is going to trigger Wonka's traumatic past and help him grow out of it, as will be explained later on. Charlie will then become an active participant. Even so, Charlie is mostly recognized as being a "flat character". According to Lothe, a flat character is "a character who does not develop, and who therefore appears more as a type" (qtd. in Eik 31). Charlie corresponds to the good sensible and obedient loving child. Charlie is a naturally ideal kid who does not need to change. Since Quentin Blake's drawings were somewhat simplistic, it gave the future directors great freedom to select which actors were going to match best their visions of the protagonists. Choosing Freddie Highmore for the role of Charlie was deemed very appropriate because the innate simplicity and goodness of Charlie were found in the actor himself. Johnny Depp recommended Freddie Highmore for the role of Charlie, having already attested of his acting talents in *Finding Neverland* (Forster 2005). Johnny Depp characterized him as "completely pure and honest and just the sweetest most normal guy in the world" (Foley). In other words, the perfect Charlie Bucket.

This purity was effectively rendered on screen through the use of light and colour. Often shot in medium close-up, in a dark lit environment, Charlie's pale face is made to stand out (fig.43/44). The whiteness of his face might have two purposes. First it reminds the viewer of his poverty since he does not eat much he does not have much colour on his face and appears quite sick. Additionally, the paleness could also be an indicator of his angelic nature. It is often agreed that the white colour has a positive connotation. It is seen as the colour of perfection and is associated with light, goodness, innocence, purity and virginity (Zammitto 5).



Figure 43



Figure 44

And from what has been seen so far, Charlie belongs to these categories. Curiously, Charlie's all too ideal personality was not always received positively by the public. In some of the reviews found in *Common Sense Media*, a web site collecting movie reviews from children and adults; Charlie was considered: "too nice and not like what a kid is" (Micah). He was not liked because he seemed to be: "undeveloped", "an emblem of goodness rather than a real kid, which was unrealistic" (Anonymous). He was "a perfect kid too much" (Domininicboo115). Most of the parents who had seen the first adaptation as kids found it better than Burton's, partly because of Charlie's different role in it.

Comparisons can therefore be made with the first adaptation of *Charlie* directed by Mel Stuart in 1971. In his version of the novel, Mel Stuart decided to give the hero a more "realistic" personality, turning him into a flawed character. Charlie acts as the perfect candidate during the first part of the tour until he gives in to temptation, despite Wonka's warning and has a taste at the Fizzy Lifting Drinks with his grandfather. Additionally, in this version of the novel, the children are bribed by Wonka's rival Slugworth to steal Wonka's last invention the Everlasting Gobstopper in exchange for money. This is actually a test from Wonka himself to be the judge of the worthiness of his contestants. Even if Charlie showed some weakness as any child would probably have when facing so much temptation, he redeemed himself by giving back the gobstopper to Wonka and thus won the contest. Despite his error of judgement, Charlie is still rewarded for his life-long good conduct. In Stuart's version, Charlie is not a flat character as in Burton's or Dahl's but what Loathe and E. M. Foster would call a "round character" or in other words: "a character who develops and changes, who may surprise us, and whose actions we cannot predict" (qtd. in Eik 31). Mel Stuart's Charlie appears to be a better-rounded character, making mistakes and learning from them. In a way, he seems to better fit the fairy tale hero archetype than the other two Charlies because his quest allows him to grow into a better child. Richard Seiter argues that Roald Dahl's Charlie ends up winning the big prize because he is "kind, quiet, observant, and passive" (193). This could probably also be a valid interpretation

of Burton's version of the story. On the contrary, even if Stuart's movie depicts the hero as relatively passive, it clearly is his actions that grants him the honours. According to June Pulliam:

Charlie wins because of something he does. Charlie too is a flawed human being, and nearly loses the contest along with the other bratty children who have already been disqualified by failing to follow the rules. Only Charlie's honesty and refusal to profit from the tour melts Wonka's heart and causes him to reconsider the boy's qualities. (113)

Here, it is Charlie's moral superiority that saves him and makes him stand out from the other children. In Burton's version, Charlie's moral superiority is not shown through his redeemed behaviour but through the choice he makes to stay with his family instead of following Willy Wonka and work with him as will be dealt in further details later on.

d. Charlie Values Family

The acceptance of the power of the family in the child's life is a theme part and parcel of the fairy tale genre. And, it seems that it is Charlie's ability to value family that has, in the end, made a difference. He is the only child who seems to embrace his role of son and grandson and be thankful for it. What would make Charlie recognize the key role of family and not the other children? One possible answer might have to do with their social status and consequently the more or less major role education plays in their development. Contrary to the other children who mainly come from a well-off background, Charlie is set aside due to his poverty. He then seems to live in a parallel world outside of society. As seen in the previous section, the four children and their parents are all products of contemporary - all consuming, competitive, individualistic society. However, Charlie's family, even if clearly affected by the capitalist system (Charlie's father loses his job at the toothpaste factory because of the increase of candy sales) does seem to live in a world apart, with a system of its own.

Charlie actually lives a Romantic childhood in a Victorian society. He is an allegorical figure. As Tim Burton points out: "He's the only one who's perfectly pure. The rest are corrupted, but he lives elsewhere and preserves his innocence. He has that simplicity, inherited from another time" (De Baecque 176). Charlie can thus be associated to the Romantic "Apollonian child". Chris Jenk, the founder of contemporary sociology of childhood, defines the "Apollonian child" as being "angelic, innocent and untainted by the world which they have

recently entered”, symbolically similar to “humankind before either Eve or apple” (qtd. in Duschinsky 79). One of the most significant proponents of this theory is French philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau who believed in the child’s natural goodness. According to him, “the child is born innocent, but risks being stifled by ‘prejudices, authority, necessity, example, all the social institutions in which we find ourselves submerged’” (qtd. in Heywood 24). For him, society was seen as a source of corruption. In order not to affect the child’s purity it was necessary to advocate a naturalist education far away from society. Even if Charlie did not receive this naturalist education *per se*, his position as an outcast, rejected and isolated from society, could be interpreted as his own unspoiled natural sphere. Being poor, Charlie lives by another social code and follows different rules than those of the other kids.

Burton presents Charlie and his family as a “gentle and affectionate caricature of the Burton’s impoverished, famished existence” (Schober 74). Indeed, the Bucket family seem to embody the 19th century Victorian poor working class families. Poverty is rendered on screen with the use of the Gothic style and German Expressionism. Kara M. Manning observes that a Neo-Victorian Gothic quality is at play in many Burton’s films, especially his stop-motions. The aesthetics are carried out in “set designs, colour palettes and representations of othered worlds” (192). Charlie’s life, city and house are depicted in a reduced palette of shades of grey and blue conveying a feeling of sadness and oppression.

The aerial shot of the town (fig.45) with its dark symmetrical houses covered with snow reflects the rigidity and coldness of the time, that is typical of German Expressionism style. Peter Kunze explains that German Expressionism is characterized by “cold and sterile environments”



Figure 45

(Kunze 201). Additionally, German expressionist films use: “stylized sets, exaggerated acting, distortions of space, heavy use of shadows, irregular compositions that emphasize oblique lines, as well as specifically filmic techniques like low-key lighting, Dutch angles, and composition in depth” (*Ibid*). Most of those elements are combined in Burton’s rendition of Charlie’s house.



Figure 46

As easily seen in the picture (fig. 46), the house is angular and lopsided. The use of different lines with the straight and vertical chimneys of the factory in the background, the horizontal buildings in the middle, the vertical sticks surrounding the Buckets' house reinforce the particularity of the house, making it stand out from the rest of society.



Figure 47

The irregularity and curved lines are also present inside the house and reinforced by the Dutch angle shot (fig. 47) that heightens the feeling of disorientation and uneasiness. B. Malherio explains in her article "The Victorian child and the Working-Class Family" that during Victorian times, working families had

"small and run down, unsanitary row houses with minimal furniture" (Malherio). Charlie's house is indeed small and very cramped since everything is packed in one room, i.e. the kitchen, the living room, the bed room with the big bed where the four grandparents live. Charlie sleeps upstairs in a dark and cold bedroom in which the wind howls through holes in the roof. The Buckets live in squalid conditions and have the strict minimum rations of food to stay alive. "Most families had little money, so potatoes, bread, cheese and tea were the mainstays of the diet" continues Malherio. The Buckets' dinner is reduced to cabbage soup for everyone. Burton wanted to portray the family realistically thus he chose actors that he seemed would suit most genuinely the characters. "It's about having those textual things. In simple terms, Charlie's family- they don't eat a lot so make the family look under-nourished, make Charlie thin, not one blond-haired rosy-cheeked guy who looks like he's just had a nice lunch. His grandparents- they're old, so make them look old, like they can't get out of bed", he explained in an interview (Salisbury 2006: 226). This attention to the 'real' is also found in their work. In order to make a small living, "the children would as soon as they got older engage in paid employment" (*Ibid*). This is visible at nearly the end of the movie when Charlie appears as a shoeshine boy [1:37:36] connoting "working class images of children in London, pre-anti-child labour movement and

reform” (Schober 74). To crown it all, the father has just gotten fired from his toothpaste industry leaving the family without a breadwinner. As Sarah Downes correctly observes:

The dullness of the scene helps to convey Charlie’s impoverished existence, but it also presents a similarly impoverished version of childhood that is visually contrasted to the bright, primary colours and possession-laden lives of the other children in the film. Childhood for Charlie is a state of lacking: color, contrast, money and material possessions. It is a time of known strife, identifiable need and negative emotional certainty. (174)



Figure 48

Yet, there is still a certain warmth felt in the house (fig.48). The very low ceiling and the low-key lighting might have given an impression of oppression, but paradoxically, it actually gives the scene a feel of intimacy and a focus on humanity. It is this faith in humanity and more particularly in the power of the family that will drive Charlie to become Wonka’s saviour. What might be then understood is that the family’s difficult start in life allowed them to value what is most important: humanity over material possessions, and this is a message promoted by many classic fairy tales (i.e. *Cinderella* (Geronimi et al., 1950)). Even if they barely have enough to survive, they always manage to see the bright side of things and enjoy life because they are together.

3. CHARLIE: A FAIRY TALE BEYOND TRADITIONS

3.1 Willy Wonka: The Peripheral Burtonian Hero Defying the Fairy Tale Set Categories

a. Wonka: A Product Between Fiction and Reality: Dahl and Burton

In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, the traditional fairy tale didactic value is clearly presented in its capacity to portray goodness and evil in a simple way. The children who behave badly receive the punishment they deserve, and accordingly, the good hero is rewarded for his undeniable virtue. This simple dichotomy is somewhat being challenged with Willy Wonka's character. Indeed, it appears that Wonka defies the defined categories of fairy tales. He encompasses goodness and evilness, teaches children how to behave properly but behaves himself in an indecent way. He is the responsible successful adult and the childish teenager. It seems then that *Charlie* might, to a certain extent, be more than a traditional fairy tale that functions according to well defined rules.

In his interpretation of Willy Wonka, Tim Burton challenges the viewers' expectations about fairy tales. Even if Wonka's difficult childhood might remind one of the unhappy childhood experiences of many heroes in classic fairy tales such as Hansel and Gretel's or Little Thumb's poor backgrounds and abandonments, Wonka's childhood is actually what is going to turn him into a liminal character and consequently a protagonist that defy the fairy tale expectations. Indeed, Tim Burton puts at the forefront the anti-categorisation, the liminality found in the character. Willy Wonka epitomises the Burtonian hero, the secluded outcast that tries to integrate but cannot. He is the good child who had to go through a rough start in life and consequently became a one-of-a-kind child-adult. Willy Wonka is the embodiment of "in betweenness". Following that idea, it is relevant to remember that Wonka's character is in itself a product of liminality since it is both a character coming from Roald Dahl's invention, i.e. coming from the realm of fiction, and a character very close to reality since it is directly inspired from Tim Burton's personal life.

