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Escaping Suburbia: A Study in Film Auteur Pertaining to Tim Burton and The Coen Brothers

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Abstract

This project will focus on the concept of "Auteur Theory" which is a particular film theory branch that emphasizes the filmmaker as the "author" of their work. "Auteur" is a French word meaning "author" in the sense of a person holding complete creative control. Studying Auteur Theory allows for viewers to better understand the filmmaker as a person by connecting visual patterns to the auteurs' own life. The "filmmaker" in Auteur Theory is defined as the director and they must exercise almost or complete control of all aspects of a film. Distinct visual characteristics as well as repeated casting of actors, storylines, genre, and writing are all aspects of identifying a filmmaker as an auteur. The project will include an essay that introduces the concept of Auteur Theory, its background, and introduce auteurs Tim Burton and The Coen Brothers who will be put into dialogue with one another. Selected screen captures will be inserted to parts of the essay to provide a visual reference to each auteurs' style. The second part of this project will include a representation of the style of these two auteurs in the form of a pilot episode script I have written. The script will provide a visual aid by applying the auteur qualities of these filmmakers in the world I will create.

Table of Contents

Auteur Theory

   Film Auteur (or film authorship) is a niche part of film theories and studies; the term was originally coined in France wherein "auteur" refers to the filmmaker as the "author" or one who holds the majority of creative power over a piece (Britannica). In film auteur, the filmmaker is defined as the director rather than other positions in film. While auteurs can influence other films creatively, they are not the true "author" of the film unless they are credited as the director. The ability to convey a strong sense of character and world allows an auteur to leave their imprint on other films but specifically, for the study of auteur, it will be conducted in the confines of films that the auteur has been credited as the director on. Auteur theory is based on tropes from reoccurring genres, themes, visuals, or even repeated use of actors and often these repetitions reveal personal details about the "auteur" themselves. One of the most infamous auteurs, Alfred Hitchcock, faced his fears with reoccurring winding stairs, and windows that acted as persistent theme of voyeurism (being looked at) and his fear of being watched.

   Often an auteur leaves their mark on films they aren't the director of, showing their level of mastering a recognizable story and visual much like *The Nightmare Before Christmas,* which was not directed by Tim Burton, but showcases many of his visual tropes (he did write it and create characters but was not in the position of a director which is the traditional qualification for being the film's auteur). Figure 1.1 illustrates the ability of an auteur such as Tim Burton to convey a strong sense of character in his writing when compared with Figure 1.2. Figure 1.2 from *Corpse Bride,* which was in fact directed by Burton, exemplifies the exaggerated limbs, dark circles, wild hair and large eyes of the typical Burton character. The physical and emotional traits of the main characters from both films act as a mirror of Burton himself, misunderstood loners who might seem a little different than "normal people." The character on the left in Figure

1.1, Sally, shares several traits with the Corpse Bride (right in Figure 1.2),this type of lead

female character initially is in despair but finds her power eventually before the end of the film.

The large eyes are a signature look of Burton's, a visual reference to his own childlike wonder of

the world.

Fig. 1.1 The Nightmare Before Christmas, 1993
Directed by Henry Selick

Fig. 1.2 The Corpse Bride, 2005
Directed by Tim Burton

Older filmmakers such as Alfred Hitchcock and Charlie Chaplin set a precedent for other

auteurs to follow in their path by introducing the way that auteurs not only develop their style but

also execute it on screen. The Coen Brothers, as well as Tim Burton, are two of the most

influential and recognizable auteurs of this time period even with a new wave of auteurs

beginning to emerge, and the definition of this concept of authorship ever-changing with time.

"The auteur has outlasted the industry, or rather he has adapted to a fragmented audience…a passionate portion of which will pay to see and see repeatedly" (Collins 80). While many other auteurs are emerging into the new era of film, Burton and the Coens are both unique in the way that they came from a past film era but evolved their authorship into the new age of film. As technology evolves in the film industry it allows auteurs to further explore their style, streamlining their creative process. Fans of Burton and the Coen's work continue to return to their films over time because of their familiarity with the style. Where Tim Burton relied heavily in costuming and set design in earlier films such as *Beetlejuice,* he has leaned less on production design and more on visual effects to continue his successful signature style. The world he builds in *Alice in Wonderland* is equally as dark and creepy as *Beetlejuice* but the production itself has grown in scope and size. The seemingly different styles of the Coens and Burton are actually not that stark as they appear, they line up akin to the suburbia of *Edward Scissorhands,* with both having some elements of a bright and colorful front with darkness brooding at the end of the road (Figure 1.3).

Fig. 1.3 Edward Scissorhands, 1990
Directed by Tim Burton

Introducing Tim Burton and The Coen Brothers

It is not just visual similarities that these auteurs share but their story elements as well as character and world building. Looking at any auteur's film allows the viewer to get a glimpse into the mind of these artists and relate to them on a more personal level. Tim Burton artfully brings personal details into film through auteur style and shows the audience a portrait of himself in the way he writes and directs beautiful stories that allow the viewer to take his hand, and escape suburbia.

Tim Burton grew up in Burbank, California and actually refers to is as a "pit of hell." Feeling misunderstood and isolated, Burton remarks that "there's something about suburbia, it's really a place to hide. Or some people use it as a mask of normalcy" (Fraga 10). Burton's aversion to suburbia and normalcy is especially prevalent in his film *Edward Scissorhands* which is one of his most personal works. The character of Edward is a loner, hidden in a dark castle at the end of the street, holding childlike wonder for the outside world, something Burton often dreamed of as a quiet kid in Burbank. Burton's strange life hanging out in cemeteries also contributes to his films like *Corpse Bride* which makes the dark not seem so bad, "for me, there's an energy to it that is not creepy or dark. It has a positive sense to it" (Elfman). Tim Burton fell in love with dark themes and stop motion as a child, often focusing on isolated characters such as "Vincent" in his first short *Vincent*, quoting "I felt very tortured as a teenager. That's where 'Edward Scissorhands' came from" (Itzkoff).

Vincent and Edward Scissorhands are two characters that embody Tim Burton in looks and personality, even donning wild dark hair like Burton's. Figure 2.1 when compared to Figure 2.2 shows how personal each film was to Burton; the features of Tim Burton's face and hair can be seen on the character of Vincent. Each of Burton's films is made with a personal touch and is

Fig. 2.1 Vincent,1982
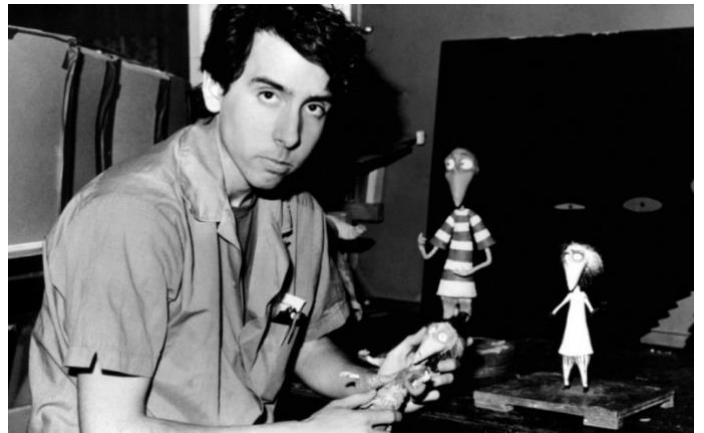*Directed by Tim Burton*

Fig. 2.2 Tim Burton creating his stop motion short film, Vincent in 1982

his way of working through his own mind or issues from the realization of the inevitability of death to his relationship with his father. *Vincent* is especially telling of his background with the character of the cat reflecting his mom's job as the owner of a cat-themed gift shop and character's with strange features like his childhood hero, Dr. Seuss (McMahan 27). The slit window in *Vincent* is also exactly the same as the one in Burton's childhood bedroom where his parents walled up a window in his room only leaving a small slit for light (Pringle).

Burton was inspired by the works of Edgar Allen Poe; his [Burton's] way of presenting his own soul in his work is very similar to the way that Poe constructed his work (Fraga 10). Burton entered Hollywood at the time of the studio system and rather than be a conformist he went against the grain by making his films intimate and personal, a trait of his that persisted throughout his career (Fraga 7). Many auteurs are like Burton in the way that they make their work personal and seek viewers who can relate to these feelings/situations or they aim for a form of therapeutic release. The Coen Brothers' auteur style is similar to Tim Burton in the way that their films reflect the place they came from and their way of seeing the world. In making the film *Raising Arizona* the Coens talk about growing up in their own suburbia in Minnesota and

how that shaped their view of places like Arizona. Both these auteurs kept true to their art and used the "against the grain" method in the middle of a studio era.

Joel and Ethan Coen got their start with *Blood Simple* (Figure 2.3) which they crowdfunded themselves by making a fake trailer (Figure 2.4) that they then presented to investors. *Blood Simple* was made "outside of Hollywood" as the Coens define it; this need for total control without outside influencers gave them a path towards becoming true 'auteurs'. In an interview with Hal Hinson the brothers both openly refer to their wish to be left alone, "we prefer to keep on making this kind of movie, independently" (Allen 11). Especially with their earlier films the Coen Brothers would exercise total control on their works as not only directors but as producers and even as editors. The closeness of the brothers allows them to share one mind as they create their work "we write the scene together; we imagine it in the same way" (Allen 41). Burton similarly came into his own as an auteur by working outside of the Hollywood system after being hired and fired from Disney four times (Pringle).
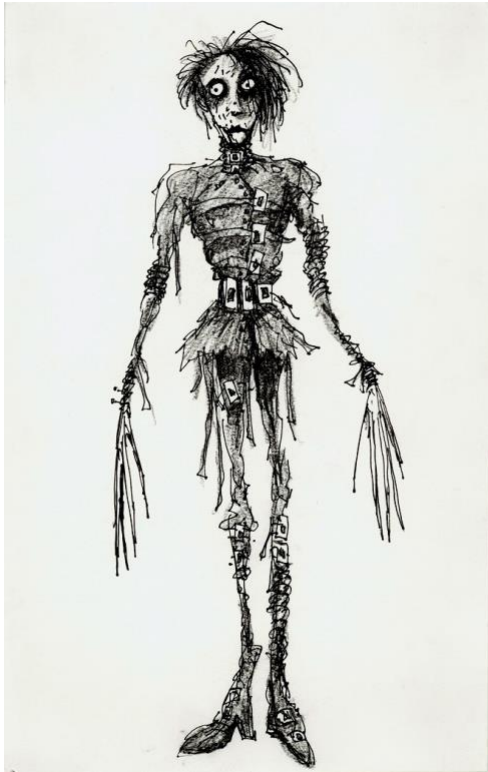

Fig. 2.3 Blood Simple, 1984
Directed by The Coen Brothers

Fig. 2.4 Blood Simple Crowdfunding Mock Trailer, 1984
Directed by The Coen Brothers

The Outlandish Character

Fig. 3.1 Early Concept Art
Drawn by Tim Burton

Fig. 3.2 Edward Scissorhands, 1990
Directed by Tim Burton

Tim Burton's 1990 film *Edward Scissorhands* (Figure 3.2) is the quintessential piece of his filmography. Originally, he had drawn a character in high school (Figure 3.1) that had scissors for hands which he showed to the screenwriter, Caroline Thompson, who then decided they should make a movie about it (Chernov). The film was released in 1990 when Tim Burton was starting to become a highly sought-after filmmaker. The movie originally fell flat with audiences to a meager box office opening but over time became beloved by fans (Chernov). *Edward Scissorhands* features a castle at the end of a perfect suburban road, home to an inventors' most ambitious creation which is a man with scissors for hands (the inventor passes away before he can finish the hands). A kind Avon lady named Peg finds Edward and welcomes him into her home, showing him a whole new world. Edward finds comfort in Peg's daughter and excels at fitting into the brightly colored suburbia by giving the housewives haircuts and

different shaped yard topiaries. While Edward is at first welcomed, soon the community turns on him as members refuse to accept how different he is. The film contrasts the world of "suburbia", which Burton spent his childhood trying to escape, with the dark castle that reflected his [Burton's] own mind. Tim Burton, much like Edward, is the strange dark weirdo at the end of the road and he spent time trying to fit into the cookie cutter suburbia but to no avail, simply returning to his own dark "mind palace" at the end of the road. In this peak of Burton cinema essential story, character, and visual elements are key roles in making the aesthetic of the film.

The characters of suburbia are all eccentric in their attempts to conform to the cookie cutter type world (Figure 3.3), Burton uses soft pastels to illustrate the almost blandness of this world. Once Edward becomes a part of these characters' lives, he adds a "little bit of Burton" by giving them these outlandish haircuts, finally breaking them out of "suburbia" and giving them something unique and weird to set them apart (Figure 3.4).

Fig. 3.3 Edward Scissorhands, 1990
Directed by Tim Burton

Fig. 3.4 Edward Scissorhands, 1990
Directed by Tim Burton

This idea of larger than life characters is also predominate in several Coen Brothers films such as *Raising Arizona* and *Barton Fink.* The Coen films, as well as *Edward Scissorhands,* use outlandish characters to not only tell a story but to illustrate this world with how much personality is infused in them. Barton Fink (a Coen Brothers character) and Edward are akin to "fraternal twins" (twins that do not look alike) because they enter a world they are unfamiliar with but always longed to be a part of, bring in a unique perspective, but are ultimately doomed in this world and return to their state of isolation.

Fig. 3.5 Barton Fink, 1991
Directed by The Coen Brothers

Fig. 3.6 Barton Fink, 1991
Directed by The Coen Brothers

Barton enters Hollywood (Figure 3.6) much like Burton and the Coens but once the dark parts are revealed and he reverts back (Figure 3.5) into a quiet place of being a slave to his own work (just in a different way as he is now owned by a studio company). The Coens and Burton both emphasize these strange characters to contrast them with the type of world they are placed in (Edward is the dark to suburbia's light; Barton is the timid to Hollywood's glamor). It is fascinating to see how auteurs often use similar character tropes in their film as a storytelling element and even go as far as using reoccurring actors that audiences can draw even more from. Burton's use of Helena Bonham Carter and Johnny Depp is not far from the Coen's reuse of John Goodman and Steve Buscemi (they usually play similar type characters). The reuse of actors allows for audiences to remember their characters and immediately know the type of role they are supposed to be playing and auteurs can use this to flesh out their characters more

The Fantastical World

The major theme of both the Coens and especially Tim Burton is a not just these beautiful characters but the fantastical world they are a part of. Both of these auteurs grew up in some sort of "suburbia" that they escaped from in their art. Tim Burton is notorious in the types of worlds he can create from *Alice in Wonderland* to *Corpse Bride;* strange shapes, angles, and color palettes dominate the set of any Burton film. Much like fellow auteur, Wes Anderson (with his symmetrical worlds), just looking at any scene from a movie can reveal its "Tim Burton touch." Burton doesn't only create his dark worlds with harsh colored lighting and grey and black colors but in *Beetlejuice* as well as *Edward Scissorhands* he shows mastery in complimenting his dark world with these beautiful pastels and simple images. *Beetlejuice* starts with an average couple in their large but simply decorated house but after their death a new family brings in strange dark art, shifting the mood of the space and even at one point the couple changes from their innocent selves into strange creatures.

Fig. 4.1 Edward Scissorhands, 1990
Directed by Tim Burton

In *Edward Scissorhands* Burton clearly finds his calling as a creator of worlds. The major theme of Burton as a filmmaker is how he escapes the confines of "suburbia" and enters this new fantastical world that mirrors the inner feelings of his own mind (or his characters' minds). The character of Edward is the perfect example of how Burton's worlds show the inner workings of someone. Edward's castle has this dark exterior and is terrifying for any of the residents of the neighborhood and yet inside this wonderous, childlike land of sculptures shows the soft inside that Edward is hiding from the world (shown in Figure 4.1). Similarly, Burton is a strange sort of man and fan of the dark on the outside but inside he is this child really looking for a place in the world (much like Edward).

Even the suburbs are a window to the type of people that exist there, it is this beautiful and pristine exterior but in reality, these people are trapped in their ignorance and darker characters roam unchecked. The high school students get drunk and break into the house, dragging Edward with them, the lonely housewife tries to unconventionally seduce Edward, and the strange religious woman can barely leave her house without making a strange declaration of hellfire to anyone who listens. Burton proves through cinema that all people have more to them than the outside, and by showing this through setting he harkens back to his own personal struggles with finding a place in the world and finding his identity. The Coen brothers use a similar type of scenery in most of their films, some sort of place in the south or desert. Much like Burton, the Coens grew up somewhere that was its own small world which they discuss in their creation of the scenery of *Raising Arizona* (Figure 4.2). In choosing the setting for their films the Coens see these other lands as "exotic" stating that "we're not from the Southwest…it's like an attraction for us" (Allen 25). Burton and the Coens share this trait of the wonder of these unknown places and by setting their films outside what they once called home they can fully find

themselves in new settings. Setting films in an unknown world allows a filmmaker to imagine without any prior knowledge in mind and that's when the artistry comes in and makes them an auteur. While the Coen brothers pay homage to their Minnesota home in *Fargo* (Figure 3.3), Minnesota appears bland and repetitive, so they ultimately seek worlds outside this, searching for an escape into new scenery and possibilities.

Fig. 4.2 Raising Arizona, 1987
Directed by The Coen Brothers

Fig. 4.3 Fargo, 1996
Directed by The Coen Brothers

The Journey of Self

Other than visual components, auteurs like Burton and the Coens often rely on similar genres, and stories in their work. Tim Burton usually has an "Alice in Wonderland" (Figure 5.1) sort of character (ironic since he made the Alice movie) who is an outcast that gets dropped into a world where they must find their way back and, in this journey, they also find themselves. Even the newer films that Tim Burton has been distributing keep up with this same sort of story and yet he knows how to keep it interesting and from being the same movie each time.

Fig. 5.1 Alice in Wonderland, 2010
Directed by Tim Burton

Edward is the epitome of an outcast at his castle at the end of the street, he gets dropped into this new world and finds love, beauty, and acceptance before he ultimately returns with a new look on the world around him. It is almost as if Burton is seeking a therapeutic release from his troubled childhood in writing characters that find themselves and find acceptance. "It's why you struggle as a child and you draw and want to create. There is an impulse to be seen" (Fraga

10) and ultimately when this character is seen they enjoy it at first before reverting back into privacy, similar to how Burton although famous is a private person.

Another component of Burton's deeply personal story is how he portrays his relationship with his father, especially in the movie *Big Fish* that features a son who is trying to unravel the story of his dying father's life. "My Father had been ill for a while… I tried to get in touch with him, to have, like in this film, some sort of resolution" (Fraga 19). The estranged father and desire to connect is extremely close to Burton and the film in its visual beauty pulls the viewer into that pain. In his life, a reconciliation with his father could have been impossible but through filmmaking and art, Burton is able to reach some sort of understanding much like his characters that reach an understanding at the end of their journey. Many other artists in different mediums can understand the power that art gives to the healing process. Burton himself recognizes this connection in his films stating "I went back to thinking about my father and as bad as a relationship I had, early on it was quite magical…it's important to remember that. I forgot that for too long" (Fraga 19).

While Burton has the character journey he enjoys, the Coens surely enjoy having a story so full of ridiculousness and often their plots are full of multiple different threads that ultimately don't mean anything. There are quirky side characters and side plots that are appealing Especially in the movie *Inside Llewyn Davis,* many different things happen but ultimately the plot circles back to the beginning and everything remains the same. Seen in Figure 5.1, the main character begins as a poor singer who has lost his singing partner and while he goes on a journey to become more, he still ends up in the same bar in his same situation in Figure 5.2 at the end of the film. While Burton likes to have a journey in his films that ends in self-discovery the Coens

enjoy a journey that might end in self-discovery but also might end in nothing changing but what a wild ride it would be.

Fig. 5.2 Inside Llewyn Davis, 2013
Directed by The Coen Brothers

Fig. 5.3 Inside Llewyn Davis, 2013
Directed by The Coen Brothers

There is an interesting contrast in the way that Burton makes his plots so personal and moving while the Coens repeat stories in new worlds but keep that personal touch out of it for the most part. An auteur that makes a point of using parts of their own lives to flesh out a more personal story has a special way of moving audiences and while the Coens have yet to explore this facet of authorship. The Coens seemingly make worlds with a personal touch but rather than adding that to their story they instead create the same basic story filled with different things they are interested in like comedy, drama, etc. For example, *Raising Arizona* is similar to *Inside Llewyn Davis* in that the characters don't change their situation by the end of the film, but they end up discovering a few things on the wild journey they experience.

The Auteur Footprint

      An auteur can have an impact on films that they aren't the director of. While traditionally an auteur is defined as a director, the creative influence they show when not in this position is the true test of their mastery of authorship. Burton especially has been mistaken for the director of *The Nightmare Before Christmas,* yet he is merely the scriptwriter so naturally, his story, characters, and the world can be seen but putting it into a visual form is ultimately up to the director. Burton's powerful way of storytelling almost allows him to control the entire film just from the writing stage. The Coens write their own scripts for the most part and this proves the power of a script and how it influences the visual medium. When the Coens remade *The Ladykillers* (Figure 6.1 and 6.2 shows the original version and Figure 6.3 and 6.4 shows the Coen version) from its original they were able to take this story and add their own "Coen flair" to it and while the story was the same it has a very different atmospheric feel when compared to the original film. When comparing the screen captures from the Coens, one can see the flair added in the form of strange looking instruments and bright pastel and yellow colors which are signature to the Coens visual style.
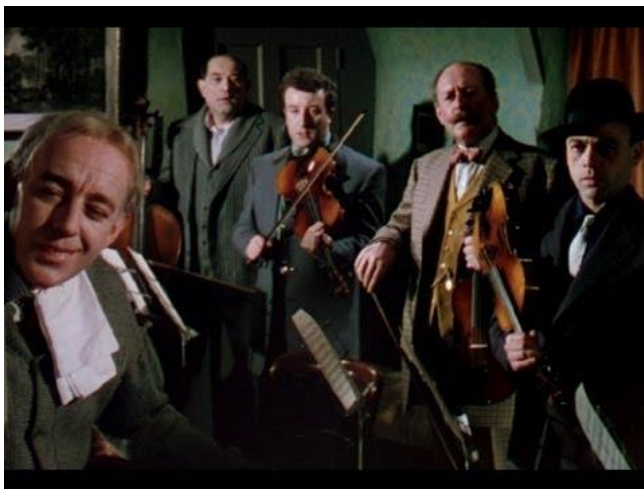

Fig. 6.1 The Ladykillers, 1955
Directed by Alexander Mackendrick

Fig. 6.2 The Ladykillers, 1955
Directed by Alexander Mackendrick

*Fig. 6.3 The Ladykillers, 2004
Directed by The Coen Brothers*

*Fig. 6.4 The Ladykillers, 2004
Directed by The Coen Brothers*

   The remakes done by the Coens keep all the story elements but as soon as the visuals are

seen, the film slips easily into the "Coenesque" world. Besides doing remakes, the Coens get

their chance at influence in a different way by being executive producers of the television

version of *Fargo* that keeps the same quirks of the original movie but changes a bit with new

directors and of course a different cast. The Coens have also influenced their original

cinematographer, Barry Sonnenfeld, who is now directing his own pieces that have very similar

visual components to a Coen film. Netflix's *Series of Unfortunate Events* is directed by

