On the serious and sad parts of *The life of Brian*

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January 2, 2019

1 Prolog: the Pythons

The film *The life of Brian* by written by the Monty Python group:

- Graham Chapman
- John Cleese
- Terry Gilliam
- Eric Idle
- Terry Jones
- Michael Palin

Directed by Terry Jones.

Terry Gilliam: ”The Pythons are perhaps a footnote in cinema history”.

1.1 We are too rude? Not true. You are too British

”Because, you see, I feel that life’s a game.
You sometimes win or loose,
and though I may
be down right now,
at least I don’t work for Jews”
The cleaning lady, from *The meaning of life* by Monty Python.

The Pythons started as a reaction to the oppressive English society. The Pythons do not approve any absolute. Hence they started killing every sacred cow there is.

1. Babies are sacred? **The Pythons: No they are not.** They wrote a sketch on killer babies.

2. Judges are sacred? **The Pythons: No they are not.** So lets write a sketch on cross-dressers homosexual judges.

3. Old ladies are sacred? **The Pythons: No they are not.** They wrote a sketch on insane killer old ladies.

4. Homosexual should be immune to criticism since they suffered so much? **The Pythons: no they should not be immune.** A typical political correct view. The Pythons were among the first to rightly understand that the political correctness movement, is a dangerous (left wing) movement that destroys our free speech. And if free speech is destroyed, we loose it all. They have been mocking political correctness as long as they existed. The following joke would not be ”approved” by the left. Brian hears for the first time that his father was a Roman. Horrified Brian asks: ”**Do you mean to say you were raped??!!**”

**Mandy: ”Well, at first, yes....”**.

The anti-semitic words of the cleaning lady in the title, completely breaking any political correctness, may sound offensive. But these lines do not make fun of Jews. They make fun of people who hate Jews. This is lost too often.

A French liberal appears after the cleaning lady and apologies in an over the top way, making fun of political correctness.

The Pythons fondly make fun of Homosexuals in every opportunity. They do not hate homosexuals. Graham Chapman, a member of the group, was Gay.

5. Army officers are men of honor. **The Pythons: No they are not.** In the film *The meaning of life* they show soldiers being butchered while the officers do nothing but care for themselves ignoring simple soldiers who are dying like flies around them.

6. The Jews suffered a lot and so should be immune to critic?

**The Pythons: No, they should not be immune to critic.** They fondly make jokes of Jews. Many times.
In *The life of Brian* the Jews are presented as hagglers. Splitters. Over the slightest differences.

Consider this scene that takes place in Passover. The Jews and Pontious Pilate speak. Pilate, who can not pronounce ”R” (he is an historical figure. Him replacing R with W is just a joke and not based on any evidence. In particular, they were not talking English in the land of Israel at the time). He wants to release (OK not release. wealese) someone and asks for suggestions. This is a long tradition. The Jews could not care less about saving someone from death. **It is an amazing cruelty from the Jewish side to play games instead of saving a person. This is a sad and unethical.** It is interesting that people note the joke, but not the terrible immorality of the action of the Jews here. The Jews get a pass because ”its a comedy”. They just want to make fun of him hearing him saying names that start with ”R”.


Pilate: All wight I will wealse Wobewt. The Jews are laughing so hard that some of them can not even stand. They just laugh their belly out on the sand.

The guards: we do not have a Robert.

Pilate to the Jews: listen we do not have a Wobewt.

The Jews: Release Roger.

Pilate: all wight I shall wealease Woger.

The guards: we do not have a Roger sir.

Pilate gets angry and says a line I use a lot in my life

No Wobewt no Woger????!!!!!

I inserted this answer to my dayly practice. If I try to solve something and I try one way, and it does not work, a second way, and it does not work, etc I tell myself: No Wobewt no Woger????!!

7. Lamber-jacks are tough men? **the Pythons: No they are not.** They wrote a song about a lamber jack who, ”wants to be a girly, just like my dear papa”.

8. Respect authority in society. **No we should not. Authority corrups and absolute authority corrups in an absolute way.** They made fun of authority from the first moment and never stopped. For example: Self-Defense, against Fresh Fruit. Cleese plays a Sargent in the army who teaches a bunch of soldiers a lesson of **How to defend yourself when attacked with a banana.**

The Sargent says: Now, it’s quite simple to defend yourself against a man armed with a banana. First of all you force him to drop the
banana; then, second, you eat the banana, thus disarming him. You have now rendered him helpless. The rest of the sketch is both cruel and silly (the Sargent shoots and kills one of the soldiers).

In a recurring motive an idiotic Colonel, appeared many times out of the blue and may stop the sketch by saying that its too silly to continue.

Here is their anti war sketch called ”The worlds funniest joke”. As usual, very very clever. Much more clever than funny.

A fellow invents a joke so funny, that anyone who hears/sees it dies laughing from cardiac arrest. Its that funny. So this fellow who invented the joke reads it and dies.

His mother comes and is horrified to see her son dead. But then she reads the joke an laughs so hard that she dies from a cardiac arrest.

The army finds a way to use this joke as a weapon. Each soldier is given one word of the joke, written on very big pieces of paper. When the soldiers hold the papers up, and are aligned properly, the whole joke can be seen. The enemy reads the joke and dies from heart attack.

Their sketches have a point. Almost always. In this case the point is: war is a joke on our expense.

In general, the Pythons dislike strong characters and think they are dangerous.

9. A person should not talk on sex in public? The Pythons: there is nothing shameful about sex.

In one of their sketches (if it can be called a sketch) a man goes to a policeman and asks him for the time. Its 14:30 the policeman answers. Then they stop. Stay in silence for a few second and then the man says to the policeman:

Should we go to my house?

John Cleese found this sketch funny.

In *The meaning of life* a teacher gives a sex education class, with his wife. Both remove their cloth and have sex from start to orgasm nude, in front of the students. The students are not impressed and are bored by the lesson. This is not talking on sex in public but rather having sex in public.

No one expected the Pythons with their English humor to make it in the USA. But they had a huge success. Because of their contempt to authority, I think.

The Pythons are credited as changing the humor in television. They defied many other axioms. Their sketches had no punch lines, Circular sketches.
Stream of consciousness sketches. Combining highly intellectual humor, with some of the most infantile jokes I have ever seen.

The Pythons think that boxing, wrestling etc is garbage. So they do a sketch of a person fighting himself. This is not funny at all. This is a clever sketch. The Pythons do have sketches which are funny. But this is rare.

Sketches were mixed with each other or ended in the middle. In the middle of a sketch it may be stopped as the above Colonel appears and claims the sketch is too silly to go on. Sketches could end by lines taken from previous sketches. Their humor was total anarchy.

But since it was so new and daring, it was highly controversial. They were fiercely attacked. The attacks amused the group. They could not care less about what critics (and after *The life of Brian* Bishops) thought on them.

### 1.2 One mind and soul

The film was very hard to make because the two leaders of the group Cleese and Terry Jones (who directed) had completely different objectives. Terry Jones wanted (and did) insert a very serious and sad part in the film. The subject of this essay.

John Cleese wanted to make a pure comedy. Cleese fought back against the serious elements of the film. This resulted in a complex mess. A film which attacks itself.

The other Pythons called Cleese and Jones, respectively, the brain and heart of the group. Cleese was the comic genius. He is a natural anthropologist for what makes people laugh. Large part of his life Cleese held a troublesome cooperation with the late Graham Chapman (Chapman is the one playing Brian in *The life of Brian*). Chapman was the best actor so was given the two main parts in "The holly grail" and "The life of Brian". Chapman contributed, in his joint work with Cleese but certainly not a lot. Until the end of the seventies Chapman was a heavy alcoholist. You see in "The holly grail" that it’s hard for him to remember his lines. In addition, Chapman was lazy. Cleese did not care for this cooperation that was forced on him, and that the credit is given to both.

The pair Cleese-Chapman started at the College days. Cleese: "Our humor back then was to show a couple of people hitting each other". A typical scene written by Cleese is the limbless knight scene of *The holly grail*. Only he could have written such a "cruel" scene. Because the scene is like a cartoon, in fact it is not cruel at all.

Presenting a bunch of people hitting each other is funny because English gentleman do not do that.
According to Cleese, British do not discuss emotions in public. It is inappropriate. They say all the time “How do you do?” without meaning it. Therefore every conversation carries a risk. You are afraid to the inappropriate. You ask: ”How do you do sir?” and get a response: ”My mother died this morning”. What can you answer to that when emotions are out of question.

Cleese violent humor is in a bitter reaction to the repression of the British society. The brilliant intellectual humor in The life of Brian is, I guess, mostly due to Cleese. But he has a lot of anger inside him (which he denies) which made the The life of Brian very violent.

The following is an important argument between Cleese and Jones that dates to the immediate time after The Life of Brian was out. Cleese does not see blasphemy in The life of Brian, nor heresy (attacking the church). Cleese said: I am willing to defend The life of Brain as a purely religious film. I agree with Cleese. Jones claimed that the film is heresy, which is completely untrue. Things are not so simple between the two. This is because Cleese is a religious person and did not care for the accusation of heresy. Cleese was watchful against any type of blasphamy in their work.

2 The controversy the film created

Woody Allen: Do you disagree with my correct opinions?

2.1 Comedies are not that important

The life of Brian is regarded as a light comedy. The reconstruction of the period is good. In the Rotten Tomatoes site the film is rated %96 fresh, amazingly high for a comedy. The film was chosen many times ”best comedy of all time”.

I want to look on the serious and sad parts of the film. Any reader should judge if I am making sense.

2.2 Offended

The life of Brian turned out to be very offensive for the right wing. Many important Bishops attacked the film. The Pythons were amused by that. A disc of the film can be rented or bought at the usual store. The disc is inside a cover. Usually, the cover carries the positive reviews on the film. This film may be unique. On the box of the rental of The life of Brian, only insults by leading Bishops appear. Thus only insults appear. One of them claims
that "If you like the film you are mentally ill". This is kind. There are much worse comments.

The conservatives went on an all out war against the film. The controversy made the film a huge hit and made the Pythons very rich. The Pythons publicly thanked the conservatives for their help. One indeed should thank those who make you rich. Even the conservatives will tell you so.

They all liked the teaching of Jesus Terry Jones said: The things Jesus said are fine. He was a very nice person. Who should object to "you should love your neighbor"?

They show Jesus twice in the film so that it will be clear that Brian is not Jesus. This did not work. Conservatives: Brian is Jesus. The Pythons: No, Brian is not Jesus. Jesus appears twice so you can tell they are not the same person. The conservatives: No. Brian is Jesus. We know what you mean....

No discussion is possible with such answers.

3 Why is this film a footnote

I do not know. All I can do is discuss some of the serious and sad parts of the film. Among others:

1. Tragedy and Comedy as defined by Aristotle.

2. The life of Brian as a tragedy.

3. The life of Brian as a comedy.

4. Tragedy wins.

5. Test of rationality, reverse logic, and "There must be some illogical explanation for this".

6. Test of rationality: the bearded ladies, the haggler, and "Its written this way".

7. Can we know anything about god? Does god intervenes in our world? Umberto Eco, The name of the rose and universal religion. the universal leaders and their special privileges,

8. Why is the life of Brian so similar to the life of Jesus? Is Brian holly? Is Jesus god?

10. Scenes that fight each other.
11. True love and its demise
12. Why does everybody betrays Brian?
13. Irrationality and fear as the devil
14. The life of Brian as a religious film: a religion compatible with the film.
15. Extreme left and right political movements, universal ideas of the left, self hatred, the People Front of Judea as a left wing movement.
16. The right, violence as a solution, thoughts control, glorious deaths.
17. The sad case of Simon.
18. Ben, the confused prisoner.
19. Fatalism in The life of Brian
20. Good people have a sense of humor, evil people do not.
21. The life of Brian an existential world.

Should the film The life of Brian be a footnote in cinemas history, as Terry Gilliam said?

The film was accused of bad taste. What does this even mean? The Catholic church killed a huge amount of people in its history. It is worth than the film. Why not look at the serious part of the film? We look at the funny parts of dramas. This film is based on logic. Not the strong suit of critics. I know that my essay will not be read and even if read will not change anything. Appreciation for the film, will come. I am sure, But a very long time from now.

4 Tragedy: Ask Aristotle

Woody Allen: The people in the world are divided into the sad and the miserable. So if you are sad you should be happy as you are relatively better off. From ”Annie Hall”
4.1 Aristotle on tragedy

I dont care if the film is funny. Because "Brian" is a sad film. And it does not cut us much slack.... A fierce criticism on our illogical and coward behavior of humans. It describes a world with no hope. The end of the film gives a modest (if not silly) solution to the despair. Maybe the film is a tragedy? Lets check.

4.2 Heroes

God does not play dice with the world. "Albert Einstein"

Aristotle: A drama is a story on a well to do or important person who falls for reasons that are beyond his powers

One thing common to the heroes of the tragic tales: they have strong will and defy the gods/destiny like Odysseus. They are larger than life. There is some sad heroic feeling of man who does not give up facing high forces. And at the end of the tale, he becomes a wiser man. He went trough a transformation and learned and understood his own capabilities and limitations. He also learned what are the important things for his life. The story of Moses who took the sons of Israel to Kennan, but did not enter Kennan himself is a good example of a tragic tale. Why do tragic things happen to a good person? The Greeks at the time did not think that if a person finds tragedy, is guilty. One of the worse Even if it not always your fault, some things were regarded as terrible in Greek time. The worse may have been killing your own father. The second worse: sleeping with you mother. The famous Oedipus story is an unavoidable tragedy that must happen, since the oracle spoke. Nothing Oedipus will do, can avoid what the oracle predicted. Even though Oedipus actively tries to avoid the disaster. I will describe shortly one of the most important tragedies ever written.

4.3 Hamlet

Woody Allen: "years ago I wrote a book about my mother called The castrating Zionist. From Manhattan

Some background: In Denmark, recently the king, the father of Prince Hamlet dies. And to the disdain of Hamlet, his mother Gertrude does not wait much and marries his uncle Claudius who becomes the new king.

Hamlet meets a ghost. It turns out to be his father. His father tells him that Claudius killed him by pouring poison into his ear.
He asks Hamlet: avenge me!

Polonius is a top adviser to the king and has a daughter named Ophelia. Ophelia loves Hamlet. But both her father Polonius and her brother Laertes say that a prince can not decide who he is to marry and discourage her against acting on her love.

Claudius tells two childhood friends of Hamlet Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to spy after Hamlet. Hamlet understands that they only pretend to be his friends. He then goes into a famous rant on the low quality of the human nature.

Hamlet kills Polonius by mistake (he thinks he is killing his uncle). This shows strong will. Eventually, this causes Ophelia to kill herself.

Another brave act is when Hamlet Rosencrantz and Guildenstern take a ship to England. When their ship is attacked by pirates, Hamlet returns to Denmark, leaving Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to die; It is not easy to cause the death of two childhood friends. Hamlet is also brave enough to pretend he does not love Ophelia.

Hamlet writes a play. The play is a reincarnation of the way Claudius killed his father. A brave act. When the actor poisons the king through his ear (in the play) Claudius runs from the room. Hamlet, was not sure the ghost is real, becomes convinced that Claudius killed his father.

Claudius makes a devilish plan to kill Hamlet by convincing Laertes and Hamlet into a fencing fight in honor of Laertes father that Hamlet killed by mistake. Claudius had a double sword plan. First, he gives Laertes a poisoned swords. Second, in case Hamlet wins, he prepares a glass of wine full of poison for Hamlet to drink after his win.

Hamlet is willing to get into a fencing duel. He is brave.

When the fight starts, Hamlet does well. His mother drinks from the poisoned wine, to his honor her child, and dies. Laertes slashes Hamlet with his poisoned blade. But before Hamlet dies he kills Laertes and then kills Claudius. A lot of action and brave acts for a person hesitates so much. Hence Hamlet is in line with the strong will Greek
characters. Do not tell me that Hamlet hesitates because he is a weak character. It is so untrue and unfair.

But what strong dark forces create the tragedy? Every tragedy has some evil force causing this tragedy as the gods in Oedipus. Hamlet has no gods in it. My opinion. Hamlet hesitates what to do with his uncle and does not act for so long because of his Oedipal complex (the most frequent explanation). Observe that the uncle Claudius is incestuous, like Oedipus (sleeps with the wife of his king brother and kills his brother).

The evil force that Oedipus can not overcome is his Oedipal feeling towards his mother. His uncle is a father figure. And killing your father is hard. In addition Hamlet is an idealist and wants to be sure he does the right thing.

Of course this is one of a hundred if not more short interpretations. Many say that Hamlet is crazy. Who talks to a ghost. And much more.

4.4 Sophie’s choice: does the devil leave you any choice?

The film Sophie’s choice starts at 1947. Stingo is from the south, a naive virgin who wants to be a a writer.

He makes two friends. Sophie Zawistowski, originally from Poland and her lover Nathan Landau. A Jew.

Sophie was married before but her husband and father and two children were killed by the Nazi during the war. Nathan is jealous violent at times, at times abusive. But many times charming, and even cute.

Sophie had a lot of dark secrets from the Nazi time. Her father was a Nazi. And he called Sophie: worthless. And of course, she looks at herself this way. But a much darker secret awaits.

One time, Nathan becomes super violent. Sophie and Stingo escape the violence to a hotel. They make love and Stingo talks about having children.

Sophie tells him not to talk about children with her. It turns out that in Auschwitz the Nazi animals forced her to choose: Only one of her two children will live, or both will dies. She must choose whom of the two will live, and who will die. She chose to save
her boy. This creates a destiny. Sophie leaves Stingo, returns to Nathan and they both commit suicide by taking cyanide. Why not stay with stingo?

Nathan is not her boyfriend. He is her son. She takes care of him. He is irresponsible. Unpredictable. Sometimes cruel and unreasonable. Sometimes charming and sort of cute. He is a child. She must defend him, by destiny. Like the time she chose her boy to live in the camps. The high forces here are the internal psychological forces of deep guilt. And if Nathan chooses death, she must agree.

4.5 Who is the devil?

The Nazi are the devil in the tragedy of Sophie. Hamlet uncle was the devil in Hamlet. And in Oedipus the oracle has spoken.

A good question is: If Brian is a tragedy, who is the devil in the film? Well, it will take us a very long time to find this out.

5 Comedy

"If it bends, its funny. If it breaks it is not. Comedy is tragedy with the hindsight of time". From the Crimes and misdemeanors” by Woody Allen

Here is the way Aristotle defined comedy:

Aristotle: comedy talks on simple character and should have a good ending. A comedy should be a story of the rise in fortune of a nice fellow. The comic characters are common (average) people. There is nothing heroic about them. They tell the stories of ordinary life.

Moreover in a comedy there are no strong forces. No gods, no strong internal forces. No fatalism, no destiny. We are born into nothing for no reason. And we return to nothing. Things can be explained and are not mysterious. In a comedy there is no presence of gods or divine truth. We are alone. Nobody is watching over us.
The life of Brian as a tragedy

A tragedy is a "drama" about a well to do person who falls for reasons that are internal or external". So, the first thing to decide is: is Brian a common man? Is he a hero, like in a tragedy, or an average man like in comedy? It seems that Brian must be best described as a very unusual person, starting from his birth onward.

He is a hero. Consider how related is Brian is to Jesus.

1. Brian is born at the same time as Jesus. So when the main part of the movie takes place, he has the same age as Jesus. Precisely, he is 33, the age Jesus died. This is important as it means that Brian was crucified exactly with Jesus, in Passover, like the Christian story says.

2. Brian is also born very close (physically) to Jesus (just a few house separated them in the same town. The town of Bethlehem in the old Palestine).

3. Brian is mistaken to be Jesus and blessed by the three wise man. The same 3 wise man who actually came to bless Jesus.

4. The last hours of Brian including the crucifixion parallel the last hours of Jesus.

5. Brian is mistakenly considered a messiah by the masses against his will. For them he is far from being an ordinary person.

6. High forces and destiny: Brian constantly struggles. On the cross, he shouts angrily on the P. F. J. and only gives up after Judith betrays him. There is a strong sense of high forces and destiny in the way Brian tries so strongly to prevent disaster, to tell people not to fight each other and to be free. He fails at every occasion especially in his wish NOT being mistaken for messiah. Its a stronger force than him: the film clearly hints that there is no way he could convince his followers to leave him alone.

7. Greek and Shakespearian motives: Brian is betrayed by his "Brothers and sisters" from the People front of Judea. Why brothers and sisters? The People front of Judea members call each other "brothers" and sisters.
8. Brian is also betrayed by his mother, and by his loved one Judith.... A lot of betrayal and disasters within the family. Kind of reminds of Hamlet and Odysseus. A bit of a Greek tragedy, or to the very least Shakespeare’s motives, don’t you think?

9. The film ends in a terrible way for Brian. More like the way the plays Oedipus or Hamlet end then as a comedy. Brian is going to be crucified. To die a horrible death. If a comedy has to have a good ending like Aristotle said, Brian is not a comedy.

10. His mother is called ”Mandy”. Why is it so close to Marry? For a reason.

11. When Brian says to the ex-leper: ”There is no pleasing some people” the leper answers ”Thats what Jesus said”!. Why add this line? Its not funny. But it show another similarity between Jesus and Brian.

12. ”The life of Brian”: The lives of Brian and of Jesus share some similarities that are very unlikely to happen, given the time the film takes place, and the circumstances of the mother of Brian (she is a ”single mom”; Has no husband).

Jesus was born in Bet Lehem. (This means ”The house of the bread” in Hebrew). Brian was born at the same day very close to the place Jesus was born.