In *The Tim Burton Encyclopedia*, Samuel J. Umland argues:

[Tim Burton] connects with audiences by combining a unique audio-visual language with intimate characters designed entirely by him and, like him, that

represent a charismatic blend of light and dark, wit and pathos, strength and vulnerability. As fantastic and whimsical as Tim Burton's movies feel, the characters are always grounded in real emotions shared by real people, especially those of heightened sensibility. (vii)

i. The Terrible Father Figure

Someone aware of Burton's life and films would most likely see in Willy Wonka's character and backstory similitudes with Burton's life experience. Through Willy Wonka, Burton exposes what a traumatic childhood is and what impact it can have on the adult to be. It would thus be interesting to see how Tim Burton's dark childhood experience, helps to understand Willy Wonka's liminal personality which goes against fairy tale's expectations.

Burton's recurrent focus on the figure of the flawed father in *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), *Big Fish* (2003) and *Charlie* is very telling of his personal experience. Tim Burton repeatedly acknowledges that he felt estranged from his parents specifically his father when he was a child. In an interview with *Playboy magazine* he confessed: "I made some little attempts to communicate with him and have some kind of resolution. His death wasn't a huge sense of loss, because I have been grieving the absence of a relationship with him my whole life" (qtd. in Schober 76). Interestingly, Tim Burton chose to add a sub plot to Roald Dahl's original *Charlie* focusing on the father-child relationship. Through the use of flashbacks, he gave viewers a glimpse into Wonka's terrible childhood. He introduced Wonka's father as being the main reason for Wonka's unhappiness. Portrayed as overtly strict, Wonka's father used educational methods that "bordered on torture" explains Susan Rowland (94).

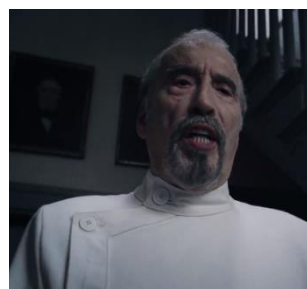


Figure 49



Figure 50

He made Willy Wonka wear "a horrible metal frame on his face" (*Ibid*) that seems to imprison him, and he forbade him from eating what children love most, chocolate and candies. His power over his son is translated on screen with the use of low angle shots when he warns Willy Wonka not to leave the house (fig.49/50). The shot reverse shot between Willy and his

dad installs a power dynamic. The repetitive switch between high angle shot to portray Willy Wonka and low angle shot to portray the dad accentuates the 'looking down upon' relationship existing between the two protagonists. Hence, tense confrontation seems to be the predominant aspect defining Wonka's childhood.

ii. Childhood: Stage of Tension and Fear

Childhood does not appear to be a stage of innocence and fun. On the contrary, it is predominantly marked by tension and fear. When talking about Roald Dahl's works, famous contemporary children's author Andy Griffiths stresses Dahl's depiction of childhood as a difficult stage of life. For him: "[Roald Dahl] evokes the feeling of childhood, where adults are big and scary and often gigantic. You feel small and the world is scary, and he touches those fears and lets us know what they are, and we see the characters dealing with it". Tim Burton's dark childhood is characterized by the director himself as a "private hell" (Timberg). As a child Burton did not have a fusional relationship with his family, he recalls spending most of his time alone in his closed room. Indeed, he had difficulty understanding why his parents had blocked up the windows of his bedroom, leaving only high slits for the light to shine through (Page 9). His loneliness and feeling of alienation were heightened by the suburban life he had to experience every day.

I grew up in suburbia and I still don't understand certain aspects of it. There is a certain kind of vagueness, a blankness. [...] Growing up in suburbia was like growing up in a place where there is no sense of history, no sense of culture, no sense of passion for anything. There was no showing of emotions. [...] You never felt that there was any attachment to things. So you were either forced to conform and cut out a large part of your personality, or to develop a very strong interior life which made you feel separate (Salisbury, 1997: 91).

This hatred for the suburbs is especially presented in *Edward Scissorhands* in which the inhabitants are all shallow and gossipy. They look exactly the same, wear the same clothes, have the same haircut. They live in the same type of houses, have the same conventional gardens. There is no outstanding personality, on the contrary the more you blend in, the better. That is why Edward, being a one-of-a-kind, is alienated from society. Similarly, Willy Wonka's unconventional job, appearance and behaviour seclude him from the overtly rigid and strict Victorian society as will be explained further on.

To understand better who Willy Wonka has become as an adult, one needs to return to his origins. In other words, Wonka's dark childhood. Indeed, in one of his interviews, Tim Burton declares that "we're all product[s] of our parents in some way, shape or form, your parents and social upbringing, everything helps create [yourself]" (Salisbury 2006 228). Willy Wonka's personality is the result of his dark childhood, mainly dominated by fear, loneliness and alienation. His childhood might in certain ways encompass some ingredients of the classic fairy tale genre (the evil parent who imposes his/her authority (*Donkey Skin* 1695), the physically ugly hero who is left aside by his friends (*The Ugly Duckling* 1843), the parent who abandons his/her child (*Hansel and Gretel* 1812). The first flashback [54:48 – 56:39] is very telling to illustrate everything mentioned above. This glimpse into Wonka's past allows the viewer to see his childhood as a state of alienation, loneliness, anxiety and constant tension.



Figure 51

When we see Willy Wonka for the first time he is part of a group (fig.51). Dressed up like the other kids for Halloween, he seems to have friends and belong to the group. Nonetheless, it is relevant to notice that he is the smallest one and the last one in the queue which puts him already aside.

Additionally, he is dressed up as a ghost. This specific costume is not insignificant. Could it be a metaphor for his place within the group and his family? Is he transparent and does not have any identity? Indeed, Adrian Schober argues that Willy Wonka appears "as a 'ghost' of himself, covered in a white sheet on Halloween" (79). The boy is struggling to find his identity. He is alone, vulnerable and trapped in an unhappy childhood. This idea can be presented through this still from the movie (fig.52).



Figure 52

Willy Wonka just came back from his trick or treat hunt and is passively observing his dentist dad inspecting the candies he brought back. The establishing shot inside Wonka's house sets the tone for the whole scene. From the minimalist living room decoration, one can infer about the dad's strict taste. Indeed, it is said that "in the late nineteenth century, [...] a living room [was seen as] the reflection of one[s] personality" (Sura). Living rooms are normally made for people to relax, socialize and entertain guests (Alexander 19). The fireplace generally gives a warm, cosy and soothing feeling to the room. However, here, the living room does not seem to be very welcoming. The room is almost empty, the colours are very fade and the symmetry found in the chairs, the two windows, the lights, the frames on the walls remind us of a strict and cold Victorian style. The fireplace does not bring any cosiness to the room, on the contrary, the four sources of light create contrasts in the room, preventing it from being



Figure 53

completely plunged into darkness. The low-key lightning forms shadows in the room and consequently installs a threatening atmosphere.

The obvious darkness and coldness present in the room is reinforced with the position of the two protagonists (fig.53). In cinema, a social blocking describes "the arrangement of characters to accentuate relations between them" (Corrigan & White 56). Here, we get an idea of the protagonists' power relationships. The two characters are confronting each other, sitting face to face. Willy Wonka appears more vulnerable than his dad. First, he is slouched in an oversized armchair placed in the corner of the room, showing a weak attitude compared to his father who is sitting straight in a larger chair, showing order and authority. Secondly, Wonka's costume captivates the viewer's gaze with its white colour making it very visible in the dark surrounding, and paradoxically, pointing out to the invisibility of Wonka in the power relationship. Willy Wonka is like a ghost, he is unnoticed, his wishes are not taken into consideration as suggested below, when he tells his father he would like to try a piece of chocolate [56:18-56:24]. "Maybe I'm not allergic. I could try a piece" says Wonka. Dr. Wilbur Wonka replies: "Really? But why take a chance?".

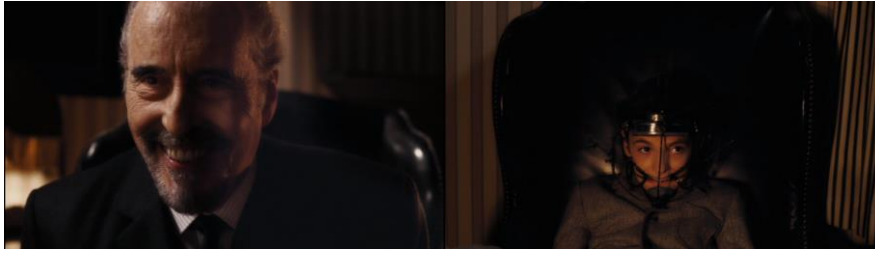


Figure 54

Figure 55

The bright smile and wild eyes (fig. 54) of the father when he replies to Willy and his deliberate punishment throwing all the candies into the fire in front of his child seem to be no more than pure sadism. Willy is powerless (fig.55), trapped in his braces and visually standing behind bars as the wall paper stripes could suggest. He stares transfixed by the colourful flames as they melt the source of his desire. Adrian Schober correctly observes that this scene: “highlights the power imbalance between the seen–and not heard– child and the law of the almighty father” (80). Wonka’s dad denied the pleasures of childhood to his son and consequently Wonka made of his life a constant childhood experience.

iii. Escape Found in Creativity and Art

In order to overcome the fears of childhood, both Tim Burton and Willy Wonka used creativity and art. Tim Burton found his escape from the dull reality of his suburbs into fantastic world movies. Making movies is for him a form of therapy. Ian Nathan observes that it is: “a way of working through the issues of his youth” (4). When making *Big Fish*, Burton confessed that “it was an amazing catharsis to do this film” because it allowed him “to work through those feelings without having to talk to a therapist about it. For [him], this kind of stuff is always quite uncomfortable and sappy and hard to put words to. That’s what [he] liked about the script, it kind of put images to the things that [he] couldn’t say” (Salisbury 2000: 204). Making movies was a “release” (Sullivan 50) and a way of expression. Communication was not very easy for Burton as a kid. He kept making this dream about a ‘tough, purple, rubberish sea lant’ that was growing in his mouth preventing him from speaking. With cinema, Burton found his own way of communicating. Page argues that Burton’s principal way of communicating is through imagery, which is often symbolic (15). In Burton’s words: “in animation you could communicate through drawings and I was perfectly happy to communicate in that way and not in any other way’ (Fraga 53). Even if Burton primarily shoots his movies for himself (Page 17), he deals with universal topics and feelings that touch everyone. As his ex-wife Helena Bonham

Carter mentioned: “Everyone seems grateful to him, particularly young people. He understands everyone’s separateness and isolation, that feeling that you don’t fit in or that you’re different” (qtd. in Nathan 4).

Just like many of Burton’s marginal heroes (Edward Scissorhands, Vincent etc.), Willy Wonka finds his solace in artistic fantasies. Considering that childhood is a very difficult period for children, the psychologist Bruno Bettelheim encourages the use of fantasy as a means to cope with dark fears (qtd. in Sullivan 53). It is always the difficult start in life that leads the character to develop his/her creative talents. Might it be film making for Vincent, cutting trees and hairs for Edward, creating a unique candy factory for Willy. As Jenny He rightfully mentions:

Creativity is the saving grace of Tim Burton’s heroes, whether they appear on paper as many-limbed, multitasking monsters, or on screen as woebegone humans sculpting shrub and ice, inventing tall tales, directing exploitation films, slitting throats, or surviving Wonderland. Their example of imaginative activity, as a response to conditions of disconnection and isolation, is the overarching message of Burton’s work. (14)

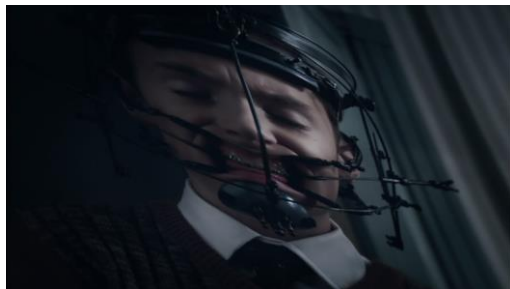


Figure 56

The second flashback [1:07:26 -1:08:25] shows how Willy Wonka’s reality is turned upside down once he discovers the taste of chocolate. As soon as he accesses the world of fantasy that is candy-making, his feelings of powerlessness, boredom, unhappiness are replaced by excitement, pleasure and freedom. After staring intensely at the

remaining shiny chocolate inside the fireplace, Willy Wonka eats it. The intense pleasure he feels is translated on screen with the music in crescendo and the distorted image of Wonka’s face (fig.56) that “seems to hint as his later fate” (Schober 80), in other words a chocolate-maker.