Sonnenfeld and has the visual artistry of many Coen films as well as its strange characters and

world. As shown in Figure 6.5 and 6.6 Sonnenfeld showcases the visual style he learned from

Coen films in *Series of Unfortunate Events* and in Figure 6.7 and 6.8 one can observe that same

style in a Coen film which Sonnenfeld was the cinematographer on.

Fig. 6.5 A Series of Unfortunate Events, 2017
Directed by Barry Sonnenfeld

Fig. 6.6 A Series of Unfortunate Events, 2017
Directed by Barry Sonnenfeld

Fig. 6.7 Raising Arizona, 1987
Directed by The Coen Brothers

Fig. 6.8 Raising Arizona, 1987
Directed by The Coen Brothers

From pre-production to distribution, the Coens zero in on their nailing of the visual

components and thus they are effective in that aspect of the auteur. What makes most auteurs

effective is this attention to detail in visuals such as costuming, production design, and lighting.

Since the Coens write their own scripts, for the most part, they prove the power of a script and

how it influences the visual medium no matter if the scriptwriter is involved in production or not.

Putting it in Practice

      To properly understand not only the auteur style and influence of these two filmmakers but also the process, I created a pilot episode that combines both of their auteur styles as well as some of my own. The world in which my script takes place is akin to the Coen Brother's film *Inside Llewyn Davis* with deep blues and soft visuals for my main character to navigate her world. The main character is surrounded by her grief and ghosts of her past; which make the choice of blue hues logical. As mentioned previously, an auteur uses stories that are personal to their life and that is where my personal auteur style comes into this series. Much like the "self-discovery" stories the Coens and Burton tell, the story of Cora Acosta (main character) is a mirror of my own journey of regaining power post a traumatic event.

In Figure 7.2 and 7.3 I included some of my inspiration for the visuals of the episode that will be applied to it once it takes form on screen. Dark longing hallways and the isolated character will be a big part of the episode as well as lighter parts that will have the signature yellowish hue that many Coen films have (shown in Figure 7.1). Characters in this episode are distinct in their dress and quirks in the same way that both the Coen Brothers and Tim Burton execute their own. In future episodes my main character will gain her own persona as I used what is shown in Figures 7.4 and 7.5 to dream up the visuals for my female vigilante (the main character).

Fig. 7.1 Inside Llewyn Davis, 2014
Directed by The Coen Brothers

19

Fig. 7.2 Inside Llewyn Davis, 2014
Directed by The Coen Brothers

Fig. 7.3 Inside Llewyn Davis, 2014
Directed by The Coen Brothers

Fig. 7.4 Alice in Wonderland, 2010
Directed by Tim Burton

Fig. 7.5 Alice in Wonderland, 2010
Directed by Tim Burton

Escape Suburbia (Conclusion)

Through the many aspects of auteur theory, one can truly appreciate the attention to detail and artistry these specific filmmakers put into these pieces that they create. Tim Burton and the Coen Brothers are the epitome of how auteurs are still relevant in modern cinema. *Edward Scissorhands* is without a doubt one of Tim Burton's most beautiful pieces of cinema and sets the precedence for the rest of his cinematic career. Every part of this film from actors to story can be seen in the rest of his film works. Burton effectively pulls on the heartstrings of audiences by reaching for the outcasts, or for any moment of a person's life when they felt isolated, alone, or like they didn't fit in somewhere.

While the Coen brothers have seemingly grasped the concept of making their mark visually and through story, they have a bit to catch up on in regard to making their stories as deeply personal as Burton's. In the study of what makes an auteur, even though the definition is ever-changing, there is no doubt that the most impactful auteurs are the ones who make a "horcrux" (an object that holds a piece of a person's soul) type film in the way that they put a piece of their soul into these films. Multiple other auteurs contribute to making their films personal and the way that Burton defied the studio system to make what he was passionate about is nothing short of an inspiration to filmmakers in the future.

Tim Burton may be a fairly nervous and private guy when it comes to fame but just by watching his films one can actually get a look into his life and see the type of the person he is and what he is struggling with behind the lens. He even speaks about the vulnerability of watching his work, something film students especially can resonate with and relate to on a very personal level. The Coens and Burton share similarities in the way their authorship is prominent in characters, story, and the world but the Coens are still leaving the audiences aching for a bit of

"Coen soul" in these films. The complete mastery of Burton as an auteur shows how this concept

has been brought into the new world of filmmaking and will most likely be continuing for many

years to come. So why not sit down, relax, turn on a Burton or Coen film, and escape suburbia.

