

# Celluloid Philosophy Lessons - What Is Hollywood Teaching Your Teen?

[Philosophy presented in movies. Can lessons be learned outside of philosophy? Why can we not agree on 1 philosophy, religion in 2,500 years? Is philosophy important?] Ancient Greece



<http://www.dfamily.com/philosophy/teach/hswtl/journal.html>

---

BreakPoint with Charles Colson

<http://www.breakpoint.org/Breakpoint/ChannelRoot/FeaturesGroup/BreakPointCommentaries/Celluloid+Philosophy+Lessons.htm>

June 25, 2003

If you've got a **teenager at home**, now that school's out, **he's going to spend a lot of time studying philosophy**. "Not my kid," you might respond. "He's not into philosophy."

[Are you into philosophy?  
Can you image a teenager studying philosophy?]

Well, he might not be reading Plato or Aristotle, but if he **sees a few movies** this summer, he's going to get what amounts to a **survey course in philosophy** whether he knows it or not.

**Everyone embraces one philosophy or another -- a world view that defines his conception of the world, of reality, of human life.** These beliefs are woven into movies -- often in such subtle ways that viewers miss them.

[Do you understand how every embraces a philosophy?  
Can anyone NOT embrace a philosophy?  
A Christian is told to keep their Christianity "private".  
What is really being asked?  
If the Christian keeps their beliefs "private", what occurs to their philosophy?\*

For example, in the film *Cast Away*, **fate is offered as a God substitute** when a FedEx employee is marooned on an island after a plane crash. As Brian Godawa writes in his book, *Hollywood World views*, "God is conspicuously absent. . . . [The man] is all alone in a naturalistic universe." In the end, he finds his way back home and meets a woman to replace the one he lost. Thus, Godawa writes, "humanity finds meaning in hope for another human being, and the benevolent impersonal fate will work it all out for us in the end."

[What is fate?  
Is fate akin to "the force"?  
I ask, because fate is described here as a benevolent, impersonal fate. Can you explain what is both benevolent and impersonal @ the same time?  
Do you believe you are alone in a naturalistic universe?  
If I spelled out a philosophy to you which clashed with your own personal philosophy,

09/02/2003

would you reject it?

If I told you an entertaining story which embraced a philosophy which clashed with your own personal philosophy, would you reject it?]

Your kids may also meet the Eastern philosophy called monism. A monist believes that all of reality is ultimately one: Evil arrives when people make distinctions among things; redemption occurs when we understand this pantheists oneness.

[I hesitate to ask if you recognize movies which contain this philosophy.]

One recent film that promotes monism is Powder, about a rejected messiah figure with superhuman intelligence and special powers. In one scene, a sheriff gives up hunting when the messiah figure "connects" him with a deer the sheriff has just shot: Enlightenment comes when the sheriff realizes he is "one" with the deer.

[Is this more than believing all animals and humans are equal (*Animal Rights*)?]

Newer films also feature plots expressing Neo-Darwinism. For example, in the computer-animated film Dinosaur, a meteor strikes the earth, forcing the dinosaurs to migrate to a new home. Along the journey, the dinosaurs fight among themselves and permit larger animals to prey on smaller ones. But then, Godawa says, a wise "Moses-like [plant-eating animal] encourages them to cooperate." They "learn that they will only survive through helping one another. Dinosaur thus embodies the theory of evolutionary psychology that cooperation" -- not competition -- "is a trait of survival of the fittest."

[Even cartoons have philosophies to promote. In Dinosaur, where is the greater lesson? With the theory of evolutionary psychology or with a character trait? Or, is the character trait embodied in the philosophy? That is, the philosophy is adapted and the cooperation is an outward manifestation of it?

Is there anything wrong with cooperation?

Desirable?

Is there anything objectionable with this philosophy?

Desirable?

Getting paranoid? 😊]

In the darkness of a theater, kids may also bump into neopaganism, Gaia worship, existentialism, and postmodernism. The question is, will they recognize these unbiblical philosophies when they see them?

[What is neopaganism?\*

What is Gaia worship?\*

What is existentialism?\*

What is Postmodernism?\*

Did you know these philosophies were unbiblical?

What makes a philosophy unbiblical?

Would you recognize them in a movie, even if you were looking for them?]

Francis Schaeffer once wrote that philosophy -- often **dismissed as irrelevant** -- is, in reality, a **powerful engine that drives cultural change**. Ivory Tower ideas filter down into popular culture, including films. There, they influence millions who often have no notion of what they're consuming along with the car chases, love scenes, and popcorn.

[Is Philosophy relevant?

Does philosophy have the power to change your society, the world?

Was philosophy born in Ancient Greece?

Are these ideas of philosophy the same as which were considered in Ancient Greece 2,500 years ago?

Why, in 2,500 years have we not all come to an agreement on just exactly "IS", instead of having so many different religions and philosophies?

By the way, who is Francis Schaeffer?]

