

Night Owls Discussion of Banshees of Inisherin

Arnold Brooks and Agnes Callard

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Arnold Brooks and Agnes Callard and a theater full of UChicago students discuss what the movie means.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl9CneSFdSM>

Agnes: Hey, everyone. We're going to have a conversation for about 30-40 minutes and then I will open it up to Q&A. You can ask us anything. Anyone who asks a question can get a T-shirt. Or a tote bag, night owl T-shirt top. And and you can leave at anytime. This is not a class, so stay as long as you. Feel like leave whenever you want. We won't be offended. OK. But first, but yeah, not first. Sorry. Will you introduce yourself?

Brooks: I'm Arnold Brooks. I teach here at the University of Chicago and the Department of Philosophy, and I'm also married to Agnes. This is my first night owls, though I've been to many, but this is my first time.

Agnes: OK, great. I'm recording this on my phone. Just so you know if you ask a question. It's going to be recorded, though the audio will be great, so it might only barely hear you. OK, so there's a moment in this movie where. Like there's a suggestion that the happy people. Are also the people who don't really think like happy people and thinkers are two separate groups of people. Does that seem true to you about the movie? And then does it seem true to you about life? Do people who think more feel less happy?

Brooks: I mean, I don't think that, but I I. Mean wait, you think? Life. I don't think that about life. I mean I I guess I wouldn't be doing the the job that I do if I did think that, but I mean, so we we do have we do have Patrick, right, who's who's. Happy and not a thinker, and in fact he's introduced as happy the first scene where we get him. He's walking through the town and there's like a rainbow over. His. I mean, it's really it really gets, you know, sort of grin.

Agnes: On his face and you saying hi to people and.

Brooks: They're saying hi to him. Yeah. And I, I guess, I guess. I mean, my main question is. Just is he. Actually happy, right? That is, he feels happy. He believes he's happy. He describes himself as a happy lad. That's sort of his identity. Like, if he had to. Umm. When he sort of called upon to describe himself, he says I'm happy and I'm nice. Those are the two things that he says about himself. So, and and then and then there's the question is he, is he really happy? Do you think he's happy?

Agnes: I guess so. Like I guess the movie gives me the impression that he was happy right up until this day.

Brooks: Yeah, right. So that that's what he says, too. He says. I was a happy lad until. My friend started acting like a Gilly gooey right, so, but then then, you know, we can ask, is that is that happiness is something that's that unstable happiness. So.

You know, his happiness appears, I guess in to to depend on this other person. That he's got this friend and his meeting hit this friend at 2:00 at the pub. That's that's the thing that makes him happy. That that's what gives his life like. Its significance or something and and I so he's the only happy person or he's the only person that's obviously happy. I mean we have the other two pub guys. I don't know what their deal is. They're sort of, yeah, they they sort of repeat one another maybe they're happy but they're not. You know. We really we have these two unhappy people. Who are thinkers? And that's Siobhan and and call and then we have this happy non thinker in in Patrick. And then we have a, I don't know. We have Dominic. Whatever is going on with him. But I I don't know that there's a sort of general happiness and non thinking thing and I. I sort of wonder, even if it's it's right to call Patrick happy. I mean maybe. Maybe the problem is that Patrick really doesn't understand his life. I mean that that that, you know, I I was talking to Maccabee, our our middle child, who's over there and his theory was that that the this is really a story of Patrick coming to understand the world that he actually lives in. Namely that it isn't a happy world, that it isn't a happy or good life. That it's actually empty and bad and he just didn't understand that before because his people were deceiving him. I mean, he was being tricked or something like that.

Agnes: At some point, Colin says to paric niceness doesn't last. And then that's when Pedro says. Maybe you were never nice, so that seems like a dispute over whether niceness lasts. Like Patrick is saying. Look, if it were niceness, it would have lasted. And column is saying no, niceness is not a thing that. Lasts.

Brooks: Yeah. So I mean the, the movie, the movie sort of begins with this perplexing break. Between Patrick and and com and I, I think it's almost like a miracle. Like it's a it's a. It's a. It's a A8 causal event, right? That you can't just stop liking somebody. You can't just stop being somebody's friend. I mean, even even when Siobhan is asked to try to justify that claim, right? Because he says, why can't you stop just being somebody's friend? She says she says it's because it's not nice, but she's stopped. I think that is it's not just that it's not nice, it's. That. It's impossible. You can't just stop.

Agnes: Being somebody's friend, I mean, Dominic says. Is he 12, which suggests when you're.

Brooks: 12 You can, yeah, but maybe when you're 12, you can't really. You have have friends or something. I mean, yeah, there's something.

Agnes: I did this when I was 12. Actually like I I totally did this. I broke up. I broke up with a friend. I was just like, I don't want to be friends with you.

Brooks: You you broke off.

Agnes: Anymore. And she was really upset. But there was a cause there.

Brooks: If I remember that story correctly.

Agnes: There's always. It was very similar to this.

Brooks: Yeah. But but in this in this we have this situation where there is no so. So they keep saying are you routing right? Are you are you fighting and and that

would explain it. They they had to reach for something they had to reach for some explanation somebody just ceasing to be your friend is like some some somebody just suddenly out of the blue falling in. Love. With you where somebody.

Agnes: That's a thing that can.