Herod was afraid that Jesus will replace him as king. Herod considered himself Jewish. He ordered to kill every baby under 2 years old after the time Jesus was born. The myth is that the family of Jesus escaped from Herod to Egypt and when a grown man, Jesus returned to Palestine and preached in the north part (the Galilee) of Palestine.

All of a sudden, we see that Brian is again at the same place as Jesus. But, even if you use a car (and cars were very rare at the time of Jesus) it takes several hours to get from Bet Lehem to the Galilee.

How come Brian is at the same place as Jesus?. Again? Why does the life of Brian parallel the life of Jesus so much? How
did a single mother with her ("small"?) child make such a trip from Bet Lehem to the Galilee?

It is one very long foot or horse ride to make. Why did Mandy did that?

We know exactly were Brian lives. The guard asks the people on the cross: "Who is Brian of Nazarat?". Nazarat. Same as Jesus. Is this a divine coincidence?

13. The mother of Jesus, Maria, was not married to Joseph in the usual sense. Like Mandy, she was a ”single mom”.

14. The governor of Judea: The Pythons go to length to show that actually Brian is sent for crucifixion by the same person who sent Jesus for crucifixion: Pontious Pilate.

The leader who says the unforgettable line ”What’s so funny about Bigus Dickus”? is Pontious Pilate. The P.F.J. explicitly mention this when planning the kidnap of his wife. This person is non fictional (he truly existed). We know from history that he was the governor of Judea in the time of Christ.

Pontious Pilate is condemned by Christianity as the one who sent Jesus to his death. It is made clear to us that Brian was sent to crucifixion by the same man.

15. The spaceship scene: This scene was taken as a spoof on star-wars, which opened 2 years before ”Brian”. A typical lazy mistake.

Upon returning to earth, a person tells Brian something which explains the scene: ”You lucky bastard!”. Why is Brian lucky? Well, he was about to be killed falling from a very high place and ”something” which is ”out of this world” and ”out of the ordinary” saved him. Perhaps it deserves the name ”A miracle?”

The scene with the spaceship talks about miracles. It contrasts the rest of the film which is rather almost completely realistic. But if god is active like some Christian think by mistake, it must be god who sent the aliens to save Brian, since Brian is Holy. Freud said that the believe in god is an infantile neurosis. When we grow up we realize that our father is not all powerful as we thought. The shock of this discovery
makes us look for an alternative father. Of course, since we create god, and not vise-versa. out god is merciful. And an all powerful one, naturally. In addition, our god must be just. Some expect that if, say, a young child or any innocent person is about to die god must act and save the child.

A rather well known person, the famous intellectual G.W. Bush, said that god made him president, and also said that god helped him decide which prisoner to execute and whom not (in Texas as a governor).

For G. W. Bush god is an active fellow..... This makes G. W. Bush is cysofrenic. Mentally ill. A person who does not understand reality as it is. Everybody who thinks he understands what god did and why is cysofrenic. Its the only kind of cysofrenic, they do not but you in a mental hospital for it.

God sends the spaceship to save holly Brian. As it must be the case with divine people. Just so that W will be happy.

So is Brian divine or not?

Surely, this scene makes fun of this irrational concept. You want a miracle?! I will give you an idiotic one..... say the Pythons.

On the other hand, it happened. So ”Brian is holy” is a legitimate interpretation.

16. Welease Brian: The scene with Pilate asking the Jews whom to release goes back to the Christian scripts (again, validating them). Recall that we know it is Passover time.

In Passover, governor of Judea release of a prisoner. The scripts mention that Pilate gave the Jews a choice of releasing Jesus or a notorious criminal named Barabbas.

The Jews have chosen to release Barabbas (and payed a lot for that for years later.... In one of the passions it says that the blood of Jesus will be on the Jews and on their descendants). Now comes a parody on ”Spartacus” (a film directed by 30 years old Stanley Kubrick).

Since all the messiah thing of Brian is a mistake, the governor releases by mistake a person called (in the script) mister Cheeky and not Brian.
17. Brian says things which are too too close to what is written in the old testament.

- Brian: Don’t pass Judgment on other people, or you might get judge yourself. This is taken from Matt 7:1-2.
- Brian: Yes. Consider the lilies... Oh, well, the birds, then. Well, have they got jobs? The birds, they do all right, don’t they? Okay. And you’re much more important than they are, right? So what do you worry about? There you are! See?
  Similar to 57 cf. Matt 6:25–34.
- Brian: Ah...look, there was this man, and he had two servants... And he gave them some talents... And he gave them some tale...wait a minute, were there three? Three Well steward actually.
- Brian: Ehm...mmbmp oh, now hear this: blessed are they... Gourd man: Three! Brian: ...who can birth their neighbor’s ox, for they shall inhibit their girth. And to them only shall be given...to them only...shall...be...given...

7 The life of Brian as a comedy

"The gods too are fond of a good joke.” Aristotle

7.1 The absurd

A strong claim that the film is a comedy can be made because of the countless absurd situations in the film.

1. The argument between a person called Mr Cheeky in the script with another man who is called big-nose. When asked what Jesus said Mr Cheeky answers "I don’t know. I was too busy talking to Big Nose”. Mr big nose gets furious and tries
to attack Mr Cheeky, cynically suggest that Big nose will wait because Maybe Jesus will say next: ”Bless all those with big nose”.

Jesus gives at the time the sermon on the mount. Its considered by many one of its greatest speeches and an important moment. While this takes place, a totally idiotic fight starts between Mr Cheeky and Mr big nose. Its so absurd to look on them fighting when Jesus gives his important speech.

2. The scene in which birded women are about to stone a person (women are not allowed to do so) is redicolous.

3. The absurd talk with the haggler.

4. Brian paint (in Latin) ”Romans go home” on the palace. Instead of jailing him, for subversive acts against the empire, its more important to this guard to give Brian a lesson in grammar. Well that is insane.

5. Check this dialogue:
   Brian: Have I got a big nose, Mum?
   Mandy: Oh, stop thinking about sex.
   Strange answer, strange woman.

6. Loretta super absurd wish to have a baby

7. The Roman soldiers looking inside the P.F.J quarters. All of the group is hiding in plain sight. But the soldiers, absurdly, do not catch any of them. Then the soldiers come back claiming that there is a place they have not looked, and come out and their leader says: We found a spoon sir!

I use the line ”We found a spoon sir” whenever someone does or says something completely unimportant instead of what the person was asked to do. Like if a five year old dies of cancer, and at the funeral a person says: ”look how pretty he is” I will probably say (to myself): ”We found a spoon sir!”. The absurd situations fill the film.
7.2 Comedy is related to logic

Funny people are almost always smart. The Pythons are brilliant. But this was the reason tragedy was something they did only once. Only once had they have something sad in a film. In *The life of Brian*, the humor of the Pythons is very logical. Their work is related to philosophy. The Pythons talk many times of famous philosophers. Here is their song which claims that many philosophers are drunk:

Immanuel Kant was a real piss-ant who was very rarely stable,
Heidegger, Heidegger was a boozy beggar who could drink you under the table,
David Hume could out-consume Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel,
And Wittgenstein was a beery swine who was twice as sloshed as Schlegel.
There's nothing Nietzsche couldn't teach yer 'bout the raising of the wrist,
Socrates himself was permanently pissed.

John Stewart Mill, of his own free will,
on half a pint of shandy was particularly ill,
Plato, they say, could stick it away, half a crate of whisky every day,
Aristotle, Aristotle was a bugger for the bottle,
Hobbes was fond of his dram,
And Rene Descartes was a drunken fart: "I drink, therefore I am."
Yes, Socrates himself is particularly missed -
A lovely little thinker, but a bugger when he’s pissed.

The "Argument ministry" sketch explains the process of logical deduction. The late Chapman was a doctor, and Cleese studied law, Palin studied literature, etc. But they all liked logic and philosophy (that is based on logic).

It's rare that a comic group is so educated people. Logic comes from math. And math is not life, as the Pythons know well. In math what is correct is correct in the absolute sense. But not in life. Clamming life is like math will lead to fanatic behavior. In fact thinking that you know the absolute truth, may make you a fanatic person. Therefore, logic is important but also dangerous. So rationality is also made fun of. So that it will not become an absolute.
But you have a good tool against the fanatics. Mocking them makes their case crumble. This was the initial reason for the creation of the group. And since they never did anything serious, everybody knew that Brian is but a comedy. Bad mistake. But sill.

7.3 Maybe Brian is a regular simple man?

If the above is true, then the film is much more comedy than tragedy. The problem is that both cases are made.

1. They make fun of Brian. Physically. He runs in a silly way with his long limbs. Brian looses a shoe. Runs with one shoe. Enters many situations which make him look like an idiot (like naked in front of a huge many people for example).

2. The song which starts the movie:
   1) Brian. The babe they called 'Brian’, He grew,...
      grew, grew, and grew. Grew up to be,
      grew up to be, a boy called 'Brian’, A boy called 'Brian’.
   2) He had arms... and legs... and hands... and feet,
      This boy... whose name was 'Brian’.
      And he grew,... grew, grew, and
      grew Grew up to be
      Yes, he grew up to be A teenager called 'Brian’
      A teenager called 'Brian’.
   3) And his face became spotty.
      Yes, his face became spotty.
      And his voice dropped down low
      And things staring to grow
      On young Brian and show
      He was certainly no girl named 'Brian’, No a girl named 'Brian’.
   4) And he started to shave
And have one ohe wrist
And want to see girls
And go out and get pissed,
5) A man called 'Brian'. This man called 'Brian'. The man they called 'Brian' This man called 'Brian'
The next and missing step of the song is that Brian grew up to be "A god named Brian"
A god? A man with a spotty face, that has to withstand such lines as: things started to grow on young Brian and show he is no girl named Brian. People will not usually speak of Jesus that way. Not mention his private parts.
Have one of the wrist?" This means get drunk. Or like the songs puts it go out and get pissed”.
Jesus was never drunk. Never thought on sex. How can Brian be like Jesus?
After all Brian makes love to Judith, she says: You were great. Brian: you were not so bad yourself! There is a confusion here. Brian talks on the sex but Judith on the speech he just gave. Jesus never had sex.
3. The cartoon in the opening credits may serve as a further warning. This cartoon was made by the talented Terry Gilliam. One of his strange images shows a sort of an angel that gets up high, too high, and is burned by the sun; a very direct hint of what happens to the overly presuming; overly proud; people that want to be heros.
4. Mandy (his mother. Not Marry. Mandy) hits Brian when he is an adult.
5. Brian gets a humiliating lesson in correct grammar by a Roman guard.
6. The ultimate evidence: At one point in the movie, Mandy, the frightening mother of Brian tells him his father actually was a Roman:
The scene continues like this: Brian: Who was him? Mandy: Heh. Nortius Maximus his name was. Hmm. Promised me the known world he did. I was to be taken to Rome, House
by the Forum. Slaves. Asses’ milk. As much gold as I could eat. Then, he, having his way with me had... voom! Like a rat out of an aqueduct.

Brian: The bastard! Mandy: Yeah. So, next time you go on about the 'bloody Romans’, don’t forget you’re one of them.

Brian: I’m not a Roman, Mum, and I never will be! I’m a Kike! A Yid! A Hebe! A Hook-nose! I’m Kosher, Mum! I’m a Red Sea Pedestrian, and proud of it!

What a proud person is this Brian! He has what is commonly called ”principles” or ”moral values”. Like a hero should. He is not one to sell his truth. He even is willing to accepts the not so polite names Jews are called by, like kike, yid, Hebe, and Hook-nose. He is proud to be a Jew. He will NEVER be a Roman.

Indeed, even when meeting the P.F.J. Brian presents himself as Brian Cohen (even though he knows Cohen is not his true father). But ”never”, is a relatively long time: When Brian is caught by the Romans, he forgets his Jewish heritage, and his Jewish pride. Without any hesitation, Brian tries to claim he is a Roman. The scene goes as follows:

The Governor (Pontious Pilate): Now, Jewish wapscallion. (Recall, Pontious Pilate the governor of Yehuda replaces R with W). Brian: I’m not Jewish. I’m a Roman. The governor: A Woman?

Brian: No, no. Roman.

The panicked guard strikes Brian.... The governor: So, your father was a Woman. Who was he?

Brian: He was a centurion in the Jerusalem Garrisons. The governor: Weally? What was his name?

Brian: 'Naugtius Maximus’. Unfortunately, fate intervened again here. This silly name of the father of Brian that sounds like ”The most naughty” causes troubles. But the point here is this: would a hero so easily betray his faith without a fight?

7. Are things here really crucial, serious, predetermined, cruel? The ending (see later) makes fun of looking at things as tragic (gives the opposite perspective). Every ”high and mighty”
issue (almost), like the struggle (for freedom!) against the Romans is not taken seriously. The P.F.J. are described as an empty intellectual group. If freedom is so important, why the P.F.J. posed like that?

8 The surprising win of tragedy

8.1 Why does tragedy win?

Tragedy and comedy fight here. This is the fight of Cleese and Jones. The film fights against itself for that reason.

Tragedy wins. What is the focal point of the movie? The thing that makes Brian tick. Why is Brian doing so many things like writing silly things on the palace walls, running, hiding, listening to empty propaganda of the P.F. J. group leaders, trying to convince crazy opposing groups not to kill each other, etc? He is just your usual person. Does not have any special ideas or ideals (not in a fanatic way, anyway). He has no passion for being a leader. When he is forced to give a speech, before turning into Messiah, see how much effort the "consider the lilies" speech causes him. He has no natural leadership skills. Why all that? Something that never happened with the Pythons happens here. Almost like a sacred cow. Something that they are no willing to mock. The love off Brian To Judith.

8.2 No hope for Brian

"Do leave any hope, you entering". Dante

In the model I want to adopt here, love for individuals is what makes life worth living. Brian does not care (too much) about the fights with the Romans. When trying to get accepted to the P.F.J, Brian says that he hates the Romans "as much the next guy". But he says this, because he wants to be with Judith. Even at that moment, so important for him, he does not say that he hates the Romans MORE than others. Brian is a moderate even when he tries to be fanatic:

Brian (to the P.F.J): can I join your group?
Reg: No. Piss off.

Brian: I didn’t want to sell this stuff. It is only a job. I hate the Romans as much as anybody.


Judith: Are you sure?

Brian: Oh, dead sure. I hate the Romans already.

Reg: Listen. If you really wanted to join the P.F.J., you’d have to really hate the Romans.

Brian: I do!

Reg: Oh, yeah? How much?

Brian: A lot!

A lot?! That is the best Brian can do? This is not an extreme thing to say. Not at all. Brian is not good with extreme hate and with extremes in general.

Brian does not seem to care for political issues too much. Right after the temple in the mount speech, Brian looks at Judith with longing eyes. Brian falls immediately and strongly in love with Judith. At one point, Brian and Judith make love. But at the end the love is lost. They were lovers only for one occasion. Brian TRIES to tell Judith he loves her. He cant. Judith breaks his speech and immediately after that (very symbolic) Brian is caught by the Romans. He was not even able to tell her one time: "I love you". Not once before dying. She will never know that Brian loves her (Brian is about to be killed on the cross when the movie ends). Why the betrayals by his "brothers” and "sisters” mother and Judith? Why did love loose? Why did Brian loose hope?

This question (and its answer) is central here. Besides this love of Brian, there is only insanity going on. Brian lost tragically. How, and why did it happen? And how can we change it, if at all? And whose fault is it? And especially: what are the strong forces that make this happen? And if it is a tragedy, then who is the devil?

We have to see the extent of the failure. Brian is symbolic. He is not just Brian. Being a simple not intellectual or especially ambitious fellow, a fellow with love and good intentions. Brian is a symbol of the simple person. Those who do not want to create
a revolution, even if they believe in god like Brian does. Not left wing, not right wing. Just plane simple people. Non racist, non ideological in the fanatic sense. Brian has good intentions. A truly kind person.

This film states that Brian never stood a chance. The world will make sure his love will fail. All his world will crumble. Any reason to live is destroyed. If there is no hope to this (typical) love, and the rest are phony lies, what keeps us from destroying ourselves?

According to the Pythons, eventually we will destroy ourselves. Why live a life that has no comfort at all? The end of Brian on the cross is the end of hope. The end of logic and reason. The end of love. A bleak future awaits not for Brian. For all of us.

9 Test of rationality

9.1 The logical deduction process and its pitfalls

All men are mortal. Socrates was a man. Hence all men are Socrates”. From the movie ”Love and war” by Woody Allen

I will present an extreme case that the Pythons make fun of logic, the tool they believe so strongly in. They believe in logic but even this can not be done in a fanatic way. Nothing is absolute.

Recall the scene of the witch in The holly grail”: A large village crowd wants to burn a woman that they claim is a witch. A wise man talks to the crowd logically:

Wise man: Quiet! Quiet! Quiet! Quiet! There are ways of telling whether she is a witch.

First villager: Are there?
Second Villager: ah??
First villager: What are they?
Crowd: Tell us! Tell us!...
Wise man: Tell me. What do you do with witches?
Second villager: Burn!
First villager: Burn!
Crowd: Burn! Burn them up! Burn!...
Wise Man: and what do you burn apart from witches?
First villager: More witches!
Third villager: Shh!
Second villager: Wood!
Wise man: So, why do witches burn?
Third Villager:....... 'Cause they’re made of... wood?
Wise man: Good!.
Crowd: Oh, yeah. Oh.
Wise man: So, how do we tell whether she is made of wood?
First villager: Build a bridge out of her.
Wise man: But can you not also make bridges out of stone?
First villager: Oh, yeah.
Wise man: Does wood sink in water?
First villager: No. No.
Second villager: No, it floats! It floats!
First villager: Throw her into the pond!
Crowd: The pond! Throw her into the pond!
Wise-man: What also floats in water?
First villager: Bread!
Second villager: Apples!
Third villager: Uh, very small rocks!
First villager: Cider!
Second villager: gravy!
First villager: Cherries!
Second villager: Mud!
Third villager: Uh, churches! Churches!
Second villager: Lead! Lead!
King Arthur interrupts and says: A duck!
Crowd: oohh!
Wise man: Exactly. So, logically...

First villager: If she weighs the same as a duck,... she’s made of wood!

Wise man: And therefore?

Second villager: A witch!

First villager: A witch!

Crowd: A witch! A witch!...

Point taken. If you abuse logic you can get a ”proof” that, if a woman weights the same as a duck then she is a witch. This is an idiotic deduction process and is super silly.

Logical people are not immune to cruelty. Because logic is neutral to compassion. To ethics. Logic is not life! Math has no opinion on life.

9.2 Contradicting basic assumptions

Generally speaking, the Pythons are liberal. With many exceptions. They hated and hate political correctness as already said.

In order to agree with this film, you need to share their basic values.

In The life of Brian, love is the most important thing. A flexible assumption.

A person for whom the belief in god is central to his world may crash with the values of the Pythons and there may be no way to repair that.

A good example is a marriage between a Jew and a Catholic. Its not approved by the religions. But it is approved by the Pythons.

The Pythons say that We can not know anything on god (see later) as explained for example by the philosopher Thomas Hobbs.

If a person thinks that he/she knows what god is doing and why, this person should not watch the film.

9.3 Basic patterns of failure

”If we don’t succeed, we run the risk of failure.” The famous intel-
In this film, society is insane. Decision are done out of fear or irrationality. Everything the film is tested. And has to pass the test, or be mocked. The test is: *Is what this person does allows us to maintain a good functioning society?*

Here are some sad examples of failure of the ”test of rationality”.

1. Reverse logic: characters act and speak in contrast to facts reality and plane common sense. In fact when something happens, all but Brian say: ”There must be an ILLOGICAL explanation to all this!” . Even if its reasons are simple and clear, the characters will look for some stupid illogical explanation. The film is filled with crazy people. They like the mystery. The illogical answer.

2. Shallowness. Laziness of the mind: People say and think things, based on their guts. Without thinking and without checking their consequences.

Fact could be scary and bad. In order to avoid that a person may follow others that tell this person what to do.

10 Test of rationality: bearded ladies

”Are there any women here today?!” From ”The life of Brian”

Let us check the bearded ladies scene test of rationality. In a time long tragedy woman have been oppressed, prevented from leaving their homes and prevented from taking active parts in the job market. Prevented from making art.

So many talents of women went to waste. Who knows what creations have we lost due to the oppression woman? In the Jewish religion the woman is a property of her husband. Since women were not allowed to vote, they could not change the situation.

What about something ”fun” like stoning a person to death? They were not allowed to do that either. And here comes a serious failure of the test of rationality. Brian asks his mother: ”why are woman not allowed in stoning?” She says: ”because its written this way”.

28
Its written hence woman can not participate in stoning? This is reverse logic. It should be the other way around. First you should think on the subject. Then you should make a law. Discriminating women is good for society because we loose the women talent. And the bible does not give good enough reasons for the limitations on women, many of which were invented by humans after the bible was long written.

The say "It is written this way" is very dangerous. Many things are "written" in the old Testament. Homosexuals are to be killed. The Jewish religion forbids Jews from saving gentiles (from death) in Sabat (keeping Sabat is indeed more important in the Jewish laws than saving lives of gentiles. However, if this sounds terrible, mind you that usually in order "to keep the peace" most Jewish Rabbi will give permission to break this law). It is also written the one that disobeys his parents should be killed.

One group of people was especially harshly treated in the old testimony. It the people of the Amalekites who attacked the Jews before they got the old testament. Before the establishing of the Jews as a nation. In punishment the old testament, directly from god, states that the Amalekites people are to be exterminated without leaving trace. Namely, even a new born Amalekites baby is convicted to death before his birth. Should we kill babies since "Its written this way?" People from different religions should not marry according to those religions. Are religions really more important than the love of two young innocent people?

