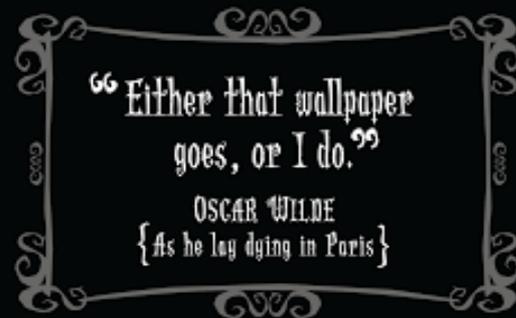
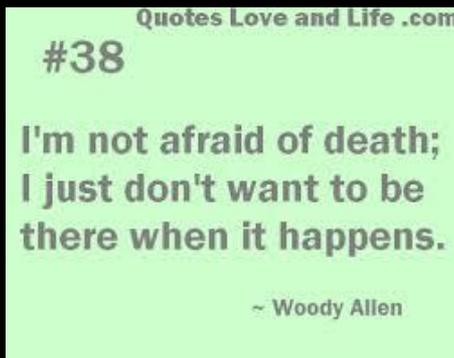


Introduction

- Philosophers and ideas about death
- Related to Harry Potter but can relate to numerous films and television programmes
 - e.g. Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit, Superhero films, Manga, Buffy
- Learning outcome 1: key terms and theoretical approaches to the study of popular culture and media studies.

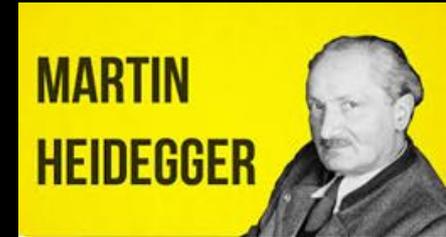
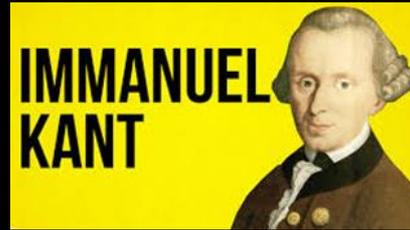
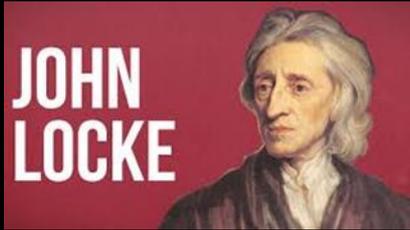
Images of death



Death and Philosophy

- Heidegger (1889-1976) – authenticity
 - Atheist
 - Death as imminent - shapes how we live
- Epicureans (ancient Greece)– unconcerned about death
- Plato ‘true philosophers make dying their profession’
- Harry Potter – confronted with death from early age

Search for meaning



- Harry Potter
 - Whether there is life after death is a theme
- John Locke (1632-1704) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
 - did believe in life after death
- Heidegger did not believe in life after death
- Harry Potter
 - Every book results in death of someone

Grave of Harry's Parents

- 'the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death' at the grave of Harry's parents'



The Approaching Battle

- Forbidden Forest to meet his doom (0.55 mins)
- Heidegger
 - shouldn't be morbid about death
 - come to terms with death
 - so that we can move into our remaining future
 - Taking hold of opportunities
- Harry Potter's actions are an example of authentic Heideggarian living
 - Recognising limitations, seizing opportunities, accepting one's mortality



King's Cross Station

(4.58 mins)

- Heidegger

- Should look into our past to uncover new possibilities
- And have a dialogue with someone we can use to guide us
- E.g. Dumbledore and Harry

- Purgatory

- Penitence and spiritual growth in Catholic doctrine

- Lord of the Rings also has quest for immortality



Reaping a destiny

- William James (1842-1910): ‘sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.’
- Our mortality and how we live are important
 - Voldemort - No remorse for mistakes
 - Dumbledore - remorse
- Aristotle (348-322 BC)
 - Notes how our actions put us on a trajectory
 - Turning us into particular kinds of people

Aristotle and Behaviour



- Repeated wrong or right behaviour
 - more likely to continue doing wrong or right
- Rowling & Heidegger – highlight that our choices here shape our destiny
- Death final/not final differences
- John Locke (1632-1704)
 - Things that give us the most real identity are memories and character
- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
 - To ensure happiness we have to assume an afterlife

Ambiguity in Harry Potter

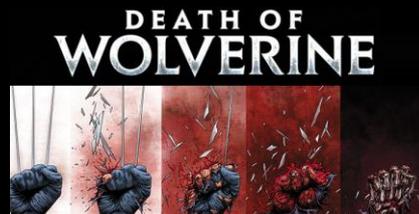
- Ambiguous whether death is the beginning or the end
- Portrayed as the next great adventure
- Harry Potter
 - Imperfect and morally flawed characters with choices between what's good and what's easy
 - Choices we make in this life are consequential

"We
are
our
choices."

- J.P. Sartre

Death is present in popular culture

- Death is shown in many films
- Determine how the characters live
- Characters portrayed as evil - killed off
- Humour - used in relation to death and portrayals (coping mechanism)
- Gallows humour (life of Brian)
- Some films have the quest for immortality as their theme.



Bibliography

- Laderman, G. (2000) The Disney way of Death, *Journal of American Academy of Religion*. Vol. 68(1), pp. 27-46.
- Matzo, M. and Miller, D. (2009) Humor and Death: A qualitative study of The New Yorker Cartoons (1986-2006). *Palliative and Supportive Care*, Vol. 7, pp. 487-493.
- Narvaez, P. (2003) *Of Copse: death and humor in folklore and popular culture*. (Ebook), Utah, Utah State University Press.
- Walls, J. and Walls, J. (2010) Beyond Godric's Hollow: Life after Death and the Search for Meaning. W. Irwin and K. Johnson (eds). *Introducing Philosophy Through Pop Culture*. Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell.