

How is Edward portrayed as 'the outsider' in the film Edward Scissorhands? essay ...

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The film 'Edward Scissorhands', directed by Tim Burton, is about a young man called Edward with scissors for hands. He lives in a gothic manor situated on a hill on the outskirts of a suburban settlement. Peg Boggs, an Avon saleswoman, had no success selling her make-up in the neighbourhood so drove up the hill to the eerie manor to try and sell some. She ascends the stairs in the manor; black and white are the predominant colours we see inside. She finds Edward sitting in the corner; she is non-judgmental of him and only wants to help so takes him down to her house to live with her, her husband Bill, their daughter Kim and their son Kevin. At the start everybody in suburbia welcomes Edward but towards the end they all reject him because of his disability.

The opening credits create a strange atmosphere for the viewers. The music has ominous undertones and suggests that the film is of the fantasy genre. The low-key lighting with a blue filter creates a mysterious, ominous yet slightly comic mood. Burton does this because he wants two contrasting genres; the horror and the fantasy. The gingerbread man biscuits symbolize child-like innocence and also show that Edward's childhood was incomplete, he was deprived of a loving, caring family to guide him through it. The camera then climbs the stairs and this mirrors Edward's life; it is a big journey.

The first thing the viewers see after the credits is the huge gothic manor on top of the hill. Straight away, from this image, we can see Edward's isolation; we know he is the one segregated from the town. Burton puts Edward's house on top of a hill to portray that he is the outsider. The image of the derelict mansion we see is very dark and cold nonetheless a light on <https://assignbuster.com/how-is-edward-portrayed-as-the-outsider-in-the-film-edward-scissorhands-essay-sample/>

means there is a sign of life within the castle. The camera then draws back into a warm room and the light has gone from a blue filter to an orange.

This contrasts Edward's cold world to a cosy, snug world elsewhere. Burton does this because he wants us to realize how cold and lonely Edward's world is. A grandmother is sitting on a rocking chair reading a story to her granddaughter who is lying in an oversized bed opposite. The enormous bed and the rocking chair can both be attributed to the fantasy genre. The child's voice is soft and innocent and is intrigued as to what the grandmother is saying. The child asks "Did he have a name?" and the grandmother replies "Of course he has a name, his name is Edward". This shows Edward is a real person because he has a name. The mythical music we hear can also be accredited to the fantasy genre.

The camera flies out of the affectionate home and the high-angle crane shot pans over the snow covered suburban community. Burton does this as he wants to show us a broad view of suburbia and how perfect it is. All the houses in suburbia are very close together and yet there is one lonely mansion at the top of the hill. Afterward we see Edward and the camera pulls back over his shoulder. First we see the grandmother, and then we see Edward. This mirrors Edward's loneliness. He is missing the town and is longing for companionship.

The contrast to the town makes Edward's house really different. The town is perfect and almost looks false, for instance the colours of the houses are very sickly and insipid. The people in the town do mundane activities and wear odd clothes that look like they're from the 50s however the clothes that

Edward wears are from the 90s. That implies that the moral of the story is timeless. Our ideas are immediately turned around by Burton. Suddenly there is a flashback to go into more depth about how Edward became welcomed into suburbia's society.

Peg is trying to sell her make-up in suburbia but is having no success, she is very irritated. She looks into the wing-mirror of her car and sees Edward's castle which shows two contrasting mise en sc enes, there is a frame-within-a-frame shot. It's peculiar because suburbia looks as though it's from a fantasy movie but the frame in the mirror looks like it's from a horror movie. This is very effective because we can again see Burton has attempted to contrast the two different genres. Peg then drives up to the castle and the music gradually becomes threatening because Peg is shaking with fear. She is extremely nervous approaching the gate to the manor. There is also a worms-eye view of the castle to show how big it is in comparison to Peg. Burton uses this technique because it shows the viewers how vulnerable Peg is.

The gate is then opened by Peg and the music surprisingly changes from intimidating to cheerful. Peg says " Oh my goodness." followed by " Beautiful." She did not expect all the unusual topiary in Edward's garden. She is in shock. The colourful and creative topiary mirrors Edward's innovation. His beautiful garden - which is full of vibrant colours - contrasts to the gardens in suburbia that are extremely bland. The cheerful music mirrors Peg's wonder, surprise and disbelief. Peg moves stealthily up the steps to the antiquated door and it creaks as she opens it, she leaves the

door ajar and walks in. The dark, low-key lighting inside the castle creates a very cabalistic atmosphere; Burton draws the viewers in to make them focus on Peg. The high pitch string music helps us feel Peg's fear, for example her voice echoes aloud as she calls for a sign of life within the castle. A high-angle shot of Peg makes her appear as a potential victim.