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Allen, William Rodney. *The Coen Brothers: Interviews*. University Press of Mississippi, 2006.

This book is a collection of various interviews that have been done with the Coen Brothers. This book is an excellent resource to learn more about the background and inspiration behind many of the Coen brothers' films.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Auteur Theory." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 27 Dec. 2017, www.britannica.com/art/auteur-theory. This Encyclopedia provides a detailed definition of "auteur theory" and explains it in a clear and concise way. Rather than using a dictionary, it is more logical to use the encyclopedia due to the intricacies of the theory itself.

Burton, Tim, and Mike Johnson, directors. *Corpse Bride*. Warner Bros, 2005.

Corpse Bride is a film directed by Tim Burton that features a man who accidentally is swept into the world of the dead and a marriage with a corpse bride. This film provides a way to examine the style of Tim Burton's unique characters and some of their signature styles that are present in his other works.

Burton, Tim, director. *Alice in Wonderland*. Walt Disney Pictures, 2010.

Alice in Wonderland is a film directed by Tim Burton that is a live action of the classic Disney film but with some darker themes. This film epitomizes Burton's sense of world building and showcases how he brings in his own signature style to a story like *Alice in Wonderland* which was originally "brighter" than this version. This source was helpful in the section of the essay that discusses the different way that auteurs shape their different film worlds.

Burton, Tim, director. *Beetlejuice*. Warner Brothers, 1988.

> *Beetlejuice* is a film directed by Tim Burton that features outlandish characters and dark themes of the afterlife, ghosts, and death. This film is a great resource to examine Tim Burton's auteur style and how it began to grow as he directed more films throughout his career. In a way, the style of this film is similar to *Edward Scissorhands,* making Tim Burton's Auteur style prominent.

Burton, Tim, director. *Big Fish*. Columbia, 2003.

> *Big Fish* is a film directed by Tim Burton that features a man who attempts to at long last get to know his father near the time of his (his father's) death. This film is the definition of a personal film to Burton and was an essential part of my research in determining the kind of stories Burton likes to tell.

Burton, Tim, director. *Edward Scissorhands*. 20th Century Fox, 1990.

> A movie written by Tim Burton and Caroline Thompson (directed by solely Tim Burton) which gives context into what exactly influences Burton's style. Tim Burton grew up isolated and estranged from society and this movie is not only ideal for the study of his style but also on how his life influenced the style prominent in his movies. Studying films such as these are essential for a study on Auteur.

Burton, Tim, director. *Vincent*. Walt Disney Productions, 1982.

> *Vincent* is one of Burton's earliest films that he directed and also shot. This short film is purely about Tim Burton and his life featuring a boy who loves Edgar Allan Poe and longs to be like his dashing idol, Vincent Prince, but it seems that everything in life including his mother gets in the way. This short film is essential in determining the background of a young Tim Burton that inspired his later films.

Chernov, Matthew. "Edward Scissorhands' at 25: From Box Office Misfire to Cinema Classic."

    Chicago Tribune, 7 Dec. 2015, www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/movies/ct-

    edward-scissorhands-at-25-20151207-story.html.

    This is an article from the Chicago Tribune that is an interview with the screenwriter of

    Edward Scissorhands, Caroline Thompson. This piece gives insight to the creative

    process of the film and Thompson reveals the background on dreaming up the characters

    that Burton created in high school.

Coen, Joel and Ethan Coen, directors. *Blood Simple*. River Road Productions, 1984.

    Blood Simple is the Coen's first film and unique in the way that it was extremely

    successful for being entirely crowdfunded outside of the studio system. The Coens were

    the ultimate "auteurs" on this film, holding almost all the important positions, including

    the film editor. This film offers more insight on where the Coen's started and how their

    style developed from this point.

Coen, Joel and Ethan Coen, directors. *Fargo*. Working Title Films, 1996.

    Fargo is the Coens film tribute to their small town in Minnesota. They artfully make fun

    of a simple Midwest life in this film that centers around a local police officer and the

    crime she is investigating. Like many other Coen films, this one helped to better

    understand the Coens and their auteur style, especially in the form of world building.

Coen, Joel and Ethan, directors. *The Ladykillers.* Touchstone Pictures, 2004.

    This film is the remake of an original film from 1955 with the same name and plot. The

    Coens don't usually do film remakes so it was interesting to study this particular piece.

    This piece helps to establish the Coen style by contrasting it with the original film to find

    the nuances and style the Coens brought to *The Ladykillers.*

Coen, Joel and Ethan Coen, directors. *Raising Arizona*. Circle Films, 1987.

