Groundhog Day

By: Ivan To, Siddharth Duraisamy, Avery Doami, Dylan Hubbard
Opening Credits

The opening credits opens up on clouds rolling through the sky as the names dissipate. A jaunty Dixieland song named Weather man plays as this happens. This hints at Phil’s job as a weatherman and serves as a transition into the scene.

GROUNDOHOG DAY
Form/Content

The form of this film was scripted into a way that it repeated the same day and event again and again, except that each time we did it was scripted differently and had something different to be said about it each day.
Plot

A deep dive into Phil’s mind-

At the beginning of the movie, Phil seems like someone who could never change, he’s self centered and narcissistic. The film traps Phil in a world that will constantly attack his character flaw, since Punxsutawney brings out his egocentric attitude. This explores how the relentless nature of the premise will have to force Phil to transform. His change is the inevitable consequence of the premise.
Plot (Cont.)

He would have to go from being selfish to selfless, and we see the actions that will eventually cause that. This is all to achieve his desire to be with Rita, a quirky and smart co-worker, being the complete opposite of Phil at the beginning of the movie. But, to achieve that, he has to go through a bunch of hurdles. Phil becomes stuck in Punxsutawney physically and time wise. “If a person could live long enough, would he ever change?”
Plot (Cont.)

This is where we see a deep dive into Phil’s mind, he does one of two things. The first is to pursue a goal until a goal until he fails. The second is to indulge himself until he gets bored. The first thing he does is try and understand and fix the problem. Once he fails at this and sees the time loop as infinite, he turns to exploit the situation. He becomes antisocial, taking advantage of every situation he is in and indulging in his fantasies.
Uh, Phil.

Yeah, yeah. yeah.
Plot (Cont.)

Once he becomes bored of this, he becomes interested in Rita, as he tries to manipulate her into falling for him. Since he is there forever, he learns new information along with the viewer as he remembers all her likes. No matter what tricks he does however, he always fails and the day ends in a slap. We realize that Phil is still self-centered, only caring about himself. There has been no change yet, and Rita could never love a narcissist. After all these attempts, Phil becomes depressed, losing his will to live.
I will read to you.
Plot (Cont.)

There’s only one last thing for Phil to do, which is to change. Phil uses his time loop to make people’s lives better. The major turning point when he tries to save an old man from dying everyday. Ironically, this gives him what he wanted at the beginning, happiness and becoming like a celebrity. Generosity truly made him happy at this point. It took him a lifetime to figure out, but Phil has changed for good, and he is set free from the loop.
Narration

The film is in third person omniscient because we follow Phil and his actions on Groundhog Day. We learn with Phil and are able to see parts in the film with characters analyzing Phil’s actions without him being there. The film follows around Phil around for the whole day specifically.
Characterization

**Rita** - Rita and Phil’s characters are polar opposites at the start of the movie. Rita is a producer at a weather news channel that is a kind and loving person. She has always been that way and was a person that didn’t worry about what people thought of her or her self-image. Rita was kind person that likes everyone for what they are. She didn’t change her perceptions on someone because of a specific reason.

**Phil** - Self centered, arrogant, hates the town he is in. Phil is a weatherman. He doesn’t care about anyone and is seen to be a loner. He indulges only for himself. Eventually his character would change to someone who wants to help others and derives pleasure from it. He has a good heart at the end of the movie.
Motivation

Motivation is an important part of Groundhog Day. Camera movement, the staging, the lighting, etc. Camera movement is important, as it helps us understand what Phil goes through, especially with the repeating clocks in the morning. The staging helps set the stage for the entire movie. The lighting helps set the romance for him and Rita, darker for suicide scenes.
Phil is going to Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania to report about Groundhog day. It is a snowy day, and there is a very high chance of a snowstorm in the afternoon. Phil is trapped there due to this blizzard. The town seems smaller than the usual big and bustling cities that Phil is used to, but Phil would come to love Punxsutawney.
Motif

Speeches, song, there are a ton of motifs at play in Groundhog Day. One of the main one is Punxsutawney Phil, who appears in the film multiple times. There's a lot of meaning behind the groundhog, its up for the viewer to decide. The clock radio is also a motif, as it appears multiple times. Phil’s speeches are also important as they show the slow change in Phil’s character.
Is it a good story?

1. Unified Plot- yes

2. Credible/Plausible? Credible

3. Externally Observable Truths

4. Internal Truths of Human Nature-Getting the most of a day repeatedly

5. Artistic Semblance or Truth

6. Interesting-Suspenseful/Action (How is suspense created?) The same day being run again and again.

7. Simple and Complex 8. Handles Emotional Material with Restraint 9. Other reasons it is or is not a good story
Why Groundhog Day is a Good Story

All the elements in Groundhog Day come together for one heartfelt, funny, story about a man learning to change for the better. As the story progresses, we grow with Phil, and that’s what makes the movie so good. The movie explores almost every option if we had the same powers as Phil, and it presents itself in a good, lighthearted fashion. All of this while having deep moral messages about philosophy and the human mind. The movie is human.
The 4 V’s

Voyeuristic- Pace, aesthetic, atmosphere, and sense of space/place. The movie works at a solid pace, keeping the viewer interested while presenting plot. There’s never nothing happening on screen. Aesthetic and atmosphere go hand and hand. The film has a chill, light aesthetic, there’s nothing with too heavy colors. The sense of place is Punxsutawney.
Visceral- Thrills, spectacle, attractions, and sensation. One of the film’s many thrills is the car chase scene, the multiple ones, which provide comedy and entertainment. These scenes are realistic and crazy.