She gradually walks up the stairs and reaches the top to see a massive hole in the roof; Edward's house is falling to pieces. Burton creates a dilapidated castle as he wants it to differ from the faultless houses in suburbia. Peg is very small compared to the large and very old, decrepit room. Leading up to the corner of the rundown room we can see Peg's point of view. This is very effective because the viewers feel they are being drawn into the action and can see exactly what is happening. Edward's soft, innocent, pleading voice is in total contrast to his terrifying, frightening image. Peg is almost immediately caring for Edward in their first conversation consequently taking him down to suburbia to care for him.

Edward is overjoyed since it is his first time out of the castle; the music even indicates his excitement. When they arrive at Peg's house Edward enters and we can see the amazed look on his face yet he does not fit in. The house is white and all of Edward's clothes are black. Peg's house is in total contrast to Edward's castle. The lack of music makes the viewers focus on Edward. At first when Edward arrives in suburbia he is treated kindly, even by the ringleader of suburbia's women Joyce. She says " You're not handicapped, you're exceptional". She is fascinated by Edward so welcomes him to suburbia.

After being tricked into attempted robbery by Kim's malevolent boyfriend, Jim, Edward is arrested and taken into custody by the police. At this point everybody in suburbia turns against Edward. Suddenly the things that made people see him as unique are seen as an indication that he is very dangerous and unsuitable to live in a 'normal society' therefore we see a low-angle shot of Edward, which shows he is irate and it appears as though he is more powerful. Edward has cut a bush like a devil which represents him rejecting the society. All of the women are in frenzy because they want Edward out of their town. The camera slowly zooms into the window which shows Peg and Kim sitting inside, Peg is now realizing the mistake she made by introducing Edward to the society.

Edward enters the house and we have a close up on Kim's face followed by a quick cut to Edward's face. Burton does this because he wants to show the viewers how pleased Edward is to see Kim. We can hear placidness in their voices as they talk. They put their arms around each other and then we have a flashback. Edward's creator had a heart attack and dropped a set of hands on the floor which could represent that Edward will never be a whole man. Edward is accepting he is different. The music as we go back to real life is magical and has a fantasy feel. Burton uses flashbacks to enable the viewers to find out about Edward's past. It is very effective because the viewers can relate to Edward better. Edward goes out to the back garden and cuts away at an ice sculpture to imitate snow.

Kim is the only person who is sceptical of Edward but by the end of the film she is the only one that sees him for who he truly is. There is a build-up of

fantasy music as Kim approaches Edward. She is wearing a white dress which symbolizes purity; she is like a fairy tale princess. We see a close up on Kim's hand catching the snow; her dancing mirrors her embracing of his creativity. Edward was surprised when Jim shouted "HEY!" therefore he accidentally cut her hand. Jim starts a fight with Edward so the music abruptly changes from fantasy to horror. Edward rips off his clothes and runs away which shows he is rejecting society. We see a bush in the shape of a running man, which indicates to Edward, and the audience that he must run. The unsteady camera here mirrors Edwards' confusion and fear.

The high-angle shot on a police car chasing Edward up the hill shows he is being ostracized. When Kim reaches the top the music becomes soothing and tender which shows Edward and Kim are becoming closer. Edward and Kim are speaking and Jim appears from the stairway and draws a gun. The fast-editing and the quick cuts make this scene highly dramatic. Jim is jealous of Edward yet he is very hostile towards Kim. Edward then pushes Jim out of the hole in the side of the castle and the camera looks down from the window giving us a bird's eye view so we see how far Jim has fallen. Burton does this because he wants to show the viewer how high up the castle is and how far Jim had fallen.

There is no way Jim is alive. There is blood on Kim's dress which shows she is no longer the sweet, innocent girl in the white dress, she is the one who truly loves Edward for who he is. We then come back to the film as it was at the beginning. The whole film was a flashback, Kim is the grandmother telling the story and Edward has not aged. It never snowed before Edward went

down to suburbia but after he went back up to the castle it did. That shows Edward brought something magical to suburbia and this is symbolised by the snow.

I think Edward is portrayed as the outsider because he is the one that lives in the castle. Nobody had heard of the man before Peg introduced him to the society. At the end of the film the disruption has been removed from suburbia and events start to pick up because those who had welcomed Edward reject him and he is forced to run away back to his own surroundings. The main cause of disturbance has been removed from suburbia and all is well. Whereas Edward has been removed the audience might believe that the film has finished on a low, but they may forget the protagonist, Edward, has had his chance to show his love towards Kim and get vengeance on the antagonist, Jim.

Despite the fact the community apparently returns to normal without the disruption of Edward, his visit has had a lasting effect on the community; snow persistently falls. Kim does not want to visit Edward again because she wants to remember him for who he was thus Edward is carved into the forefront of her mind forever. I believe the overall message of this film is misconception. Edward, who the community did not know well enough, did not get to know the innocent young man for what he genuinely was. From this film, I have learnt to judge people, not by their clothes, but by what they are truly like inside.