

MERLIN PHILOSOPHY DRIVE-IN

April 2016



Featured Film: *Waking Life*

Film Synopsis: An engaging & cerebral film about a young man in a persistent, lucid, dream-like state who observes & participates in a variety of colorful philosophical discussions with others, including the nature of reality, dreams & consciousness, free will, the meaning of life, and more. Shot using digital video coupled with stylized frame-by-frame lines & colors, this Richard Linklater film is a philosophical & artistic gem. The title, *Waking Life*, is a reference to philosopher George Santayana's maxim: *Sanity is a madness put to good use; waking life is a dream controlled.*

Some Philosophical Questions Raised

- Is life always changing? If so, how do we keep an even keel?
- Is your life yours to create? What does that mean?
- What does it mean to live fully? Is responsibility a part of this?
- Does creation come out of imperfection, striving and frustration?
- Are words dead? Inert? Or is there more to them?
- Would justice, fairness, loyalty & freedom differ in a consciousness that was unrestricted by time and space?
- Does humankind long for chaos, depression, strife & destruction?
- Does society (media) have a vested interest in catastrophes? Is their function to persuade audiences to accept evils and be passive observers?
- If our experience of time differs dramatically from experience to experience, is it possible that time does not actually exist?

- If something exists in our mind, is that existence as real as anything else? Or different?
- Is "collective" spontaneity across the globe really spontaneous?
- Is reincarnation (if it exists) just a poetic expression of what collective memory is?
- Is free-will really possible if we are physical creatures governed by physical laws?
- If probabilistic theory (quantum mechanics) allows for randomness, does this help explain freedom? Should our freedom be a matter of random swings in a chaotic system?
- How do we find room in our world view for 'persons'? What is 'personhood'?
- Is dissent & challenge critical to overturning systems? Is it critical to being human?
- Is the negative an example of our own will to nothingness?
- Do we always remain quintessentially ourselves even though our cells regenerate numerous times in our life? What is our 'self'?
- Is a new world just as likely as an old world?
- What are the barriers that keep people from reaching their true potential?
- Which is the most universal human characteristic: fear or laziness? Or something else?
- Is a well-armed populous the best defense against tyranny? What does 'well-armed' mean?
- If a dream is only real as long as it lasts, can the same be said for life?
- Is there a difference between dreaming a perception & action and the waking perception & action?
- Is it possible to combine your waking rational capabilities with the infinite possibilities of dreams? If so, how?
- Are our waking and dream lives both dimensions of reality?
- Do you think of the story of the song first? Or does the song come out of the moment?
- Can you dream with more than your mind?
- Is it possible that we are dream characters in someone else's dream?
- Can you live life & understand life simultaneously?
- Are we just a "place" to house all of the logical abstractions that obtain?
- What does it mean to "wake up"?

Some Movie Quotes Paraphrased

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sea refuses no river • Color inside the lines, color outside the lines. It's what you do with the crayons you're given | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is always our decision who we are • Language is about more than survival; it developed from a desire to transcend isolation and connect |
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- Once the answers are out there, we can pick up on them...all telepathically sharing our experiences
- To say 'yes' to one instance, is to say 'yes' to all of existence
- Moments are never truly empty; they are empty with the fullness of life pulsating within them
- There are two kinds of sufferers - those who suffer from a lack of life and those who suffer from an abundance of life
- Holy moments are always present and here but staying in those moments is hard
- Doubt is here as an exam of our vitality
- As patterns get more intricate & subtle, being swept along is no longer enough
- Examine the nature of everything you observe
- Life understood is life lived

Some Philosophical Themes Present

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| • Existentialism | • Human Condition | • Rationalism |
| • Nihilism | • Society | • Meaning |
| • Phenomenology | • Identity | • Evolution |
| • Determinism | • Rights | • Science |
| • Free Will | • Freedom | • Logic |
| • Responsibility | • Reality | • Language |
| • Personhood | • Solipsism | |
| • Human Nature | • Empiricism | |

Resources

If you are interested in exploring or learning more about some of the questions or philosophical themes discussed in this film, please let me know and I will be happy to provide you with some resources. These could also be topics to explore in our monthly think & drinks!

Contact Information

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