Vicarious- Empathy and emotional information. Phil doesn’t learn empathy until the 3rd act of the movie, in the meantime we feel for the characters, especially Phil. We learn about emotional information with Phil, and it hits him hard.
The 4 V’s (Cont.)

Verisimilitude- The film, at least to what we know, is presented as very real for Phil. He experiences this all by himself. In a pre concept for the film, Phil was going to be cursed by an ex girlfriend and that what causes him to repeat the day over and over again. But, the film appears as true.
Change of Knowledge

Throughout the entirety of the movie, Phil and the viewer were restricted from what it took to get out of the Groundhog Day loop. We learn new information with Phil, Ned Ryerson, Rita’s preferences, etc. This change of knowledge helps us understand what Phil knows and what he’s going through. Through change, Phil came out of the loop by becoming a truly good person.
Cause and Effect

Analysis of the movie

The goal of psychoanalysis is to break behavioral patterns. In the film, Phil is given at least 34 chances to relive his day and break free from the routines he’s created in his life. The opportunity to redo and learn from experience—in particular, to love and learn through experience with a good object—symbolizes the redemptive, reparative possibilities in every life.

Paul Hannon- Wrote a whole book about analyzing the movie.

Dr. Niles Goldstein believes that Phil’s character is given multiple chances to practice good deeds. “The movie tells us, as Judaism does, that the work doesn't end until the world has been perfected.”

Phil learns life is not something to be conquered and controlled but a lover inviting you to dance. Phil ends up getting over his ideology of his superficial ideas of life and becomes a man that understands life is something much simple than that.
Interpretations of the film

There are a ton of interpretations of the film. Some well known ones would be, Bill Murray is our savior, Groundhog Phil is the reincarnation of Jesus Christ, Punxsutawney is purgatory (an actual really good theory), it's a metaphor for judaism, and it's a metaphor for psychoanalysis.
Intent/meaning

- The Intent of the story was to show how anyone can change if given enough chances.
- Phil started off as the worst type of person to be around to show how far he could come.
- Phil was given over 34 chances to change the way he thinks and become a better person.
- "If a person could live long enough, would he ever change?"
Why the name Groundhog Day?

Before the creation of this movie, Groundhog Day usually referred to the little holiday that the groundhog was able to predict if there’s more winter or spring. Now, it refers to an unpleasant situation that keeps repeating itself. I believe they chose this day to shed light on it, how many people really did know Groundhog Day? It could also mean some form of symbolism, as like a groundhog, Phil keeps repeating a similar day at the same time of year.
Repetition At Its Finest

What’s the point of putting the same smashing clock gif? Repetition, the same thing that Groundhog Day does. It what makes Groundhog Day so compelling, the repeats, and how the movie smashes the clocks, dialogues, and situations into our head. The clock’s repetition is very important, each clock represent Phil’s mood for the day, slow mo would mean he doesn’t want to do that day.
Irony

One of the most ironic things in the film is the song “I Got You, Babe”, which plays at the beginning of every new day for Phil. The song title alone is the opposite of Phil’s character, as he has no one, he’s a loner. The song acts as a clue for Phil’s escape. It is also irony in Phil’s name, sounding similar to feel. Yet Phil cannot feel.
Groundhog Day

Directed by Harold Ramis, 1993

A weather man is reluctantly sent to cover a story about a weather forecasting fest (as he calls it). This go-to guy enters a Groundhog Day loop again, and again, and again. But he soon discovers the advantage, thus convexing the real nature of what he is destined to spend the rest of eternity in the same place, and begins some people's favorite thing: STORY Time.

- Rob Harten 1/28/93

Plot Chart

Legend

- Angry
- Annoyed/bothered
- Mean
- Hopeful
- Sad
- Depressed/broken
- Tired
- Happy
- In love
- Dead
Groundhog Day manages to be nonlinear while being linear. The plot chart on the other page basically explained the character’s emotion on what day and on what time. It started off with Day 1-When Phil first experiences Punxsutawney, he wants to escape the town as much as possible. Then we get Day 2- The first loop, where he tries to understand and the situation. Several Loops Later- He realizes he has no consequences for his actions and exploits the situation.
Plot Chart Explained (Cont.)

He does things like rob money and punch Ned Ryerson. No one can disapprove of his actions. Several loops Later- He tries to court Rita, he spends the most time here, failing every time, each slap being a day, we lose track of the days. Several more loops Later- He goes on a suicidal and dangerous spree, as he has no will to continue on. More loops Later-He realizes that he is trapped and has all the time in the world to do everything.
Plot Chart Explained (Cont.)

He learns things such as piano, ice sculpting, and speak French. He becomes desperate to save an old man from dying, but fails. These good deeds pay off eventually, as Rita is impressed. Many, many, many, loops later, he finally is able to get Rita and the loops end.

We can assume, as there is no confirmed number, that Phil has been in the loops for either hundreds of days or hundreds of years.
Resources

www.shmoop.com/groundhog-day/analysis.html

http://mentalfloss.com/article/55243/8-creative-interpretations-groundhog-day

https://elevatedreviews.weebly.com/blog/elements-of-narrative-in-groundhog-day

https://www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com/movie-storystructure/groundhog-day/

http://www.screenwritingtricks.com/2014/03/groundhog-day-full-story-structure.html

http://baynemcgowan.com/p7.html