

Bill Murray is one of my favorite actors (think *Rushmore*), so you can understand why I love this movie. However, and once again, I really never saw the movie's specific quality until I read Thompson's chapter on it.

I thought it was neat that she started out the chapter writing about how the film never attempts to explain the plot and the "impossible situations" that it deals with. Aside from the psychiatrist, which is also mentioned in the chapter, *Groundhog Day* makes no effort to be a sensible comedy steeped in realism. And as well it shouldn't. I get bogged down by movies that seem to justify every aspect of a plot (think *Minority Report* or the *Matrix* or any other movie that the action is preceded with "this is what happened before so this is what must happen next"). *Groundhog Day* obviously couldn't realistically happen, and coupled with the fact that it is a comedy, I say thumbs up to the deviation from 'tradition'. It works very well in this movie to avoid explanation of "how" or "what" keeps Bill Murray waking up in the same day.

The next two things in the chapter that I found interesting coincide. The fact that there is no antagonist, that Bill Murray is "protagonist and antagonist rolled into one," is a perfect setup for this movie. Heavily relying on repetition, in the form of the same day over and over again, it makes sense that one main force (character) runs the show (story). I could see the movie easily getting sloppy or facing continuity problems in the script or filming if Bill Murray and a second main character (presumably a featured antagonist) were to be show separately in the same reoccurring day. Additionally, because Bill Murray is such a great comedic actor, the dual role of protagonist and antagonist fits perfectly. This, of course, lends and attaches itself well to another one of Thompson's point, the star persona. Murray's preexisting master of dead-pan delivery, the story makes sense that he can be both the bad and good guy. And in all actuality, it is the bad guy in Murray's character that drives the character-arc and delivers change to the character. *Groundhog Day* was the medium in which that change was brought about, and a funny one at that.

One last positive about thing about the movie. On page 141, Thompson notes a "temporal shift" in the movie. Wary of becoming repetitive, the filmmakers deviated from the blaring alarm-clock radio that had previously started each one of the repeating days. This happens when he goes from kissing Nancy to readying himself to rob the armored car. Such a simple thing, but I was still amazed when Thompson wrote that the audience can keep track of this movement because the kissing scene was at night and the robbery was at (obviously the next) day. It remains a mystery to me how authors or script writers are conscious of these small but crucial elements in their works.

Lastly - I found the Phil / Phil name thing a little too cute and unnecessary. The movie does a good job of keeping coherent plot while at the same time not speaking too direct to the audience, and I thought that Bill Murray didn't need to have the same name as the Groundhog. Kind of overdoing it. Besides that, though, this movie is superb.