Brooks: Also happen. Yeah. Well, but it's also maybe a bit miraculous, right? Or or or peace suddenly breaking out between warring parties. For no no reason. It's just now it's peace. It's. Over. Right. Or war? Breaking out between friends or something like that, that that there's something. There's something uncanny about it and the whole the whole first act of the movie is him. Patrick just dealing with this almost miraculous event that that they could just they could just break. Like this and. Just just trying to come to some kind of an.

Agnes: Understanding of it. OK, dude, that there's two things I would say that. So first, is it like this thing? Are we rallying like by the end they're rowing, right? It's almost like the whole movie is the is them getting up to the point where they're rowing finally. OK, now we have a war, and now it will almost like makes sense by the end. And that the beginning is the part where it doesn't make sense. I think it's a really good point about how it's uncanny. So like when Shivan, the first moment where the suggestion of come just doesn't like you anymore, it comes from Siobhan, where he tells her like she he just didn't come out when I knocked at his door. And she's like, if he just doesn't like you anymore and and and she sort of laughed and the and the audience laughed too. And in fact, when calm first says I just don't like you anymore, the audience. Craft, I noticed. And it's like if we laugh because it's like we can't take it in like it's it's unintelligible. And by the end of the movie or even by halfway through the movie that he just doesn't like him anymore, it's like, becomes deadly serious for the whole audience. And we stop laughing at all those moments. So the audience itself had to get. Used to this, he just doesn't like you anymore. Like it's uncanny at the beginning. And then we become accustomed to it and we become almost like submerged in the horror.

Brooks: Got it. Yeah, and in particular, the thing that's sort of miraculous or horrible about it is. That there's no explanation for it other than just time. And it's sort of like. Like the idea of the miracle is the idea of something happening without a cause, right? Or at least an other worldly cause, A cause that isn't part of the world. And and and you know, maybe we can think of free will that way. Maybe free will is like. A miracle in that sense, it's a cause that comes in from the outside. And time is a little like that too. Like, imagine that something could just be changed just by time, by nothing but time.

Brooks: Right. So I mean, and this is the confusion, it's that Patrick has always been dull. He's always been the same. Person. Whatever it was that allowed this, at least person who thought he was an interesting, you know, fiddler to hang out with this dull cowherd is that hasn't changed. Right. It's just that call has changed and his only explanation for the change that he might have undergone is just time. It's like it's time. Just without change. It's just him feeling the passage of time. And that

seems like it's like there's no cause there. Or it's a way of talking about something that. Happens without a.

Agnes: Cause, but isn't it like the fear of death showing up for him somehow?

Brooks: Yeah, I mean, right, so we we have this this thing about despair. I mean he. He doesn't talk directly about the. He sort of talks about feeling the time, whiling away. I mean, when they're sitting outside, he talks a little bit about death, he, you know, and and and in a sense that's also an explanation that Patrick jumps to. Right. He also thinks maybe this is about death, right? And it turns out it's not really about death either. It's just about just the experience of the passage of time.

Agnes: So one thought that I had was that maybe calms despair. Like made Patrick sort of cheery persona unbearable to him. At a certain point.

Brooks: Yeah, right. So we have this. You know, we find out about halfway through the movie that there's this back story to what's been going on, but it isn't purely A causal it's not this thing completely out of the blue, it's that this is something that he's been discussing with the priest, right, that that he's got this despair. Umm. I mean, the way he puts it is that. Patrick was talking about his donkey **** for two hours and that he just couldn't take that, that there was he was like timing. It he. Was. He was. He was I I don't know if it's the cheerfulness or or like like there is something about Patrick that's a little bit like a dog or a donkey. It's like, you know, he he has that relationship to the fear of death or to his own. Reality, or to infinitude or something like that, which is just obliviousness, right. You know you have loads of. Time or something like that.

Agnes: So we it's very, very strange to watch like a friend break up like someone just break up with their friend. And like as you know, I've done this. I mean when I was 12 and. Also again later. So it's a thing I do, but it's not a thing most people do. Most people, they break up with romantic partner. But with friends, they just kind of drift apart. They don't just one day say I don't want to be your friend anymore. That somehow feels incredibly harsh in a way that like, I don't want to be your boyfriend or your wife or whatever. As harsh as that is, doesn't seem as bad. So why? Why is it so harsh? To just be saying, I don't want to be your friend anymore.

Brooks: Yeah, I mean, so for me, for me the first question about this movie that that jumps out to me is. Why didn't call sit Patrick down and say listen, Patrick? I've enjoyed my time with you. I think you're a fine guy. I need some time for my music, so I'm not going to do the pub at 2:00 thing anymore. I'll meet you here at six. Like, that's such an obviously correct answer to the problem. I mean and. And you know, Patrick says, like, why his fingers? The first thing it's like. It the solution here is so obvious that I think the way we have to read it is that the breakup is the point. I mean, we really. Don't do this. With people you're you're weird and almost weird. And and in general, we do just drift apart. We start, you know, not. Answering calls and. Being like, Oh yeah, sorry I've been busy. I've been really, really busy, you know, like as if that ever is. True. But we just, we just let people drift apart, you know.

Agnes: We just, OK, if you not answer my question, why? Why don't we do it? Why? I mean, in a romantic context, we don't just let people drift apart. We tell them I don't want to be in a romantic relationship with anymore. So why do we not? Tell our friends I don't want to be a friend anymore.

Brooks: Yeah, I mean, I guess I think that there's something impossible about it that that it's I, I don't know what it is that there's something that lies outside the structure of the relation. You can't do that. You have to find something to have a fight about. You have to find a reason, right? I mean, even the sister in some sense can't leave until there's the fingers being thrown at. The. Door that. That's what gives her the ability to leave is that suddenly she can say it's because of this. That I'm leaving and not that this is.