These laws were written in other times and should be understood in that context. However, if taken literally these laws are very dangerous. This is not a theoretical question. Many people that who take these laws literally are in power today. The stoning scene is because you cannot utter the name of god out loud. Why? "its written this way". The old testaments found this so important, that one of the 10 commandments states that you ”should not utter the lords name in vain”. From there, the road to ”You should not utter the name of the lord out loud, is a short distance.

For a rational man, it makes no difference that its written this way. Things are written, but we have been given in the Jewish religion freedom to interpret what is written under free will.

The old man to be stoned to death complains: ”I only said that
my wife cooked a meal which was good enough for Jehovah!"

The Jewish leader (in charge of the stoning) immediately jumps to reverse logic. The Jewish leader: "By saying Jehovah again you are making it worse for yourself". Worse for yourself? Where is the logic? He is about to be stoned to death. The old man: Worse? What can be worse than that? Then the old man starts dancing and says over and over again: "Jehovah". Jehovah", "Jehovah".

The sad truth is that "its written this way" was just an excuse. And a cowardly one in that. The mob from "The holly grail" wants to kill the witch, and the bearded ladies that want to stone to death the old man, do it just because they enjoy killing. Because of their animalistic urges. They faces look like those of killers and monsters.

Humans need an excuse to do evil things. From the Jewish religion: "No one declares himself evil". Or like Jean Renoir puts it (in the classic film "The rules of the game") "The problem is that everybody has reasons". We cant be evil! Only "they" are evil (the "they" changes from place to place.) As long as we can enjoy some violence and somebody assures us that "there is a reason" guilt is out.

Actually, the Jewish leader that handles the stoning ceremony is the one murdered by the women and not the old man who said Jehovah. Who cares? Hypocrisy. The uttering of the name of the lord was a silly excuse. They wanted to kill someone. Never mind who. So they did.

Using arbitrary and cruel laws, that are irrational work against society and even against those who are in charge of the rules. It goes back to the "reverse logic rule" mentioned above. Arbitrary rules (as opposed to logical, rules based on what is good for society) are random rules. Unpredictable at all. without any reason for our rules it turn against us. Kafka wrote for example in "The trial". "K" never gets an explanation of what he did wrong. This is why its so frightening: How can we beware, be careful of the illogical/unexpected? The movie adaptation of Orson Wells on "The trial" shows that completely illogical frightening world will destroy itself at the end.

We see the rule tuning against the one leading the ceremony, in an example to how illogical rules can turn on the strong people in
society. Innocent people are more likely to be killed in an illogical world. Logic is predictable (at least, more predictable) and so more helpful. A similar thing happens when the film starts.

10.1 Test of rationality: 3 wise man and hypocrisy

The three wise men came by mistake to the house of Brian, and blessed Brian. They confused Jesus by Brian by mistake. They give Mandy the three presents and start to bless Brian, all by mistake. The messiah. A person that will make the world a better place. Bring the Messianic era (see later for explanation). When the three wise men realize their mistake they take the presents away from Mandy, Violently. They push her hard down to the floor. Using violence against a single mother with a very young baby, in order to make the world a better place? Reverse logic.

Hypocrisy, is the situation when you say or claim something but act in the opposite way, contradicting your own claim. Hypocrisy is the opposite of logic. Logic is built on consistency. Hypocrisy is dangerous for society. Its arbitrary nature makes it unexpected (like any illogical behavior). The three wise man are hypocrat, hence evil.

10.2 In a crazy world the sane is the insane one

And the test of rationality is spread all over the movie. A significant case of point is the scene with the haggler that insists on haggling with Brian.

The haggler is a politician. A salesman. Uses dirty tricks to get more money (which is like more power).

Here is why he is a politician. He gives Brian a gourd for free.

Consider these lines: The salesman (haggler): Now, where’s the sixteen you owe me?

Brian: I just gave you twenty.

The salesman: Oh, yeah. That’s right. That’s four I owe you, then.

Brian: Well, that’s all right. That’s fine. That’s fine.

Brian: That’s all right. That’s four for the gourd.

The salesman: Four? For this gourd? Four?! Look at it. It’s worth ten if it’s worth a shekel!

Brian: But you just gave it to me for nothing.

The salesman: Yes, but it’s worth ten!

Only a politician can complain about the offered price of something he gave for free earlier...

In addition, the scene portrays a nice example of a “reverse logic”.

The haggler plays a game dictated by society. And if you do not play by the rules of society, is the odd man out. We all know it’s a game, but we simply can not afford not to play it. Like the scene puts it:

The salesman: Now, are you telling me that’s not worth twenty shekels?

Brian: No.

The salesman: Look at it. Feel the quality. That’s none of your goat.

Brian: All right. I’ll give you nineteen then.

The salesman: No, no, no. Come on. Do it properly.

Brian: What?

The salesman: Haggle properly. This isn’t worth nineteen.

Brian: Well, you just said it was worth twenty.


Brian: Huh. All right. I’ll give you ten.

The salesman: That’s more like it. Ten?! Are you trying to insult me?! Me, with a poor dying grandmother?! Ten?!

Brian: That’s what you told me to say!

Brian, is a non-politician. This makes him unsuited to live in the place he is.

The haggler is angered by the unwillingness to play the game. And what is playing the game means? It means to lie. Brian, is
not a liar.

The haggler: "There is one (insane person) born any minute". Yes, rational, non politician, truth telling Brian is the insane one in the world of the film. In a place everybody uses reverse logic, Brian does not fit.

10.3 Our world from a rational perspective. First conclusions

Few things expressed in the film do pass the of "is it good for society" rationality test.

We fail, as humanity (namely, as a society) in most tests and bring disaster upon ourselves and our future. This is tragic. Not funny.

Maybe we should go to the basics again. Why do the Pythons do comedy?

11 Umberto Eco on universal religion

"I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use." Galileo Galilee

Umberto Eco is a semiotic expert (semiotic is the study of signs, languages, etc) whose expertise is in medevil times. His book "The name of the rose" became a best seller even though it contains a huge amount of hard to read (to say the least) parts and many quotations in strange languages. "The name of the rose" therefore is a very complex book, to the extent that there is a book called "The key to the name of the rose" explaining the book "The name of the rose". Its popularity grew because it was later adapted into a much simpler film. The film changes the end to a happier one..... A disgrace.

The story: The story takes place in a monastery in the fourteenth century, namely, in medevil time.

The main part of the story takes place in a maze. A labyrinth. A complex structure. Like in film noirs in which the city is a
labyrinth. It's too big. People get lost. Enter one door and leave at another. Live in a dangerous world. There are many reasons to call *The name of the Rose* a neo-noir (film noir shot in colors).

The film has a detective, William of Baskerville. This cites Sherlock Holmes. The book describes how William investigates a series of killings in the monastery. All the dead people have something in common. They have a blue tongue.

Why is the film called ”The name of the rose”?

In the film, the director (who did not understand the book) made the girl the rose and said that the young monk does not remember her name.

The girl is a very small detail in the book and in the movie. If the title would have been on her, it would have been a terrible mistake.

The names is based on the saying in the book: *Stat rosa pristina nomine / Nomina nuda terminus*” This means: ”The name of the rose is given by God; our roses are roses without names. The quote dates to the 12 century.

The film that influenced film noirs the most is *Citizen Kane*. Citizen Kane also describes a mystery. A news mogul by the name Charles Foster Kane dies, but before his death he says *Rosebud*. Nobody is beside him. and in the entire film it is not clear how they know his dying word. A reporter tries throughout the film to find out what Rosebud is. Rosebad is the mystery of the film. ”Citizen Kane” is a maze itself. Several people speak about the like of Kane. They talk about scenes they never saw. Maybe they were told about. Hence, what they say may be completely incorrect.

The maze in *Kane* has no center. They do not find out what Rosebud is. We the spectators do find out. Susan, his second wife fills many maze-like jigsaw puzzles. *The name of the rose* brings into memory the film *Citizen Kane* because *The name of the rose* reminds us of a neo-noir, and *Citizen Kane* is the most influential film on film noirs. Eco was a cinema scholar. In *The name of the rose*, rose(bud) means ”mystery”. The pazzels that people try to solve.

If rose is mystery, what does ”The name” means? As Eco knows well the Jews can not speak out-loud the name of god and thus they call god ”The name”. ”Ha sem” in Hebrew. A person that that
utters the name of god in public is stoned to death is punished (recall the stoning scene).

Combining the two above interpretations we get that ”The name of the rose” is: ”The divine truth of mysteries”. The saying and the film ”sells” the point of view of Eco. Eco thinks life is like a maze (like the maze in the monastery). Life is complex in structure. Life is at least as complex as film noirs: complicated, multi-layered, nothing is like it seems.

What are the main mysteries of humans? How was the universe born? Does our life have a purpose and so on. Things we never will discover and only god can know. The interpretation of the quote is thus: Only god knows the answer (the name) to the big mysteries (the rose). We dont know the absolute truth. Our roses (mysteries) have no name. Or: we cant know the universal truth.

The term ”Catholic” means ”Universal”. In the Catholic belief the Catholic church is universal in the sense that in preceded all existence. It is a sacred divine institute that makes no mistakes. The church tells you what to believe and these believes are universal, namely, true in the absolute divine sense. They should be followed by a religious catholic person without hesitation even if doubts arise. Eco disagrees. In the medevil times the historic arguments regarding the existence of universal truth, was in its peak. A person with doubts (such as Galileo Galilee) risked torture and death by the hands of the inquisition.

A bit more on the story in The name of the rose: The murders in the monastery in The name of the rose are committed by (how symbolic) a blind monk. His name is Jorge de Burgos. Doubting the existence of a name for every rose, or alternatively, doubting the universal truth is the reason for al the murders. Indeed the William part of the name of the investigating monk, ”William of Baskerville relates to the English philosopher William of Occam that claimed that no universal truth exist. Only interpretations exist.

Eco knows a lot about interpretations. They are the main part of his occupation. Of semiology. The study of sign and languages.

Eco jokes as follows. He invents a ”second volume of Aristotle’s Poetics”. The second one is on comedy (which does not exist). We know that in ”Poetics”, Aristotle’s speaks on the proper way to
write tragedy. He gives advises to contemporary writers and poets. He gives examples from famous plays like Oedipus the King. Jorge de Burgos (the blind monk) is afraid of this second volume. Aristotle was a highly influential man. He may convince those who read the book that comedy is legitimate, and writes in this (imaginary) second volume that laughter helps fight against universal truths which lead to extreme views. Specifically, the tendency of the universal people to resort to violence.

Jorge de Burgos is appalled by this notion of laughing at the universal truth. He tells William: "If there is comedy, then there is no fear. And if there is no fear, there is no god".

Jorge de Burgos poisoned the ink on the sticky pages of this comedy volume of Aristotle. Its hard to separate the pages. This is a tool of death because to separate the pages the readers use their tongue to wet their fingers, to separate the pages. Hence consuming the poison and dying. This is better that reading Comedy may cause them to develop non-universal thoughts.

We found the real role of comedy, at least as practices by the Pythons. They want to save lives. If we disallow universal truth (kill sacred cows), there will no reason reason to kill and get killed. There will be no university in the world and the Hitler of their era will not be able to convince them to fear hate and kill.

In the Falkland war an English Navy ship got bombarded by the Argentinians. Their Ship started to sink. When sinking the soldiers sang together: "Always look on the bright side of life". Big mistake. The Falkland war was one of the most silly most cruel wars in the 20 century. A typical universal truth war.

I never found humor in classic German books, and certainly not I see the films done between first world war to second world war: the German Expressionism. Hitler was so funny, without intending to be. See "The great dictator".

The Germans should have been made fun of Hitler badly, when he was still weak, without any mercy. Mock the idiotic way he talked. Mock his stupid hate. This could have saved millions of lives. The Germans would never have followed a person that was made a full off. Humor could have saved us. I can guess what the Pythons would have said. Something like: "I do not know if the German have national hobbies like us British. But we know its the
only country where humor is illegal”.

Hitler, like Stalin, and the Spanish inquisition had absolute universal truth. Since this truth is universal, you are allowed to kill an unbeliever. After all, what is human life compared to a universal truth. Stalin said: ”When you cut trees, saw-dust falls”. This means: when you are doing a very important thing, you should not pay attention to ”little” details like a few millions here and there that are killed or sent to the gulag. We have to look at the big picture, says Stalin. At the bigger thing; at our universal truth. In large part, the ”Brian” movie is dedicated to destroy this idea.

12 A film of self doubts

12.1 A film that goes against itself

I do not want to be with a girl that is like myself! I hate myself! Jerry Seinfeld in ”Seinfeld”

Even though the Pythons believe in logic, they make fun of logic in the scene of the witch above (from ”The holly grail”). The usual problem for a skeptical artist is: how to strongly convey ideas when you think that all values are relative, complex and should be treated on a case by case basis?

Here is a question that they are not sure about (among many). Is Jesus divine?

12.2 Questioning your own ideas

We saw many hints that Brian is important, and many hints that he is not. I call such a film, a film that fights against itself. Every film that is worth talking about it ”sells” some idea. The life of Brain sells doubts. The absolute (or universal as I will call it later) frightens them. They insert clear parallels between Brian and Jesus, but also point to many things that imply that Brian is nothing like Jesus. They do not answer basic questions like is Brian holly? In a careful elaborate collection of scenes, they make sure that both possibilities can perfectly be justified as I did above. They Pythons themselves are not sure about anything.
12.3 The doubts on Jesus: Validating the scripts

Woody Allen: I do not believe in the afterlife. But I will take a pair of clean underwear just in case

Taking the film without following all details, its perhaps seen as a complete ”secular” film. Rational adults do not really believe in divine forces, and miracles, etc.

Therefore it may be strange that the Pythons do kill their own secular arguments by introducing ”divine forces”.

1. The birth of Jesus: Jesus is seen at first in the beginning of the film. Holly music is played and his home is lighted in divine light. This validates the scripts.

2. Three wise man: Many details validate the Christian myth. The book of Matthew tells us of a group of man came to bless Jesus. The book does not mention how many, but since they give 3 gifts, gold frankincense and myrrh, it is reasonable to assume there were three.

This books tells us that they were: ”wise man” or Magi, namely, astrologers. They were lead by a star, came from the east. We see the star. We dont know what east means but probably these 3 man were from Persia (now Iran) or Mesopotamia (namely Iraq). Rather a long trip to be lead by one star.

The completely insane myth is validated in details. The exact same gifts. The exact claim of coming from the east. They also say they are astrologers. They say that they are 3 wise man. They point out that they were lead by a star.

(Mandy: you were more likely lead by a bottle!).

They say (thinking that Brian is Jesus) that Brian is king of the Jews, etc. Not a secular film. Did the Bishops that were so angry notice that?

How can there be a light over one house? How can a star starts moving in a way that it leads three people to Jesus. Since when god personally contacts people?

They even visit Brian by mistake, and Brian becomes a messiah BY MISTAKE. Sounds consistent.
3. The ex-leaper: In another scene, an "ex-leaper" appears and says that Jesus cured him. If we do not think super-natural forces exist, how come Jesus can cure a terrible illness? This story of curing a leper appears in the new testimony several times, claiming Jesus cured a leper in his second journey through the Galilee. The Pythons validate the scripts.

4. Brian leads a life similar to Jesus, and at least for Brian (which implies for Jesus as well) crucifixion happened. Like it is written in the scripts.

5. The Sermon on the Mount: The Pythons validate one of the most prominent Christian myth.

6. When Brian is forced to give a speech, an old man bothers him about the gourd. And immediately applies the reverse logic principle:
   
   Old man: How much for the gourd?
   Brian: nothing.
   Old man: I will give you one (shekel) then!
   Brian: take it, it is yours.
   Old man: I will give you two then!

12.4 Invalidating the scripts

Woody Allen: God is not a bad fellow. He is just an underachiever”. From the Movie ”Love and War”

One good way to invalidate the script is to say that Jesus is irrelevant. The film present a reverse logic crazy world: And in a completely random and insane world, what is Jesus influence? Nobody listens to god. The world described in the film is decidedly crazy, unorganized illogical. Some examples follow.

1. Reverse logic: pretending you are weird The two guards near the crucifixion corridor ("out trough the door line on the left one cross each") seem to be with some physical impediments. One of them seems to be deaf and the other, stutters. The one that stutters is homosexual (again making fun of homosexuals).
But when these two are left alone, we see that it was all an act. The two guards are not "crazy" even though they "pretend to be crazy". They have to do it to survive. In such a crazy world like the one described in *The life of Brian* you need to be crazy to just survive.

2. The ex leper jumps in a silly way.

3. The haggler is quite insane.

4. Mister Cheeky behaves in insane reverse logic way. We first meet mister Cheeky in his argument with mister big-nose. Later mister Cheeky is one of those convicted to be crucified. A guard comes to rescue Brian and asks: "Who is Brian of Nazarat?" A parody of the film "Spartacus" follows:

Many start to claim they are Brian. One convict even says "I am Brian and so is my wife".

Among the various people that claim that they are Brian is also Mister Cheeky. When mister Cheeky is released from the cross, he does the decidedly crazy thing of insisting to get back on the cross ("I am not Brian"). He complains that "those Romans have no sense of humor". Why would he want to return and keep the chance of getting crucified? Dying a painful death? Remember what the Roman guard told the old man at the P.F.J. quarters: crucifixion is a terrible and slow death. What is going on with mister Cheeky here? Perhaps he wants to be crazy like the rest of the characters in the movie? Can god be even relevant if things go so crazy in the world?

5. Only moderates get Brian, Big nose, Mr Cheeky and so on. Reverse logic. They should punish the violent people.

6. A distinguished moment nicely explaining the reverse" logic of the world of the entire film is the moment when Brian addresses his followers out the window. He tells them: "You are all different!". They answer in one voice "We are all different!". Then, one guy says: "I'm not!".

So the ones who say "we are all different" are not different. They all answer Brian with one voice.
The person that claims he is not different (say "I am not" meaning "I am not different" is actually the different one. Such a world will self-destruct like in the end of "The Trial" by Orson Wells.

7. But say that we agree that there is a god. So what? I will do something rare here and explain how we get to the philosophy of knowledge. A very wide subject. But if you assume that Jesus is god, what he says is the divine truth. But it does not work, because we are humans.

Philosophers say that knowledge very general speaking can be achieved by using your brain (see Descartes) or by Empiricism. We can know only what we get by our senses.

The Pythons say: let us agree for a moment that Jesus is god. So what?

Our senses are very limited. We may not understand Jesus and we may even understand Jesus but disagree on the meaning of what he says. The issue of humans needing to interpret the so called divine truth is was the original reason they did the film. The holly scripts are divine. Possibly, but we are only human.... When asked about the film, Jones said: "It is ironic that Jesus speaks about loving your neighbor and for the next 2000 years we kill each other over the question of: "How should we love our neighbor"? This contradicts the try to understand god by our thinking.

The following scene contradicts empiricism. Jesus, gives one of his main speeches: the Sermon on the Mount.

Alas, he does not speak loud enough. And people in the back do not hear him. At one point Jesus says something, and the crowd cant hear it. This is what they say:

Man 1: What was that?
Mr Cheeky: I don’t know. I was too busy talking to Big Nose.
Jesus: who hunger and thirst to see...

Man 2 : I think it was 'Blessed are the cheese makers.'
An honest mistake but they really heard wrong. Jesus actually said: ‘Bless the peacemakers”. They do not hear well. A failure of our senses.
Then they try to make sense of the mistaken line.

The wife of man 1: Ahh, what’s so special about the cheese makers?

Man 1: Well, obviously, this is not meant to be taken literally. It refers to any manufacturers of dairy products.

The convoluted way that this person tries to explain the mistaken line is pathetic. He tries to make the words of Jesus more important than what they think they heard. This is a serious philosophical question. Given the holly scripts, two things remain. Make sure to find the right interpretation..... And make sure your senses do not mislead you.

Well, they just contradicted the possibility of knowing something for sure, in any of the two ways above. So we can not know anything?

Philosophy has been debating this since before the time of the Greeks. Hume had a problematic influence on this question, and this was resolved by Kant. But Lated Heidegger ("The being comes before cognition") says that Kant misunderstood the world. I will not say more here but its an interesting thing to read about.

8. Interpreting things differently is central to the shoe scene. When escaping his followers, Brian accidentally drops a shoe. The crowd chasing Brian thinks of the shoe as a sign:

Follower 1: He has given us... His shoe!

Follower 2: The shoe is the sign. Let us follow his example.

Follower 3: Let us, like Him, hold up one shoe and let the other be upon our foot, for this is His sign, that all who follow him shall do likewise.

Brian just dropped a shoe by accident. He did not mean anything by it. However, remember the rule his followers most go by in this movie: "Find the most illogical explanation to any event”.

Follower 1: A sign that we must gather shoes together in abundance.

Girl: Cast of the shoe.

Follower 3: What? Girl:...the shoes? Follow the Gourd!
Follower 1: No! Let us gather shoes together!
Immediately, we have the “Gourd camp” and the “shoe camp”.
The illogical explanation in this case is:
A follower: "No, no! It is a sign that, like him, we must think
not of the things of the body, but of the face and head!"
And it does not take long for violence to arrive.
Follower 1 tries to take by force the shoe of another follower.
Follower 1: Give me your shoe!
Another Follower: Get off!.
Girl: Follow the Gourd! The Holy Gourd of Jerusalem!
The two camps follow in different directions.
Except for one person, that remains a "group of one" and says:
Stop! Stop! Stop, I say! Stop! Let us.... let us pray. Yea, He
come to us, like the seed to the grain.
Terry Jones called this scene: the Christian history described
in two minutes....

