



Movie Club

Magnolia (1999)

1. With its ensemble cast, the film follows the story of many characters—eleven in fact. Does this inhibit you from connecting with individual characters and their story? What character's story are you most invested in and why?
2. One way to analyse the film is to focus less on individual characters and more on the wider themes these characters represent. What themes stand out to you?
3. The film doesn't rely on a traditional linear narrative structure. There are a series of climactic build-ups that ebb away. It has been suggested that the concept of the blooming magnolia flower is an analogy for this structure. What do you make of the structure of the film? How does this structure enhance the characters and the themes of the film?

'A magnolia is a type of flower, which is used as a symbol throughout the film. The concept of the blooming flower has been used as an analogy for the film's structure and flow.' IMDB
4. The soundtrack consists mostly of songs by singer/songwriter Aimee Mann. Music is an integral part of the film inasmuch it works to set theme and tone as well as signify character arcs. How does the music achieve this within the film? Is it lyric or melody or both, that affects the meaning so much?
5. Why do you think Anderson says 'Magnolia' is the best movie he will ever make?

'...but I guess the way that I really feel is that Magnolia is, for better or worse, the best movie I'll ever make.' Paul Thomas Anderson
6. All the characters in the film have some form of connection to the media and television. Frank Mackey is interviewed and filmed by a journalist, Earl Partridge is a former TV producer, Frank Gator hosts a TV show, Donnie Smith is a former star of TV show 'Quiz kid', and other characters are connected to these characters. With this in mind, do you think the film is making a comment on media and TV?