Agnes: No, no, because she she she she tells him I'm leaving before they come home to find the fingers.

Brooks: Yeah, but I I guess it's like, I mean, she's deciding.

Agnes: Oh, but the but but. The but the previous fingers. Already been drawn? Fair enough. Yeah, and.

Brooks: That there sort of has to be a reason for things like that. Like you can't just say we're done. It's sort of impossible, like, even even in romantic relationships, right? You can't break up with somebody unless you come up with a reason. And sometimes you have to just invent something, but you can't just leave. Like there's something just kind of impossible about it. I'm not really sure why, but it really is. You just can't do.

Agnes: That OK, so suppose that the breakup is the point and that it's not that Colin wanted time away from Patrick, it's that he somehow wanted this, like, traumatic thing. It's almost like he wanted. He wanted the thing that happens at the end, where there's like a war, and they're rowing. Let's suppose that for the moment. That you didn't want peace. But he says he wants peace. He says he wants silence. What he actually wants is a war cause because this would be the way to get a war. Why would you want that?

Brooks: Yeah, I mean, why does he seem so cheerful about cutting off his fingers, too? I mean, he he seems proud of it. He's sort of fascinated by his hand. He, like, holds it up. To. The light this and then later on he says that it's it's like a burden that's been lifted from me. This this cutting off. Of the fingers. And I sort of think maybe. I mean I, you know, I've been thinking about your, your stuff about Socrates and wavering and stuff like that where the way people when they don't understand something, they go back and. Forth on it, right? They they say one thing and then they say the opposite a little bit later and that Socrates is good at bringing that out and people the way that they waver and one. Way to solve wavering is to just. Do things you can't take back like we would take everything back if you gave us enough time. We would take everything back and we would do it again and we'd take it back and.

We do it. Again, because we just don't have a real sense of what's. Happening to us or what we're trying to do, but if you cut your fingers off, you can't take that back and it looks like a decision. It feels like something that you that you can settle on, right and cutting off a friend is an attempt to maybe do that or burning a house down or fighting a civil war or something like that. Just shooting people in the street. I mean, these are things that you can't take back. And so now it feels like you're acting. With it feels.

Agnes: Like you're moving forward, you're making progress.

Brooks: Yeah, it feels like, yeah, you've like now you've accomplished something, right?

Agnes: There's a great moment. And since you brought up Socrates. There's a great moment in the credo where Socrates friend Credo is trying to get to escape from jail, so he cannot be killed after he's been sentenced to death by the city of Athens. And Crete is like. So I think now maybe you're going to admit, Socrates, that actually you should care what the majority of people think about you. Maybe it's this time you're gonna get that and Saudis is like, Nah, you know, the majority like they'll put me to death. And if you give, if they could bring me to life again, they would do that later. That's like your point about wavering. Right. Like they the, the, the finality is only in the thing it's not in the person. So maybe he wants some kind of final thing. I mean that would be a good explanation of why he would do something that seems so counterproductive to the fact that what he wants to do is produce music and he is also preventing himself from doing that. Like that I just, even with your interpretation, I find that very mysterious. Like, why did he pick the one form of self mutilation that would also interfere with the reason he was giving for wanting to be free from pain?

Brooks: Yes, the two the two sort of lines we have on that are one, we need first threatening to do it, he says I'll cut the fingers off my left hand, my fiddled hand, right, so that the hand he's going to do the strings with and then later on when Shavon said that says that you won't be able to play music if you cut off all your fingers. He says now we're getting somewhere. And and those are both pretty mysterious comments, but it seems like he's very deliberate about making sure. That the self mutilation in question, it's not really about the hands, it's that he's he'll it's mutilating his ability to play.

Agnes: Music. Yeah, it's a real cost for him.

Brooks: Yeah, that he's he's destroying the thing that he's supposedly getting out of this breakup with Patrick. Yeah, I mean, I'm not sure. I'm not sure what why he wants to make that. One one thing, one thing you might say is. Just. He wants to be free of the burden of needing to be some way. And one way to do that is to compose a tune so that you are somebody and another way to do that is to make it impossible for you to compose a tune so that you don't have to be somebody.

Agnes: But isn't like whiling away your hours aimlessly chatting with parrick. Just the perfect way of freeing yourself up the burden of needing to.

Brooks: Be somebody. No cause. Then it's there. I mean you. You gotta sit with it and and and be listening to this man talk and thinking like, you know, this is my life. This is what my life is supposed to be like. Like, aren't I supposed to be somebody? Aren't I supposed to accomplish something and and. If you can somehow make it impossible for yourself, then that's a relief. It's like a it's to save yourself self from that.

Agnes: I feel like in some way Callum and Shivan are presented as almost the same person at different stages or different ages, like my support for that is that they're both put forward as thinkers and then you know, the where he where, where, where there's a scene. Between them? Where? Calm says something like don't you ever think you're entertaining yourself while staving off the inevitable? And she says. No. And he's like, yes, you do. I you're like me. I can recognize a kindred spirit. Doesn't that seem right? To you, and are we supposed to interpret her getting off the island as something like her finding an alternative solution to this problem so that she doesn't end up like him?

Brooks: Yeah, I mean, they're definitely, I mean, at least common things that they're sort of in a parallel situation that they're both thinkers. The other, you know, the the barman, they think that Chevron is a thinker like calm, right, that that in that in some sense would not have been an odd couple. If those two have been friends. And so I mean, one thing is I you asked me to which which is totally fair to come up with some questions for you and and that was going to. Be one of my questions for. You it's just too late. I asked. You is just what is a thinker? Right. What is it that they have in common? That is what? What? What is it? To be a thinker in in, in the sense that they. They are thinkers.

Agnes: I guess I. Thought it that was animating my first question to you. I thought it was something like you live your life with the need to scratch below the surface so that if things even if things seem OK, you're like probing at it and thereby always potentially undermining the sources of your stability and happiness. So I thought the movie was. Presenting thinkers as people who are going to be like that. That unhappiness is like an occupational hazard or something of being a thinker.

Brooks: Yeah. I mean maybe maybe being a thinker is something like. Because, you know, thinking about it in terms of what the goal is going to be. Right. As opposed to a kind of like neurotic habit that maybe the to be a thinker, is to be somebody who tries to find in themselves something that will make them. Good or complete, or that give them a meaningful life or make them whole or something like that? And that the non thinkers of the people who don't try to find. That. In themselves, it's not clear that they're trying. To find it. In some other way, maybe just sort of, you know, shines down on the way it seems to shine down on Patrick at the beginning, but then maybe the thing that. Shivan and com have in common that common sees them as having in common is that one way or another maybe? You'd say that it's that they're cut off or something like that, but they have to find the thing that they need in themselves. They can't find it in other people. They can't find it in, you know. Civil struggle. They can't find it in anything but their own resources, and they're neither of them are able.

Agnes: To do that, OK, I disagree with that. So I remember when Shevon says, don't you ever feel lonely? Yeah. Like I think she's lonely and she wants other people to commune with. I don't think she's looking for the answers inside of herself. I think that's why she leaves. And I guess my thought was calm is lonely too, and his loneliness has become twisted into this thing where, like, I'm going to leave an eternal image of myself through my music. That isn't really that good anyway, but I can sort of tell myself that it is. Like, because I've given up on people I've given up on human connection, but she hasn't given up and she's not searching within herself. She's wanting to meet other people. She's like the people here on the mainland are nicer and happier. And I. Like them better.

Brooks: Yeah. So maybe maybe it's just wrong that they have that in common. But he definitely thinks that she's got the same curse, right? And and I mean she disagrees, I think. Or she doesn't ever really respond. Very directly. I mean, she at in the 1st at at the pub where he first says this, that that she understands him, she just walks out, right. And the second time she says no, I don't. I'm not just entertaining myself to like, you know, to hold off the inevitable. But he I mean he. Doesn't. He says yes, you do. And she doesn't. She just leaves. Then again too, she.

Agnes: Doesn't press the point. You do wonder why they don't become friends. Call him Shivan, right? They seem compatible, but no. OK, I want it.

Brooks: At least just worry.

Agnes: We can. We can take a little longer. Is this movie a comedy?

Brooks: Yeah, I I. I also found it confusing that it was so funny. Because it it really is very funny. I mean, it's a little almost a little bit too funny. Like the hook on the stick. Line I I thought that was very funny and I I wasn't. You know, I mean, Dominic is obviously a very it's a very sad arc for him. And we laugh at him.

Agnes: A lot, but he's also the most lovable character. Like, I think by far for me, even more than so than.

Brooks: Shavon. Yeah. I mean, he's the one that's sort of goodish, right? That is, he even balks at the that petty revenge against the music. Student. Yeah, and and I guess, I guess you know to, to, to take a step back and and and think about the. The way that the movie was made, why was it made to be funny? Right. Why was this? Why was this sort of written as a comedy right up until the last 20 minutes or so? Umm. And I don't know. I mean, does it feel to you like it makes the the sort of tragedy of it more poignant? That it's funny it.

Agnes: Feels like a way of selling the tragedy, like where it's like you start watching this movie and you're like, oh, this is funny. This is amusing. Ohh, guys. Breaking up with his friend. How weird and funny. Right. And it kind of hooks you. And sucks you in to its world through being funny and through entertaining you. And and then you're sort of invested. And then when he first cuts off the finger, just like it's very shocking because it's suddenly become real in a way. So I feel like when I'm, you know, when you're watching, like a Greek tragedy, you know, from the beginning or like, you know, I've been teaching a fellow, it's like it's. From the from from act. One you know,

this is not going to end well. And you almost have steeled yourself against it. You're like, OK, everyone's going to die. It's a tragedy. Everyone sort of supposed to die, so you almost don't invest. And so I feel like the humor is at least partly a way to pull you in and to get you to invest. So that the tragic force has more impact.

Brooks: Do you? Modern people need that in order to feel a tragedy in a way that ancient people didn't.

Agnes: Yeah. I mean, it's interesting like in. The ancient world there. Were just there were tragedies and there were comedies. They were different places and you knew which one you were going to see if you wanted to laugh, you go to a tragedy you wanted to, you know. Be sad. You go to start. Other way around and. I mean, this is an unusual movie, though. It's not like most tragic movies have a lot of. Funny parts. Yeah. So I I guess I wouldn't generalize from it. It's it's clever. It feels like a bit of a like a clever move that the filmmaker came up with. Where where they get around our distancing. By using humor. It also seems. Like it relates to the bin cheese comment. So we're we're, Colin says maybe we do have bengies, but they're just, they're just amused and observed. And I almost wondered whether we're the supposed to be the banshees, like the viewers of the movie, who were just watching and kind of laughing.

Brooks: Banshee in the movie. I mean, there's that horrible.

Agnes: We we talked about this. I don't think she's a banshee.

Brooks: Well, she pretends the death of one of the characters. That's what banshee. Too, he says that in the movie, she's definitely. But I mean that for me is the thing that I still.

Agnes: OK, fine, fine.

Brooks: Really don't understand about and she. Smiles a lot. Yeah. And like, yeah, she seems amused right in weird ways. And she observes she's she's all over the place. She's on the Cliff, like magically. Like she she she can move very quickly when she's not on camera. Right. And she's she's just she's just sort of present and observing all of the major events in the movie. Like, I mean, you know, right at the end in that last. Meeting she's there to observe it.

Agnes: Yeah, she also has the best line in the movie. At least my favorite line when she says I'm not trying to be nice. I'm trying to be accurate.

Brooks: Yeah, I like the way that she says accurate very accurately.

Agnes: Yeah, it's just accurate. Right, right. And so I mean, but it was an interesting moment, right, because there was this, there was this battle over niceness, right, between all the characters where it's like, call. You're not being nice. And he's like, I can't be nice anymore. And but she's, like, stepped outside the space of Nice. She doesn't care about niceness. She's not in some way, she's, like, disconnected. She doesn't seem to care.

Brooks: Yeah.

Agnes: That shevon avoids her like she knows everyone avoids her. She doesn't care. People avoid her. She brings up, you know, the death of their parents. That's the first thing we hear her do is say how how long has. It been since your parents died. So

is, you know, I guess maybe we're meant to contrast her kind of disconnection with everyone from the kind of disconnection that calm is looking for from. Park.

Brooks: Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know about that. I mean, the the nicest thing is interesting and and I think. You're right. I mean, she she seems to be out of the niceness game in a really deep way, like nobody expects her to be nice and she's not. She isn't nice and everybody finds her sort of unpleasant, but she seems sort of like, I mean, the fact that she carries this hook staff.

Agnes: Around well, she doesn't until the end, right?

Brooks: Wow, she does. She does kind of throughout that whole last thing. Well, after it ceased to be important to the actual dragging. Out of the. Right. Hmm. She carries it in the last. Scene. She's OK. Yeah, over her lap. Something like that, like it's a kind of like, you know, like it's the side or something. It's a kind of emblem of her, of her office. She she's like a part of the island in a way. But I did want to ask you about the nice thing because sort of halfway through the movie, I think it's like on the. Wednesday Ish between the two Sundays. There's that scene in the in the bar where where he gives that drunken speech about niceness and it's like he gives this theory right. He gives this account of. What's happened and what their relationship is and what's going on and the kind of denunciation of calm and and and then. It's, it seems very satisfying, right? And he seems to walk out very satisfied and then it's gone. And that falls apart. And so, like, one of the one of the questions about the movie for me is just what happens to that theory. Like. Why do we get a kind of collapse afterwards, such that we have to end up in this basin of just rage where now he's going to destroy? Tom's life and and I at least I I think by the end of the movie, he's going to continue to destroy Holmes life.

Agnes: Yeah, it it. It's sort of like there is this epiphany that's not very stable, this epiphany about I want to be a nice, happy person like it almost feels like he just becomes convinced by the world around him that being a nice happy person is actually a terrible thing to be. It makes him a loser. Like Dominic, he doesn't want to be a loser. That the island starts to divide into winners and losers. The people on the top and the people on the bottom, and his happiness makes him someone on the bottom.

Brooks: Yeah. Or that or just, you know, that there's something kind of unstable. I mean, you're right that he gets this idea in his head that he shouldn't be a pushover or something like that, that he isn't a pushover. I mean, from the beginning, he's he's pretty harsh with me. See, it seems to me that he stands up to himself. He stands up for himself with calm.

From the beginning, I mean, he says. Are you gonna be an idiot again today? He yells at him. He says you were being harsh with me. You were being harsh with me today too. Like he, you know, it's not like he doesn't voice his complaints. It's just that he keeps looking for a kind of end to it such that they can keep talking and and you know, you really get the sense that. If he'd come and barged in and yelled at him, yelled at calm and then he had not offered to go to the pub later. It would have been fine, but it's the fact that he offered to go to the pub later that made it worthy of the

rest of the cuts. Fingers. But that. Yeah, I mean he he gets it into his head that he's got to stop. He's got to be a different kind of person. That the kind of person he's. He had been doesn't work anymore. And I I don't know. I mean I I guess my thought was sort of like. Umm. When he finds rage, he finds something that he can really be about. Like he finds something in himself that he can that can be a sort of place for him. To to to act from and to think from, and that what he's been looking for throughout the whole movie is this. To find a point of stability and it just turns out that the point of stability is just this basin of rage where he gets to. Umm. Just wage and endless war against this man.

Agnes: I mean, it seemed like the two possible points of stability were, you know, they they start being friends again and things go, but things go. Back to the way they were or. They hate each other and they're at war and in effect the movie was about how there is no equilibrium between those two. That is, you're either in the one. Or in the other. And so like if basically it's like if you and I are friends, either we can be friends or we can be enemies, but there isn't something in between and column seems to at least be suggesting in the in much of the movie there could just be something in between we could just. Be nothing to each. Other and and Patrick is not. That that just like. Isn't working for him as a a persona or something like that.

Brooks: Yeah. So what? Why? Why is it that, I mean, because there are people that can somehow find that. Equilibrium.