The abrupt transition leads us outdoors, where Wonka sitting alone in the street tastes different types of chocolate and writes his comments on his notebook. The rapid changes of shots from close-up [1:08:05], to medium shot (fig.57) [1:08:02], to extreme close-up (fig.58) [1:08:09], to dolly zoom [1:08:19 -25] and angles from POV shots [1:07:34] to over the

shoulder shot (fig.59) [1:07:38] high angle shot [1:07:35] gives dynamism to the scene and expresses the feeling of excitement experienced by Wonka.



Figure 57



Figure 58



Figure 59

The candies bring life to Wonka's deadly routine. They always stand out from the dark and ordinary background. The multitude of colours, the different shapes and texture represented on screen convey a world of possibilities. Willy Wonka seems to be overwhelmed by this new world of fantasy. The focus is put on the sugar rather than on the boy who appears behind the candies (fig.60) or behind the window shop (fig.61). Willy Wonka is experiencing his first moment of intense happiness and freedom away from the constraints of his life. He is high on sugar and absorbs everything he observes.



Figure 60



Figure 61

b. Willy Wonka's Traumatic Education Turned Him into a Liminal Character

In addition to being both a character of fiction and one that is very much inspired from Burton's real life, Willy Wonka retains in himself a duality that is uncommon in the fairy tale genre in which characters are either good or bad. Wonka's duality seems to be explained by his traumatic childhood. Indeed, it appears that a child experiencing a traumatic childhood will bear the marks of it as an adult. The National Institute of Mental Health defines childhood trauma as: "The experience of an event [such as emotional abuse or neglect, physical abuse or neglect and separation from a parent] by a child that is emotionally painful or distressful, which often results in lasting mental and physical effects" (qtd. in ICTC). This can be seen with the character

of Willy Wonka who, as shown above, was far from living a happy childhood. As Tim Burton states in an interview with *The Independent*: “I think if you've ever had that feeling of loneliness, of being an outsider, it never quite leaves you. You can be happy or successful or whatever, but that thing still stays within you” (Pringle). His words can be directly applied to Willy Wonka’s case, even if he broke free from his dominant father and found peace and fame in his candy-making factory he is still not fully happy. His past made him who he has become, shaping his unusual hybrid personality far from the definite characterisations of the fairy tale characters.

i. Spatial Isolation

According to psychiatrist Grant Hilary Brenner: “people with negative developmental experiences may opt to avoid closeness and isolate themselves”. Loneliness and alienation are still part of Willy Wonka and of the life he is living as an adult. This is very clearly shown in the choice of home he has picked. Wonka is shown to be a liminal character spatially speaking. Willy Wonka does not live in the centre of the city, but on the peripheries. The factory seems to be apart from society, behind railings. It is overshadowing the industrial town with its



Figure 62

imposing size and obscure exterior. Willy Wonka lives in a gothic mansion with the smoke stacks replacing the spires (fig.62). The black colour of the factory is reinforced by the white snowy sky which gives the building an even more rigid and scary look.

The dark colours of the factory are symbolic of Wonka’s isolation. As Orsolya Karacsony explains, “Burton tends to use the same or at least similar colours for the representation of those topics that often recur in his work, such as childhood traumas, loneliness, and what it is like to be an outsider. Black is usually associated with isolation and loneliness” (29). Wonka has no contact with the outside world even if he is known worldwide. His factory is out of life and dehumanized, since no one has ever seen any visitors or workers inside. This lack of life leads Antoine De Baecque in his essay “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory: A river of chocolate” to compare the factory to a concentration camp. In his words: “Reified, orderly, rigidly mechanized and dehumanized, Wonka’s world is like a concentration camp: chocolate is manufactured there under a system of ‘mechanical reproduction’, a gourmand’s nightmarish vision” (172).

ii. Physical Alienation



Figure 63

Willy Wonka's isolated living place is not the only element that makes him a quirky character. Indeed, the chocolate maker's appearance alienates him even further (fig.63). His peculiar style makes him stand out from the crowd, isolating him from the norm. Wonka seems to be the product of another time. Antoine De Baecque declares that: "With his pageboy bob and neat fringe, a pair of spectacles with purple-tinted lenses, and the pale complexion of someone who spends all his time indoors, Willy Wonka seems both totally anachronistic and the perfect Burtonian hero" (175). Adrian Schober seconds that point, seeing in Wonka the "Victorian dandy, a la Oscar Wilde" (81). His very pale complexion compared to the other characters reinforces his difference. Orsolya Karacsony points out to Burton's heroes' paleness that he

interprets as "an artistic anemia that suggests long hours, spent in [their] study or other places of isolation far from the rest of civilization" (31). One might think about Edward Scissorhands who, alone in his castle, spends his time cutting trees or wandering in the dark empty rooms of the castle. Or one might also remember Ichabod Crane, who stays most of the time indoors with his scientific machines trying to solve enigmas. After having officially laid off his workers and closed his factory to the public for good, Willy Wonka never appeared in public again. His life was spent between the walls of his factory, in his own unique world. This can explain his particular personality and style that only works in his separated world.

iii. Behavioural Alienation

Willy Wonka is a liminal character in space, in physical appearance but also in behaviour. In order to understand better how the chocolate maker acts in a specific – out of the norm – way, one should take into account the major influence played by the father figure again. Many of Burton's heroes do not have a mother (Sweeney Todd, Edward Scissorhands). Indeed, some lost their mother at a very early age (Ichabod Crane) and when they do have a mother,

she does not play a major part in their lives (Charlie, William Bloom). One might think about Edward Scissorhands who is the product of his father's scientific invention only. Ichabod Crane in *Sleepy Hollow* sees his witch mother being killed by his religious dad or Batman, the Penguin and Wonka who never get to meet their mother. The main creator is then the father figure as it is often the case in fairy tales (Ariel, Cinderella, Pocahontas have single fathers). As Susan Rowland argues: "The basis of childhood, the nourishing, comforting female element, is removed from Burton's fairy tales. The boys are born into a cruel and cold world to a male parent who, for various reasons, fails to provide adequate care for them" (89). They all end up being a deception for their kids who have to face their fate most of the time alone.

The heroes thus find their freedom by opposing themselves to their father as it could have been found in *The Little Mermaid* (Musker et al., 1989) or *Donkey Skin* (1695). Yet, it is surprising to see how their past demons are actually constantly present in what they undertake. In *Big Fish* William Bloom cannot bear listening to his father's imaginative life story and becomes a journalist. His profession is both an acceptance and negation of his dad's love for storytelling. Edward believes in imagination compared to his son who collects authentic facts. In *Sleepy Hollow*, Ichabod Crane follows his father's step by fighting against superstitions, he only cares for facts and science. However, being a scientist, he leaves behind his dad's medieval techniques of torture and chooses exact scientific knowledge instead. Willy Wonka's decision to become a chocolate maker can be interpreted as a reaction against his father's job who is a dentist. Despite his will to be different from his father, a connection still remains. It is visually depicted by the similar low angle shots used to get a sense of their power over children (fig.64/65.), their similar way of dressing up (fig.66), the close-ups on their faces showing a bright sadistic smile as they answer questions (fig.67/68).

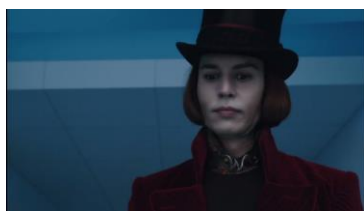


Figure 64



Figure 65



Figure 66

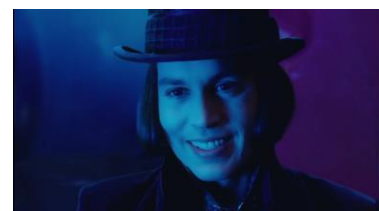


Figure 67

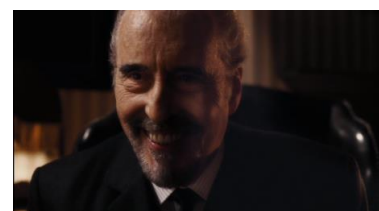


Figure 68

In her book *The Monster and the Crowd*, Helena Bassil-Morozow analyses the importance of the hands. According to her, “Hands stand for whole vulnerable personalities and represent broken hearts” (134). They are: “means of physical and emotional contact. Within the radius of the hands: personality metonymy, gloves covering hands equal a mask hiding a face” (*Ibid*). Both Wonka and his dad are wearing gloves as a way to hide their vulnerabilities from each other. They are hiding their true selves from each other.

Indeed, one could say that Wonka’s lack of love and attention from his dad as a child leads him to behave artificially. Andrea Brandt, a childhood emotional trauma therapist explains that the way in which her patients’ childhood emotional wounds, carried with them into adulthood, is revealed through “the creation of a false self”. Unable to act normally around members of society, Wonka takes on another identity. He becomes the eccentric host in order to build an emotional distance between him and his surroundings. In his essay “Willy Wonka as a Contemporary Dandy”, Radoslaw Osinski explains that the factory has become the stage, the visitors, the audience, the musical numbers, the performance. Willy Wonka is acting theatrically as the only way for him to “overcome the trauma of his childhood when he suffered the lack of warm, caring feelings on the part of his father, who raised him” (178). This detached attitude is also present in his inability to connect with people around him. Wonka’s trauma as a child prevents him from communicating properly. He is unable to pronounce the word “parent” and has to read from his flashcards each time he needs to present something as it is illustrated in the introductory scene. He also requires his flashcards each time he has to answer difficult questions as seen in the inventing room when Mr Salt asks him what the point of his 3-course chewing gum meal is.

There are some instances during the factory tour in which one can see Willy Wonka trying to socialize and integrate himself. Unfortunately, it always ends up being a failure. For instance, the scene of the puppet show; Wonka’s first appearance shows him as being part of the group of visitors. Just like them he is witnessing the show instead of being, as one might have expected, on the throne. However, as soon as he starts talking to them, a distance installs itself between him and the visitors. Despite his will to be funny as his introductory sentence might suggest: “Good morning starshines, the earth says hello” [35:26] no one seems to really get him. The weird glance they exchange and they give Wonka, renders their uneasiness and the negative impression they have of the chocolate-maker.

Wonka is repeatedly depicted trying to make jokes or talk in a teenage-like manner to connect with his visitors, but here again, he provokes no reaction but uneasiness. This is for

example illustrated in the dialogue he has with Mike over his hair toffee invention. When Mike asks him who would ever be interested in growing hair. Wonka first answers accurately, but still with a hint of humour saying: “Well, beatnicks for one; folk singers and motorbike riders” [1:00:22]. But then he gets carried away and tries to speak like a youngster, using an informal way of talking and expecting Mike to give him a high five: “You know, all those hip, jazzy, super-cool, neat, keen, and groovy cats. It’s in the fridge dady o. Are you hep to the jive? Can you dig what I’m layin’ down? I knew that you could. Slide me some skin soul brother” [1:00:23-33]. As probably expected, Mike does not do anything, staring at Wonka with indifference. The camera shooting the scene from behind the characters (fig.69), helps expressing the tension between the group of visitors and Willy Wonka. Indeed, Mike, his dad, Charlie and his grandfather and indirectly the viewer, form half a circle, a protective barrier, as they all stand close to one another facing Wonka.



