

DC227 Weekly Response 3

DC227 402 411 Due October 6 at 8 am on D2L

Please submit as a Word file named like this: **DC227 F15 WR3 lastname, firstname**

***Demonstrate your understanding** by answering in your own words and reserving the use of quotations from the textbook as support for your statements. I encourage you to cite the original sources (the philosophers, etc.) to bolster your responses when appropriate.*

Answer in complete sentences. Proof spelling and grammar.

Your name John Berry

~~~ short essay, 46 points

(Be sure to incorporate specific details from the film in your analysis.)

How does the narrative structure of the film *Memento* contribute to the exploration of the issues of identity that are central to the film?

The narrative structure of *Memento* is very unique from other films. The story is told in fragmented pieces of Memory. The main character has memory loss that dates to his wife's rape and murder. Everything after that incident, he has short term memory loss and cannot remember. He carries photographs which he writes on to remind himself of places and people. This is an essential point in the film's exploration of identity. At one point in the film Leonard tells Teddy that "this is who he is". Teddy responds that Leonard is wrong and that is, "who he was." This is a direct examination of the role memory plays in personal identity. Leonard is on a whirlwind of a path that is created by his own decisions. While Leonard struggles to remember decisions and has to devise a unique system to remember his day to day life, the outcomes of his decisions form his everyday reality. Essentially, Leonard wakes up every day and lives the product of the outcome of the choices he has made, whether he remembers them or not. While this is true, Leonard still has a sense of self. He creates it with his notes, tattoos, and countless clues he writes. This explores how central memory is to a fluid continuity of identity. Leonard can remember everything about himself up until the murder of his wife. So it begs the question, is Leonard the same man as he was back then, or is he changing with each day and action and hundreds of minute details that will now vanish from his memory never to be reclaimed? Teddy would hope to have him believe that he is no longer the same. But Leonard cannot seem to accept that. This shows that memory is not the only component to identity. I would argue that Leonard's soul also plays a big part in it. While Leonard cannot remember what he ate for breakfast unless he writes it down, he undoubtedly feels like the same man.

~~~ from the readings and screenings (9 points per question, 54 for section)

1- What is Laplace's demon?

Laplace's demon is the first examination of "causal determinism". It details determinism with the explanation that if a human knew every moving part of the universe at every given time, then that individual's past can be determined by the laws of the universe.

2- What is human determinism? How is it different from fatalism?

Determinism differs from fatalism because it essentially states that for every human action or event there is a necessary consequence that goes along with it. This is different from fatalism because in fatalism, all events are already set to take place and inevitable. The human's actions have no influence over the outcomes in fatalism. In human determinism, the individual's actions have an effect on the outcomes.

3- What are the three traditional positions within the free will and determinism debate and what are the central tenets of each?

Free will is a choice made with conscious awareness of the causality within each individual. Free will must be a deliberate, voluntary act. Free will outcomes are inevitably what make a person's character and the individual is responsible for the outcomes. Determinism differs from free will slightly in this sense, with the fact that the outcomes of each person's actions are outside of their creation, but rather just by products of their choices.

4- How does the film *The Matrix* explore the issue of determinism? In which scene did you feel this issue reverberated most decisively?

The film *The Matrix* explores the issue of determinism by examining Neo's new life outside of the Matrix. Neo is dubbed "the chosen one" by his comrades. He is seen as a hero with a path already laid out before him that he must take in order to save Zion. This is a direct exploration of determinism because while Neo has choice whether or not to take the red or blue pill, his choice has direct consequences that go with it. I would say that either the scene where Neo is offered the choice of blue or red pill, or the scene where Neo must jump across buildings in the simulator are great examples of determinism in the film.

5- How does the film *Hilary and Jackie* explore the issue of determinism? In which scene did you feel this issue reverberated most decisively?

Hilary and Jackie explore determinism in a slightly different way. Because Hilary and Jackie tell the same events from different viewpoints, it offers a unique perspective. I think the scene that reverberates the issue most effectively is when Jackie wants to have sex with Kiffer. The consequences that result from this action differ in magnitude for each character. Kiffer and Hilary see it as manipulative and malicious and the actions Jackie takes are unavoidable for them. On the other hand, after the fact, Jackie sees things

completely differently from them. Jackie does not see her act of sex with her sister's husband as bad. The consequences for her almost zero.

6- How does the film *Memento* explore the issue of determinism? In which scene did you feel this issue reverberated most decisively?

Memento explores determinism through Leonard's experiences. The film puts a special twist on the issue because Leonard cannot remember from moment to moment. So it begs the question, if Leonard did something but cannot remember or remembers it falsely, are the consequences the same? I would have to say yes. Leonard chooses to kill Teddy Gammell, the man who murdered his wife. His choices leading up to this can be examined succinctly because the film plays memories backwards. The viewer is able to see each action's consequence and the new path the choice has catapulted Leonard onto. I think the scene that reverberates the most on this issue is when Leonard is looking at the picture of the man who he tied up in the motel. He is at the woman's house who lost someone too and he pulls out the photograph of a man with duct tape around his mouth. Leonard is initially angry because he doesn't remember if he killed the man and is starting to think that people are trying to get him to kill the wrong man. I think this is most effective because it illustrates that while Leonard is consciously making decisions about his actions. He is not aware of the outcomes that he is creating for himself. He is, in a sense, being blindly led down a path that he has created by his actions, but soon forgets.