Agnes: Like like maybe not on a small.

Brooks: Island. But like you and you and Ben sort. Of have that equilibrium right your friends. And so, like, how did you do that? I mean, I've never found that every time I step away from somebody through a break up a friend or relationship, it's always, you know, we're enemies because we don't have any, any middle ground. So where's like, how do you get to the middle ground?

Agnes: We were never not friends, so I like we never have to recover from, you know, a. Like, we're not talking to each other kind of break. So I don't know. I don't know how you recover from it because I didn't have to go through that. I mean, I guess I think that in the other cases, the way people do it is they actually like physically move. Away from one another so that they're not. In any kind of communication and you know, we live in a world where that's pretty hard because. If you're on social media, whatever, like you're in some sense in contact with a lot of people, even if they're not physically close to you. Maybe so maybe in that way this movie is very timely because it were at a time where it's sort of hard to be totally separate from other people. But that that. That's all I can think of as the way to do it. It seems like the way the. Way that people. Do it is by the way that people have peace. Peaceful separation is just. Like physical distance and no communication and otherwise it's war or friendship.

Brooks: Yeah. And I think that maybe the war or friendship, they sort of come from the same thing because the thing that seems really intolerable to both of them, and especially to Patrick, where these moments, this is like the most heartbreaking thing, it was like choking up. I was watching this these moments where. He sees his

friend, or there's a kind word or like he thanks him for taking care of his dog and he's just overwhelmed by happiness. And he has to just walk away from that. And that's the thing that's hard for him. It's not the it's not the meanness, it's that he's still happy to see. Calm. Like there's his heart still leaps when he sees him.

Agnes: Yeah.

Brooks: Whenever in season and like to be in this to be in this situation where your heart should leap every time you see somebody, but you're supposed to never talk to each other, that seems impossible. It seems like you'd have to destroy them or something like that. You'd have to somehow. Move away or just get away from them more. Find some way to be angry at them. Maybe.

Agnes: OK, I have one last question and then you can ask me one last question, if you have one and then we'll open it. Up for Q&A. So here's my last question. Actually, I'm also gonna ask this. To the audience, are you? Team column or team pack pack? I'm just gonna ask Arnold 1st and then and then we'll actually wait. I should actually. Should just think in your head when your answer is your answer can also be. Neither. OK, OK, I. Ask you guys. You can also be neither. OK, who is team calm? OK, it's like 12345677 ish. Something like that. OK, Who's team park? Whoa. OK, I'm not going to count. So particularly one that one. OK, Arnold, what's your?

Brooks: Answer. So an interesting thing is I noticed a fair number of my students were. On team come.

Speaker 8: Are you are you on team?

Brooks: I sympathize. You know, I don't know. I I don't know. I mean I.

Agnes: You're just going to try and sympathize with both.

Brooks: Yeah, it it feels like a real. Tragedy in the sense that. UM. I mean, you know, of course column is sort of pretentious and silly, and he thinks he's, you know, a person of destiny. And it seems like he's probably not. I mean, it seems like shavan is sort of right about him, that he's he's he's just as boring as. The rest of them, he's just, you know, he has these high ideas for himself, but at the same time, it's like it's like. He has the idea, you know, he has the idea of life having some kind of significance of him doing something beyond himself or something like that and. I I don't know. I mean, there are these two there are these two pictures of a of a human life that I I I cannot diss tangle myself, which is the one is the picture of a story of a glorious achievement and or a downfall or whatever. And it's a kind of story. It's a kind of like tale that you tell. And that's the way calm sees himself or it's he he. That's the way he thinks he ought to be able to see himself and that. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I mean, somebody about whom you tell a story or you'd remember something of them. Right. And then there's this other picture of human life. And it's the the one in which you just are at this moment happy. You're not happy, you're feeling good or feeling bad or.

Agnes: A hero.

Brooks: You know, and that's the sort of. That's the sort of Patrick kind of picture I mean and it it, it has something to do with animals, but it's also the way philosophers tend to understand a good life, right? I mean philosophers. Don't talk about this glory

nonsense. They think you should just be happy. And I don't. I don't. I mean, I'm. I'm so deeply torn about this issue that I cannot decide between these two characters if that's the right picture.

Agnes: Not tell the audience that this is an advertisement for the course that you're teaching. Arnold is teaching a class on this question that is life. In the sense of, you know, living happily along Patrick style versus a life in the heroic sense of achieving something next next year in the fall. OK. So if you want to.

Speaker 4: Want to follow?

Agnes: Talk about that. Thanks, class. OK, you have a final question for me.

Brooks: You've, I mean, we've ended up talking about a lot of them, but I do have a question. It's it's a little bit of a lame one. Is the song about Patrick? Or what's the song? About it's about Patrick's death. Yeah, or like like, why is? Why does he think? I mean, why does he say I've been having these thoughts about playing at your funeral?

Agnes: I think I think he feels like he could feel so much love for Patrick if only Patrick were dead. You know, he's like imagining the love that would be pouring out. Of him like. Poor and he does feel bad for him. He gets punched. Right. And he feels bad when he loses donkey. He notices that he can care for him, just not when he has to, like, hang out. So I think that that, but I don't know what the song is about him. I just think the song maybe this song is like an expression of his love. But the love that is not consistent with actually spending time with him.

Brooks: Or like the only way you can understand Patrick's life is as. Something to memorialize?