Figure 69

This latter is alone standing in front of them. Here again, Wonka is not part of the group despite his attempt at approaching it as he leans forward to high five Mike. Seeing the reaction of his visitors Wonka finds best to recreate the distance between them, making a step back.

As explained so far, Willy Wonka defies the typical fairy tale protagonist definition being here mostly characterised by “in-betweenness”. He is always standing in the ‘no man’s land’. He is spatially removed from society, he is physically different from the norm, he does not behave truthfully but takes on identities. He tries to communicate, socialize but nothing seems to be working. Adding to all this above, Willy Wonka is also stuck in time. He is stuck between childhood and adulthood. This phenomenon is, as already mentioned in the first part, very common in Tim Burton’s films. Edward being one of the most striking example, trapped in an adult body but with the mentality of a child.

iv. Stuck in Time: Child or Adult?

Interestingly enough, one of the plausible reasons that can explain this tendency to remain a child is again traumatic childhood. Freud labels this phenomenon “regression”. It is defined as “a defense mechanism for coping with stress; where one reverts to earlier, more childlike patterns of behavior to cope” (Sisgold). Having very likely had to cope with a stressful father and a devastating abandonment Willy Wonka shows signs of immaturity and

childishness. He is the embodiment of a childlike adult that goes against the expected knowledgeable adults found in classic fairy tales. He only does what he likes and rejects everything he does not want to do. Like the perfect teenager, Wonka “shuns his family and retreats into a world of his own creation” (Eldelstein 180). As explicitly shown in dialogues he has with Charlie, Wonka does not see the point of having a family. Family is an obstacle to creation and success. In his own words: “A chocolatier has to run free and solo. He has to follow his dreams, gosh darn the consequences. Look at me, I had no family, and I’m a giant success” [1:34:18]. Just like a teenager going through an existential crisis, Wonka hates when people tell him how to behave. As he tells Charlie: “You know, they [parents]’re always telling you what to do, what not to do, and it’s not conducive to a creative atmosphere!” [1:38:16]. This very basic way of thinking reveals Wonka’s immaturity and reinforces his childishness and thus his incompatibility with the fairy tale genre.

If one takes some time to think about Willy Wonka’s job, it looks like the profession every kid would die for. A life that is the combination of fun, candies and freedom. Eating sweets all day, having no authority figure around and thus being one’s own master seems to be the dreamy kind of life. Wonka managed to make his dreams come true and he is now able to live his fantasies. A world without responsibilities, where he can just do as he wishes. Just like a child, “Willy takes time to play and indulge in things simply because they are pleasing” (Pullman 109). Consequently, one of the reasons that could explain why Willy Wonka has retained the characteristics of a child might be because he is still living in childhood. A period of time during which a child can let his imagination grow wild and believe that anything is possible. A time during which one’s conscience is free of responsibility, and life is all about fun and pleasure. This is exactly what Wonka’s marvellous factory offers. The flashy colours of the rooms and the various patterns and shapes (dots, stripes, curves), typical of Burton, also give to the factory a child-like feeling (fig.70).



Figure 70

This colourful and magical factory does not fail to remind its children viewers of their most likely favourite place in the world: Walt Disney. Interestingly enough, Wonka's factory has sometimes been seen as a Walt Disneyesque world. This does not come as a surprise if one considers that Tim Burton has spent some time collaborating with Walt Disney studios in his early years. In her essay, "Navigating the Risks of Re-Adaptation: Burton's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory After Dahl and Stuart", Pamela Krayenbuhl points out to the resemblance that exists between Wonka's boat ride and the attractions in Walt Disney (fig. 71/72). She says:

Charlie's sometimes calm, sometimes turbulent boat ride through expansive spaces, including its emphasis on the jostling of the boat's passengers, is reminiscent of several of the popular immersive world-building roller coaster rides at Disneyland: "Indiana Jones Adventure", "Pirates of the Caribbean", "Space Mountain", and "Splash Mountain." (155)



Figure 71



Figure 72

Similarly, the puppet show is an obvious hint at Walt Disney's famous attraction: "It's a Small World" (fig.73/74) with its very colourful setting and its smiley puppets singing in unison a joyful song.



Figure 73



Figure 74

However, just like the gloomy side of the original fairy tales, the haunted houses in Walt Disney, Willy Wonka's fantasy world has some dark edges. After all, childhood is far from being a time of pleasure only. Childhood can be seen as a dark period of time for the child who

has to deal with fears of separation, death, violence, growing bodies amongst others (Matthews 17). It is also during childhood that the child gradually takes into account that he is powerless over these “big giants” (i.e. parents), as Roald Dahl commonly calls them, who rule their lives. Wonka’s version of childhood embraces this duality. It is all fun and pleasure until one transgresses the rules and have to face the consequences of their actions. Children’s fears are explicitly portrayed on screen thus allowing them to cope with their anxieties. Violet Beauregarde is metamorphosed into a blueberry. Even if the scene looks scary, as it was previously explained, the fact that Violet leaves the factory deeply happy because she has gained significant flexibility, after being squeezed, might allow the child viewer to accept his physical change as a good phenomenon.

In this child-like world lives Willy Wonka, whose behaviour reveals his dual child-adult personality. This is made especially clear in Roald Dahl’s original text especially with the passage below in which Wonka meets for the first time his visitors at the gate of his factory:

He had a black top hat on his head. He wore a tail coat made of a beautiful plum-colored velvet. His trousers were bottle green. His gloves were pearly gray. And in one hand he carried a fine gold-topped walking cane. Covering his chin, there was a small neat pointed black beard—a goatee. And his eyes—his eyes were most *marvellously bright*. They seemed to be *sparkling and twinkling* at you all the time. The whole face, in fact, was alight *with fun and laughter*. And, oh how clever he looked! How quick and sharp and *full of life*! He kept making quick *jerky little movements* with his head, cocking it this way and that, and taking everything in with those *bright twinkling eyes*. He was like a squirrel in the quickness of his movements, like a *quick clever old squirrel* from the park. Suddenly, he did *a funny little skipping dance* in the snow, and he spread his arms wide, and he smiled at the five children who were clustered near the gates, and he called out, “Welcome, my little friends! Welcome to the factory! “His voice was *high and flutey*. “Will you come forward one at a time, please,” he called out, “and bring your parents. Then show me your Golden Ticket and give me your name. Who’s first?” (Dahl 70 (*my emphasis*))

From this extract, one could infer that Wonka has both adult and child characteristics. From the one hand, his outfit is rather distinguished. It is normally expected of a gentleman to be wearing a black top hat, gloves and walking with a cane. Moreover, he shows good manners

welcoming his guests, talking in a formal manner. On the other hand, his over-excitement translates a child-like behaviour as though he was not able to keep his emotions in check. Adults are normally expected to show self-control. Here, Wonka is overwhelmed by emotion. His excitement is visible through his eyes that are described as “marvellously bright”, “sparkling and twinkling”, ‘bright twinkling’. This focus on the “brilliance” of his gaze expresses Wonka’s vivacity and liveliness, that is normally ascribed to small witty children full of life and energy. Moreover, his gestures also translate a youthful behaviour. Just like a child who shows impatience to do something, Wonka is not able to stay still making “quick jerky little movements” and a “funny little skipping dance”. The “quick clever old squirrel”, to describe him seems to be the most accurate description to indicate his duality. Wonka is both “quick and clever” suggesting a youthful energy, and he is an “old squirrel” that could point out to his wisdom acquired from experience. Nonetheless it is relevant to stress that it is originally Willy Wonka who teaches the children to repress their emotions inside the factory and in this passage, it is made clear that he is unable to apply this rule to himself. Here again, he does not belong to any defined categories.

This idea that the rules don’t seem to apply to him is taken further if one considers that most of the things he rejects in the unruly children’s behaviour is something he himself does, giving him a childish status. For instance, he is as rude as the other children when he openly says to their face that he does not want to know their names because he does not see any point in doing so [36:21]. He even says to Violet Beauregarde that he “doesn’t care” [36:58] to know who she is. To this, Violet answers that he should care because she is the one who is going to win the special prize. Here is another critical characteristic that Wonka has in common with the brats. He is presumptuous. If one pays close attention to the lyrics of his puppet welcoming song at the gate, Wonka himself does not seem to show more restraint than her.

Willy Wonka, Willy Wonka...
 The Amazing Chocolatier.
 Willy Wonka, Willy Wonka...
 Everybody gives a cheer!
He's modest, clever, and so smart,
He can barely restrain it.
 With so much generosity,
 There is no way to contain it...
 To contain...to contain...to contain...to contain.

Willy Wonka, Willy Wonka...
He's the one that you're about to meet.
Willy Wonka, Willy Wonka...
He's a genius who just can't be beat.
The magician and the chocolate wiz...
The best darn guy who ever lived.
Willy Wonka here he is!
(35:19-36:30 (*emphasis ours*))

Willy Wonka is presented as being naturally the greatest of all. Considering that it is Willy Wonka himself who made the song, it gives the viewer a clear impression of what he thinks of himself. Wonka has overinflated pride and is not afraid to show it. As he says in his lyrics, his genius is out of his control and it cannot be repressed. He sees himself as a genius but also a magician and a chocolate wiz(ard), he establishes himself from the very beginning as an extra-ordinary character who achieves things beyond human's attainment. Indeed, throughout the tour, his confident attitude and proud comments validate the description he gives of himself in the song. Wonka never misses an opportunity to remind his guests that he does things no other can do. For instance, he mixes his chocolate by waterfalls and as he tells his visitors twice over: "no other factory in the world" does it [40:13] with a proud smile on his face.

Authority, more precisely parents' lack of authority over their children is another feature Wonka despises, as it is humorously hinted at when Wonka takes on Mr Salt's voice to tell Veruca she cannot have a squirrel. But, paradoxically, Wonka is the first one who dislikes authority. He hates being told what to do. That is the first reason why he originally decided to leave his house and strict father behind. Each time he loses some authority, and thus credibility, as portrayed in his interactions with Mike who keeps on asking him specific witty questions, he cannot answer. Wonka shuts down any possible exchange pretending not to hear him. In that way, he does not leave Mike any chance to undermine his authority and at the same time implies that Mike does not have anything to say that is worth hearing.

Despite all these elements revealing that Wonka is far more a child than a respectful adult, Wonka refuses to see himself as a child-person. He rejects everything that might associate him with the child figure, showing disgust and fear each time he is being hugged by Veruca or Violet. He refuses to acknowledge he has ever been a child. In their essay "Reconstructing Lost

Childhood in Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*", Adrian Schober points out to Wonka's tendency at displaying "unusual childish behavior that suggests he is stuck in an earlier psychosexual stage" (79) and at the same time refusing to admit he has ever been a child. According to Freud, traumatized people use a range of defence mechanisms – repression, suppression, denial, regression and sublimation – to cope with their past trauma (*Ibid*). Indeed, Wonka tells Violet Beauregarde he was never "as short as [her]" [54:26]. When Charlie asks Willy if he remembers what it was like being a kid, the voice over narrator tells the viewer that "Willy Wonka hadn't thought about his childhood for years" [54:40]. This suggests that Willy Wonka tried to suppress his past by removing it from his memory. Nonetheless, these defence mechanisms do not work if one considers that he repeatedly has to confront his past through flashbacks, after being asked about it. Specific personal questions about his childhood and his first time eating a candy, words used such as "parents" [37:43] or expressions such as "Candy is a waste of time" [1:18:55], bring him back to his past. Just like a PTSD survivor, Wonka struggles in coping with flashbacks. Charlie is the one person who will bring Wonka to overcome his trauma, make him forgive his dad and help him move on from childhood to adulthood. Coming to terms with childhood and growing up are themes that are part and parcel of the fairy tale genre, however, here again, they are given a little twist since in Burton's fairy tale it is the child who helps Wonka the child like adult.

