

Some thoughts on watching films

Stories are the stuff of life. They allow us to reflect on all sorts of issues at a safe distance as we engage with the characters, cry with them, laugh with them, get cross with them and generally share their experience. How they deal with the issues they come across may frustrate us, or give us new insights; cause us to laugh or cry; result in us hurling abuse at the screen or willing there to be a happy ending. And through it all we can encounter God in all sorts of unexpected places if we only take time to look.

Questions to ask yourself

What did you think of the film? What do you like most? Least?

Which incidents made you *think* or *feel* most strongly? How well did you think the film treated those incidents?

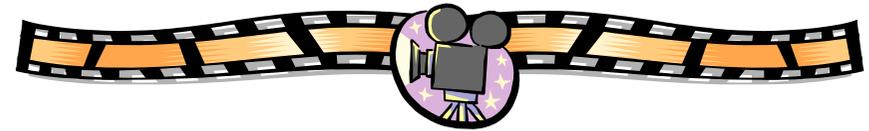
What issues did the film raise for you?

What character(s) do you most identify with and why?

Does the film have any echoes of Christian beliefs or stories from the Bible? Does it support or challenge Christian values?

Some facts about the film

- The houses used in the film were a real community in Florida, completely unchanged except for their garish exterior paint.
- This was Vincent Price's last screen appearance and his last moment ever on screen is a death scene.
- The first draft of the film was written as a musical.
- Johnny Depp says only 169 words in the film.
- Some of the topiary that Edward makes in the movie can be seen permanently at the New York City restaurant Tavern On the Green.
- Tim Burton's understanding of the role of Edward was as someone "both simple and complicated. Both beautiful and off-putting, both creative and horrifically clumsy".
- Initially, Twentieth-Century Fox had demanded that Tom Cruise play the role. The studio wanted a "bankable" actor. Burton attempted to work with Cruise, but found the relationship impossible. Michael Jackson then expressed interest but was ignored. Tom Hanks turned it down. Although Burton was unfamiliar with Depp's previous work, Burton was impressed with his "subtlety and ability to act with his eyes", remarking that "for a character that doesn't speak a lot, eyes are very important".
- In preparation for the role, Depp watched many Charlie Chaplin films to study the idea of creating sympathy without dialogue.
- Studio executives were so worried about Edward's image that they tried to keep pictures of Depp in full costume under wraps until release of the film.
- Johnny Depp was coincidentally dating Winona Ryder at the time of filming.
- The film received an Oscar nomination for best makeup.



**A chance to watch films together.
An opportunity to discuss the issues raised.
A time of friendship, food and fun.**

7th Dec	<u>Edward Scissorhands</u>
4th Jan	Juno
1st Feb	The Kite Runner
1st Mar	Son of Rambow
4th Apr	Son of Man
3rd May	WALL-E

**Films start at 5:30pm
Followed by food, coffee and conversation**

**10 Bletchingdon Road
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Edward Scissorhands

Edward Scissorhands, made in 1990, is a modern fairy tale about an uncommonly gentle young man who happens to have scissors for hands. He is befriended by a sweet Avon lady and introduced into a community which initially welcomes his extraordinary skills, only to turn against him as time goes on. Raising issues of good and evil, right and wrong, innocence and guilt, the film invites us to reflect on the transforming, yet devastating, effect one person can have on a community and, in so doing, points us towards Christmas.

The idea for the film came from a childhood drawing of director Tim Burton, which reflected his feelings of isolation and the way he felt unable to communicate with those around him, such as his family and friends. Burton stated that he was often alone, and had trouble retaining friendships. "I get the feeling people just got this urge to want to leave me alone for some reason, I don't know exactly why. Subconsciously, it led to this character who wants to touch but can't. This in turn became linked with scissors. There's quite an interesting design to a pair of scissors, if you really look at them. How do they work? What do they do? They're both simple and complicated, creative and destructive. It's that feeling of being at odds with yourself."

Being special—being normal

Edward's unique gift, arising out of his scissorhands, is his ability to cut things, whether it be hedges, fur or ladies' hair. However, his gift also sets him apart from everyone else. In his TV interview, he longs for someone to give him proper hands like everyone else and someone comments that he would then no longer be special. What does it mean to be "normal"? What does it mean to be "special"? In one sense, we are, of course, all special. But when does being special become a curse rather than a blessing? How can we celebrate our differences?

The right thing to do

At one point in the film, the family discuss ethics around the dinner table and, in particular, what you should do if you found a sum of money in the street. What would you do? Do you think there is a difference between the "nice" thing to do and the "correct" thing to do? How does that make you feel? Would it make a difference if you knew where the money had come from (eg. from someone who wasn't going to miss it)?

The crowd

The neighbourhood initially welcome Edward into their midst and enjoy sharing the fruits of his natural abilities. They turn against him essentially because of the jealousy of one man and the frustration of one woman, happily believing the lies they are told about Edward. Why is it so easy to turn the crowd? Why are they so fickle? Why do we so easily turn away from someone when things begin to get difficult?

Signs of God

Kim continues to believe that Edward is up there because of the snow. She doesn't know for sure, but she continues to believe. Likewise, we cannot prove that God is there but, nonetheless, many believe it to be so. What signs of God help you to continue to believe?

A Christ figure?

Edward has sometimes been described as a Christ-like figure. How do you react to that? In what ways do you think it might be true?

Memorable quotes

- Officer Allen** Will he be OK, Doc?
Psychologist The years spent in isolation have not equipped him with the tools necessary to judge right from wrong. He's had no context. He's been completely without guidance. Furthermore, his work - the garden sculptures, hairstyles and so forth - indicate that he's a highly imaginative... uh... character. It seems clear that his awareness of what we call reality is radically underdeveloped.
- Officer Allen** But will he be all right out there?
Psychologist Oh yeah, he'll be fine.
- TV Host** Quite a story, yes? Any questions for Edward?
Audience #1 What's been the best part of your new life here in town?
Edward The friends I made.
TV Host Any other questions?
Audience #2 Have you ever thought of having corrective surgery or prosthetics? I know a doctor that might be able to help you.
Edward I'd like to meet him.
TV Host We'll give that name after the show. Thank you very much. That's very nice. Anyone else? Yes, stand right up.
Audience #3 But if you had regular hands you'd be like everyone else.
Edward Yes, I know.
TV Host I think he'd like that.
Audience #4 Then no one would think you're special. You wouldn't be on TV or anything.
Peg No matter what, Edward will always be special.
- Kim** Well, then why'd you do it?
Edward Because you asked me to.
- Bill** You're walking down the street and you find a suitcase full of money. No one else is around. What do you do? (a) Keep the money; (b) use it to buy gifts for friends and your loved ones; (c) you give it to the poor; (d) you turn it in to the police.
Edward Give it to my loved ones?
- Jim** [*after seeing Edward accidentally cut Kim*] Hey! Now you've done it!
Kim It was just a scratch Jim, really!
Peg What's going on?
Jim Call a doctor, he skewered Kim!
Kim He didn't skewer me!
Jim [*now bullying and shoving Edward*] You can't touch anything without destroying it! Who the hell do you think you are hanging around here, huh? Get the hell outta here! Go you freak!
Jim [*to Kim*] He tried to hurt you.
Kim No he did not and you know it!
- Kim** Hold me.
Edward I can't.
- Granddaughter** How do you know he is still alive?
Kim I don't know—not for sure. But I believe he is. You see, before he came here, it never snowed. And afterwards, it did. If he weren't up there now, I don't think it would be snowing. Sometimes you can still catch me dancing in it.