9. Forcing your beliefs on others. Another complaint toward
the followers of Jesus. is that they try to convert people.
According to the Christian religion good Christians must be
missionaries.
The ex-leaper was making a fine living out of his illness, and
then came Jesus and CURED HIM. Against his will! The
ex-leper explains: "I was hopping along, minding my own
business. All of a sudden, up he comes. Cures me. One
minute I’m a leper with a trade, next minute my livelihood’s
gone. ‘You’re cured mate.’ (Jesus is a ) Bloody do-gooder.”
It should go without saying that ALL those who are not Chris-
tian, are seen as LEPERS by the Christian. Our souls will be
dammed.
We are "sick”. Like the leper. They must try to force Chris-
tianity on us.
Jesus cures the Ex-leper against his will. This is a specific
complain (and a rare one) directly on Jesus.
I know: the Christian think they found the absolute truth. Still do not try to convert us by force. It’s insulting. It smells of “holier than thou” thinking. It is vane and shows no respect for others.

10. Should we help our neighbor? In the above line the ex-leper calls Jesus, a ”bloody do-gooder”. Why did you cure me? Who asked you?!

A central philosophical question is why do good people suffer. Why are they (the good-doers) rewarded?”

Of course it is schizophrenic. to thinks that his good deeds will be rewarded by the lord. God does not work for us. Therefore thinking the above is not understanding reality as it is. A definition of what a schizophrenic person is.

The rational person, just by observing the world notices that it does not work this way. Fine people suffer from no reason. Four years old children die of cancer. Quantum theory in fact implies that our world is random.

The Crucifixion party carries the cross. A good doer tells one of the pack: ”let me shoulder your burden”. The convict carrying the cross escapes and leaves the good doer to bare the cross...... Mister Cheeky makes fun of the good doer: ”He had you there, mate. Didn’t he? That’ll teach you a lesson!”

For some people when truly bad things happen in this world, they start doubting their faith.

According to the new testament Simon was carrying the cross for Jesus. The story about the good doer simply verifies the scripts one more time.

The Pythons do not know if Jesus is god. By the similarity between god and Brian, clearly the Pythons know even less if Brian is holly. After all the main idea of the film is doubt. The duality toward Jesus implies that when the Pythons are asked ”was Jesus a true messiah?” they rationally answer ”We dont know”. How could we? Its absolutely impossible for humans to know anything on the one who created the world and thus is outside our world. Not only we can not know anything on god, we do not know even how aliens look like. With such a huge universe aliens are highly likely to exist. They are in this world, and we do not know anything
about them. So how can we know the infinite that lies outside our world, when we are finite?

Thomas Hobs (super simplified):

There are two ways to prove things. Physical evidence, and by logic. (See above).

We can not prove anything on god because god does not obey the physical rules of our universe. We can not prove that god exists by logic, since god is out of this world.

Faith is only faith. Faith does not mean that you know anything on god. This message is an anti divine message because many people say all the time that they know what god does, and why. The Pythons justly say that such people are schizophrenic.

13 Remarks on some characters

13.1 On the dual role of Judith

Judith plays one of the only other person but Brian that at times seems sane. Giving hope. That is her one role. Her second role is to turn completely crazy in the most important moment, and ruin the life of Brian for good. She is not like Brain that is politics free, but at times she seems more grounded than the insane members of the P.F.J.

Here is Judith being detached:

1. After the sermon on the mount Reg says: ”Yeah. Well, what Jesus blatantly fails to appreciate is that it’s the meek who are the problem.” Judith: ”Yes, yes. Absolutely, Reg. Yes, I see.” She is easy to manipulate.

2. Participating in the insane argument of the J.P.F:

Judith: Here! I’ve got an idea. Suppose you agree that he can’t actually have babies, not having a womb, which is nobody’s fault, not even the Romans’, but that he can have the right to have babies. However, she has other facets to her character.
3. After Judith and Brian make love, Mandy "catches them". Then Judith explains: No! Let me explain, Mrs. Cohen!

Mandy (completely shocked. You should see how she looks at naked Judith): Who....

Judith: Your son is a born leader. Those people out there are following him because they believe in him, Mrs. Cohen. They believe he can give them hopes of a new life, a new world, a better future!

What a strange thing to say. She is delusional. Brian did not even want to make the speech he later makes. He just wants to be left alone. A natural born leader would not reject so strongly the leadership role. Judith should have said Mandy: "Mrs Cohen, we love each other."

But no. The love starts being sacrificed for the so called "more important" issues of: "the struggle against the Romans".

4. After the speech Brian gives ("you are all different") Judith and Brian talk:

Judith: Brian? Brian, you were fantastic!

Brian: You weren't so bad yourself.

A symbolic confusion. Judith tells Brian something about the so called "larger picture". About the Romans.

Judith: No, what you said just now it was quite extraordinary.

Brian: What? Oh, that. Was it?

Judith: We don't need any leaders. You're so right. Reg has been dominating us for too long.

Brian: well, yes.

Judith: It needed saying, and you said it, Brian.

Brian: You're... very attractive.

Judith: It's our revolution! We can all do it together!

Brian: I think I think (he wants to say "I love you" but gets no chance).

Judith: We're all behind you, Brian. The revolution is in your hands!

Brian: What? No! That's not what I meant at all!
Fanatic ideology, say the Pythons, kills love. It is no coincidence that immediately now, after this first "small betrayal" of Brian by Judith, Brian is caught by the Romans.

13.2 Stalin wins, love looses

Judith sometimes acts in a sane way. This is why we wonder about her. Judith did make love to Brian. She is capable of human contact. When Brian is caught by the Roman, she does not just talk. She hits the Roman soldier that hardly feels it. But says: "Stop it".

She also confronts Reg. In the scene that Reg says that "What have the Romans ever did for us??!!" Judith is one of those to defy Reg: Judith: Oh, yeah, the sanitation, Reg. Remember what the city used to be like?

The most dramatic moment is when she is completely sane, and the other P.F.J. members carry on with their insanity.

Judith: They’ve arrested Brian!
Reg: What?
Judith: They’ve dragged him They’re going to crucify him!
Reg: Right! This calls for immediate discussion!
Judith: What?!
P.F.J. member: Immediate!
Lorretta: New motion?
Reg: Completely new motion, that there be, ah, immediate action.
Francis: Ah, once the vote has been taken.
Reg: Well, obviously once the vote’s been taken. You can’t act another resolution till you’ve voted on it...
Judith: Reg, for God’s sake, let’s go now!
Reg: Yeah. Yeah.
Judith: Please!
Reg: Right. Right.
Francis: Fine.
Reg: In the light of fresh information from, ah, sibling Judith

Loretta: Ah, not so fast, Reg.

Judith: Reg, for God’s sake, it’s perfectly simple. All you’ve got to do is to go out of that door now, and try to stop the Romans’ nailing him up! It’s happening, Reg! Something’s actually happening, Reg! Can’t you understand?! Ohhh!

Reg: Hm. Hm.

Francis: Oh, dear.

Reg: Hello. Another little ego trip for the feminists.

Loretta: What?

Reg: Oh, sorry, Loretta. Ahh, oh, read that back, would you?

Judith tries the futile task of bringing P.F.J. down to earth. Shouts reality into their ears. Its a unique moment throughout the film that another character besides Brian is all of a sudden completely sane.

So clearly we expect Judith to go herself and rescue Brian.

Very few minutes after that our hope is shattered in what seems to be a scene from an horror movie. She goes to Brian and say:

Judith: ”Terrific! Great! Reg has explained it all to me, and I think it’s great what you are doing. Thank you, Brian. I’ll... I’ll... never forget you.”

She does she have to ”remember” him. Nobody will stop her if she pulls him from the cross. Mr Cheeky explained that. Nobody guards those to be crucified. He is there not for the first time. He gets rescued often by his brother.

Instead Judith states that ”she understands” that Brian is going to become a martyr. He does not. Judith is talked again by Reg, that there is something more important than the love she has with Brian.

It looks like a horror scene when Judith says ”Reg has explained it all to her”. Why does Judith prefer to re-listen to the person, Reg, that just recently failed her. She has forgotten all about the ”They have arrested Brian” scene before. She was so angry with Reg. The contrast is simply horrifying. Kills any hope. This is the
moment Brian looses hope and understands he is going to die.

Reg calls Brian ”brother”. This is an obvious lie. Reg does not really cares for his ”brother” Brian as he pretends. He decides for Brian that Brian should kill himself and somehow convinces Judith to go along. Terrible.

Judith: Thank you, Brian. I'll... I'll... never forget you.

She hesitates. They have recently made love. Should see say something on their doomed love? She says ”thank you” to Brian for being a martyr. The loss of love is sacrificed for the so called ”larger issues”. Stalin, wins.

” will never forget you is a meaningless line for a person about to die”.

After the ultra quick change of heart of Judith, its not only Brian that should loose hope, but we, the spectators should loose the hope with him.

13.3 The rest of the characters

Almost all characters in the film get some good qualities besides their inevitable crazy behavior. Even Reg, the Leader of the P.F.J. This is in spite Reg being one of the worst portrayed figures in the film.

The first thing Reg says poses Reg as a legitimate radical rebel leader.

Reg: What Jesus fails to understand is that the meek are the problem.

For the revolutionary movement, this is true. Meek means (more or less) humble. The humble in spirit can not become revolutionaries with ”fire in their eyes”. Reg also shows leadership qualities when he needs to handle the huge mass of people following Brian. After the ”consider the lilies” speech.

Reg, ever the opportunist, calls Brian the ”savior”. Then he has to deal with a multitude of people seeking Brian.

Reg: Don’t push that baby in the Savior’s face. You’ve got till later.

Man: I say. I say, could he just see my wife? She has a headache.
Reg: She’ll have to wait, I’m afraid.
Man: It’s very bad, and we’ve got a luncheon appointment.
Reg: Look, the lepers are queuing.
Man: Her brother-in-law is the ex-mayor of Gath, you know.
Reg: Brian, can I introduce the gentleman who’s letting us have the Mounts on Sunday?
Another man: Hello.
Reg: And keep the noise down, please! Those possessed by devils, try and keep them under control a bit, can’t you? Incurables, you’ll just have to wait for a few minutes. Um, women taken in sin, line up against that wall, will you?
So Reg is a leader.

There is a very strange moment in the film, that could be interpreted in two ways. In this moment Reg has a flash of clarity. This is contrasting all the rest of the film.
Reg: What’s the point of fighting for his right to have babies when he can’t have babies?!
Francis: It is symbolic of our struggle against oppression.
Reg: Symbolic of his struggle against reality.
Reg admits of something being unrealistic? This from the leader of a small movement that wants to overthrow Rome? Fighting Rome is ridiculously unrealistic... Its like nowadays a small country like Belgium declaring war on the USA and Russia simultaneously. This is a fair comparison to the force balance back then. What is with this sudden reality check? No way Reg admits that the fight against Rome is non-realistic. A revolutionary does not admit that.

But on a subject of a man that want to have babies, he is clear. This can never happen.
The irony is that he does not realize that their struggle against the Romans is no less futile.
Mandy, the practical lady single mother has no deep persona. She is not symbolic, and is just a caricature. She is very frightening woman that opens the door to her home by kicking it with her leg.
Nevertheless, the mother is given few positive attributes. She is not fanatic. Accepts the reality that the Romans are not that
bad. Is willing to undergo borderline prostitution to have things for her small family ("if it would not have been for the Romans, we would not have had all this").

However, the betrayal of Brian by Mandy, is the most painful one. And these are lines should not be heard in a comedy.

Mandy: (not letting Brian explain what happened): "So, there you are! I might have known it would end up like this. To think of all the love and action I’ve wasted on you. Well, if that’s how you treat your poor old mother in the autumn years of her life, all I can say is, ’Go ahead. Be crucified. See if I care.’ I might have known it would...”

She wasted(!) her love. Up to this point, Mandy did not engage in the reverse logic of the other characters in the film. She was very practical, not fanatic, non philosophical not thinking too much ("its written this way", she tells Brian). Now, reverse logic conquers even Mandy that claims Brian WANTS to be crucified.

This speech by Mandy is terrible, any way you look at it. There is nothing funny about the speech. Most unbecoming of a comedy. This is an admission of the Pythons that the film is not just comedy. It has terrible things.

The only character the film has no mercy for at all, is the only non-fictional one (besides Jesus that only appears briefly and is treated with high respect) namely, Pontious Pilate. The film makes a mockery of Pilate, that deserves this. We know from history how intolerant was he. Also as any tyrant, he lacks humor whatsoever.

Having a sense of humor is the litmus test in the film for being evil. The film puts a special emphasis on showing that humor seems dangerous to Pilate.

He DARES the soldiers not to laugh.

He forbids humor very strongly, especially when himself is concerned. But this is impossible. How can you not laugh when the name of the wife of Bigus Dickus is Incontinentia Buttocks?

This name of Bigus’s wife means that she can’t control her bowel movements. There are limits to abilities not to laugh.

This scene is strong for the most obvious point that the Pythons add here and that appeared in many of their sketches. Making fun
of the powerful. Pilate can not sustain the possibility that people make fun of him. Impossible! He is also cruel (Pilate sends a guard to fight lions just because he could not refrain himself from laughing). These part of the movie is by far, the best scene they ever did on abusing power. And its very funny, a thing that was not always true in their sketches.

A roman soldier at the crucifixion seems very decent. In the script he is called Nisus. Nisus is even naive, and believes the crazy mister Cheeky when mister Cheeky in joke states that he, mister Cheeky, has to be released. "They said I have not done anything so I should go free". Loyal to the reverse logic of the film, after Nisus agrees to free mister Cheeky, Mister Cheeky reveals the joke ("I was just pulling your leg"). He could have been set free but is bound by reverse logic.

Nisus has this uncomfortable look on his face when seeing the convicts with the cross. He has a sense of humor (laughs at the joke by mister Cheeky) and so cant be evil.

Also, Nisus sort of tries to cheer the convicts speaking gently. Nisus: Crucifixion party. 'Morning. Now, we will be on a show as we go through the town, so let’s not let the side down. Keep in a good, straight line, three lengths between you and the man in front, and a good, steady pace. Crosses over your left shoulders, and, if you keep your backs hard up against the crossbeam,... you’ll be there in no time. Nisus is a good person. Nisus is a good Roman. Without him, the Romans would be pure evil. A thing the film tries to avoid.

14 The essence of the film

14.1 The (rational version of the) Messiah according to the Jews

There are two main streams of the Messiah in the Jewish religion, and we are going to describe the more rational one, because it fits the film better. The "Maimonides", the greatest Jewish scholar to ever live, defined a rational Jewish religion. We are taking his viewpoint on the Messiah, because it fits the film best. Hence we ignore
the irrational stream about the Messiah in the Jewish tradition. That Jewish Messiah is very different than the Christian one. The word Messiah means the anointed which means covered by oil. The Jewish Messiah must have a father and a mother (unlike Jesus) and must be a descendant of king David. One of the early discussions of the messiah appears in the old testament. Perhaps the most known of the prophecies is the one by Isaiah: ”And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore... (Isaiah 2:4).

And the famous: The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid (the Christians will see the kid as ”A lamb” and surely will see this as a sign of Jesus in the old testament), the calf and the beast of prey shall feed together with a little child to herd them. (Isaiah 11:6)

The whole world will worship the One God of Israel (Isaiah 2:1117)

The Jewish messiah is not godly. It is a ”regular” human. The Jewish messiah has many duties. Only after completion of those duties we can know that this person is the Messiah.

The messiah has to

1. Bring all Jews from the exile to Israel.
2. Restore the religious courts of justice.
3. End of wickedness, sin and heresy;
4. Reward to the righteous.
5. Rebuild the third Temple, and many other duties.
6. Become the anointed King of Israel.
7. Start anew the ritual of sacrifice of Animals which is one means of obtaining forgiveness. We face our god, and thus we face our death, and we sacrifice an animal instead/ Since the second temple fell, the sacrifices were replaced by prayers. When the third temple will be formed, the sacrifices to god will start again.
Since the Messiah is just a regular person, charismatic figures in Jewish history where "suspected" as being the Messiah. Some people where self-appointed Messiah. All of them were false Messiah because they did not manage the above duties. Including Jesus (at least for the Jews).

Trying to predict when the Messiah will come is an unfortunate thing irrational Jewish Scholars try to predict, even though the Jewish religion does not allow that. The Maimonides said that if a human seems like he possesses qualities ascribed to Messiah, we should check this person out. If this individual actually succeeds in the many tasks, then he is the Messiah. Otherwise, he is not the Messiah. The Maimonides, in the 12th century. Besides being a great scholar, he was a doctor of medicine. He wrote many important books for the history of the Jewish people.

The Messianic Age: This age is sometimes called Ha Olam Ha-Ba. The next world. Unfortunately this is also used for heaven and earth or afterlife which is another subject. And so there is some confusion. The times after the Messiah arrives are characterized by the peaceful co-existence of all people (Isaiah 2:4). Hatred, intolerance and war will cease to exist.

There is a supernatural aspect in this story as well. This Jewish line of thought is based on the saying "The generation is getting lesser and lesser". We are worse than our parents, and our children will be worse than us. Thus all that is needed for the situation to become much better is for the time to go backward. The Messiah is associated with resurrection of the dead. According to this belief the resurrection will take place forty years after the arrival of Messiah. It. So the resurrection will make things better because of the above saying. The "Maimonides", a rational person, tries to square the waking of the death, saying that they will be awakened as angels.

Therefore, in the big picture, the concept of the Messiah in the Jewish religion is quite rational.

The arrival of the Messiah is also called The end of times. The Talmud states that this will happen around year 6000. We are not far from that date in the Jewish calendar. Some of the Jewish scholars (but certainly not all) relate the Messiah to the following event. It describe a time in which God agrees that he failed to
convince the gentiles that he is the real god (god fails a lot in the old testament). In order to mend that, he wants the Jews to fight a war that will help convince the gentiles that they should follow the Jewish god. The concept of the end of times makes some scholars associate two seemingly unrelated things. The arrival of the Messiah and the war of Gog and Magog. What I describe here may be a completely different issue, but was related to the Messiah by many.

Under this opinion turbulent time are expected at first to prepare us for the coming of the messiah. The following is a prophecy from the old testament Ezekiel 38 and 39. Before the arrival of the messiah, Ezekiel book tells us, that Gog, the king of Magog, will attack Israel. To the best of my knowledge it is not clear who is or will be this king Gog. I tried to find an answer and found countless answers. Its futile.

Magog will fight a big battle against Israel. Many casualties (from both sides). However, naturally, the Jews will win. This is makes Ezekiel a unique prophet that explains that god “gave up” on being recognized by the non Jew in peaceful ways. The war of God and Magog in which the few Jews will win over their enemies. We are told that the enemy will come from the north but not much more is known about him. The win of the Jews will convince the non-Jews to recognize the Israel God as the supreme being. One has to remember that the Jews themselves are not important or holly. Only god is. The ultimate goal of the Jews is to make the entire world population recognize the divinity of their god. This is the reason the Jewish people were created. And if they have to die in masses, so be it.

This bares some similarities to the Christian story of the Armageddon. But its completely different stories at the end, that should not be confused (and they are!).

15 The mystical Messiah of the Christians

The book or revelation presents a series of miracles in the ”end of time” and the second coming.

Like in the Gog and Magog war, a terrible war among the Jews
and other nations will take place in the ”mountain of Megiddo”. The word Armageddon originates from Hebrew. It refers to the mountain of Megiddo (a mountain in the valley of Jezreel, north in Israel, not that far from Haifa) which is the place the war described in the book of revelation is to take place. ”Har” in Hebrew means: mountain. Armageddon: Har Megiddo. The mountain of Megiddo.

The prophecy in this book is so long that I shall only present some highlights.

I shall start with the ”Seven seals”. The lamb opens them and starts a series of disasters. After that, the second coming starts.

1. The first seal is broken and is associated with a white horse. This horse represents a highly powerful conquering power. It probably represents Satan.

2. The second seal is associated with a red horse, and with wars.

3. The third seal is associated with a black horse which represents famine.

4. The forth seal is associated with a pale horse. It represents death. The fifth seal is associated with the innocents slain for the ”Word of God”.

5. The sixth seal starts a series of supernatural events. A great earthquake will happen. The sun will become black. The moon became like blood. The stars of the sky fell to the earth, The sky was split apart, every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”

6. After the seventh seal is open, there is 30 minutes of silence in heaven.

7. Some events later: The earth burning. Mountains fall from the sky. The text discusses a dragon with seven heads, a beast, some terrible creature comes out of the sea. The reign of the Beast is the reign of Satan on earth. Later ”The lamb” fights and wins over the beast. The Martyrs are resurrected. The wicked, are cast into the Lake of Fire. Then the messianic era starts.

People relate by mistake the two prophecies, albeit they are quite different.
16 There were many human gods

Jesus was by no means the only Messiah at the time. Like the film shows well, many messiah existed. In short, let me remind of one famous such messiah: Apollonius the Nazarat. A person with many parallels to Christ. His birth was pre-announced, and he was born at the same year Jesus was. And he preached similar motives as Jesus. He went from place to place in his preaching, always accompanied by some disciples.

