

Groundhog Day Movie Analysis

Posted on October 17, 2023

Groundhog Day as Comedy and Philosophy

Released in 1993, the film “Groundhog Day” is a skilful blend of comedy and philosophy. It is centred on an egotistical and arrogant man named Phil Connors, who is a weatherman. He only lives for the future and pays no mind to the present; however, that all changes when he gets stuck in a time loop that forces him to live in the present and change his way of living (Ramis, 1993). This paper will analyze the movie and the character, Phil Connors, to find different worldviews in the movie.

The Time Loop and Moral Transformation

The time loop is the most significant theme in this movie as, throughout the repetition of the same day, the viewers can see the worldviews of Connors changing. This time loop lasts for a decade, which gives Connors a relatively long time to change into a better person, but this change does not come immediately. When he realizes that no matter the way he spent his day, it did not matter as his day would reset. So, he just accepts the time loop and takes advantage of it by doing everything that comes to his mind because he knows there will be no consequences for his actions. This part of the movie revolves around hedonism, a philosophical worldview that revolves around people who only live for pleasure. “Living on the edge” is a simple way of describing this worldview. Any activity that gives an adrenaline rush falls into this worldview, and the people that have this worldview live “like there is no tomorrow”, which means they do not care about the consequences of their actions. Connors also develops this worldview and does all those things that he would not have avoided if he were not in a time loop. “I’m a god – I’m not the god, I don’t think” (Connors, 1993a, 00:27:45). This quote shows the height of carefree attitude that Connors develops and does not care what anyone would think about him.

Hedonism Despair and Existential Crisis

Soon, Connors realizes that this hedonistic behaviour was just a means of escape from his reality, which was in a constant loop. This realization changes his worldview, and this time, he starts to believe that everything in this world, nothing matters. His life is pointless, so whether he lives or dies, it will not matter as the time will reset, and he will have to do everything yet again. Connors, in this part of the movie, states, “Well, what if there is no tomorrow? There wasn’t one today” (Connors, 1993c, 00:57:21). This quote shows that he was losing the will to live as his life was losing its meaning. Eventually, the stark reality of his situation drives him to take his own life, only to wake up again on the 2nd of February (Groundhog Day). However, this attempt and its futility do not stop him

from attempting suicide again; in fact, he does it multiple times in different ways, only to wake up again on the same day. “You want a prediction about the weather? You’re asking the wrong Phil. I’m going to give you a prediction about this winter. It’s gonna be cold, it’s gonna be grey, and it’s going to last you for the rest of your lives!” (Connors, 1993e, 00:42:12). Connors becomes extremely depressed by living the same day over and over again, and he starts to take out his frustration on others. This worldview, where the person believes that life holds no meaning, is known as Nihilism, and this worldview is the most destructive worldview of all. It views life as a curse and causes the person to live an unfulfilled life. “What would you do if you were stuck in one place and every day was the same and nothing you did matter?” (Connors, 1993d, 00:33:13).

Self-Improvement and the Discovery of Meaning

After so many attempts at trying to take his life, Connors decides that this is also not the way to break out of his time loop. He is now forced to look within to find the thing that is missing from his life. He starts to build value in his life and pursue the things that matter. He learns to play the piano and carve ice sculptures and realizes that some things are always going to be out of his control. This makes him optimistic and becomes more humble in his pursuits. “I think people place too much emphasis on their careers. I wish we could all live in the mountains at high altitudes. That’s where I see myself in five years. How about you?” (Connors, 1993b, 00:72:12). This shows that he starts to think about the future again but with optimism and not greed. He finally becomes happy, and this part of the movie uses the philosophy called Aristotelianism, which means that happiness is an act that allows people to feel fulfilled.

Christian Themes of Redemption and Renewal

There is a lot of discourse that this movie uses solely philosophical worldviews; however, in light of the Christian worldview, the viewers can see that when Connors leads a life of sin, he is unhappy and unfulfilled. Only by choosing to do the right thing and turning his life around for the better does he finally feel happy. This also allows him to break free of the time loop. Regardless of whether this movie is a philosophical comedy or a religious debate, one thing is certain: this movie teaches a valuable lesson on the moral virtue of doing the right thing and making correct decisions. *Groundhog Day* is a thought-provoking movie that should be watched to understand different dilemmas that can cause people to change their worldviews.

References

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