Agnes: Yeah, maybe it would be about him. And then people would. Remember him? Yeah. OK, so why don't you raise your hand? And I think every will be coming around with a microphone and we're just going to kind of randomly, you know, call on people.

Speaker 7: Of.

Agnes: Course yeah.

Speaker 8: OK, a little bit curious about again the point of the comedy and I'm. Convinced by what Doctor? Allen said about it sort of drawn us in, so it's like. Almost a strategy to show us. Like absolute corrosive power, this kind of violence, it destroys everything in the world, including our laughter. And that's why I kind of think this kind of violence is completely irrational. Like, it seems impossible to me to be team either when they're, like, just it's cyclical and it destroys everything. And so you've already entered this some questions. But I'm still curious about that. Is it ever possible to cease this kind of violence? To me, it seems almost like this kind of violence, the the point of the state is to cease this kind of violence and the state in this movie is like completely absent. Like even at the police officers there, it's not really analogous to a modern police state like the he's integrated in the community. It's not really violence from above, so is it possible?

Speaker 4: To seize this kind of violence.

Agnes: I mean, of course in the background is civil war, right with sort of a kind of parallel situation of Irish people fighting Irish people, Irish Protestants, fighting Irish. And and and so it's almost like how is the state going to solve the problem when the state is ending the problem right? I I guess I do. I had a thought about like, you know your thoughts, this is totally irrational and like there's a way in which that's true. But there's a way in which by the end of the movie, it really feels like the only possible way that this could end up is in this feud, like, you know, are you rowing? Like. Where there had to be a row, it had to turn into a row, and so in that sense it was inevitable. It was there was this kind of tragic result that had to take place and we could still call it irrational but. It seems as though there's something there's. It's a kind of predictable result of a certain form of interaction where you know. On some level, maybe nobody's doing anything wrong to start out with, right, like calm doesn't want to be friends with this guy anymore. Eric, like, is like. No, you're my friend, right? And that just turns into this situation. It turns in almost like, naturally. Not because anyone did anything wrong. Right. So. So so I'm not sure if I want to call it a rational. At least I want to say it's it's sort of inevitable and deep and it's the product of rational moves. All the moves are rational in a way. How does it end? I think that like, you know that I really like the thing Arnold said at the beginning about how it almost. Feels like a miracle or like it. Starts out of nowhere and I almost feel like, yeah, you just need another miracle somehow for it to. And you know, I did have a night owls with Chris Blackman, who wrote this book about war. Like why told why we fight and he's really interested in these extended fighting situations like why does fighting go on so long in certain parts of the world? There's just these persistent fighting. For instance, in Ireland and and you know, he just thinks, well, there's just a bunch of different. There's like 5 different causes or something like that, but. There isn't some one general theory about how you solve it, but it it it does feel it feels to me like it would take a miracle. Somehow to end it.

Brooks: Yeah, I mean, so, so in the. In the 2nd and the second time was in the confessional. The priest asks why, if he thinks God cares about miniature donkeys and he says, I fear that he doesn't, and that that's where it's all gone wrong. And I I sort of think that that's the movies attempt to sort of address. This question. It's sort of like. You know, there are moral reasons. There are, like, justifications for war there. There are like, reasons why we might fight and why we might think it's it's OK or it's legitimate to fight. But the actual texture of conflict and people's motivations for violence is so much finer that it, you know, it's almost as if you'd have to care about miniature donkeys. If you really wanted to prevent war, you'd have to care about these silly little animals that people love and we can't. You know, you know, makes sense of the world. That's that fine grained where this start of this conflict is that the donkey choked on is his severed finger. I mean. How could you? How could you think of that in terms of like the justice of a conflict? Like, you know, I mean. Here on my Aristotle class like we talk about. What? What justice is and what are the grounds for retributive justice? And like we never consider stuff like this, I mean, but it is the

cause of war. I mean, this is really this is really how it happens. And so. At least the the movies take on it seems to be that. You know, whatever theories we might come up with about the rationality of conflict, the reality of it is so particular and so fine grained as far as people. 'S motives and. The sort of backdrop of conflict that it's it's it looks like it's coming out of. And there's just it. It'll feel like it's totally rational, but to the people engaged in it, I mean, it is just justified violence.

Agnes: Ohh to add one thing and then this question, but something occurred to me was like if people live close together, they're just going to sometimes hurt each other and in. Fact sometimes kill each other like. Accidentally. That's just going to happen in any group of people. Today OK Arnold, who's hurt his leg really badly today. I like kicked his leg. Basically the leg that he. Had hurt really badly and it. Him so much. OK. That like, I don't know, 40 minutes later, it still hurt from my kicking him. And now Arnold knows that I wasn't trying to hurt his leg. Right. I wasn't trying to cause him this pain that I did cause him. And he had, like, goodwill about it. But like, imagine if we had been in some really, really deep fight. And like, I had just kept on saying how much I don't know how much I like hate him. And I think he's dull and I don't want to talk to him anymore or whatever. And then I heard his leg. Right. That's like, you can imagine if, if, if. Paul. And accidentally killed the donkey. You know, before when they were friends, it would have been forgiven. But so there's stuff where we kind of we're. Going to need. To be able to forgive each other because we're going to hurt each other and then the absence of friendship makes those those things unforgivable. Ohh and sorry just before you ask your question you can after you ask your question you can come and get a T-shirt or you can wait until the end. It's up to you either way. OK it's fine to come and. Walk up or whatever, yeah.

Speaker 2: I have two questions. Unrelated.

Agnes: OK.