3.2 A Peculiar Family: Willy Wonka and Charlie

Fairy tales are mostly centered on the child's experience. It is no wonder that fairy tales have titles referring to their main character. For instance, *Little Red Riding Hood* (1697), *Hansel and Gretel* (1812), *Pinocchio* (1883). Every one of these tales already gives the reader a major clue about the main focus of the story. Similarly, Roald Dahl's book title *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* brings the attention towards Charlie as being the main protagonist. The story is indeed centered on Charlie and his experience in the chocolate factory. However, it seems like Charlie's passivity leads the reader/viewer to reconsider his original assumptions. Willy Wonka is made much more appealing than the expected hero. He is actually the one everyone is fascinated about. He is also the one people remember decades after the book's publication. Conveniently, Burton's version of *Charlie* gives Willy Wonka a major role since he adds to the original story a focus on Wonka's difficult childhood. One may declare then that Tim Burton plays with the fairy tale expectations, since he puts the hero, Charlie, in the background and

gives Willy Wonka all the attention. Willy Wonka becomes the main interest of the plot and the movie reveals itself to be no more about Charlie than it is about Wonka. Mel Stuart seems to have understood it beforehand replacing in his title *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, Charlie by Willy Wonka. After all, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* could be read as Charlie and Willy Wonka. The chocolate factory being a metonymy referring back to the owner. It seems then relevant to understand how both characters function as a pair, as it appears, they implicitly do from the title. Indeed, despite Willy Wonka being a liminal character who embodies “in betweenness” defying thus the fairy tale set categories, it appears that guided by Charlie, Willy Wonka is able to find some consistency again, being able to grow up through the finding of his home. This is of course, a key notion in fairy tale stories that is at the core of the analysis here.

a. Wonka: Need for a Substitute Family

As previously noted, it is rather unlikely to watch a movie made by Tim Burton that is not going to deal, at some point, with issues related to family, especially concerned with the father figure. Most of Burton’s heroes have been negatively affected by their father and they bear the marks of it. Willy Wonka is no exception. Paradoxically, having had to suffer from a dysfunctional family, Wonka both rejects home and aspire to find one, like the expected fairy tale hero would. Leaving his home behind, he finds in his new job a substitute family. More precisely, he finds in the Oompa Loompas his children. One has to bear in mind that, just like it was explained in the first section, Wonka defies categorisation. He is both good and bad, child and adult. It is then not so surprising that his treatment of the Oompa Loompas might also be marked by duality calling again into question his rightful place as a character of classic fairy tale. He can be interpreted as an exploiter or a loving father. The Marxist approach of *Charlie* believes Wonka, the rich owner, to exploit the under-class Oompa Loompas as he wishes. According to Lucy Mangan: “The factory is the distilled essence of capitalism, with bourgeois Wonka exploiting the powerless labourers” (201). Tim Burton seems to reinforce this idea through the depiction of his Oompa Loompas. He chooses Deep Roy as the only representative of the workers. Using CGI, Burton was able to shrink and multiply the actor into hundreds of identic 30-inch tall Oompa Loompas (MacEachern 17). The decision to make the workers all similar reinforces this idea of worthlessness. They are not individuals *per se* but a mass of individuals that don’t have any unique personality. They are anonymous workers that can be replaced easily.

This still from the movie (fig.75) makes a clear association between the situation of the Oompa Loompas and that of the galley slaves (fig.76). Just like them, they are sitting in rows, paddling together by the drummer's beat. They follow Wonka's orders and have no say in anything. Each time Wonka calls them to bring one of the parents to see their child, they come and follow the order. They are also here to serve Wonka's experiments as illustrated by the Oompa Loompa who tried the toffee hair invention and has had his hair grow till his feet.



Figure 75



Figure 76

On the other hand, Willy Wonka's relation to the Oompa Loompas could be interpreted differently. Indeed, the workers could easily be taken as Wonka's children. Their small size helps seeing them as allegorical children. Their different way of talking sounds very close to children's babbling [45:57]. The Oompa Loompa's primitive way of talking is only understood by Wonka, showing their special intimate father-son link. Besides working, the Oompa Loompas also love dancing and singing; activities that are mostly enjoyed by children. It is repeatedly shown that Wonka actually cares for his workers. Just like Snow White and her seven dwarves, Willy Wonka looks after his Oompa Loompas. He never forces them into servitude but offers them what they worship most in exchange of services. In a way, the Oompa Loompas are portrayed as worthier than the Americans. Wonka believes in their honesty contrary to that of his local community who betrayed him. Wonka cares for his workers and wants them to feel at home. As he tells Mike's father, he keeps his factory warm because he wants his workers to feel comfortable [36:41]. It is also interesting to see how the workers and Wonka have similar personalities, which could then reinforce their familial tie. They have a passion for chocolate in common. They both like isolation if one considers where Wonka found them i.e. in a jungle, alone. They have a dark edge to their personality since they seem to enjoy punishing the children and their parents one after the other. They retain a crazy side as well, caught laughing for no obvious reasons, just like Wonka [52:50/ 59:46].

The element that is most significant to prove that Wonka acts as a father to his Oompa Loompas is his decision to find an heir. This decision is partly motivated by his concern with the fate of his workers. He wants them to be well treated even after he is gone. As he tells the Buckets, during his semi-annual hair cut he had the strangest revelation: “In that one silver hair I saw reflected my life’s work, my factory, my beloved Oompa Loompas. Who would watch over them after I was gone?” [1:33:26]. Wonka does seem to really care for his workers and is then pushed by a sentimental need to protect his beloved children.

b. Willy Wonka is a Paradoxical Father Figure: Santa or Father Whipper?

To an extent, Wonka’s Oompa Loompas answer Wonka’s hidden need for belonging and family. This implicit need is also present through the work he has chosen to do. Indeed, keeping with characteristic themes of fairy tales, Wonka could rather easily be associated to the universal father figure that is Santa Claus. This latter is the embodiment of hopes and dreams. He is the figure the children love most. He spreads joy and love throughout the world. He rewards children for their good behaviours. There is always a realm of mystery hanging around him, because he comes at night when everyone is asleep. No one ever sees him. He is said to work with his elves, helping him to build the toys. And when Christmas night comes he takes his dear and fly to every child’s home to bring them presents.

Willy Wonka fits quite well this description with some alterations of course. First, the movie opens with snow falling down the sky and ends again with snow inside the factory, establishing from the start a Christmas like atmosphere. A feeling that is of course reinforced with the cheerful family dinner at the Buckets’ house, reminding the viewer of Christmas family dinners. There is an obvious part of mystery surrounding Willy Wonka. He is the genius chocolate maker everyone dreams to meet, but cannot (until, of course, the visit). He is then mostly talked about and his fabulous story is told to children as illustrated by Grandpa Joe’s story time to the whole family. Willy Wonka brings fantasy and hope in a dark society. Burton’s depiction of the town as very gloomy helps stressing the greatness of the factory. From the start, the aerial shot on the grey factory and the town brings its viewers into a dreary world. From the initial scenes, Burton shows an environment of degradation with myriad factories being the focus of the deprivation” (McCoppin 30). Moreover, as previously noted in his movies (*Corpse Bride* (2005), *The Nightmare before Christmas* (1993)) the director makes a “dialectical portrayal of two distinct universes” (Van Elferen 66). The very colourful factory heightens the dreariness of the London streets. In *Charlie*, the ordinary world is “photographed in bland

colours and populated by dull people”. On the contrary, the fantasy world is “full of colour, life, interesting characters, and music” (66). This dichotomy was very important for Burton because it allowed the viewer to have a much more intense experience when entering the fantasy world. According to him, “One thing that we wanted to do was contrast the exterior factory, the town, black and white colour scheme. You remember in *The Wizard of Oz* when it’s, like, black and white, and then you go into colour, it’s an amazing moment” (DVD2/’Designer Chocolate 5:01-5:13). The opposition was also reinforced by the difference in size. Alex McDowell, the producer designer of *Charlie* explains:

... the very first thing to do was to establish the polar opposites of the environment. One was the town, and one’s the factory. The factory looms over it, a little crumbling house, which is also a unique structure in the town. All the rest of the town in between the Bucket house and the factory is basically identical generic housing. (*Ibid*)

Interestingly, Danny Elfman’s music helps stressing the difference between both universes. Isabella Van Elferen notes that:

Danny Elfman’s soundtracks create musical dialectics that make Burton’s juxtapositions of Fantasy and reality audible. Most Burton’s films have only two main, musically contrasting nondiegetic themes. Often these themes are linked to the protagonist or the fantasy world, on the one hand, and their Big Bad Wolf or ordinary world, on the other hand. (66)

This can be indeed validated in *Charlie* with the music announcing the fantasy world (the opening theme: 00:19- 3:54/ 13:25-13:58) standing in contrast with that of the theme used when dealing with Wonka’s father, a symbol of Wonka’s dark past reality [54:40/1:07:29].

Thanks to this marked dichotomy, the factory stands out as the most amazing place anyone has ever seen. It has a magical fairy tale side to it, just like Santa Claus’s factory, hidden in the North Pole far from the eyes of the crowd. Wonka might not be making toys, but he still makes the thing children crave for, chocolate. He is also helped by his elves, the Oompa Loompas. Curiously, the workers fit very well the description and personality of Santa Claus’s helpers. In her *Encyclopédie du fantastique et de l’étrange*, Béatrice Bottet explains that: “According to a British legend, elves are ghosts of children who died before being baptized. They managed to acquire a body, but they keep during their whole life as elves a completely

immature mind. Their love for pranks, small games and inappropriate jokes seem to prove it” (my translation).²⁵

The Oompa Loompas are depicted as childish beings, they might be loyal to their father figure but take great pleasure punishing the other visitors. Their mischief is especially present in the novel, mostly laughing at the worried parents’ face. After Augustus Gloop falls into the river, Mr Wonka calls one of his helpers to lead Augustus’s parents into the Fudge Room where their son is sent to. Their first reaction is to: “explode into peals of laughter” (Dahl 92), finding the situation especially funny instead of showing sympathy. It happens again when the visitors are about to get into the pink boat: “Suddenly, for some reason best known to themselves, they all burst into shrieks of laughter” (*Idem* 97). As Wonka observes: “They’re always laughing! They think everything is a colossal joke!” (*Ibid*), it tells a lot about their immaturity and teasing side that is characteristics of the elf.



Figure 77

still manages to fly with his elevator to Charlie’s home and to grant him his dearest wish: being given the factory.

In *Pure Imagination*, Mel Stuart acknowledges his will to make of the workers “candy-making elves” (38). Indeed, his Oompa Loompas fit quite well the appearance of the elf (fig.77). It is common to picture Santa’s elves with redish hair and a green outfit. Here, the Oompa Loompas keep the two main colours but to fit their eccentricity, and Tim Burton’s quirky view, it is their hair that is green and their faces that are orange. Finally, Wonka might not have deer to fly to the children’s home, however he

Wonka being who he is, it is no longer surprising to think that he might not be as jolly a Santa Claus figure as expected and thus defy once more the set characteristics expected from a fairy tale character. Indeed, his dark side might lead one to reckon that he has as much of a Santa Claus as a Father Whipper. Le “Pere Fouettard” as famously called in French, is said to be the pendent of Santa Claus. If Santa brings presents to the good boys and girls, Father Whipper takes care of the naughty ones. He does not offer them presents but prefers punishing them for their misbehaviour. Willy Wonka suits this role perfectly. He offers Charlie his factory to honour his genuine good behaviour but does not hesitate to give the other impolite children

²⁵ « Selon une légende anglaise, les lutins sont des fantômes d’enfants morts avant le baptême. Ils ont fini par acquérir un corps, mais ils gardent pendant toute leur vie de lutin un esprit totalement immature. Leur attirance pour les farces, les petits jeux, les plaisanteries de mauvais gout tend à le prouver » (30).

the punishment they deserve. Willy Wonka is thus the fatherly figure the children lack. Considering that each of the parents does not provide a right model for his/her child to follow, it is Wonka who serves as the authority figure. Roald Dahl is known to have promoted through his books, a very different view on family and adults than other writers of his time. In *Language and Control in Children's Literature*, Murray Knowles and Kirsten Malmkjar assert that: "The submission of children to the domination of the family as a right and necessary system of control is very definitely not part of this writer's view of the world. Ready obedience is out; anarchy is in" (125).