He went to Rome to face a certain death by Domitian (a rather cruel emperor. Perhaps more cruel than his predecessor, the infamous Nero). In the case of Jesus, he went to Jerusalem to die. Apollonius was supposed to have had powers similar to Jesus (brought a young girl back from the dead, for example). More generally, he could heal the sick. See the scene in ”Brian” with a multitude of people seeking Brian’s help in curing their deceases. After his death for many centuries he was considered a saint and was worshiped as a god in many parts of the world. His followers said that he was the son of a god. Like in the case of ”Brian”, Apollonius did not like being called the son of god. He lost due to politics, as after all, its humans who decide who the real god is.

I brought this example, which is slightly more known than others to show that the abundance in messiah figures in the film is respective of history. In fact, this film depicts the way researchers estimate historical events, in more realistic ways than any film on Christ including the Mel Gibson film.

17 The mystical speeches of the other prophets

These prophets certainly choose the much less rational story of the apocalypse. They talk about these terrible punishment of sinners at the day of judgment, and of the ”super-natural” order that will holds. Things that are completely irrational.

Two of them are scary. A preacher that looks like some kind of animal (one of the only acting roles for Terry Gileham) says: ”And the bezan shall be huge and black, and the eyes thereof red with the blood of living creatures, and the whore of Babylon shall ride forth on a three-headed serpent, and throughout the lands, there’ll
be a great rubbing of parts. Yeah...”

This is a typical Christian doomsday talk. With an out of the ordinary animal (three-headed serpent). This prophet explain the fate of those who do not believe. Their fate will be terrible when ”the time comes”. God will punish them. The first preacher tries to enforce his opinion using fear.

17.1 The second preacher

This second preacher is fanatic apocalyptic again:

”For the demon shall bear a nine-bladed sword. Nine-bladed! Not two or five or seven, but nine, which he will wield on all wretched sinners, sinners just like you, sir, there, and the horns shall be on the head, with which he will...”

Again the tale of the apocalypse. Mystical tales on signs of the apocalyptic (nine blade sword creature). Such talk is supposed to work on the lowest common denominator. inside Our primal fears. And the one to be punished is other people (not them).

17.2 The confused preacher

And there is a confused laconic prophet:

”Obadiah, his servants. There shall, in that time, be rumors of things going astray, and there shall be a great confusion as to where things really are, and nobody will really know where lie those little things with the sort of ratio work base that has an attachment.

At this time, a friend shall lose his friend’s hammer and the young shall not know where lie the things possessed by their fathers that their fathers put there only just the night before, about eight o’clock.

Yea, it is written in the book of Cyril that, in that time, shall the third one...”

This confused prophet still speaks about mysterious things. ”Things go astray”. You mysteriously can not find things that you know where you have left them.

As far as I know, Cyril refers to the Jerusalem Bishop that lived
actually about 300 years after the film takes place. Cyril had very strict beliefs.

He was exiled by the Roman emperor because the Emperor wanted to build the Jewish temple and Cyril strongly objected.

In three different ways, we hear on fear and mystery and the lack of rationality.

18 The essence of a film: three deciphering tools

How can you know what is the most important moment in a movie. Here are some tools.

1. What brought the decline of our hero? When the hero of the story is met at the end with a downfall, it seems logical to me to look for the turning point that facilitated this process. If he dies at the end I ask: what made him die? If he looses things that he holds dearly, I ask what caused that? If the director or script writer are able, there will be some indirect implication.

The answer in any analysis for “why did this scene took place” is never “for no reason”. In fact every detail is important.

In ”Citizen Kane”, the downfall of Kane starts when he meets Susan (Alexander). Why does he meet Susan? He went to ”some” place to pick up something sentimental (the sledge). This moment explains that the problems of Charles are because his mother leaving him.

In ”American Beauty”, our hero Lester Burnham (Spacey) dies. The key scene in this entire movie is with Colonel Frank Fits kissing Lester Burnham. This kiss scene explains the movie. It is a movie about hypocrisy. Lester dies because Frank is a hypocrat.

Also check the names. Is Frank really a Frank person? Does mister Fits really fits? And is Burnham not simply shown as a burned person when the movie starts? etc.

Why will Thelma and Louise die? It also seems that dying for them is not a tragedy. Its a liberation. The two ladies
welcome their death. The reason is the essence of this film. Better to die free than live a slave in a male dominated world.

And what about all the death of the heroes in almost all the first films in the French new wave movies? Check for example ”Breathless”, ”They shot the pianist”, ”Her life to live”, ”Jules and Jim”, ”A band apart” and others. They die because they are not authentic to themselves. Being authentic, is the main requirement of the existential philosophy that those young critics followed. Non authentic character filled these films, hence, died at the end.

2. Cinematic tools. Cinema language is a great way to explain that we are watching the essence of the film.

To give a slightly less known example, consider a commercial American film ”K-Pax”. It tells the story of a man (Kevin Spacey) that claims to be an alien from the planet K-Pax. Jeff Bridges plays a Psychiatric treating Spacy.

As often it is for Psychiatric in cinema, Bridges is portrayed as cold and unemotional. The main idea of the film is portrayed in a single shot.

The psychiatric is about the enter the police room in which they hold ”the alien”. Before entering the room Bridges takes a pause. An unusually long and seemingly senseless pause. This should alert us that this moment is ”special”. The room in question has a glass window. The image of Spacey is reflected on the window. When Bridges pauses, the images of Bridges and Spacey merge.

In a single shot, the director (Iain Softley) tells us: Bridges is an alien too. He is alienated from his emotions. Alienated from his family, and children, and friends. Thus, the journey in the film (as it is typical) will be two fold. Not only Spacey will converge toward facing reality but Bridges will have to learn how not to be an alien as well. Apparently, both of them are detached from some painful truth of life.

In ”North by North west”, the key scene is when Thorthon discusses the O in the middle of his name (Thorthon says: ”its nothing”). This scene is ”prepared” with a loud horn noise by the train. This horn sound should alerts us that this
moment is "special". At this time Thorthon is immature and not ready for marriage. His mother has a strong influence on him. Thus he has a zero in the middle of his name. He learns and matures during the movie. The last fight scene takes place in mount Rushmore. They fight "over the face of the fathers of the USA nation". A good symbol for growing up.

A camera movement in "Vertigo" explains the movie. A 360 angles turn in which we go to another room in the middle. A unique shot in cinema history. It represents the end of a transformation. Or the Pygmalion affect. Judy turning to Madeleine.

In "The wrong man" the images of Henry Fonda and the real guilty person merge. This is the main point in this film (transfer of guilt) and also in large part of Hitchkok work.

3. When the movie has many heroes: who survives? Why some people live and the others to die?

Comparison between heroes is then in order. "The cheating of death by the artist" scene in "The seventh seal" is the key scene in the movie and a great example of that only the artists will survive. Becomes eternal via his art.

A good example of this type of movie is the science fiction/horror movie "Alien" (Ridley Scott). This movie is complex and contains numerous hints and signs. It is strongly influenced by another science fiction film: "2001: Space odyssey". "Alien" has a double meaning. A new life form, but also, no emotions.

For those interested, I will point out some signs. The ship is called mother. All the men and woman are dressed in uniform that make them look alike. This is even more notable in the third part of the Alien series because women and man are forced to shave their heads making the distinction between men and women even harder. The spaces in the spaceship are almost all vaginal symbols. The film starts and ends with sort of a "birth". It also is full of various deaths. The world in the movie is dominated by some heartless mechanical company. Most man in the movie are posed as greedy. The company has no concern for human life but only for weapons.
The company does not create anything except for weapons. The machine (robot) is the only one who knows the truth, and even if he looses at the end, its the expense of killing almost all humans.

In a sense the machine has won. We have only one survivor. Ripley is the only one that survives. All the man die. Even the male robot. And also, the girl that has an hair cut of a man dies.

And who dies first? A man that ”gives birth”. But he only gave birth after being used by a ”parasite” as an incubator, and his ”baby” turned out to be a ”monster”.

Ripley survives but not before she ”turns into a woman”, or reborn as a woman. She removes her uniform. Has a full feminine body. Later she is dressed white, putting some vaginal symbol white uniform. I think these hints tell the story.

On the other hand, if the film portrays a struggle between a group of people, the winner of the struggle may implicitly explain the point of view of the artist. See a great example in ”We all loved so much” by Ettore Scola. See a very illustrative example in ”Knife in the water” or ”Bitter moon” by Polanski. Lets apply these rules on the ”Brian” film.

19 The essence of ”Brian”: why will Brian die?

”I don’t want to achieve immortality through my work; I want to achieve immortality through not dying.” Woody Allen.

Brian, will die. This is rule 1. Hence, lets see what brought Brian down. We could say that his love for Judith got him into trouble. But this love is too focal for the film. Its his main triggering point. Without it, there will be no film. Hence, maybe we should say: why was Brian caught by the Romans? Thousands of people claim that he is the Messiah against his will. Being this messiah brings havoc such as the need to give public speeches. And Brian is caught after his speech to the masses.
Hence, let’s backtrack to the question: Why did Brian become a Messiah? I will return to that.

Rule 2: Consider repeated lines in “Brian”. There are only three lines told twice by Brian. Many lines he says, are variants of each other ("You don’t need to follow” me”. You don’t need to follow anyone”). Only three lines are repeated twice exactly or almost exactly as is.

One of them intensifies the betrayal of the P.F.J. Brian says: ”You bastards!”, ”You buster”, ”You sanctimonious batters!”.

One of them is repeated because the audience does not understand or hears properly (the ”Don’t judge other people....” line).

But one line is repeated twice by Brian without change and is also prolonged by a slow speech. Hitchcock would have done this by cinematic means. This is the moment Brian is turned into a Messiah against his will. The most important moment of the film. What did Brian say or do to make his followers gather around him?

19.1 The speech of Brian

Brian starts with ”Don’t you pass judgment on other people, or you might get judged yourself.” The speech of Brian is actually based on logic (implications). Is directed to the brains and not the primal fears of the audience. It is way too logical for the audience to accept. Brian defies here the preachers around him.

Brian: ”Consider the lilies...”

A surprised woman asks: ”Consider the lilies?!”

Brian: well, the birds, then.

Man 1: What birds?

Brian: Any birds.

Man 1: Why?

Brian: Well, have they got jobs?

Man 2: Who?

Brian: The birds.

Man 1: Have the birds got jobs?!
Man 3: What’s the matter with him?

Man 2: He says the birds are scrounging.

Brian: No, the point is the birds. They do all right. Don’t they?

Man 3: Well, good luck to ’em.

Man 1: Yeah. They’re very pretty.

Brian: Okay, and you’re much more important than they are, right? So, what are you worrying about? There you are. See?

Man 1: I’m worrying about what you have got against birds.

Brian is optimistic. And uses logic. Inferring from basic observations and implication rules:

Fact 1: The birds are doing OK.

Fact 2: Humans are more important than birds.

Implication: If one creature is doing OK, any creature which is more important, will do OK.

Conclusion: Hence, do not worry for your future.

He uses other methods of the thinking person: Generalizing, using symbols, abstracts.

Like abstract symbolic birds (namely, not a specific bird) and the lilies as a symbol to all plants. The logical implications contrasted with the other preachers to say: ”logically, if the lesser creatures get along and do not worry on doomsday, and live in the present and are all right, why do you worry about things you have no control over, and things you can’t know?

Brian is way too different from the rest of the preachers. The people can’t take it.

Brian: I haven’t got anything against the birds. Consider the lilies.

Man 2: He’s having a go at the followers now.

Man 1: Oh, give the flowers a chance.

Brian: Look. There was this man, and he had two servants.

Man 2: What were they called?

Brian: What?
Man 2: What were their names?
Brian: I don’t know. And he gave them some talents.
Man 2: You don’t know?!
Brian: Well, it doesn’t matter!
Man 2: He doesn’t know what they were called!
Brian: Oh, they were called 'Simon' and 'Adrian'. Now
Man 2: Oh! You said you didn’t know!
Brian: It really doesn’t matter. The point is there were these two servants
Man 2: He’s making it up as he goes along.
Brian: No, I’m not! And he gave them some.... Wait a minute. Were there three?
Man 1: Oh, he’s terrible!
Man 2: He’s terrible.
Brian: There were three. They were stewards, really.
Lady: get off (the stage).

Again we see that the audience does not understand the abstract. Like understanding that in a parable the protagonists are symbols. Their precise name is irrelevant. The audience demands specifics: to know the names of the servants, and why specifically the lilies etc. What birds? a man asks.... More appalled is the audience when Brian dares saying: "I do not know". Would you imagine the two scary preachers answering "I dont know"?

The humans lost their ability to abstract, to deal with parables and are completely illogical.

19.2 And to them only shall be given

Insanity in individuals is something rare - but in groups, parties, nations and epochs, it is the rule”. Friedrich Nietzsche

Now, to this strange line that got Brian into troubles.
Brian really pressed since some Roman guards go by starts talking nonsense.
"Now now hear this! Blessed are they... who convert their
neighbor’s ox, for they shall inhibit their girth (he means earth),... And to them only shall be given... And to them only shall be given....”

Brian said this line twice out of panic. While in fear. The Roman guards were walking by. Being pressured, Brian speaks in the way the other preachers speak.

For a unique time in the film, Brian goes to the mystical. Of course. there is nothing wrong in wanting a group you support to be blessed. But in this case, look what Brian says. He speaks irrational nonsense stating that ”bless the one that converts his neighbor Ox....” The audience immediately takes interest in this more familiar tone. The mystery comes from a freak ”accident”: Brian did not finish the line above. Hence, he becomes ”mystical”. The troubles of Brian now start.

The audience applies the rule: ”There must be some illogical explanation to all this!”.

Woman 1: (Shall be given) What?
Brian: Hmm?
Woman 1: Shall be given what?
Brian: Oh, nothing.
Woman 1: Hey! What were you going to say?
Brian: Nothing.
Two man: Yes, you were.
Woman 1: Yes. You were going to say something.
Brian: No, I wasn’t. I’d finished.
Woman 1: Oh, no you weren’t.
Man 1: Oh, come on. Tell us before you go.
Brian: I wasn’t going to say anything. I’d finished.
Woman 1: No, you hadn’t.
A blind man: What won’t he tell?
Man 2: He won’t say.
Blind man: Is it a secret?
Brian: No.
Blind man: Is it?

Man 2: Must be. Otherwise, he’d tell us.

Man 1: Oh, tell us the secret.

The crowd is taken by the mystery left by Brian’s unfinished line. ”There must be some illogical explanation to that!” He must know ”the secret for eternal life!”, for example. Brian himself gives the simple answer: ”I was not going to say anything. I was finished.” Brian engaged in mystery only once and very shortly. Boy will he be punished for that.

One thing to point out is that the public does not really holds the messiah on a pedestal. Disobeying Brian while claiming he is a Mashia will return again and again. They refuse to listen to the Mashia that they created. If he is divine why do they keep ignoring his wishes?

A large crowd is now assemble together and start following Brian. The crazy emotional behavior of the crowd with respect to Brian will now continue throughout the rest of the film.

How logical is to follow a man that insists he is not the messiah? Why do we invent super power out of thin air? Jesus himself objected to being called a messiah.

The crowd asks Mandy if she is a virgin. Appalled, Mandy refuses to answer. The people apply the rule ”there must be some illogical thing here” and so people whispers: she is! she is a virgin!. This mystical lie (we know that Mandy was raped), caught and from now on Mandy will be considered a virgin.

19.3 Irrationality and fear as the devil

”Living is easy with Eyes closed” The Beetles

Who is the devil in this tragedy?

Since this is what made Brian the messiah and caused his eventual death, irrationality is the devil. The crowd wants some ”father” to tell them the future. To reduce the frightening uncertainty in life. To give them hope. To feed them when they are hungry (as they ask Brian to do). Working is a hard task.... The crowd wants Brian to tell them what to do. Thinking for yourself is very scary.
The crowd also wants to believe that holy people can cure terrible deceases. Facing incurable deceases is almost an impossible task.

A blind man claims that Brian cured him. He wants to believe that. But this is a lie: immediately following his declaration the blind man fails to see a hole in the ground and falls.

Part of of being a grownup is thinking for yourself. Taking responsibility for your own life. Not following anybody.

Not all people above twenty, even if they work and produce, are grownups. They could be children. For instance believing that some so called holy man can cure a decease is not only childish and lacks self respect, but also dangerous. It means betraying yourself. In some extreme cases people refuse treatment to their children under the assumption that ”god will cure the child. No need for a doctor”. But in rational religion god does not interfere in the world.

Besides irrationality, the second devil is fear. The result of fear is that we become uniform (”We are all different”!). People act the same. You get some comfort if your opinion is backed by a mass of people.

Fear make people submissive. A strong person can take over. The film claims that if we do not face reality and let irrationality and primal fears take over, disasters will happen.

Fear puts obstacles to any advance or change. Fear is the opposite of science that tries to teach us new things. Fear completely blocks knowledge in cases that the knowledge implies something bad. For example science claims we are descendants of the apes. Jews and Christian do not accept that.

To do a good science work is the opposite of the uniform: you have to think a unique new brave thought. To be alone at the beginning. Starting the ”To them only shall be given....” scene, the fearful crowd behaves as a herd of sheep. We are in the cave of shadows.
20 Forming a rational religion compatible with the film

"God does not play dice with the world. He plays hide and seek". From the movie "Husbands and wives" by Woody Allen).

We can learn how does a religion should look like by voiding what is mocked in the film.

Principals of rational religion according to the movie There is no way whatsoever to create a rational religion based on the Catholic faith. The film suggests a faith that has a lot in common with the Jewish one.

1. What does the film say on the silence of god? The film clearly shows the silence of good. The parody of the spaceship is a good example. The fact that only non fanatic people are crucified and evil people continue living, the failed love of Brian and Judith. The death of the person that wanted to help another carry the cross. All the insanity. God means law and order and so, god does not interfere in our world.

Rational religion is based on the important Jewish verse: 'The world behaves in its usual way' The "Maimonides" said: the rules of of nature come before the rules of god. Or more simply: good does not interfere with our world. This is suggested many times in the film. Strongly suggested in the spaceship scene by being a parody.

God declares at the end of the book of Jov (after almost all his family is killed and Jov himself becomes a leper): 'I dont owe explanations'. Seeing all the false prophets in the film indicated that god does not contact humans. God also did not talk yo Jov: Its a parable. The old testament is a collection of parables. Any other interpretation, would violate the test of rationality.

The exodus of the Jews from Egypt has no scientific validation whatsoever. It does not matter. Its a story on how a collection of people becomes free. The test of rationality implies that this never really happened.

2. What does the movie say on good versus evil? As the film shows,
good people like Brian are punished in the film. To claim that the good are rewarded is reverse logic. Recall that the person that helped another to bear the cross was betrays and punished by death. The film clearly shows: God does not reward the good, does not punish the bad. Does not heal the sick. Infants will continue to die. A question like 'How come the Jewish Holocaust happened' is blasphemy. They wanted the laws of nature to change. This is reverse logic. God never intervenes in this world. The world continues according to the rules of nature.

3. What does the film say about the possibility of knowing the future?

We can't. Our world should be studied by science. Science and religion are completely separated. Science itself can not predict the future. This was settle with quantum theory. Nothing is certain.

4. What does it mean to be a Jew? The film only says what it does not mean to be a Jew. Expecting anything from god is blasphemy. Brian clearly is a religious person. At that time there were no such thing as a secular Jews. This is a term coined in the 20 century.

The film clearly says ("its written this way") that to be a Jew you have to follow blindly what is written in the bible. According to the Maimonides, the essence of being a Jew is acting and not acting according to 613 commands. You can ask why of course. You can ask your Rabbi for example. As long as at the end you follow the rules. A big rule in the Jewish religion is do the deeds, and only later doubt them/

5. What does the film say about the prophets? The prophets in the film are false one, and once more pretend to predict the future. The film suggests the obvious: nobody can predict the future.

At this stage its fair to discuss the prophets

The Jewish scholars day the obvious. The prophets in the bible did not predict the future. They are not a bunch of clowns in a carnival act. The prophets in the bible just said how the world should look like. They were morally superior.
We listen to them for that reason, not because they talk to god. They do not talk to god. No human can know anything about god. Much less, talk to god. You do not become religious for the sake of turning god into your agent, and god making you healthy and rich. This is a terrible blasphemy.

6. How should we punish people?

The film say that we should adapt the ancient rules, and interpret them in a way that will not cause death. They show how idiotic of an idea is to stone to death a person that uttered the name of the lord. Its modern time. Get over this.

7. So why should I believe?

The film does not give you a reason to believe because there is none. If you believe or not is totally arbitrary. Like your choice of being kind or evil.

Science has nothing to say on god.

The belief is blind. Being a Jew is very hard. These 613 commandments you must follows are hard to fulfill. Jews have to pray daily three times, not work in Saturday, fasting in the Day of Atonement. Giving up all kinds of food that the religion forbids, Not drinking milk combined with eating meat.

8. What does the film say about God protecting the Jews?

He never does. In all the film, except for the parody of the spaceship, Jews die right and left all the time. Like those who attack the palace.

The Pythons know Jewish history. They actually prepared to make the film by learning the Jewish and Christian religions and history. They learned how much god failed to help the Jews. God did not help the Jews when the Spanish inquisition tortured them. Did not protect the Jews in Russia and Poland from "Pogroms". The Pogrom is the is a violent riot aimed at the massacre of Jews. In Russia and Poland, this was a practicing tradition for a very long time. God did not help.

9. Is it possible that a religion fights against itself like the film?

The Pythons that know the Jewish religion, know that a film
that goes against itself is a perfect reflection of the Jewish religion.

