

## **Chris Columbus: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002)**

Sorry, the first thing that comes to my mind regarding this movie and time is that it is too long and I paid a price for that. I went for the 10.15 AM show on the second day it opened and didn't realize that it is 161 minutes long. Therefore I was late taking back till 1 PM a reserved book to the College library and got fined.

I noticed that the movie was long also from the fact that I was bored several times. When I read the books I couldn't put them down they were so engaging. The movie was very successful of transferring a lot of the action from the book. But a little less would have been better. Although it captured the book's content and added visuals and sounds to it but added little else to the experience. That's why I was bored, not much new in it for me. Particularly that I've seen the first of the series as well.

Maybe I am a bit unfair. The special effects are well executed, the kids are very likable, the monstrous are monstrous and Kenneth Branagh as a pompous, self admiring person is very convincing in an over the top way. But we are in fairy land where everything is pushed to the furthest extent.

Back to time. Timing is just as important in magic as it is in slapstick comedy. The levitating cake has to fall down right when it is above someone's head, the flying car can fly off from the pursuing train at the right second, and the phoenix flies in the last second to cut out the serpents' eye with its beak and so on. It all worked magically as it should. Thus there are no surprises here neither.

There was on time travel sequence in the movie. When Harry opened Tom Riddle's diary he traveled back 50 years. This was done with the usual repertoire of tools. With the help of computer graphics through an ever-increasing hole in the book light poured out symbolizing the tear in the fabric of space time continuum. Harry got sucked in there and found himself in a world which was black and white and not color as his own. First we think that he has stepped into a frozen frame, because nothing moves except him. This is a standard way of showing time traveling. But then it turns out that people move he just arrived at a solemn moment. It is part of the game that none can see him. The beard of his beloved professor Dumbledore is 50 years shorter as well. By the time he learns almost everything he needs to he is conveniently sucked back to his own timeframe through the book. Usual time travel nothing to get worked up by.

It took me a year, but I figured out what disturbs me with Harry and the Harry Potter phenomena. He cheats all the time, breaks the rules, gets away with it and ends up being the hero. He rarely gets punished. I shudder at the thought that he is the role model of kids today. They are taught that to be successful you can do almost anything. I understand the importance of finding the balance of dependence and independence training, but this is off balance. He doesn't work/study hard but he takes credit for other people's work. He is not smart (like Hermione); he has inherited money, thus no financial worries (like Ron). The books are great reads, the movies are visual feasts, but is this the kind of behavior we want to teach our kids. OK, now I sounded like some conservative radio talk show host, which I am not. I have no kids and don't claim to know much about bringing up one. But I believe that the values presented in the phase of socialization the target audience (5-8 year olds) is in stuck deep. They should be the good ones.