Paradoxically, Charlie's obedience is what is going to grant him the factory. Nonetheless, anarchy is indeed represented in the parents, who, contrary to the expected parent figures from classic fairy tales impose their absolute power over their children. Here, parents defy their expected role of authority, encouraging their children's misbehaviour rather than punishing them for it. It is made very clear with Mr Beauregarde's comment when he pushes his daughter to chew the three-course dinner meal despite Wonka's warnings against it. In his words: "Keep chewing baby! Keep right on chewing! This is a great day for the Beauregardes!" (Dahl 113). Mrs Beauregarde puts her chance at success before the safety of her child and of course in Wonka's world it does not go unnoticed. Wonka tells beforehand which behaviour to adopt in order to avoid mischief. He tells the children to "be patient" (*Idem* 73), to stay calm: "do be careful, my dear children! Don't lose your heads! Don't get over-excited! Keep very calm!" (*Idem* 77). He always warns the children when they give in to temptation, but it is still possible to prevent their fate. He tells Augustus that "[His] chocolate must be untouched by human hands!" and that "[he] *must* come away." (*Idem* 87), he tells Violet that "[he] would rather [she] did not take it" since "[he hasn't] got it quite right yet." (*Idem* 112) and repeatedly asks her to "Stop!" and "spit it out" (*Idem* 113) because "it's not right!" (*Idem* 112). He warns Veruca against her will to take one of the squirrels (*Idem* 131) or Mike's will to be sent by television (*Idem* 153). However, not one of his directives are taken into consideration and consequently the children are all altered. These three steps: warning, transgression and consequence suit perfectly the cautionary tale format of the story. Indeed, in her article "What is a cautionary tale?", Mary McMahon explains that: "Most cautionary tales come in three sections. In the first part, a boundary or taboo is established, often in the form of advice from an older person to a younger person. In the second section, the taboo is violated, and in the third, the repercussions arrive". Wonka uses his workers as his spokesmen to voice the ultimate guilty ones. The Oompa Loompas become the voice of morality. June Pulliam interprets them

as a “Greek chorus” that “say things their master is too polite to say” (110). They use songs to get their messages across, clearly exposing the parents as one of the major reasons for their children’s downfall: “who turned her into such a brat? [...] they are (and this is very sad) her loving parents, MUM and DAD” (Dahl 138). The book and the movie seem to be addressed equally to children and parents who might learn from Wonka’s lessons a lot on proper education.

c. Wonka as Charlie’s Role Model, Mentor and Spiritual Father

Wonka is the spiritual father figure of all the children in the factory and that includes Charlie. Contrary to the other children, Wonka is not here to teach Charlie how to behave appropriately since Charlie already knows it. Nonetheless, he still has a major influence on the child that resembles that of a father to a son. In Dahl’s and Burton’s versions of *Charlie*, the hero does have a father. However, it is very early on, shown that this father figure is mostly passive and does not bring much to the movie, which is why Burton and his team thought about removing him from the plot.²⁶ It was not done for the sake of fidelity to the book. Mel Stuart’s *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971), on the other hand removed the father figure completely, making Charlie an orphan and in that way emphasizing even more his poor fate and encouraging sentimentality from the audience.

In Tim Burton’s version, Charlie might have a father, but he does not seem to be a great role model. Except bringing him toothpaste caps he is never portrayed doing anything significant for him. He is not even the one who takes Charlie to the factory. He does not give him any valuable lessons about life, contrary to his grandparents who teach him the importance of believing in one’s dreams (Grandma Georgina), that of not valuing money above anything else (Grandpa George). Curiously, in Dahl’s original text, both parents accompany their child to the visit; however, Charlie only goes with his grandfather. Despite the fact that Joe seems to be the best family member to bring Charlie, considering that he is the one who has told him about Wonka’s life, the hero appears like an orphan compared to the other children. William Todd Schultz argues in his essay “Finding Fate’s Father: Some Life History Influences on Roald Dahl’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” that Charlie is “parentless in a metaphoric sense” (468), consequently, “Wonka responds to Charlie differently, not only because he is the one good kid, but because he lacks (figuratively) a father, and because Wonka’s ‘real purpose [is]

²⁶ Have a look at Mark Salisbury’s book *Burton on Burton* (2006) to learn more about it (page 225).

to find an heir', or *son* (Treglown, 1994, p.151). Or as Wonka himself explains, 'I have to have a child' (175)" (*Idem* 465).

It is then Willy Wonka who serves to Charlie as a father figure. He is in many ways his role model. Having already worked on both of Wonka's and Charlie's childhoods in the previous parts, they arguably share some similarities with the classic fairy tale renditions of unhappy childhood. Wonka's childhood might not have been marked by material poverty as Charlie's, but it was still really gloomy and sad. Similarly, Charlie might have received love from his family, he had to go through difficult times, having no friends, barely anything to eat or drink. The closeness between both childhood experiences is heightened by the similar ways in which it is shot. One thing that stands out when having a look at both scenes is the importance of darkness and light. Both their houses are plunged into darkness with only few sources of light, mainly lamps and fire places which helps creating a sombre atmosphere. However, the lights serving a different purpose in each case. The chiaroscuro used to depict Wonka's flashbacks of his childhood highlights the tension of the scene, especially portraying the father as a threat (fig.78). The play on lights in Charlie's case brings about the humanity of the family, heightening the warmth of the place more than making it frightening (fig.79).



Figure 78

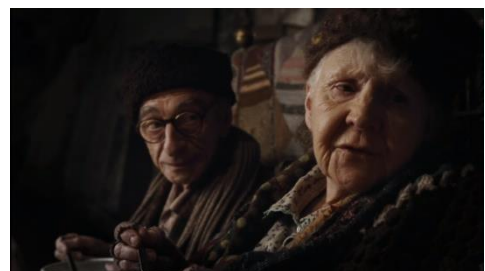


Figure 79

Just like Wonka who is figuratively confined in his childhood as it is metaphorically depicted with his braces and the striped wallpaper looking like a prison cell (Fig.80), Charlie happens to be trapped in an unfavourable status that keeps him from achieving great things. This idea of entrapment is visually represented with the close-up on the boy's face as he is hugging his grandmother and appears behind the bars of the bed (Fig.81).



Figure 80



Figure 81

Wonka has managed to break free from the rigidity of his past and has become the genius he was meant to be. He has made a reality of his dreams and has become a giant success. In that way, he gives Charlie reasons to believe that despite a difficult start it is still possible to achieve eminence. And this is exactly what Wonka is going to teach Charlie by giving him his factory and turning him into his young apprentice. Wonka becomes Charlie's mentor teaching everything he needs to know to take over his factory. Charlie's passivity serves Wonka well. According to Hamida Bosmajian in her essay "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and Other Excremental Visions", Charlie is "the quintessence of the deprived empty ego and, therefore, a colorless docile hero who will not threaten Wonka's egocentric trickster-self" (43). Wonka deliberately chooses a child as his heir because he does not believe in adults. Despite his uncharacteristic liminality, paradoxically Wonka rejects the adult figure that he sees as a threat and builds trust with the figure of the child only. This adult child relationship is characteristic of fairy tales as it can be found in *Peter Pan* (Clyde Geronimi et al., 1953). In his words: "I don't want a grown-up person at all. A grown up won't listen to me; he won't learn. He will try to do things his own way and not mine. So I have to have a child" (Dahl, 175). Wonka's motifs are very clear, his intention is to shape Charlie's knowledge to his benefit. What can be understood from his words is that a good child will listen to him, learn from him and will not object and give his personal opinion.

Charlie seems to be the perfect candidate, as explained earlier, Charlie is the perfect passive hero. He is after all a "bucket", a tabula rasa in Locke's terminology. He is a "blank slate" thirsty of knowledge. However, as Hamida Bosmajian puts it, he is also a "receptacle for human waste" (44). According to her, not only does Charlie have to be a good listener but he also has to "waste away" (*Ibid*) and come very close to death if he wants to receive the golden ticket. After Charlie's dad gets fired from his job, the Bucket family go through a very difficult time, having even less food than usual. Charlie is so affected by the lack of food that he almost reaches a stage of invisibility. This is made very obvious by Dahl's description of Charlie's state: "his face became frighteningly white and pinched. The skin was drawn so tightly over the cheeks

that you could see the shapes of the bones underneath” and with “curious wisdom . . . everything he did now, he did slowly and carefully to prevent exhaustion” (48-49). Charlie is a living skeleton that will not be saved by his parents but by providence and Willy Wonka’s food for the gods i.e. chocolate.

It is interesting and important to note, however, that Charlie is not as pure as might have been shown so far. Indeed, the only way he found to end his starvation is to give in to oral greed. Walking back from school, Charlie finds some money in the snow and instead of sharing it with his family, goes straight to the first shop to buy a chocolate bar. He does not buy one but two bars, making his transgression even worse.²⁷ But according to Roni Natov, just like fairy tale heroes, Charlie’s transgressive act is necessary if he wants to change his ordinary life. In her words, “questing heroes often have to “break some taboo” and “revolt” against the familial/social structure in order to create change. Tradition must be subverted so that evolution can occur. This is at the heart of the hero’s quest” (qtd. in Daniel 189).

Tim Burton’s handling of these facts are slightly different. Indeed, in his version, Charlie does give in to temptation and buys some chocolate for himself. However, he redeems his transgressive act by telling his parents he is willing to sell his ticket in exchange for the money one woman offered him. Charlie’s virtue is thus re-established, and this fits very well with Burton’s choice to remove the fizzy lifting drinking transgression that was present in Mel Stuart’s film. Similarly, Wonka’s instructive and dominating role over Charlie is in the film called into question. Burton portrays Wonka as an equal to Charlie. He wants to work with him and cares for his ideas as it is presented in the last scene of the dinner table [1:42:16- 1:42:21]. Wonka asks Charlie how he feels about little raspberry kites and Charlie gives his opinion proposing to put liquorice instead of string. Willy Wonka does not impose his will, he asks Charlie about his own ideas and even better, approves them. Charlie is thus given more power and credibility than in the novel. Wonka might act like Charlie’s spiritual mentor and father; however, it seems like Charlie has the same influence on him.

d. Charlie as the Responsible Adult Figure and Wonka’s Adoptive Father

Indeed, in most classic fairy tales it is rather common to see a child hero being helped by adult allies. For instance, in Walt Disney’s rendition of *Cinderella* (Geronimi et al., 1950),

²⁷ It is relevant to point out that having eaten three chocolate bars before finding his golden ticket, Charlie suits again the fairy tale genre. The number three is in fairy tales very significant. One could think about Goldilocks and the three bears or the three little pigs, the three sisters in Cinderella amongst others.

the heroine is helped by her fairy god mother, in *Sleeping Beauty* (Clyde Geronimi et al., 1959), it is again the three fairy god mothers who take care of Aurora and in Grimm's *Red Riding Hood* (1812), it is the hunter who saves both the heroine and the grandmother. However, Tim Burton's choice to turn Willy Wonka into the main protagonist in need of help challenges the traditional fairy tale expectations. In the movie, Charlie is depicted as someone more mature than Wonka. If Wonka retains some child-like features, Charlie is closer to be an adult than a child. In Mel Stuart's version, Charlie is made a fatherly figure from the top. His father being dead, he has no choice but to fill in his place as the head of the family. As traditionally portrayed in classic fairy tales, his mother is reduced to expected female tasks such as cooking and washing clothes, whereas he, as the male of the family, is the bread winner literally bringing bread to the family and complaining about the meal being not enough. As said previously, Burton does not remove Charlie's father from the plot; nevertheless, he does not take the opportunity to make of him a stronger and more influential figure in the hero's life. William Todd Schultz argues that "Charlie's father serves essentially no function [...] he is nearly irrelevant. [...] He opens his mouth only to read verbatim newspaper descriptions of each new lucky winner" (468).