In the Jewish belief there are Rabbi. A huge amount of Rabbi. The Jewish belief encourages contradictions.

A Jew should make him a rabbi. The statement is not choose a Rabbi. The Rabbi should not be chosen arbitrarily. To choose your Rabbi you must effort and compare and choose a Rabbi that seems to you close to your beliefs.

And what if the Rabbi say contradicting things. It does not matter. You should follow your own Rabbi. Even though the Rabbi contradict, the Jewish religion says: Both Rabbi speak the words of god.

There is no truth in the world. The script may be holly but we are humans. Here is a typical story that shortly explains the Jewish religion.

Simon and Jakov get into a strong feud. They have the same Rabbi though. Simon comes to the rabbi and complains about what Jakob did to him. He says: Jakov is evil. The rabbi listens carefully to what Simon says: I thought about it, and you Simon, you are right.

However Jacob hears about this. And as they have the same Rabbi, now Jakov goes to the Rabbi. Jakov says:

What Simon told you is not true. Simon is the evil in this case.

The Rabbi thinks for some time, and after contemplating, the Rabbi says to Jakov: Jakov, you know what? You are right.

The wife of the Rabbi hears all these exchanges. Appalled she strongly tells the Rabbi What are you doing? It cant be that both Simon and Jakov are right! This is completely illogical. They have opposite views!

The Rabbi takes a long think and then tells his wife. ”You know what? You are right as well!

Rational religion is frustrating to people because you cant know anything.

10. What is wrong with us? The people in the film behave irrationally and are afraid to think by themselves. They invent a
Messiah against his will. Their biggest sin, is not looking at reality as it is, since its so hard.

Remark: The Jews lost their ways. The Maimonides clearly established that there is no such thing as "sacred places" in the Jewish religion. A "sacred place" is a matter of tradition but has no theological value whatsoever. Those who pray near the wailing wall engage in what the Jewish religion calls "Avoda Zara" namely the worshiping of a god that is not the Jewish god. The penalty for that in the old testament is death.

I can not see any large group that beliefs in rational religion. This means our future is bleak.

21 Politics: left and right wings, and combinations

This second part focuses on politics. The P.F.J, the Romans, and the Roman-Jewish wars plus the wars among the Jews.

21.1 Jewish history made short

"One never expects the Spanish inquisition". Monty Python.

In order to understand the power struggle presented in 'Brian" (between Romans and Jews, between Jews and other Jews and so on) a few very basic (very partial) facts of the history of the Jews and the Jewish life in the time of Christ are required.

The first time the Jewish people lived at a state of their own was in the 11 century BC. At this time the Hebrew tribes grouped together in a monarchy under king David.

The leaders came from the tribe of JUDAH and this monarchy was called the JUDAH KINGDOM. After the son Solomon of David died, a revolt caused the establishment of another monarchy: the monarchy of Israel, alongside the one of Judah.

The monarchy of Judah is an especially essential key of understanding the way the P. F. J. behave in the film.
Then tragedy stroke. The Israeli Kingdom was overthrown by the Assyrian around 722 BC. Around 586 BC, the kingdom of Judah was conquest by the Babylon and sent the Jews to an exile. It seems that the so called "Old testament" (or "Tanah" in Hebrew) was written at the time between the fall of the Israel kingdom to the fall of the Judah kingdom. Hence, it mostly reflective the combative point of view of the Judah kingdom.

The bible was the first to described the journey of the "sons of Israel" to the land of Kennan from Egypt. A story that never happened.

In contrast, scientific indications show that a flood happened. And this story appears in many other cultures.

The old testament is the first to describe god as powerful and gave a central role to the temple in Jerusalem. Worshiping in the great temple is sacred.

It was the Persian ruler that allowed the Jews to return. The Jews rebuilt the temple. From around 165 BC to 135 AC (namely, up until 135 years after Christ was born), the Jews were trying to restore the kingdom of Judah. Jews and suffering: The Persian could not have treated the Jews any better. Still the thing that the Jews remember is mainly one person, Haman the evil. Haman was a vizier in the Persian empire under King Ahasuerus, traditionally identified as Xerxes.

The Jews made a monster of Haman claiming he was a descendant of Agag, the king of the Amalekites. Haman and his wife Zeresh instigate a plot to kill all of the Jews of ancient Persia. They were saved by Esther that married King Ahasuerus, prostituting her body.

The Jewish holiday of Purim is in memory of how the Jews killed Haman, his wife, and all his 11 innocent children. There is a tradition that when Haman name is mentioned, the Jews should create a lot of noise. The Jews invented a noise maker artifact to use for this occasion. Pastry known as Oznei Haman (the Ears of Haman no less) are traditionally eaten on this day. That was how the Jews rewarded for their kind treating of the Jews.

The Jews strive when they celebrate death of others. Always look on the past (they should look to the future to the coming of
the Messiah, but in practice this does not happen). They celebrate only if tries to kill the Jews in the past. But the Jews killed this someone instead. As in all religions, holidays are a celebration of death. Even though the Persian were so good to the Jews, a Jewish child, and probably an adult as well, will not know it. Most Rabbi see all gentiles as enemies.

The people front of Judah are trying to resurrect the Judea kingdom. As always, celebrating death, the myth of JUDAH THE MACCABEE that won over the Greeks, or more precisely, the Seleucid, had enormous influence on the Jews in the time of Jesus.

JUDAH THE MACCABEE established a kingdom on large parts of the old Judah. This rebellion occurred around 200 years before Christ was born. Since the Greeks tried to kill the Jews and at the end the Jews killed the Greeks, there is a a holiday to celebrate this death called Hanuka. Passover, celebrates the death of the Egyptians.

21.2 The Jewish life at the time of Brian

As soon as the Roman took over, clashes between Jews and the Romans immediately began. Historically, the Romans were intolerant towards the Jews (of course there is an argument about that).

First, the idea of a single god held by Jews was incomprehensible to the Romans. When the Romans occupied some place, they simply incorporated the new gods of these place. into the collection.

The consideration the Jews had for human life seemed strange to the Romans. The Romans used to Enjoy watching warriors fight lions in the coliseum. Or watching a fight to death between two humans. Senseless violence. The Romans loved it.

Pontious Pilate, the governor of Judah at the time was especially inflexible and did not respect the sanctity of the Jewish temple. Many Jewish groups started fighting Rome. The Jews also complained on the too high taxes (as they saw it).

"The big revolt" started at 70 AC (AC after Christ). This was an insane act. Rome was way too strong. But the Jews thought that that "god will keep us safe".
Except that god never keeps the Jews safe. Not in the first exile, not in the second exile, not against the inquisition, and not in the holocaust. They lost eventually (see below).

As the film clearly shows, the Jews throughout history, love to fight sometimes to death, against each other. This is not true only for the extreme right. This holds for all Jewish sects.

The four main groups in the time of Jesus where the Pharisees (this probably means: those who separate). They had a very simple life style. They were flexible in their interpretation of the Tora. Were not extreme. They inserted angels reincarnation and many other mystical ideas to the Jewish religion, and they did it without asking god. Brian is a Pharisee. He has a very humble house and dresses in a humble way and is not extreme. Exactly like the Pharisees.

Then there were the Sadducee. Meaning ”the righteous ones”. They believed only in the Tora (the first 5 books of the old testament) and did not believe in re-incarnation, angels, etc. They were more conservative and did not agree with the ”new rules” of the Pharisees. The Sadducee did not obtain the support of the common people (at least in the time of the fall of the second temple).

A highly religious group were the Essences. (here it is probably clear that their name comes form the word essence). Religious Zelouts. They hated the Sadducee and the Pharisees. They claimed that Apocalypse is near and the world is about to end.

The Dead Sea Scrolls claim that the world to end shortly. So are they Essences? Jewish scholars argue for ages on this question.

Some of the Dead Sea Sect people went to live in the desert to escape the corruption of city life. The old man that ”Brian” that did not talk in 18 years *named ”Simon” in the script) is a typical Essence.

The more extreme groups were called Zealots. The life of Brian is filled with those. Recall the scenes with multitude of people chasing Brian. When Simon, the old naked man defies the divinity of Brian (”No he is not”, meaning Brian is not the messiah) the crowd immediately attacks him shouting ”Unbeliever!”. This is the Zealots way.

Among them the more violent groups the above mentioned
Sicarii. The "People Front of Yehuda" are a Sicarii group. Their plan of kidnaping the emperors wife and use extortion, is consistent with the known methods of the Sicarii.

22 The left can be universal too

22.1 Initial remarks

The left also has universal rules. Many times, the ideas are well intended. But the left gave us communism. This left wing theory caused the death of millions. In communism whatever is invented belongs to everyone. This does nor give motivation to excel. The extreme left try to justify it this way. You had an invention. But its importance is only because others use it. Thus it should belong to everyone equally. Like the one who invented the car. Without other people this would be useless.

This is a nice exercise in demagoguery. Communism states that there will be a non democratic stage before the world becomes communist. This non democratic regime seemed endless and killed millions.

Many left wing groups like the vile political correctness movement, which is a fascist movement, PETA, Me-too and others act violently. There is no difference between the smallest of sins (see the case of Al Franklin that the me-too ended his career for no reason) and the most terrible of the sins. Those who rape for example. The me-too movement became fascist very fast after it was established.

There are those who want to save endangered spices. More than 99 percent of the species that ever existed are gone. If a spices is to be extinct I say, let it go with dignity

Those who want me to recycle did not apparently read enough. I can give definite scientific evidence that recycling at the end hurts the environment. The trees are not in danger. We grow trees for producing paper. If more paper will be needed, they will grow more trees.

Those groups above treat their pet issue like its a matter of life and death. In a world with child prostitution, and modern slavery,
and people dying from hunger, and from diseases that are long
gone in the west, and with all civil wars around, and with all the
people that live in a dictatorship, I should worry about ”saving the
snails”?

22.2 A relevant terrorist group of the left

The ”Brian” film being made in the seventies, may remind us of
the red brigades. This group was formed in 1969.

   It is a Marxist-Leninist group. Its aim is to create a revolu-
tionary state. Also, relieve Italy of western alliance.

   Their methods are not far from those of the Sicarii mentioned
above. They performed assassination and kidnaping of Italian Gov-
ernment officials.

   Their most famous murder is of the former Prime Minister of
Italy, Aldo Moro in 1978. This happened a year before Brian was
released and was still in impact.

   All is fair, the red brigades say, in the war against NATO. Anti
NATO was a universal idea.

22.3 The P.F.J. and the insult: a left wing movement

The P.F.J group acts like a left wing group. The Sicarii, were an
extreme right wing movement. Very religious and certainly not
democratic.

   The Pythons trying to offend both sides, make the P.F.J as a
left wing movement. With some of its usual agenda.

   One has to remember that the Jewish religion (unlike Christian-
ity, for example) is a ”total” religion that encompasses all walks of
life. The proper way to live eat, make love, worship what have you
is not a matter of opinion or vote. There is no democracy in the
Jewish religion.

   The Pythons knew that making the P.F.J a left wing movement
is the huge insult for the extreme right wing, and to extreme left
wing. That is their reason of doing it. This hints to the similarity
the Pythons find between extreme left and extreme right groups.
23 The trademark of extreme left movements

"Communism is a nice theory. But there is a problem. It can become a reality". Kishon

What are liberals ideas?

Democracy, human rights, elections.

The P.J.F are actually ”very” democratic..... The P.F.J want to keep their left-wing democracy at every moment.

The film makes fun of their wish to be democratic. After they betray Brian on the cross., they actually take a vote on if to sing for him ”For he is jolly good fellow” or not sing. Everybody votes yes, so they sing.

And they speak all the time of men rights (and women!) and on birth rights of any men (and woman!). Human rights? Naturally. But the right to do what?

Talking on human right is empty. What human right?. Did Bin-Laden have the HUMAN RIGHT to blow-away Americans? Is the USA the great devil in our world as left wing European groups claim? Should we automatically hate rich people? Human rights is an empty propaganda if not accompanied by proper definitions of what the rights are. Since the P.F.J never say what the rights are, what they say is empty.

23.1 An example: The argument on the state of Israel

One scene in ”Brian” reminds me how the state of Israel was established.

In order for the comparison to be clear I will elaborate somewhat on this history. Specifically, the Israeli Palestinian dispute.

Both the Jewish state and the Palestinian movement are among the ugly movements of the 20 century. It did not use to be so bad for the Jews. But after the ”6 days war” the Jews conquered a large amount of land, thought that the messianic time may have started and started to treat the Palestinians in a cruel way.

The P.L.O was established 3 years before the 1967 war. This is the best evidence that the Palestinian want to destroy Israel. Since
they were established before the war. They want Tel-Aviv, Haifa, all of Jerusalem. Everything. They use disgusting violent method and even use homicide killers. People that carry explosive on their bodies and explode it in the middle of a bus. This was invented by Japan in world war two. But the Palestinians were the first to do this against civilians. I would not say that they are worse than Japan, because of the ”Asian Holocaust”.

Too many left wing parties in Europe do not see Hamas as a terrorist group. Because Israel has ”no right to exist”. Because it was founded by violating the ”human rights” of Palestinian.

The fact is that Israel was established by a majority vote in the united nation in 1947. The assembly of nations gave Israel its ”right to exist”. This is more than we can say about England, France and the USA.

The Jews were massacred not long before by the Nazi. Europe was not safe. The Jews wanted a country. The left wing in Europe insist that the Jews are the only one who do not deserve a country. In such a case, why did you kill Jews in masses?

In 1948, Palestine was split in a US resolution between the Jews and Palestinians.

The territory given to Israel by the UN then, is a small fraction of the territory that Israel holds now. What happened?

The Arab countries and the Palestinian defied in 1947 the UN resolution and opened an immediate war against the Jews. Breaking international law.

Then Israel committed a crime against humanity. During the 1948 war, many Arabs were transferred (forced to leave) by the Jews. This created the refugees problem. Transfer is a crime against humanity.

The Jews won.... From 1948 to 1967, Israel was living in the so called 1967 borders. The Jews already captured more territory than they were supposed have had. The 1967 borders are not that bad.

This crime against humanity has its roots in the lesser crime of the Arabs launching a war against Israel breaking the international law. By the way, after Israel was established, Jews were deported in masses from Arab countries. The Arab countries stole all the
Jewish possessions. The Left in Europe ignores this crimes.

Many countries have been built as a result of crimes. Check countries previously populated by natives (Peru, Argentina, USA). Why does Peru that was founded by making the native Inca tribes (almost) extinct has a ”right to exist”? Why do fascist countries where the minority rules by fascist methods of intimidation (like Syria. In Syria a small minority rules. This was also the case until recently in Iraq) have the right to exist?

The ”human right” excuse is misused here, and worse. It is hypocritical (contradicts itself). The extreme left wants to solve the crime and tragedy of the transfer of the Arabs out of Israel in 48. They suggest to transfer the Jews out of Israel. Hypocrat. You do not solve a crime using exactly the same crime.

Those who want to destroy Israel should start a campaign to destroy Peru, Argentina, the USA and other countries. The Israeli country was formed by transfer. But the countries mentioned above where formed by genocide which is way worse. Hypocrat. Cowards.

23.2 The state of Israel versus Simon

The scene that I want to compare to the establishment of the state of Israel is the scene with Simon (the naked old man that kept quite for 18 years).

It is an example that explains that the world is complex.

The parallel is formed as follows:

1. Brian represents the moderate Jews

2. Simon represents the Arabs that lived at the time in Palestine in 1947.

3. The fanatic followers of Brian represent the fanatic right wing of Israel. Even the one of today.

1. Brian invades the territory of Simon. Like the moderate Jews who invaded Palestine but had nothing but good intentions. They were peaceful left wing people (at start). Like Brian.
2. Brian hurts Simon’s foot like the moderate Jews who hurt inadvertently the Arab population that lived in Palestine in 1948. The first Jews to come from Europe were very moderate (socialistic) groups. Moderate like Brian. They did not want to violate human rights.

3. When Brian tries to reconcile with Simon, he is angry and objects. Like the Palestinians did in 1948.

4. Then Simon attacks Brian. Like the Arab population attack the moderate Jews of the time.

5. When attacked, the fanatic Jews rose. The fanatics attach Simon back. Exactly like the Jewish fanatics today oppress the Palestinian. In fact the fanatics expelled Simon from his habitat like the transfer of Palestinians by the Jews.

24 You speak but you do not say

The P.F.J. are in part an example of an impotent left wing group. Their rhetoric is based on theoretical ideas that are both detached and not followed by any meaningful actions. This rhetoric being void is explained in a truly perfect way in the following discussion.

    Judith: I do feel, Reg, that any Anti-Imperialist group like ours must re such a divergence of interests within its power-base.
    Reg: Agreed. Francis?
    Francis: Yeah. I think Judith’s point of view is very valid, Reg, provided the Movement never forgets that it is the inalienable right of every man
    Stan (Lorretta): Or woman.
    Francis: to rid himself
    Stan: Or herself.
    Reg: Agreed.
    Francis: Thank you, brother.
    Stan: Or sister.
    Francis: Or sister. Where was I?
Reg: I think you’d finished.
Francis: Oh. Right.
Reg: Furthermore, it is the birthright of every man
Stan: Or woman........

If you collect what Francis said you get: "It's the right of every man or woman to rid himself......” Thats it.

We are left with an empty statement. "Humans rights”. What rights? This is not discussed.

The Pythons strongly mock here extreme feminist movements. Another fascist organization. The Pythons are liberal. But they will not support the extreme.

Talking about empty propaganda, can there be a worse cliche than saying (that the right of Stan to have babies is) ”Symbolic of our struggle against oppression”? More void line than that is hard to find.

The (misfired, namely, not funny) scene with Judith coming to inform the P.F.J that Brian was captured, shows an all talking/voting group, not backed by action. The P.F.J prefer theory over actions. Brian was caught? This merits a new motion! Completely new motion!

25 The right is even worse

25.1 Violence is the only answer

It’s not balanced. The view of this film is that the right wing is much worse than the left wing. Much more violent. By nature. They have terrible concepts like ”honor”. Honor tramps human lives, of course.

But the most disgusting thing with the right is that they claim to base their ideas on what god said. God gave us this country. Making the bible a history book. No country belongs to no people. They only belong to god.

The right wing has a bad habit of trying to force the hand of others. Violently. The right wing tends to say that violence is
ALWAYS the solution. See the "Judea People front Crack suicide squad" near the end of the movie.

An up bit music starts and then:
A worker: The Judea People’s Front!
Another fellow: The Judea People’s Front!
A Judea people’s front leader: Forward all!
Workers: Look out! The Judea People’s Front! The Judea People’s Front!...

The J.P.F member: We are the Judea People’s Front. Crack suicide squad. Suicide squad! Attack!
J.P.F.: Oh Oh... (Kill themselves)
The leader upon dying: That showed ’em, huh? Oooh.

A summary of the ways of right wing. The character that says ”we showed them” is Oto. A neo-Nazi character that was dropped for being too offensive.

But the right wing thinks that death is better than negotiations. This is what happen in Jerusalem. And amazingly happened again in Messada.

25.2 ”Showing them”: the big revolt

This short scene of the "Crack suicide squad" represents well several epochs in the Jewish history.

In fact this ”we showed them” altitude combined with suicide is an integral part of Jewish history.

One example: In the year 66, a Jewish rebellion started. Nero ordered confiscating some treasures of the temple.

The above and other issues triggered the big revolt. The Sicarii held Guerilla war against the Romans. The Jews were able to deny the Romans entry to Jerusalem that was like a fortress. Some of the Romans in Jerusalem were lynched by the Sicarii.

The revolt was on its way. The success of the Jews in driving Rome from Jerusalem was a big shock to the Romans. The zealots ”showed Rome”. But there were consequences (as always). The Romans held a series of attacks against Jews, especially in
Caesarean, Alexandria and Damascus. Many (thousands) of Jews were killed or enslaved. The Romans were determined to "Show the Jews back". And show them they did. Inside the Jewish camp, many did not want the war. The Pharisees did not want the war. Their leader Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai opted for a peaceful solution (he stated the obvious: that it is crazy to attack Rome).

The Sadducee that were already pro-Rome agreed.

However, there were the Zealot who would have none of it. The zealots were determined to "show them" back. It may be that they felt that the Messianic era is about to start because the war with Rome may be the war against Magog. This is non consistent with the old testament that established that Magog will come from the north. But still, the first wars of the Jews and Romans did start at the north.

The zealots expected that "god is with us and will protect us". They swore to fight to the death. They caught upon the Roman soldiers heading toward Jerusalem and killed 6,000 Romans soldiers. On top of that, they inserted mystical claims to make their wishes more universal. They claimed that the victory (if killing 6000 people is a victory) happened in the same place where the Maccabee had won over the Greeks. Its probably a myth. But the Zelouts said as usual: This is a sign of god!. They where ecstatic.

Irrational religion is tricky. Nero appointed a new commander: Titus Flavius Vespasianus, also known as Vespasian. Vespasian appointed his son Titus as one of his lieutenants. After fierce battles, the Romans achieved control over the Galilee. While Vespasianus turned into the emperor of Rome, Titus his son went after Jerusalem. Jerusalem was very hard to conquer fortress. Instead of trying to conquer Jerusalem, the Romans siege Jerusalem hoping they will run out of food.