> This film is one of the Coen brothers' earlier films that features a young couple that steal a baby and end up raising it for a time before returning it. To better understand the Coen's signature outlandish character and circular plot, this film is the easiest choice. It is also interesting to see how far the Coen's style has come from *Blood Simple* to this piece.

Coen, Joel, et al. *Inside Llewyn Davis*. CBS Films, 2013.

> This Coen brothers film features a musician who has recently lost his musical partner as well as his way in life in general. Through a series of misadventures, the main character at last begins to accept his new reality. This film was a fantastic source for studying the Coen's use of a circular plot as well as brainstorming the aesthetic for the pilot episode that is part of my project.

Collins, Jim, et al. *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*. Routledge, 1993.

> This book is an excellent source for seeing how different film theories (including auteur theory) can be applied to everything from well known blockbusters to older classics. This book was especially useful in understanding the way that auteur theory is evolving and how it is persistently effective in modern cinema.

Elfman, Danny, and Tim Burton. "Tim Burton." *Interview Magazine*, 2010.

> This particular piece features Tim Burton being interviewed by his film composer, Danny Elfman, on parts of his past that influenced the strange type of films that he makes today. This particular interview helped fill in the gaps about parts of Burton's childhood that explained several themes in his different films. By being interviewed by a colleague, Tim Burton opens up more in this interview than in some of the others where it is a stranger.

Fraga, Kristian. *Tim Burton: Interviews*. University Press of Mississippi, 2005.

This book is similar to the Allen book in that this book is also a collection of interviews with Tim Burton. Much like the Allen book, this source is great in finding answers to question specific to a movie that Burton has done. When researching Burton it was important to find as much as possible as far as his personal perspective on his motivation behind the lens.

Itzkoff, Dave, and Tim Burton. "Tim Burton, at Home in His Own Head." *New York Times*, 19

Sept. 2012.

This article is yet another interview with Tim Burton on his filmmaking and what goes on inside his head when he dreams up his world. Burton in this interview speaks in length about his childhood, how his mom once owned a cat-themed gift shop, and how his own childhood dog inspired the film *Frankenweenie.* There are few scholarly works on auteur theory which makes these interviews with filmmaker critical to research.

McMahan, Alison. *The Films of Tim Burton: Animating Live Action in Contemporary*

Hollywood. Continuum, 2006.

This book's main theme is influence. McMahan argues how Tim Burton's filmmaking style has set the new standards for various genres and has changed the way some of them are made which was a crucial part of showing the influence of the auteur on cinema. She also describes the various aspects of art and film that influenced Burton and gave him his own sense of style.

Pringle, Gill. "Tim Burton: How a Strange Childhood Gave Him a Taste for the Bizarre." *Belfast*

Telegraph, 6 Oct. 2012.

This particular interview with Burton mostly focuses on his relationship with the Walt Disney Company and how strained it has often been. Burton talks in length about the

times when he dealt with their rejection and how he found a way to continue to make

films for himself and for the lonely child he once was.

Selick, Henry, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Touchstone Pictures, 1993.

> *The Nightmare Before Christmas* is a film that is written by Tim Burton but is directed by
>
> Henry Selick. Many mistakenly think this film is directed by Burton because the
>
> characters are so recognizable as his. This film is an essential part of the argument
>
> proving that true auteurs have an unmistakable and strong sense of character and world
>
> building.

Sellors, C. P. *Film Authorship: History and Theory*. Wallflower, 2009.

> This book focuses strictly on Auteur Theory and how to define it and study it. Not only
>
> does this book delve into the definition of Auteur Theory but also presents the
>
> background of the study, its origins, and the greatest debates of the theory. The first part
>
> of my essay focuses on Auteur Theory and this book will be helpful for explaining it
>
> [Auteur] in detail and bringing it into concept for the remainder of my essay.

Sonnenfeld, Barry, director. *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. *Netflix*, 2017, www.netflix.com.

> *A Series of Unfortunate Events* is a Netflix original series based on the books (by the
>
> same name) written by Lemony Snicket. Barry Sonnenfeld's masterful take on this story
>
> showcases how the Coen Brothers heavily influenced his visual design. In order to
>
> recognize the influence of auteurs, this series helped to solidify the argument.

Zjawinski, Sonia. "Arts: Explore Origins of Tim Burton's Goofy Gothic." *Wired*, 11 Nov. 2009,

> Arts: Explore Origins of Tim Burton's Goofy Gothic.
>
> This article in Wired magazine showcases various drawings that Burton has done at
>
> different points in his life from childhood all the way until 2009 when this article was

created. This source was useful in providing concrete pieces of art that were used in the

creation of Burton's iconic characters (one such drawing from this article can be found on

page 7 in the "Outlandish Characters" section).