Charlie's father is not able to fill in his role of bread winner, being fired from his toothpaste factory. Charlie becomes then the mature and reasonable figure who knows where the priorities are, offering to exchange his ticket for money or working as a shoe shiner to bring some money back home. Just like a father figure, Charlie takes care of his family. It is he who delivers them from hunger and poverty. It is again thanks to him that his grandfather Joe is momentarily brought back to life. When Charlie announces that he has found the golden ticket, he jumps out of bed and starts dancing, as if he had gained some of his lost youth back.²⁸ Just like a child, he cannot keep his emotion in check, and starts telling Charlie everything he has to do before the big day. He is portrayed as more exuberant and childlike than Charlie. Traditional

²⁸ Here is Roald Dahl's description of Joe's reaction to the good news: "...Very slowly, with a slow and marvelous grin spreading all over his face, Grandpa Joe lifted his head and looked straight at Charlie. The color was rushing to his cheeks, and his eyes were wide open, shining with joy, and in the center of each eye, right in the very center, in the black pupil, a little spark of wild excitement was slowly dancing" (58).

This passage clearly expresses the intensity of emotions the grandfather goes through. It seems like grandpa Joe is gradually brought back to life, the good news stimulating his senses. As James Parker declares: «the ups are fierce and the down are fierce. Extremes of feeling are the currency of fairy tales».

Burton's rendition of the scene [30:11] brings even more depth and fervor than Dahl's description. It is mainly due to Elfman's music that aids creating additional emotion and suspense. Moreover, the Point of view shot used to shoot Joe's discovery of the ticket allows the viewer to share his perception and excitement, bringing even more intensity to the whole scene.

roles are reversed. Charlie becomes the head of the family; Grandpa Joe turns back to his childhood self and can fulfil his wish to see Wonka again for a day.

More than being a fatherly figure in his family, Charlie plays a pivotal role in Wonka's life, becoming his adoptive father. Having been abandoned by his father, Willy Wonka found some other ways, expressed previously, to answer his need for a family. However, it is Charlie who will provide the help he needs to finally accept the importance of a true family in his life. It is Charlie who will bring an end to Wonka's quest for his self and his home. Contrary to Willy Wonka who, as shown earlier, retains more of the child than the adult; Charlie plays a key role in helping the chocolate-maker reconnect with his lost self. He is the only one asking him about his childhood and in that way forces him to confront his unfulfilled past and enter the process of "self-actualization" (McCoppin 31). In order to fully embrace his selfhood, Wonka has to heal his wounded inner child. The inner child or child within or wonder child is defined as "the childlike usually hidden part of a person's personality that is characterized by playfulness, spontaneity, and creativity usually accompanied by anger, hurt, and fear attributable to childhood experiences" ("Inner Child"). The inner child movement's father, John Bradshaw worked on the wounded inner child and said:

When a child's development is arrested, when feelings are repressed, especially the feelings of anger and hurt, a person grows up to be an adult with an angry, hurt child inside of him. This child will spontaneously contaminate the person's adult behavior. [...] [He] believes that this neglected, wounded inner child of the past is the major source of human misery. Until we reclaim and champion that child, he will continue to act out and contaminate our adult lives (7).

Bradshaw focuses on how to reclaim the wounded inner child by "actually experiencing the original repressed feelings" in order to grieve (*Idem* 75). It is only by healing one's wounded inner child that the creative wonder child will emerge. Willy Wonka seems to suit well this situation. There is an actual rupture between his wonder child and his wounded child and it is particularly present in the scene when Wonka is undergoing a psychoanalysis session with one of his Oompa Loompas. He tells him he is unable to make any new candies. In his words: "Candies have always been the only thing I was ever certain of and now I am not just certain at all. I don't know which flavours to make, I don't know which ideas to try, I am second-guessing myself which is nuts!" [1:36:45 -1:36:53].

Wonka has lost touch with his creativity or in other words his inner child and he needs Charlie to heal him. In *Lost and othered childhood*, Adrian Schober characterises Charlie as redeemer and conciliator. “Like other child redeemers, he performs his good deeds within the framework of family” (85). It is by making Wonka accept the value of family in his life that he leads Wonka to his self-actualization.

e. The End of the Quest: Family and Home to Become Adult

It seems like the theme of family and more importantly that of broken families, as seen in the first part, is part and parcel of the fairy tale genre. As Maria Tatar explains: “Fairy tales are about the hyper-dysfunctional family” (Miller). Indeed, the family institution is generally very important and far from being ideal in Roald Dahl’s books. One could think about James, an orphan who has to suffer from injustices before finding a nice substitute family in his animal friends or Matilda, who ends up living with her teacher Mrs Honey because she feels rejected by her own family. *Charlie* is no exception, exposing five different types of dysfunctional families. Burton seems to be promoting the fairy tale traditional message about aspiring for a better substitute family than the one given at the start of the journey. He appears to be more persistent in his enhancement of the institution. Indeed, by adding the story line of Wonka’s past, he offers the viewer another example of a dysfunctional family. The opening scene of the movie directly establishes the family as the movie’s moral centre. By giving up his chance to become Wonka’s next heir to the factory, Charlie shows that “family is more valuable than any material comfort” (Pulliam 106). He successfully teaches it to Wonka by making him reconcile with his dad and integrating him in his own family as seen in the ending scene of the family dinner reunion in which Wonka is invited.

This stress laid on the family institution in Burton’s version can be explained by the cultural context in which the movie had been produced.²⁹ In “Navigating the risks of re-adaptation”, Pamela Krayenbuhl observes that:

²⁹ On the contrary, Mel Stuart’s version is not centered on the importance of family but rather on morality, honesty and integrity. This has to do with the context in which the film was made. It was the era of the Vietnam War and Watergate. As Pamela Krayenbuhl argues, at that time, the political government did not live by those virtues and consequently, corruption and betrayal were frequent topics at the box office hits (153). For instance, *The Godfather Part II* (1974 Coppola). *Charlie*’s moral was then changed to suit better the expectations of the time. Adding Slugworth’s plot into the story brings the theme of loyalty and morality to the forefront. By giving back the gobstopper to Wonka, Charlie redeems the unworthiness of the other children and gives hope to viewers showing that people can be morally good. Contrary to Burton’s final message that could be “cherish your family because there is no better reward”, Mel Stuart’s moral message would probably sound like: “Do not forget children that loyalty is what will save you from trouble”.

In the decades since 1971, during which large number of middle and upper-class Americans have been regularly seeing a therapist, popular media have developed a hyper awareness of such dysfunctional and/or traumatic family relationships. During these decades, the nuclear family has become increasingly fragmented; this, coupled with the perception that Americans have come to lead more mediated lives, has no doubt further contributed to a national desire for stronger family bonding. (153)

This encouragement for better family ties seems to be supported by Tim Burton who uses his film to voice those contemporary anxieties and offers a solution in the figure of Charlie. Charlie's decision to stay with his family instead of going with Wonka is reinforced by the visuals. It is worth noticing how Burton uses cold and bluish lightening when Wonka comes into the house and asks Charlie to give up his family (fig.82).



Figure 82

Conversely, it is interesting to look at the way he uses warm colours and comforting lights when the Bucket family are together at the start and the end of the movie (fig.83/84)



Figure 83



Figure 84

This change in lightning promotes the institution of the family and encourages the viewer to regain confidence in the nuclear family. Just like the fairy tale hero who, ending his quest, has found in the process who he is and a family who accepts him, Willy Wonka's quest led him

to come to peace with his childhood trauma and embrace the power of the family. It has a significant effect on his personality as depicted in the last scene [1:41:41-1:43:02].

The first thing one might notice about Willy Wonka when he enters the Buckets' house is that he instantly removes his glasses and his hat. He does not need to hide behind them anymore. He has evolved and is now open to the world. He does not want to be isolated, he is happy to spend time with the Buckets and accepts their dinner invitation. His position at the dinner table i.e. at the center, is revealing of the importance he has taken in the family. He is no longer a stranger, he is one of them. And curiously, it seems like the Buckets have also been influenced by Wonka. Indeed, the grandmothers' outfits are very colourful and have eccentric shapes like red and green spots or purple and pink stripes that could remind the viewer of the colours and shapes found in the factory (fig.85).



Figure 85

Additionally, he does not make any mean comments or protest because he has to sit between the two grandmothers. He manages to even compliment grandma Georgina and does not make a weird face or step back when she spontaneously hugs him (something he would have done if one remembers his reaction when Violet hugged him at the beginning of the visit). He even seems to enjoy it. Furthermore, Wonka embraces the new role he has been given by the Buckets. Lance Weldy declares that "Wonka has become part of the Bucket household as a veritable second son" (159). This is validated by Charlie's mother who gently warns the two "boys" not to talk about business at the dinner table. The motherly manner in which she addresses them turns indeed, Wonka into a boy. Wonka has found a place where he belongs.



Figure 86

This idea of belonging and integration is expressed visually through the long shots of the table that reinforce the union of the members (fig.86). It is also shown with the use of light that is primarily focusing on the members and thus translates the happiness and warmth that provides family reunion. As the camera zooms out,

the viewer discovers that the Buckets' house is located inside Wonka's factory. This inclusion could represent the feeling of assimilation felt by Wonka into the family. It is interesting to see how, from the start of the movie, Charlie's and Wonka's houses are very revealing of the state of their owners.



Figure 87



Figure 88

From the still (fig.87) one can observe how each of the houses is located in the outskirts of the town. They are both, just like their owners: isolated. Nevertheless, they are facing each other and, in that way, linked to each other. Charlie enters Wonka's world and his factory when he comes to visit it and similarly, Wonka enters Charlie's world when he brings him back to his house at the end of the tour. However, it never is a success and one has to wait until the last minute of the movie to see them reunited (fig.88). The factory and the Buckets' hut are brought together just like Charlie and Wonka who have found one another. Adrian Schober seconds that idea of final integration saying that "when Wonka relocates the Bucket house within the mock winter snowbound landscape inside his factory, the juxtaposition of cold and warmth indicates that he has finally found warmth/acceptance within the heart/hearth of the family" (85).

The film closes on the Oompa Loompa's line: "In the end Charlie Bucket won a chocolate factory, but Willy Wonka had something even better: a family. And one thing was absolutely certain, life had never been sweeter" [1:42:41], this voice over narration is relevant for two reasons. On the one hand, it gives a feeling of oral storytelling that is very characteristic

of the fairy tale genre and it is reinforced by the music, the high pitch voices giving a final magical quality to the ending.³⁰ On the other hand, this ending sentence points out to the main outcomes of the story and serves as the final moral always expected at the end of a fairy tale. First, Charlie has fulfilled his most precious desires and won a chocolate factory. Then, Willy Wonka has reconciled with his father and most of all found a new family. One might have disliked the fact that Wonka's father was not at the dinner table since both reconciled thanks to Charlie's help. Nonetheless, it must not be forgotten that it is a Burton's movie after all and perfect, well-rounded, traditional fairy tale ending does not seem to be his cup of tea.