The Jews could have lasted perhaps years. They had big supply of food. But then the zealots came to the help of the Romans. When the moderates attempted to talk to Rome, and worse remove the Zelouts from the Temple Mount (in Hebrew: Har ha Bait, meaning the mountain of our home) the zealots slaughter the moderate Jews. Amazingly, the Zealots destroyed the supply of the Jewish food so that the people would have no choice but to fight or starve.
Faced by starvation, the Jews have lost. The Romans destroy Jerusalem and the temple and perform massive killings (by the usual method: crucifixion). It was very clear that god faltered the Jews. In few more years (about in 135 AC) Jerusalem will become pagan city called Aelia Capitolina. The worst insult possible for Jews.

Even more amazingly, this was all repeated in Masada. The siege on Masada was chronicled by Flavius Josephus. All we know about the first Roman Jewish war was from what he wrote. On a careful note, it seems to me that he was working for the Romans and so his accounts may be favorable to the Romans.

According to Josephus the long siege of Masada by the Romans led to the mass suicide of the Sicarii rebels. They would rather die than loose and be captured. Masada, regrettably, became a big positive symbol for the Jewish right wing. I guess that like the Judea people front, they also ”showed” the Romans when they killed itself.

The right wing, being a master of lies, says that the second temple fell because of senseless hate. A big fat lie. The temple has fallen because of the zealots. Because of the extreme right.

Because parties like the Likud that is in power for almost 40 years now in Israel (with very short periods when the left or center left ruled).

Moderate Jews are living Israel by masses, living just the extreme right. Can the small amount of moderate left Israel from itself? I doubt it. Usually it ends in exile. The only problem is that now the Jews have nuclear weapon. And the Palestinian Israeli conflict could easily cause a nuclear war, and the end of the world, no less.

25.3 The civil war of the big revolt: a depiction

The raid in question was similar to what happened in the big revolt. The scene in which the P.F.J try to kidnap the wife of Pilate, reflects, like no other scene I know, the fact that the Jews tend to fight and kill their own.

Francis: Once in the sewer, timing will be of the essence. There
is a Roman feast later in the evening, so we must move fast, and don’t wear your best sandals. Turning left here, we enter the Caesar-Augustus memorial sewer and from there, proceed directly to the hypocaust. This has just been re-tiled, so terrorists, careful with those weapons. We will now be directly beneath Pilate’s audience chamber itself. This is the moment for Habbakuk to get out his prong.

When the raid starts the P.F.J meet another group. It turns out to be The “Campaign for Free Galilee.”

C.F.G. member: Campaign for Free Galilee.
Francis: People’s Front of Judea. Only officials.
C.F.G.M: Oh.
Francis: What’s your group doing here?
C.F.G.M: We’re going to kidnap Pilate’s wife, take her back, issue demands.
Francis: So are we.
C.F.G.M: What?
Francis: That’s our plan!
C.F.G.M: We were here first!
Francis: What do you mean?!
C.F.G.M: We thought of it first!
Another P.F.J. Member: Oh, yeah?
C.F.G.M: Yes, a couple of years ago!
P.F.J: (showing disbelief)
C.F.G.M: We did!
Francis: Okay, come on. You got all your demands worked out, then?
C.F.G.M: Of course we have.
Francis: What are they?
C.F.G.M: Well, I’m not telling you.
Francis: Oh, come on. Pull the other one.
P.F.J.: Shh!
C.F.G.M: That's not the point! We thought of it before you!
Another P.J.F. member: Did not.
C.F.G.M: We did!
Francis: You didn’t.
C.F.G (all of them): We bloody did
By the way here the C.F.G talks like an Englishman saying the word ”bloody”.
Brian interrupts and tries to tell the rivals to be quiet.
C.F.G.M: You bastards! We’ve been planning this for months.
Francis: Well, tough titty for you, Fish Face. Oh! Oh.
The two groups start a deadly fight among each other. Brian tries to stop this.
Brian: Brothers! Brothers! We should be struggling together!
Francis: We are!
Brian: We mustn’t fight each other! Surely we should be united against the common enemy!
Upon hearing these words of Brian the two groups ”wake up” and promptly shout in one voice together:
”THE JUDEAN PEOPLE’S FRONT!!!!”
Brian is shocked to hear this answer.
Brian: NO. The Romans.
Talking about senseless hate, this is senseless hate. The extreme hate is just for the sake of hate Because these two Jewish groups that fight to death against each other, have exactly the same goals.
Upon hearing Brian now, everybody says:
For a moment the two groups seem to get back into their senses.
Francis says: Yeah. He’s right.
However, a Roman soldiers passes by.
The two group members freeze and then:
C.F.G.M: Right! Where were we?
Francis: you were going to punch me.
C.F.G.M: Oh, yeah.

The two groups fight to the death except for one man: Brian.

Like many times in history, the Jews kill each other. This happens now and will happen more in the state of Israel.

25.4 Glorious deaths

After being informed on the failure of the mission Reg says:

"I now propose that all seven of these ex-brothers be now entered in the minutes as probationary martyrs to the cause. Let us not be down-hearted. One total catastrophe like this is just the beginning! Their glorious deaths shall unite us all."

Glorious deaths. A sick right wing idea. They say that some ways to die brings honor.

The film objects. There is no honor in death. A death is a death. Life is important. The right wing is sick and deals with the dead more than with the living.

The unnecessary death caused by the Zelouts in Jerusalem and later in Masada is senseless. Their death is far from glorious. It did not help in anything.

The two Jews groups fighting in the palace, are not fighting for honor dignity or divine reasons. They fight because they hate. Not only the Romans. They hate everybody that is not like them.

Brian is kept alive. It is important for the film to make the last hours of Brian as similar to the last hours of Jesus.

25.5 Jewish survival

Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakkai was the leader of the Pharisees. A moderate. Zakkai saw that Jerusalem cannot hold. He saw that the zealots may cause Jewish Annihilation.

He did not want a glorious death for the entire Jewish people. At the peak of the roman siege on Jerusalem, the Zealots forced everybody to stay in Jerusalem (in order to fight). To die a glorious death. Those who manage to leave Jerusalem, got crucified by the Romans. Seeing that, Rabbi Zakkai acted. Alone. In a try to save
the Jewish people from this glorious death.

Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai hides himself in a casket and taken to Vespasian. When meeting Vespasian, he greets Vespasian as if he were the emperor.

Vespasian is furious and wants to execute Zakkai for his remark (because Vespasian is not yet the emperor. His father is).

The Rabbi insists: ”God would allow only a great ruler to take Jerusalem”.

Just then (according to this myth) a messenger arrives from Rome. Caesar has died and Vespasian was made the new Caesar.”

Impressed with this prophecy, Vespasian asks the Rabbi to name a wish. Rabbi Yohanan asks to save some Jews. Vespasian allows Zakkai to convene a Sanhedrin (the assembly of religious judges) at Yavneh. Because of the Yavneh group, the Jews survived. In Yavneh, the Sanhedrin seeing what is probable to happen, namely the exile, prepare the Jews to life in exile, which is not a simple matter.

At the end, it was a man like Brian who saved the Jews. Yohanan Ben Zakkai. A moderate. The Zelouts called him a traitor as they always do. But without him, the Jewish people would have been extinct. Nevertheless, I do not remember him mentioned even once when I learn the old testament as a kid in Israel. Rewriting history.

25.6 The police of thoughts

”Any person can state any opinion. Unless he disagrees with the president and then becomes a subversive mother”. From ”Bananas”.

Intimidation. This is the favorite tools of the extreme. There tell you what is allowed and what is not. If you take one of the disallowed position you are a traitor. Or they say: ”People with this opinions are the enemy from within”. Or they may say on others, they are subversive, defeatist or engage in blasphemy.

But the Pythons are not ones to go along.

Lets jump to the scene in which the Romans chase Brian to the
headquarters of P.F.J. An old man named Mathias. watches the door. It just takes him a large time to open the door, and so the others have time to hide.

The following dialogue develops between Mathias and the Roman soldier:

Mathias: My eyes are dim. I cannot see.
Soldier: Are you Mathias?
Mathias: Yes
Soldier: We have reason to believe you may be hiding one Brian of Nazareth, a member of the terrorist organization, the 'People’s Front of Judea’.
Mathias: Me? No. I’m just a poor old man. I have no time for law-breakers. My legs are grey. My ears are gnarled. My eyes are old and bent.
The (apparently mentally challenged) soldiers come inside and are able to miss all those hiding in plane sight.
Soldier: You know the penalty laid down by Roman law for harboring a known criminal?
Mathias: No.
Soldier: Crucifixion.
Mathias: Oh.
Soldier: Nasty, eh?
Mathias: Hm. Could be worse.
Soldier: What do you mean, ‘could be worse’?
Mathias: Well, you could be stabbed.
Mathias: Stabbed? Takes a second. Crucifixion lasts hours! It’s a slow, horrible death!
Mathias: Well, at least it gets you out in the open air.
Soldier: You’re weird.
Later the soldiers return. They say: There is one place we have not look!
Mathias: My legs are old and bent. My ears are grizzled. Yes?
Soldier: There’s one place we didn’t look. Guards!
And when they come out they say: We found a spoon sir.

Mathias: I’m just a poor old man. My eyesight is bad. My eyes are poor. My nose is knackered.

Soldier: Have you ever seen anyone crucified?
Mathias: Crucifixion’s a doodle.

Guard: Don’t keep saying that!

At the end, the soldier uses the right wing method. He says: Don’t say that! How dare you raising these subversive ideas? As the blind monk from ”The name of the rose” would say:

”You talk about it like there is no fear. And if there is no fear there is no Roman rule” Crucifixion being the most common punishment tool used by Romans should remain frightening. People can not just ”dismiss” it as without fear, how would the Romans sustain their ruling?

When Brian returns from his mission, of writing ”Romans Go Home” (in Latin) on the palace Reg says:

Reg: Oh, great. Great. We need doers in our movement, Brian, but before you join us, know this: there is not one of us here who would not gladly sure death to rid this country of the Romans once and for all.

A P.F.J. member: Uhh. Well, one.

Reg: Oh, yeah. Yeah, there’s one, but otherwise, we’re solid.

As one could have guessed, the Pythons did not let any universal violent ideas (”we are all willing to die”) stand. They are very effective at mockery.

And consider this dialogue:

Reg: They’ve bled us white, the bastards. They’ve taken everything we had, and not just from us, from our fathers, and from our fathers’ fathers.

Loretta: And from our fathers’ fathers’ fathers.

Reg: Yes

Loretta: And from our fathers’ fathers’ fathers’ fathers.

Reg: Yes, All right, Stan. Don’t labor the point. And what
have they ever given us in return?!

   P.F.J. Member: The aqueduct?

   Reg: What??!


   Reg: Oh. Yeah, yeah. They did give us that. Uh, that’s true.

   Yeah.

   Another P.F.J.M: And the sanitation.

   Loretta: Oh, yeah, the sanitation, Reg. Remember what the
city used to be like?

   Reg: Yeah. All right. I’ll grant you the aqueduct and the
sanitation are two things that the Romans have done.

   Mathias: And the roads.

   Reg: Well, yeah. Obviously the roads. I mean, the roads go
without saying, don’t they? But apart from the sanitation, the
aqueduct, and the roads...


   P.F.J.M: Medicine.

   A.P.F.J.M: Huh? Heh? Huh...

   A new P.F.J.M: Education.

   All: yeah....

   Reg: Yeah, yeah. All right. Fair enough.

   P.F.J.M: And the wine.

   All: Oh, yes. Yeah...

   Francis: Yeah. Yeah, that’s something we’d really miss, Reg, if
the Romans left. Huh.


   Loretta: And it’s safe to walk in the streets at night now, Reg.

   Francis: Yeah, they certainly know how to keep order. Let’s
face it. They’re the only ones who could in a place like this.

   All: Hehh, heh. Heh heh heh heh heh heh heh.

   Reg: All right, but apart from the sanitation, the medicine, ed-
ucation, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, a fresh water system,
and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?


Reg: Oh. Peace?! Shut up!

The police of thought. Reg asks a rhetorical question. The official answer is: The Romans took our freedom and did not give us anything in return! In the right wing the enemy is not human and has no face. The Arabs have no face for the right wing Jews in Israel today. The enemy remains devilish, rhetorical, obvious, immediate, axiomatic, unrelated to facts, faceless.

However, the P.F.J members did not get the hint.

The Romans that were using mass murder tactics against the Jews are nevertheless, not all bad. In fact some of the above claims on the situation improving under Rome are true. We should give credit to Reg partially accepting the challenge over his universal truth. In fact, when Brian is on the cross, Reg ends his speech with: Reg: Your death will stand as a landmark in the continuing struggle to liberate the parent land from the hands of the Roman Imperialist aggressors, excluding those concerned with drainage, medicine, roads, housing, education, vine culture, and any other Romans contributing to the welfare of Jews of both sexes and hermaphrodites. Signed on behalf of the P.F.J., etcetera.’ And I’d just like to add, on a personal note, my own admiration for what you are doing for us, Brian, at what must be, after all, for you, a very difficult time.

So Reg admits that the Romans are not all bad.

But, there is a limit to the amount of truth allowed. P.F.J member resorts to the ”dirty trick” of reminding Reg that the Romans ”brought peace”, it is too much for Reg. Peace stands in the opposition for every thing Reg wants.

Then Reg returns to the favorite method of intimidation of the extreme right wing, and tells the P.J.F.M: Shut up! Meaning: Some things should not be said! Even if they are true.... The police of thought.
The best mockery of violence in cinema history

"A single death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic." Josef Stalin

The most violent people in the movie are the Romans. Minor deeds in the film (like swearing) are responded by the threat of crucifixion.

An unsettling greet is uttered when Roman official meet: Hail Caesar. These greetings echo the way Nazis saluted each other. And they remind us of the Nazi in a "comedy". Senseless violence all around. A good example for this cruel senseless violence is the Colosseum fight.

In a parody on such senseless violence. the forces do not seem equal. After all the contestant are Frank Goliath, the Macedonian baby-crusher, and Boris Mineburg....

The Pythons ridicule violence. The "mighty Goliath" looses like in the bible story. Boris wins. He just runs away like the coward he is. Goliath being slow is not being able to catch him. Goliath dies from a heart attack.

A person watching says: "Shocking".

So much for "might is right". So much for "brave" or "glorious" death. The coward wins! Boris manages to avoid his glorious death. What a pleasure to see this scene.

The best attack on senseless violence due to honor, actually appears in another film of the group. "The holly grail."

In this hilarious scene Arthur faces the so called "Black Knight":

We see the black knight killing a green knight. And then:

Arthur: You fight with the strength of many men, Sir Knight. I am Arthur, King of the Britons. I seek the finest and the bravest knights in the land to join me in my court at Camelot. You have proved yourself worthy. Will you join me?

The black knight does not answer.....

Arthur: You make me sad. So be it. Come, Patsy.
Black knight: None shall pass!
Arthur: What?

Black Knight: None shall pass.

Arthur: I have no quarrel with you, good Sir Knight, but I must cross this bridge.

Black Knight: Then you shall die.

Arthur: I command you, as King of the Britons, to stand aside!

Black knight: I move for no man.

Arthur: So be it!

They start fighting and then Arthur chops the left arm of the black knight.

Arthur: Now stand aside, worthy adversary.

Black knight: It is but a scratch.

Arthur: A scratch? Your arm’s off.

Black knight: No, it isn’t.

Arthur: Well, what’s that, then?

Black knight: I’ve had worse.

Arthur: You liar!

Dark knight: Come on, you pansy!

The fight goes on and then Arthur chops the right arm of the black knight.

Arthur: Victory is mine!

Arthur starts kneeling and prays: ”We thank Thee Lord, that in Thy mercy.....”

All of a sudden, the black knight kicks Arthur with his legs.

He tells Arthur: Come on, then.

Arthur: What?

The Black knight Kicks him again

Arthur: You are indeed brave, Sir Knight, but the fight is mine.

Black knight: Oh, had enough, eh?


Black knight: Yes, I have.
Arthur: Look!

Black knight: Just a flesh wound (kicks Arthur).

Arthur: Look, stop that.

Black knight: Chicken! (kicks) Chicken! (kicks).

Arthur: Look, I’ll have your leg. (The black knight continues to kick).

Arthur chops the black knight’s right leg.

Black knight: Right. I’ll do you for that!

Arthur: You’ll what?

Black knight: Come here!

Arthur: What are you going to do, bleed on me?

Black knight: I’m invincible!

Arthur: You’re a looney.

Black knight: The Black Knight always triumphs! Have at you! Come on, then.

Finally, Arthur chops the last limb on the black knight.

Black knight: Oh? All right, we’ll call it a draw.

Arthur: Come, Patsy.

Black knight: Oh. Oh, I see. Running away, eh? You yellow bastards! Come back here and take what’s coming to you. I’ll bite your legs off.

The Black Knight started with such respectful and intimidating lines as ”non shall pass”.

Honor. Pride. That is the mark of the black knight.

The black knight never losses!

He is willing to die for his honor.

The scene is so effective.

We see how much honor is left for him at the end. Sanity is better than being crazy, after all.
26.1 The special privileges of universal leaders

"I had other priorities". Dick Cheney on the Vietnam war

In the talk about Umberto Eco, I mentioned universal values. And the saw-dust line of Stalin. The right wing is based on saw-dust.

How does the right wing behaves in the USA? The right wing are powerful are rich and unethical. Always wanting more power and more money. Using tax loop-holes. Making sure the Republican get tax cuts for the Rich. On the other hand, cutting food stamps. Cutting welfare. Thinking that poor people are inferior. Their evidence: well they are poor and we are rich. So we are better people.

In a recent documentary I saw, the secretary of Hitler stated: ”Single people looked completely unimportant to him compared to the nation and the ”super human” notion”.

Its just that the universal rules do not apply to the leaders themselves. They stands special privileges. These kind of universal leaders are not only cruel and cynical, they are also corrupted.

The saw-dust people killed do not include the family and the loved ones of the leader.

Like it is described in ”The life of Brian”: The People front of Judea decide to raid the Pilate’s palace. The scene goes as follows:

Francis: Now, this is the palace in Caesar’s Square. Our comando unit will approach from Fish Street, under cover of night, and make our way to the northwestern main drain. If questioned, we are sewage workers on our way to a conference. Reg, our glorious leader and founder of the P.F.J., will be coordinating consultant at the drain head, though he himself will not be taking part in any terrorist action, as he has a bad back.

When they arrive to the entrance of the palace, Brian asks Reg: Aren’t you going to come with us?

Reg: Solidarity, brother.

Brian: Oh, yes. Solidarity, Reg.

So a leader is likely not to feel the consequence of his universality. He has a bad back after all.
That is the way of the ruling class of the right wing.

In Barry Lyndon, talking on one of the battles in which Barry participated the narrator says:

"The battle was not important enough to be remembered by history, but it was memorable enough for those who took place...."

Exactly. The special privileges of universal leaders. The little people are forgotten. Nobody cares.

26.2 Extreme left and extreme right combined: Ben the prisoner

In jail, Brian meets Ben (the name is taken from the script). Ben is a prisoner that hangs by the wall. Has been in the cell for 5 years (until a day before he was hanging upside down).

Usually the critics say that Ben is a radical right winger. Because of lines like:

Brian: What will they do to me?
Ben: Oh, you’ll probably get away with crucifixion.
Brian: Crucifixion?! Ben: Yeah, first offense.
Ben: Get away with crucifixion?! It’s terrible.
Ben: Best thing the Romans ever did for us.
Brian: What?!
Ben: Oh, yeah. If we didn’t have crucifixion, this country would be in a right bloody mess.
Brian: Guards!
Ben: Nail him up, I say!
Brian: Guards!
Ben: Nail some sense into him!
Jailer: What do you want?
Brian: I want you to move me to another cell.
The jailer hits Brian.
Brian: Aah!
Ben: Oh, look at that! Bloody favoritism!

Jailer: Shut up, you!

Ben: Sorry!

Ben: Now, take my case. They hung me up here five years ago. Every night, they take me down for twenty minutes, then they hang me up again, which I regard as very fair, in view of what I done, and, if nothing else, it’s taught me to respect the Romans, and it’s taught me... that you’ll never get anywhere in this life, unless you’re prepared to do a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay!

This is right wing rhetoric. The belief in the need of a strong leadership. The belief in strong punishment for criminals. However, lets point out to a (somewhat brutal) criticism of the left. Yes, Ben has a left wing part. In the next conversation ’Shekels” was the money used at the time. Israel itself turned into shekels in the eighties of the previous century.

Ben: You lucky bastard.

Brian: Who’s that?

Ben: You lucky, lucky bastard.

Brian: What?

Ben: Proper little jailer’s pet, aren’t we?

Brian: What do you mean?

Ben: You must have slipped him a few shekels, eh?

Brian: Slipped him a few shekels? You saw him spit in my face!

Ben: Ohh! What wouldn’t I give to be spat at in the face! I sometimes hang awake at night dreaming of being spat at in the face.

Brian: Well, it’s not exactly friendly, is it? They had me in manacles!

Ben: Manacles! Ooh ooooh oh oh. My idea of heaven is to be allowed to be put in manacles... just for a few hours. They must think the sun shines out o’ your ass, sonny.

Yes, some left wing extreme seem to wish to be spat on their face. They understand the terrorists. And take their side. Like the European left who is in love with terrorists.
26.3 Summary: What does the film say about splitting tendencies?

Well, let's see:

Reg (to Brian): Right. You're in (namely, accepted to the P.F.J).

Reg: Listen. The only people we hate more than the Romans are the fucking Judea People's Front.

P.F.J: Yeah...

Judith: Splitters.

P.F.J: Splitters...

Francis: And the Judea Popular People's Front.

P.F.J: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Splitters. Splitters...

Loretta (Stan): And the People's Front of Judea.