That's why it's so important that we **teach our kids how to find the world view message in every film -- including the G-rated ones**. Reading Godawa's book, *Hollywood World views*, is a great place to start.

[Do you agree or disagree?]

The time for philosophy lessons, you see, is before our kids walk into the multiplex -- not when the lights go down.

- 
- \* Christianity, as a philosophy, becomes subordinate.  
Subordinate, and as time progresses, contaminated.
  - \* A **Neopagan** religion is a modern faith which has been recently reconstructed from beliefs, deities, symbols, practices and other elements of an ancient religion. For example, the Druidic religion is based on the faith and practices of the ancient Celtic professional class; followers of Asatru adhere to the ancient, pre-Christian Norse religion; Wiccans also trace their roots back to the pre-Celtic era in Europe. Other Neo-pagans follow Roman, Greek, Egyptian or another ancient tradition.
  - \* **Gaia** is a revival of Paganism that rejects Christianity, strives for a global religion centered on **Gaia worship** and the uniting of all life forms around the goddess of "Mother Earth". A cunning mixture of science, paganism, eastern mysticism, and feminism have made this pagan cult a growing threat to the Christian Church. **Gaia worship** is at the very heart of today's environmental policy.
  - \* **Existentialism** is the philosophy that places emphasis on individual existence, freedom, and choice.  
**Existentialism** attempts to describe our desire to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe. Unfortunately, life might be without inherent meaning (**existential atheists**) or it might be without a meaning we can understand (**existential theists**). Either way, the human desires for logic and immortality are futile. We are forced to define our own meanings, knowing they might be temporary. In this existence "**The Individual Defines Everything**".

**premodernism:** Original meaning is possessed by authority (*for example, the Catholic Church*). The individual is dominated by tradition.

**modernism:** The enlightenment-humanist rejection of tradition and authority in favour of reason and natural science. This is founded upon the assumption of the autonomous individual as the sole source of meaning and truth--the Cartesian cogito. Progress and novelty are valorized within a linear conception of history--a history of a "real" world that becomes increasingly real or objectified. One could view this as a Protestant mode of consciousness.

**postmodernism examples:** ( <http://www.xenos.org/ministries/crossroads/pmandyou.htm> ) [With an attitude! BUT, it does a far job of helping us understand more of what Postmodernism is.]

### Education

In postmodern public education, teachers are no longer transmitters of information to children. Instead, teachers facilitate children as the children construct their own knowledge. Who are we to say that western science is better than the psychoenergetics (*precognition, psychokinesis, remote viewing, etc.*) of ancient Egypt?

### Health Care

So-called alternative medical techniques were considered pure superstition a short time ago. Not any more! Now, authors like Deepak Chopra and Dolores Krieger have brought Ayurvedic Medicine and Therapeutic Touch into mainstream hospitals and nursing schools with the help of postmodern rhetorical techniques.

### Science

Have you heard people claiming that Physics proves the whole world is interconnected? Have you heard people claim that quantum physics shows that the universe is not rational? Why are top rated movies like Jurassic Park and Dances With Wolves always attacking science and western culture?

### Psychotherapy

The existence of therapists suggests that they want to seek a better state of affairs for their patients. But who determines what constitutes a "better" state of affairs? Isn't this a values judgment made by one (*the therapist*) for another (*the patient*)? It's not clear what the basis for such a judgment is, when reality is that which is constructed in the mind of the patient.

### Religion

The new tolerance in religion means never questioning the propositions of another religious point of view. But wait! There's one exception. It's okay to censure any religion arrogant enough to think it knows the truth. These are the fundamentalists. They have to be stopped before they gain the upper hand and begin persecuting other religions again. The marginalized religions, those of non-western civilizations, must be given a voice.

### History

We don't look for what happened in history any more. That will never be known, and besides, everyone's reality was different then, as now. No wonder we have today, Women's history, Gay and Lesbian History, Black History and Native American History. It's no exaggeration to say that in postmodern cultural history, each marginalized group had their own experience, their own reality. The goal of history is to give voice to the silenced, or marginalized minorities.

### Literature

We used to be naive enough to think that literature was a mode of communication: an author took pen in hand to produce a text which could communicate propositions to a reader. Now, postmodern literary theory has shifted focus of meaning from the author to the reader who produces, or constructs new meanings from the text, like someone looking at a painting.

### Biblical Interpretation

Considering the new reader-centered approaches to literature, we should not be surprised to discover that postmodern hermeneutics rules of interpretation are radically different. No longer is God in authority through his Word. Now the reader constructs meaning. What does it mean to me? is the only thing we can know.

### Law and Government

The Critical Legal Studies movement is increasingly influential. This radical reading of the law sees all law as political constructs designed to hold down the poor, women, minorities, or those of alternative sexual preference. They think judges cannot be "fair" in any objective sense, and are therefore really only engaging in the theater of justice while pursuing their own agenda.



<http://www.dfamily.com/philosophy/teach/hswtl/journal.html>