³⁰ This choice of ending is used by Tim Burton in another one of his movie *Edward Scissorhands*. However, this time, the scene is rather Dickensian. Adrian Schober comments on the family reunion dinner scene that reminds him of the fireside Christmas dinner at the Cratchits' in Dicken's *A Christmas Carol*.

CONCLUSION

Fairy tales, unlike tales about fairies, more often than not, do not include fairies in their cast of characters and are generally brief narratives in simple language that detail a reversal of fortune, with a rags-to-riches plot that often culminates in a wedding. Magical creatures regularly assist earthly heroes and heroines achieve happiness, and the entire story is usually made to demonstrate a moral point, appended separately, as in Perrault, or built into the text, as in Grimm (Bottigheimer 1996: 152 qtd. in Hunt 148).

If one relies on Bottigheimer's definition of what a fairy tale is, Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* seems to fit somewhat perfectly in this category. Charlie is written in a simple language, it is only 180 pages long. It focuses on a poor and needy boy who becomes the luckiest child in the world. There might not be a wedding in the literal sense, however there is still a 'union' between Willy Wonka and Charlie who end up working together and even sharing the same family (as it is presented in Burton's film). Magical creatures *per se* do not help the hero through his journey, but grandpa Joe and Willy Wonka, both Charlie's allies manage to help the hero, having not given up their inner child themselves and thus bring the fantasy and magic Charlie craves for. And finally, the book still retains a didactic side, telling its readers right from wrong through the different fates of the characters of the story.

It appears then quite naturally that Roald Dahl should be considered as a writer of fairy tales. Indeed, Roald Dahl brings to its fairy tales a modern twist that makes all his genius. In a traditional fairy tale universe, he brings his readers in a world where their unspoken dreams, how wrong they might be, can come true. Adults are not all-powerful role models, they also have major flaws which discredit them and turn them into grotesque figures. Adults and children alike receive the same treatment if they fail at behaving rightfully. In Dahl's world, justice is finally applied, and punishment inflicted. The status quo is called into question for the enjoyment of the young readers but the disapproval of the oldest. Even with its subversive side, Dahl's children's book still retains the traditional fairy tale characteristics with its Manichean vision according to which bad people are punished and good ones are rewarded.

In his adaptation of the book, Tim Burton manages to stay very close to Dahl's version. Indeed, through his special aesthetic, choice of imagery and music, the director is able to bring his viewers into an enchanted world. Putting forward the didactic aspect of the book, Tim

Burton uses the fairy tale morality to make a broader statement about today's society. Taking the liberty to modernise Dahl's original text, Burton manages to present on screen a fiction that is nonetheless very telling of contemporary reality. His choice to transform Mike into a video game addict or Violet into a competitive self-centred winner suggests his will to affect the audience effectively since they can easily relate to the characters. Their downfall does not only teach children a lesson about good behaviour, but it also warns the parents about their essential role in the formation of their children. This possible transposition into modern days shows again how much *Charlie* can be considered a fairy tale as it retains a universal scope that can be used over again through time which is a key feature of the fairy tale genre.

According to Antoine De Baecque: "Burton has made a film about his anger at what we have done to our children, his disgust at the contemporary world and his difficult, troubled relationship with childhood, torn between total generosity and alarming cynicism" (178). Being torn between sentimentality and cynicality, parents are overwhelmed and unable to cope with society's expectations and, as a consequence, children suffer from it. "*Charlie* is a film full of despair and sadness, whose message is that children (with exception of the model hero) have been deprived of their innocence, and take the side of punishing them, disciplining them with a terrible malignity" (*Ibid*). And it is thanks to the fairy tale approach that the director manages to legitimate his choices and crude rendition of today's society. Fairy tales cast aside the bad child who behaves wrongly and encourages as a consequence the reader/viewer to take the other direction. Here, Charlie is the safety valve that gives the viewer a role model to identify with and imitate. Coming from a poor family but still managing to climb the social ladder thanks to his obedience, respect and care for others; Charlie embodies the perfect fairy tale hero and hope for the future.

Sticking with the fairy tale tradition, Tim Burton centres his movie on canonical themes that are part and parcel of the genre such as childhood, the quest for the self and for a home. It is through the repetitive tests and ordeals of childhood that the child figure learns how to grow into a good person. Putting together different types of childhood: traumatic (Wonka), modern (the four bad children) and romantic (Charlie), Tim Burton points out to the essential part early education plays in the development of the self. He offers, in the character of Willy Wonka and Charlie, hope for the future. Defying the fairy tale expectations, Willy Wonka embodies the peripheral protagonist who is neither good nor bad. However, through the character, Burton seems to make an important point about education. Tim Burton encourages the "in-betweenness" as a quality that makes Wonka special and different. Even with his traumatic

education and liminal personality, Willy Wonka still manages to understand who he is, and to embrace the importance of the family institution which in the end is what fairy tales promote above all. It could then be advanced that, despite its participation in the subversive tradition of parodying extremely didactic cautionary tales, and putting to the forefront a character that is originally not expected to be the hero of the story and who defies all categorisation, Tim Burton reunites through his analysis of the family theme both fairy tales expectations and his peculiar “Burtonesque” vision. Opting for a sentimental and mainstream ending fit for a ‘living happily ever after’ Walt Disney closure, Tim Burton’s singular place in the Hollywood industry appears to be called into question.

Through his adaptation of Dahl’s book, Tim Burton reveals himself to be as much a product of the Hollywood cinema as a marginal of it. It has become now very common to associate Burton to the marginal director who has imposed his unique style in the blockbuster cinematographic industry. Fuelled by his dark life and introverted personality Burton has created a dark universe around his name. As Fraga explains, the name itself of Tim Burton came to be associated with specific connotations. In her own words: “Tim Burton conjures up images of gothic landscapes, demonic clowns, and the melancholy sweetness of a loner struggling to find his way in an unaccepting world” (qtd. Schober 67). Burton has, from the start, tried to detach himself from the industry, trying to promote a rather independent style far from the mainstream. Despite his growing success, he stood to his position declaring: “All that Hollywood hype, it’s depressing, it’s dangerous. I could never embrace it. I wish I could embrace it more. I often question why I make movies because I hate showing them, I don’t get enjoyment out of sitting with an audience, it takes me a couple years to look at something I’ve done now the Pee-Wee movie is the only one I can enjoy” (qtd. in Ansen).

Despite his statement, it seems somewhat paradoxical to think Tim Burton as an independent director if one considers how famous he has become, how his style won over millions of viewers and developed into fan communities and marketing products. Paradoxically, it appears that Tim Burton’s said difference is what made him even more popular and brought him into the light. Curiously, his growing partnership with Walt Disney studios (*The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Frankenweenie*, *Alice*, and now the up-coming *Dumbo*) has anchored him even more into the mainstream entertainment. Similarly to Walt Disney, not only did he make a business out of the high production of marketing products based on his films (one could think of the variety of products such as T shirts, jewellerys, posters, teddy-bears) but he also seems to have adopted the child-like fantasy promoted by the studios. Charlie might have retained

some dark elements of the fairy tale genre with its dark expressionist aesthetic, its black humour and its psychologically deranged chocolate maker, but it nonetheless seems to encourage sentimentality and sympathy from the audience, associating it to the light-hearted vision promoted by Disney. This is something that has, not so surprisingly, been noticed by his fans and critics with his later fairy tale adaptation *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), leading his sceptical fans to question, already, his take on the classic fairy tale *Dumbo* that is due 2019 (Loughrey). Only time will tell.

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The Jungle Book. Directed by Wolfgang Reitherman, Walt Disney Pictures, 1967.

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Directed by Clyde Geronimi et al., Walt Disney Pictures, 1949.

The Lion King. Directed by Rob Minkoff et al., Walt Disney Pictures, 1994.

The Little Mermaid. Directed by John Musker et al., Walt Disney Pictures, 1989.

The Nightmare before Christmas. Directed by Henry Selick, Touchstone Pictures, 1993.

Vincent. Directed by Tim Burton, Walt Disney Production, 1982.

FIGURES

Almost all of the figures used in this dissertation are screen shots taken from Tim Burton's movies.

Figure 1 (12:56), **5** (21:55) comes from *Batman Returns* (1992)

Figure 2 (2:14) comes from *Dark Shadows* (2012)

Figure 3 (2:56), **7** (14:22), **8** (08:46), **9** (47:46), **10** (48:10) comes from *Edward Scissorhands* (1991)

Figure 4 (14:27) comes from *Beetlejuice* (1988)

Figure 6 (33:54) comes from *Sweeney Todd* (2007)

The front **page illustration** (1:43:34) and **Figure 14** (1:13:26), **15** (1:03:30), **16** (33:27), **17** (33:46), **18** (34:58), **21** (1:42:52), **22** (16:11), **23** (16:21), **24** (46:20), **25** (1:31:12), **26** (18:13), **27** (1:10:14), **28** (18:50), **29** (1:10:01), **30** (17:44), **31** (18:22), **32** (22:01), **33** (22:09), **34** (21:58), **35** (32:33), **36** (40:00), **37** (23:13), **38** (1:27:39), **39** (1:32:06), **41** (4:10), **42** (19:39), **43** (1:3:16), **44** (5:32), **45** (4:00), **46** (4:24), **47** (4:44), **48** (4:55), **49** (1:18:56), **50** (1:19:00), **51** (54:54), **52/53** (55:32), **54** (56:26), **55** (56:12), **56** (1:07:58), **57** (1:08:02), **58** (1:08:12), **59** (1:07:38), **60** (1:08:19), **61** (1:08:23), **62** (31:38), **64** (1:12:55), **65** (1:18:56), **66** (1:41:19), **67** (57:35), **68** (56:26), **69** (1:30:36), **70** (38:59), **71** (57:12), **73** (33:58), **75** (52:26), **78** (55:43), **79** (11:35), **80** (56:12), **81** (12:51), **82** (1:36:12), **83** (4:55), **84** (1:41:42), **85** (1:41:57), **86** (1:42:29), **87** (4:24), **88** (1:42:52), all come from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, produced by Warner Bros in 2005.

The other figures that can be found are retrieved from:

Figure 11: Mazin, Pauline. "Helena Bonham Carter as the Red Queen." *Pinterest.fr*, no publisher, no date, www.pinterest.fr/pin/469711436107998439/.

Figure 12: Pachirisustar, No title. *Centerblog.com*, no publisher, August 8, 2010, pachirisustar.centerblog.net/47-alice-au-pays-des-merveilles-tim-burton?ii=1

Figure 13: Volger, Christopher. "The Stages of the Hero's Journey." *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for writers* (3rd Edition), edited by Christopher Volger, Michael Wiese Productions, 2007, 8.

Figure 19/20: Quirine, "Memorable Quotes from Charlie and the chocolate factory." *Pinterest.fr*, no publisher, no date, www.pinterest.fr/pin/426223552211069349/

Figure 40: Dahl, Roald. “Here Comes Charlie.” *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Illustrated by Quentin Blake. Puffin Books, 2016, 3.

Figure 63: Meganthecutegirl1997, No title. *Deviantart.com*, no publisher, Jun 1, 2017, meganthecutegirl1997.deviantart.com/art/Wonka-in-bed-description-683894388

Figure 72: Barbour, Shannon. “Disney Park.” *Cosmopolitan*, getty images, March 21, 2018, www.cosmopolitan.com/lifestyle/a19521506/walt-disney-world-pirates-of-the-caribbean-ride/

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Figure 77: Imgflip. “Oompa Loompa song and dance Template.” *Imgflip.com*, no publisher, no date, imgflip.com/memetemplate/119025999/oompa-loompa-song-and-dance.

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