P.F.J: Yeah. Splitters. Splitters...

Reg: What?


Reg: We're the People's Front of Judea!

Lorretta: Oh. I thought we were the Popular Front.

Reg: People's Front!

Francis: Whatever happened to the Popular Front, Reg?

Reg: He's over there. (A good joke: he split so much that he became one).

The group pauses for few seconds and then shout toward the only person in the Popular front: Splitter!

At the end Lorretta says that they hate the P.F.J, namely, themselves. All the other Jewish groups want essentially the same as the P.J.F and hating these groups leads to the logical conclusion: the P.F.J should, and in fact do, hate themselves. Because if you hate people that are exactly like you, you hate yourself.

Hate and separation is more important than life itself. Consider the following scene that takes place while the convicts are at the cross:
Roman soldier: Up you go, Big Nose!
Mr big nose: I'll get you for this, you bastard.
R.S: Oh, yeah?
M.B.N: Oh, yeah. Don’t worry. I never forget a face.
R.S: No?
M.B.N: I warned you. I’m going to punch you so hard, you Roman git!
R.S.: Shut up, you Jewish turd!
M.B.S: Who are you calling Jewish?! I’m not Jewish! I’m a Samaritan!
Another convict: A Samaritan? This is supposed to be a Jewish section.
R.S: It doesn’t matter! You’re all going to die in a day or two.
A.C: It may not matter to you, Roman, but it certainly matters to us. Doesn’t it, darling?
The wife: Oh, rather.
A.C: Under the terms of the Roman occupancy, we’re entitled to be crucified in a purely Jewish area.
Pharisee: Pharisees separate from Sadducee.
Welsh man: And Swedish separate from Welsh (why? I dont know).
All: Yeah...
How different are the Samaritan from the Jews? As always, its a complex issue and a large one, and the details are many. Samaria was the kingdom of Omri, in the north of the above mentioned Israel Kingdom. After the exile (of Babylon and Assyria) the returning people from Babylon did not accept the Samaritan as their brothers.
It is a long story, but the Jews and Samaritan have more in common (in my opinion) than what separates them (they are separated for example, as Samaritan do not accept the sanctity of Jerusalem).
The Samaritan and Jews clearly have the same heritage (the Samaritan consider themselves descendants of the tribes of ancient
Nevertheless, when about to dye convicts hold their group association so dearly that they keep dwelling on it and not on their coming death.

In this way, life as many times in the film becomes secondary to the extreme beliefs.

The P.F.J were large once but split. There is no daylight between the opinion of the various groups. Splitting over minor difference of opinions. Splitting hairs, so to speak. So much splitting that the popular front is now a single person.

When the P.F.J ask where is the Popular front, they get the (funny one must admit) answer is: ”He is siting over there”. The P.F.J try to hold back but after a few seconds shout to him ”splitter!”.

The problem for this fellow is: how would he split further? I am sure he will find a way to further split even though he is only one. He will to develop a multiple personality disorder.

27 Fatalistic philosophy

27.1 Destined to be a messiah

The disaster seems unavoidable in ”Brian”. In large parts of the film the crowd acts so uniformly, that they impose their will on Brian. For example, Brian is forced to address them out the window.

Even if they selected Brian as the Messiah, it does not mean they do what he says. Also, whatever Brian does or says he can not avoid this destiny that was decided by the crowd. See the following scene:

Followers: Master! The Master! Master! Master!...
Shoe follower: The Master! Aha. He is here!
Follower 1: Master!
Followers: The shoe!...
Follower 2: The shoe has brought us here!
Followers 2,3: Speak!
Followers: Shhhhh!
Followers 2,3: Speak to us, Master! Speak to us!
Brian: Go away!
Followers: A blessing! A blessing!
Follower 2: How shall we go away, Master?!
Brian: Oh, just go away! Leave me alone!
Shoe follower: Give us a sign!
Follower 2: He has given us a sign! He has brought us to this place!
Brian: I didn’t bring you here! You just followed me!
Shoe follower: Oh, it’s still a good sign by any standard.
Follower 2: Master! Your people have walked many miles to be with You! They are weary and have not eaten.
Brian: It’s not my fault they haven’t eaten!
Follower 2: There is no food in this high mountain!
Brian: Well, what about the juniper bushes over there?
Followers: Hhhhh! A miracle! A miracle! Ohh!...
Shoe follower: He has made the bush fruitful by His words.
Follower 4: They have brought forth juniper berries.
We see that Brian has no escape. He must become a messiah. Whatever he says or does not say, his followers impose the Messiah role on him.
Brian: Of course they’ve brought forth juniper berries! They’re juniper bushes! What do you expect?!
Woman: Show us another miracle!
Follower 2: Do not tempt Him, shallow ones! Is not the miracle of the juniper bushes enough?! Simon (the old naked man): I say, those are my juniper bushes.
Follower 2: They are a gift from God!
Simon: They’re all I’ve bloody got to eat. Uhm. I say, get of those bushes! Go on! Clear the lot of you. Go on.
The haggler: Lord! I am acted by a bald patch.

Blind man: I am healed! The Master has healed me!

Brian: I didn’t touch him!

Blind man: I was blind, and now I can see! Aargh! (the blind man falls into a hole)

Followers: A miracle! A miracle! A miracle!

Simon: Tell them to stop it. I hadn’t said a word for eighteen years till he came along.

Followers: A miracle! He is the Messiah!

Irony. The fact that Brian caused Simon to end his vow, is considered an attack by Simon, but a miracle for the followers,

Simon: Well, he hurt my foot!

Followers: Hurt my foot, Lord! Hurt my foot. Hurt mine...

Follower 2: Hail Messiah!

Brian: I’m not the Messiah!

Follower 2: I say You are, Lord, and I should know. I’ve followed a few.

Followers: Hail Messiah!

Brian: I’m not the Messiah! Will you please listen? I am not the Messiah, do you understand?! Honestly!

(Some few seconds of silence and then) Woman: Only the true Messiah denies His divinity.

Brian: What?! Well, what sort of chance does that give me? All right! I am the Messiah!

Followers: He is! He is the Messiah!

Brian is trapped here by the reverse logic.

Brian: Now, fuck off (Some few seconds of silence and then)

Follower 2: How shall we fuck off Lord?

Brian: Oh, just go away! Leave me alone.

Simon: You told these people to eat my juniper berries. You break my bloody foot. You break my vow of silence, and then you try and clean up on my juniper bushes! Simon starts choking Brian....
Brian: Oh, lay off.
Follower 2: This is the Messiah, the Chosen One!
Simon: No, he’s not.
Brian: Aaaaagh!
Follower 2: An unbeliever!
Follower: An unbeliever!
Follower 2: Persecute! Kill the heretic!
Followers: Kill the heretic! Kill him! Persecute! Kill!...
Brian: Leave him alone! Leave him alone! Leave him alone. Put him down. Please!
Ironic, again. The crowd asks Brian ”what shall we do master”? Brian wants to be left alone.

But the crowd absolutely longs for what Brian has to say. We WANT we LONG we PRAY to do JUST what you say.

But when Simon the ”unbeliever” is attacked, Brian is for once willing to ask the crowd to do something. Brian specifically REQUESTS, DEMANDS, BEGS from his ”followers” ”Leave him alone”! But the crowd that made Brian the messiah, that wants to obey all Brian says, that demands to know just what Brian wants them to do so they will immediately comply. But this is the lynch of an unbeliever that we are talking about! Let us have our fun.

Consider a different scene:

When brought to the cross, Brian tries to tell one of the soldiers:
”You do not have to do that. You do not have to take orders!”
The soldier answers:
”I like orders!!”.
He likes to follow orders. Without orders he has to stand alone.
It is very frightening.
It is a terrible thing, to live in fear......

27.2 Fatalistic context

We know how the story of Jewish-Roman wars will end. And not far from the time of the film. In 70 A.C the Jews started a big
revolt that failed. The fall of the second temple happened in in 70 AC. Both sides learned nothing from the events of the big revolt. Hence, naturally, disasters continue. The time of emperor Hadrian seems to have started well. He rose to power around 117 AC. Hadrian tried at first to bring back some Roman tolerance. However, later Hadrian became a sworn enemy of the Jews. Hadrian wanted to make Jerusalem a pagan city (city that worships many gods). Jerusalem is at the heart of the Jewish belief. A new revolt was unavoidable.

Led by Bar Kochba (the son of a star in Hebrew) the Sicarii groups fought the Romans as much as they could. The wonders lived in caves (these caves still exist in Israel unchanged). Bar-Kochba at start had a few wins. He was very charismatic. that Bar-Kochba was consequently proclaimed the messiah by the important Rabbi, Rabbi Akiva. But the balance of of powers, number of soldiers, were all in favor of Rome. Thus the Roman won, the Jews were exiled from the land of Israel. Bar-Kochba was not the messiah after all. Hadrian built Elia Capitoline, a pagan city, over the ruins of Jerusalem. The exile will end in a sense only with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

The film takes place in 33 A.C. when the two next disasters of the Jews are about to take place in 70 and 130 AC. This makes the time chosen fatalistic. History has spoken.

28 Existentialism: the last song

"What if everything is an illusion and nothing exists? In this case I definitely overplayed for my Carpet." Woody Allen.

The movie just described shows a crazy and cruel world. Existentialism was the first to have a world without a god. This is shown in large part of the film (even though the film fights against itself). Heidegger was the main promoter of this theory. Since nobody is watching us, we need to find the authentic self. Something that is really suited e should follow this ideas bravely and with full responsibility. In existentialism you are alone, nobody is watching over you, and you have to take your own decisions.

The term "authentic" is crucial in Existentialism.
Existentialism became popular after World War II, and strongly influenced many disciplines such as theology, drama, art, literature, and psychology. In cinema, existentialism is a key to understand the French New Wave movies. Those directors were highly influenced by Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus who were existential thinkers.

Their hero, Sartre, solved the old question of how do we know things for sure by saying Existence precedes essence. Don’t ask me how do I know that this chair is a chair. The world was built before this question. And when it was built, they invented these things we call chairs. This is overly simplified but will do for what we need.

Sartre: "There is something before existence. A core unique to the human born". This core is spiritual and without mass. So to emphasis this point, Sartre called it ”the none”. Sartre said that ”A person is not the total sum of its attributes. The difference between the two is the ”none” ”. See his book ”Being and Nothingness”. Human beings come before the world they inhabit. The world they see was created by their existence that came before any notion of consciousness. He called it ”the none” because this core of a person has no weight and can not be measured”.

The lack of god may make our existence absurd and meaningless. Hence existential depression was born. Desperate people in a meaningless life.

28.1 Existentialism in Brian

God is a comedian performing in front of an audience that is afraid to laugh. Voltage

Returning ”The life of Brian” the world presented is absurd and meaningless and crazy. As described in Existentialism. People in the film by en large do not take responsibility on their life and violate every existential principal, the opposite of what existentialism asks for. The film ends with a slight parody on Existentialism, that has some grain of truth in it.

The song Always look on the bright side of life. was composed by Erik Idle, that also wrote the lyrics. This part is the most weak part of the movie. When asked about the last scene of Brian John
Cleese ignored (as he does) the fact that its a parody and gave the proper answer an ”English” gentleman would give:

”Maybe some times it is not so terrible to die”. The English by tradition should be brave in face of death.

I am not sure he really believes that. But that is the official story. A convict on the cross, called in the script Mr Frisbee starts the following song highly sarcastic words. This is after Brian is betrayed by everyone. And all hope is lost.

Mr Frisbee: Cheer up, Brian!.
You know what they say. Some things in life are bad.
They can really make you mad.
Other things just make you swear and curse.
When you’re chewing on life’s gristle,
Don’t grumble. Give a whistle. And this’ll help things turn out for the best And
Really? Cheer when you are about to die? With all the English resolve, I doubt if Idle was serious here.

(music starts)
Always look on the bright side of life.

Always is a mistake because it’s a universal word. The Pythons hate universal rules. This makes me think that the first part of the song is a joke. What is bright about a 4 years old baby that dies of cancer?

(The convicts whistle)
Always look on the light side of life.

(whistling)
If life seems jolly rotten, There’s something you’ve forgotten,
And that’s to laugh and smile and dance and sing.
When you’re feeling in the dumps, Don’t be silly chumps.
Just purse your lips and whistle. That’s the thing.
And... Always look on the bright side of life.

Still the parody on shallow people that speak in a shallow silly way
All: (whistling)

Mr Frisbee: Come on! All: Always look on the right side of life.

(whistling)

Not ”every cloud has a silver lining”. Frisbee is totally detached. But later the song works against itself. As usual.

Mr Frisbee:
For life is quite absurd
And death’s the final word.

You must always face the curtain with a vow.

Forget about your sin.
Give the audience a grin.

All: Enjoy it. It’s your last chance, anyhow. So,...

The middle of the song start a new song unrelated to before. Existentialism indeed implies that ”life is absurd”. The song states that there is no afterlife. Its fair to say that this is consistent with the old testament that has no afterlife.

Using William Shakespeare’s: ”All the world is a stage”, The song claims that life is a show. One big game.

This part tries (and fails in my opinion) to find something happy in our lives. Life is totally absurd, and absurd is funny. God is a comedian performing in front of an audience that is afraid to laugh. Voltaire.

Why is god a comedian? Because if there is a god he puts us in an extremely absurd situation. We know we are going to die. So our life is a joke created by god. But death is to scary so people are afraid to laugh. The world is meaningless and we are meaningless. We go along doing things, and think they will have an impact. It almost never has.

That is the joke of god is so cruel, that I myself fail to find comfort in the fact that absurd is funny. See that now the film takes a more serious note, that goes against the start of the film.

The song: ”You must always face the curtain with a bow”.
”Forget about your sins”
”Give the audience a grin
”Enjoy as its your last chance anyhow”
You are an actor in an absurd play. Before until your death, Before you die bow.

The words here are a mistake. "Forget about your sins" attacks the Catholic religion. I think an attack on any specific religion was not the goal of the film. This mistaken line shows what happens if many people write for the same movie. Even though the cruelty in the Catholic religion is infuriating. You are about to die, and before that you have to confess your sins? Death not enough.

All: Always look on the bright side of death,
(whistling)
All: Just before you draw your terminal breath.
(whistling)
Always look on the bright side of death?! The song started with idiotic lines, and went to more serious line, and now goes against itself and says that the initial words were a joke. The Pythons do not really want us to look at the bright side of death. What bright side?

All the world of Brian has crumbled... Everybody betrayed him... What bright side exactly?

Mr Frisbee:
Life’s a piece of shit.
When you look at it.
Life’s a laugh
and death’s a joke. It’s true.
You’ll see it’s all a show.
Keep ’em laughing as you go.
Just remember that the last laugh
is on you. And...

How do you know what is good and what is bad in a world abandoned by god? We live in a society. What works for the society is good. "Good" is defined by the results, not by some detached ideology. If life is a show then: "keep them laughing as you go". Laughing means that the show works. Namely, you are doing the right thing in life. You are making the life better for
society. Like the Americans say: the proofs is in the pudding. If it tastes good, it is a good pudding. If your show is funny you are good.

I would change the line to: People laugh AND THEN YOU KNOW. Namely, when people laugh, you know you are doing the right thing.

All: Always look on the bright side of life. (whistling)
All: Always look on the right side of life. (whistling)
Mr Frisbee: Come on, Brian. Cheer up.
All: Always look on the bright side of life! (whistling)
All: Always look on the bright side of life! (whistling)
Mr Frisbee: Worse things happen at sea, you know. All: Always look on the bright side of life!
Mr Frisbee: I mean, what you got to lose? You know, you come from nothing. All: (whistling)
Mr Frisbee: You’re going back to nothing. What have you lost? Nothing! All: Always look on the bright side of life! (whistling)

A shallow version of existentialism in one line.
Mr Frisbee: Nothing will come from nothing. You know what they say?
All: Always look on the bright side of life!
Mr Frisbee: Cheer up, you old bugger. Come on. Give us a grin. There you are. See?
All: (whistling)
Mr Frisbee: It’s the end of the film. Incidentally, this record’s available in the foyer.
All: Always look on the bright side of life!
Mr Frisbee: Some of us have got to live as well, you know.
All: (whistling)
Mr Frisbee: Who do you think pays for all this rubbish?
All: Always look on the bright side of life!
Mr Frisbee: They’ll never make their money back, you know. I told him.
All: (whistling)

Mr Frisbee: I said to him, 'Bernie.' I said, 'They'll never make their money back.'

All: Always look on the bright side of life!

Mister Frisbee sees the world as Thomas Hobbs. As a jungle. Big fish eat little fish. We came from nothing, and we return to nothing. Existentialism.

I do not think the Pythons are cynical by saying: take comfort in the absurd. They mean it. I just do not think this will work for many. It does not work for me.

By the way Mr Frisbee was wrong. The film made millions and millions.

What a sad tragedy the film is. In a tragedy usually the hero and the world around him learn something and become better. In this film nobody learns anything. The madness will continue after Brian’s death.

29  The life of Brian: indecisive on Post Modernism

Post-modernism resulted out of existentialism as a nihilistic side product. Stating in length the post-modern philosophy can not be done here. Among others it means low expectations for change, a feeling that it was all seen before, the use of references (citations), combinations of "high" and "low" culture, putting emphasis on style and not content, never taking anything seriously, and refusing to name anything universal. There are no absolute truths in post-modernism. This philosophy lack hope. Lack any trust in the human race and in its future. The films are amoral, namely do not care about morality.

Tarantino who is a cynic thinks that violence is fun, and life is only a joke. So you can show terrible scenes, in a funny way.

There is a joke in the film that I would call a post modern joke. It is told on the cross by Mister Cheeky.

Recall that this Assyrian empire is the one to destroy the king-
dom of Israel. Mr Cheeky. This empire fail and rose many times (as we know from history).

Mr Cheeky: ”my brother rescues me if he gets of the girls. My brother goes up and down more than the Assyrian Empire.” The joke in vulgar, but you need to know history to understand it.

There are many citations that do not make sense at all and are post modern. In post-modernistic art you need to come with a lot of knowledge to the film. Because post modernism implies citing other culture. A convict on the cross mentions Pharisees and Sadducee. Many of us do not know these groups.

sense at all and are post modern. In post-modernistic art you need to come with a lot of knowledge to the film. Because post modernism implies citing other culture. A convict on the cross mentions Pharisees and Sadducee. Many of us do not know these groups.

Is the parody on the film ”Spartacus” understood by anyone? probably not. The ”star wars” scene with the spaceship was likely better understood.

Not only citations, but many absurd ones. ”Spencer Tracy”, ”Swedish”, ”Welsh”, ”Cyril”, ”Jumbo jets” ”Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer,...”

I do not think the film is nihilistic. The love of Brian to Judith is the reason for the film. And at the end, we are talking of a very sad film, unlike the post-modernistic films that are always one big joke.

Cleese said on ”Pulp Fiction”: the innovations in ”Pulp Fiction” are not that great as others claim. And the content is a ”product of a sick mind”.

30 The was not changed since the film was done

The topics discussed in the film are basic, and central. In many places in the world, senseless violence, prevails over reason.
1. Love: Religions do not allow say a Catholic marrying a Jew. The lovers are the sawdust in this case. Love can be unfulfilled due to social differences, and other reasons. Even in democracies people like Trump and Netanyahu are elected by stoking fear in the citizens.

2. Splitting and self hatred. The most comon mass death today is Muslims killing Muslims over small differences. For example in Yemen and Sudan. This is self hatred. They kill people that think almost entirely the same as the killers.

3. Extreme left and right groups: The world is going through a return to populism that is another word for fascism. There are many extreme left groups in Europe that say that the USA is the cause of all evil, and that Israel should be destroyed. The left wing political correctness and Me-too movements became extreme and some try to impose These ideas violently. The left does not critic Muslim countries. A country that behead women like Saudi Arabia is immune. Political correctness is so tolerant that it tolerates intolerance.

4. Manipulative preachers: Donald Trump represents most of the problems in the word, as the Pythons see it. His extreme talk on journalist as the enemy of the people, his extreme lies, his violent tendency when he talk, trying to crush opponents with terrible accusations, are all examples of extreme speech.

5. Understanding the wishes of god. Many Bishops and Rabbi tell us what god wants and why does he wants it. The infantile notion that we can understand good prevails.

6. Irrational religion: Its getting worse and worse. The Jews pray in the Western Wall. Holly stones. According to the original bible, this is blasphemy. Rocks are not sacred in the Jewish religion. and there are no holly places.

Some people attend graves of so called holly people. Blasphemy.

I do not see at all people engaging in the rational religion that was suggested by the film. From any religion. Not rational religions are highly dangerous.
7. The police of though and freedom of speech: The Iraq war was imposed on the Americans with lies and violence. Those who were against the war were attacked as traitors. They broke the law when this war started at their will. Some American citizens (at least four) where arrested without due process. No lawyer was provided for them. A few hundred non-citizens were arrested, and since they were not citizen, they were in jail on average of 7 months. Then they released those Muslims. Not one of the arrested was indicted. The law known as ”The patriot act” provides a dangerous invasion of privacy possibilities to the USA government.

In Israel, the left is being lynches by the right wing. It is getting worse and worse even though the left wing is not in power for a long time now.

8. Special rights of universal leaders: Trump lived all his life ignoring all rules. The rest of the family, his two sons and his daughter engage in the same corruption. Trump thinks on himself and not on the USA. Being president for him, is a chance for making more money. Like the film describes, there is no ethics.

9. The world we live in is if any even more absurd than before. Existentialism is the best way to describe our crazy world even today. The film was right on that point.