

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?

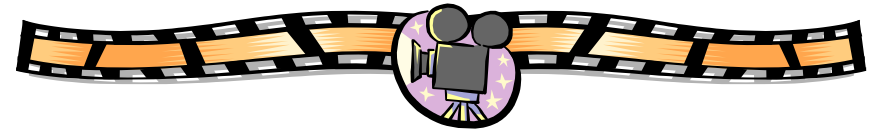
What issues did the film raise for you?

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

- *WALL-E* won an Oscar for Best Animated Feature in this year's awards, and was nominated for five others.
- The original idea for *WALL-E* was conceived during a lunch in 1994 along with ideas for *Monsters Inc.* and *Finding Nemo*. It was developed further for two months in 1995 under the title of *Trash Planet* but then put aside until 2003.
- The end credits animation was added after a test screening in 2007 where half the audience said they felt the humans would not have coped with living on Earth and would have died out. The animation continues the story, is stylized in different artistic movements throughout history, and gives an optimistic tone.
- Auto was a conscious homage to HAL 9000 from *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The manner in which he hangs from a wall gives him a threatening feel, like a spider.
- The humans were modelled on sea lions due to their blubbery bodies, as well as babies. The filmmakers noticed baby fat is a lot tighter than adult fat and copied that texture for the film's humans.
- To animate their robots, Pixar watched a Keaton and a Chaplin film every day for almost a year, and occasionally a Harold Lloyd picture. Afterwards, the filmmakers knew all emotions could be conveyed silently.
- Stanton, who is a Christian, named EVE after the Biblical character because WALL-E's loneliness reminded him of Adam, before God created his wife.
- During writing, a Pixar employee remarked that EVE was reminiscent of the dove with the olive branch from the story of Noah's Ark, and the story was reworked with EVE finding a plant to return humanity from its voyage.
- The first dialogue between WALL-E and EVE begins 22 minutes into the film. The first human dialogue begins after 39 minutes.
- EVE was co-designed by Jonathan Ive, the man responsible for the iPod.



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

4th Jan	Juno
1st Feb	The Kite Runner
1st Mar	Son of Rambow
5th Apr	Son of Man
3rd May	<u>WALL-E</u>
*14th Jun	Into the Wild

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

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WALL-E

It's the year 2800 and the earth is a complete mess, full of rubbish produced by humans. This garbage has left the earth uninhabitable and completely devoid of life. All that is left is one small robot, WALL-E, and his pet cockroach. His job is to clean up the earth, something he has been doing for 700 years, surviving by keeping himself going with parts salvaged from other defunct machines. Then, one day EVE arrives, and his whole life changes.

The throw away society

We live in a throw away society and the scenario in the film takes that to its extreme. Humanity's solution is to simply abandon the planet and continue their all-consuming pursuit of pleasure in space, under the auspices of the Buy 'n' Large corporation, which has effectively taken over all world government. This laissez-faire attitude contrasts markedly with the Biblical view of human responsibility for the earth. Psalm 24:1 says: "the earth is the Lord's and everything within it", and we, as humans, are entrusted with its stewardship, not its destruction. How do we encourage people to take this role of stewardship seriously? How committed are **we** about these issues when they may require significant changes to our lifestyle?

Falling in love

Much of the film is of someone falling in love for the first time and discovering what that means. As soon as WALL-E sees EVE, he is mesmerised by her, yet he has to wait a long time, and they both go through many challenges, before they finally end up together. During that time he risks getting hurt in order to get close, nearly being destroyed by EVE's laser. When EVE is immobilized, WALL-E cares for her and is struck by lightning in the process. WALL-E remains committed despite the dangers, the cost, and the fact that, for a long time, the relationship is one-sided. In so doing, he reminds us that loving relationships remain a universal desire. We all long to be, and have a need to be, loved and to love. Some of us have been very lucky in that respect. Others may have had more difficult relationships. Can you remember the first time you fell in love? What has been your experience since? And what about your relationship with God? How has that developed over the years? Has that, too, been one-sided at times?

Ship of Theseus paradox

This paradox revolves around a ship which, bit by bit, is replaced as things wear out or are damaged. Once everything has been replaced, is the ship still the same ship it was to begin with? WALL-E is programmed to continually replace bits of him that wear out. Is the robot at the end the same one as at the beginning? And has that anything to say about resurrection—a process which is both continuous (in some way we are the same) and discontinuous (in some way we are different)?

Being human

God made people to be in relation with each other, as he is in relation with himself. At the very heart of God is a relational being. That's what the Trinity is all about. Yet the people on the Axiom seem to have lost this. Instead, they choose to live their lives "once removed". Even people sitting next to each other communicate via their built-in screens. Andrew Stanton, the director, puts it like this: "It's a perfect metaphor for real life. We all fall into our habits, our routines and our ruts, consciously or unconsciously to avoid living. To avoid having to do the messy part. To avoid having relationships with other people, of dealing with the person next to us. That's why we can all get on our cell phones and not have to deal with one another." It takes WALL-E's arrival to catapult people out of their mere existence into life. For the first time, both John and Mary suddenly realise there is life beyond their screen and begin to look around them. As they do so, they discover the possibility of a real relationship. How much do you think modern technology gets in the way of forming proper relationships? What about those people who actually find it easier to talk to others via email, or in a chatroom, rather than face to face? How do we get the balance right and use technology to enhance communication rather than hiding behind it?

Memorable Quotes

Commercial Too much garbage in your face? There's plenty of space out in space! BnL StarLiners leaving each day. We'll clean up the mess while you're away.

Commercial The jewel of the BnL fleet: The Axiom! Spend your five year cruise in style: maided on 24 hours a day by our fully automated crew, while your captain and autopilot chart a course for non-stop entertainment, fine dining. And with our all-access hoverchairs, even grandma can join the fun! There's no need to walk! The Axiom - putting the "star" in executive StarLiner because at BnL, space is the final "FUN-tier"!

Computer Time for lunch... in a cup!

Captain 12:30? AUTO, why didn't you wake me for morning announcements? Honestly, it's the one thing I get to do on this ship.

Teacher A is for Axiom, your home sweet home. B is for Buy N Large, your very best friend.

Captain Define "hoe-down".

Computer Hoe-down: A social gathering at which lively dancing takes place.

Captain [*AUTO appears near the captain*] AUTO! Earth is amazing! These are called "farms". Humans would put seeds in the ground, pour water on them, and they grow food - like, pizza!

Mary I didn't know we had a pool!

AUTO Sir, orders are do not return to Earth.

Captain But life is sustainable now. Look at this plant. Green and growing. It's living proof he was wrong.

AUTO Irrelevant, Captain.

Captain What? It's completely relevant. Out there is our home. *HOME*, Auto. And it's in trouble. I can't just sit here and do nothing. That's all I've ever done! That's all anyone on this blasted ship has ever done. Nothing!

AUTO On the Axiom, you will survive.

Captain I don't want to survive. I want to live.

Computer Caution: Rogue robots. Caution: Rogue robots.

Captain Wait, that doesn't look like Earth. Where's the blue sky? Where's the the grass?

Song It only takes a moment to be loved a whole life long.

[*last lines*]

Captain This is called farming! You kids are gonna grow all kinds of plants! Vegetable plants, pizza plants. Oh, it's good to be home!