Speaker 2: The first one is this could be I guess as it pertains to the character part or general, but what hurts more for part or again in general the loss of when a friendship is is. Broken or loss? The loss of the friend or feeling like something is wrong with you. Like what's? Wrong with me? This person no longer wants to be friends with. Me, which I think we see a little. Just go throughout the film. I don't know if I should.

Agnes: Ask this. Go ahead, ask the. Second one I'm writing down.

Speaker 2: Then the second question is how real is the friendship between the two characters? If all they talk about is nonsense, you know, kind of idle chatter. And is this idle chatter because they can't truly connect with one another, or because they're on this tiny island? And there's nothing more to discuss.

Agnes: Great. Arnold, do you have an immediate response?

Brooks: Yeah, I I mean. It certainly seems like it's the indignity that hurts the most, at least at first. I mean, he's he's asking. Patrick is asking himself, is he dull? Is he stupid? Do people make fun of him behind his back like? What did he do to deserve? To deserve being cut off like this and the the scene that I mentioned where he as it were, gives his theory and you know, there's this, there's this confrontation

between the you have to leave something to posterity view of life and the you could you should just be nice view of life. Is is in a way it's an attempt to just explain that and it's an attempt that focuses on the bad Ness of Patrick, right. And and and that's sort of what they they concentrate on, but it seems like they leave that and that at least the second-half of the movie. The part of the movie where things get really violent is it really is about the loss. Like it's about this. Separation and the fact. Like. More and more like Patrick doesn't know what to do with his afternoons anymore. Like he doesn't have anything to do or say like he just sits there, smoking in the chair with his sister or something like this. He I mean, he's he's sort of like lost. And that's the thing that eventually I think really gets to him. So I I think that there's this immediate question what who am I? To deserve being cut off like this. But in the end he's really hurt much more by the loss of the. The the the friend, I mean it it it's sort of a loss of himself, right, I mean. Maybe one way to. Put it is he's. Supposed to be nice. That's who he is. But he loses a the person that he's nice to, and so he can't be nice. Anymore. Who's he supposed to be nice to and he no longer has a beneficiary. Right. And so he he sort of loses that part of his identity. And maybe that's the answer to why the theory falls apart is just it ceases to be true of him that he can. Be nice because he loses the person.

Agnes: Yeah. One thing that like I I agree on all of the both important. I think there's a sort of a third thing which is that. Somebody. It's like, imagine somebody breaking up with you, but you're still, like, living in the same apartment and and you keep thinking we could get back together. And there's a certain kind of insanity that that breeds. So I think that if Callum had left the island or died, he would have lost a friend, but he would have dealt with it very differently. And I think even setting aside the like, even if comments said I'm leaving the island because you're so dull. Still, I think it wouldn't have had the negative effect that it had. I think being around someone who you're not allowed to talk to. It's like being around a ghost or something like it's like there's this ghost person that's in your life, but they're not there and you keep seeing them, you and but you can't interact with them and even call himself, has trouble with restricting himself from interacting with park. So in the drunken scene, Park does not address home until home address Park. Comments like go away or whatever, and then he's like you talk to me, you know, you weren't supposed to, right. So there's this kind of almost impossibility. So I think it's like it's the, it's losing your friend when also in some way you didn't lose them and they're still there and the, the the temptation of them possibly becoming your friend again when you're constantly maybe oh, it's April first, maybe that was an April Fools Day joke. Oh, maybe he's depressed, but you're constantly being forced into these ruminations. Of what? If that is the thing that makes it so hard for him. OK. The second question, how real is their? Friendship, if it's just idle chatter. Like it's your view is that it's.

Brooks: Not very real. No, no, I think it's real. OK, but I don't understand friendship at all. I think it's completely confusing. I so I I was just teaching Aristotle's view

of friendship, which is terrible. And some of you know, I love Aristotle. And so it's hard. For me to say that, but.

Speaker 9: It's.

Agnes: You think 99 is terrible any 9.

Brooks: 9 No, I it's not all terrible, but the basic idea is that there are there are these three kinds of friendships, there's friendships of pleasure, right where we just take pleasure in each other's.

Speaker 2: OK.

Brooks: Nobody. Their friendship, friendships of utility. And then there are virtue friendships, right? But explain to any of your friends, any of them. Because virtue friendships are incredibly rare, right? Like you know, only between virtuous people who are like, you know, teammates or whatever, and and explain to any of your friends that this is the friendship that you have with them. Oh, it's a pleasure. Friendship, you know, and you're done as soon as I stop taking pleasure in your company and they will cease to be your friend instantly.

Speaker 4: That but it's.

Brooks: Clear that I mean, in a way that I mean it's almost like calm things of of Patrick that way.

Speaker 4: But it's clear that.

Brooks: It it's killing him to do this. I mean call like, the the scene where he's holding his fist to his mouth when he's sitting on the wall. I mean it like, it really hurts him to cut Patrick out it it. And it's just that they have this time that they've had together that that the friendship has been something that's been a part. Of their lives for a long time. No way of accounting for that. And I also don't understand what that is like. What is it that people mean to each other just through time? But that's the other thing. Time alone is doing in this movie that I don't understand and also in life.

Agnes: I wonder if the movie itself puts us in that position of creating a pleasure friendship with us by like being funny for a while and then and then we're like, committed and we have to stick it out through the like finger trappings.

Brooks: Yeah, they couldn't have started at the finger trappings.

Speaker 10: Right.

Agnes: OK.

Speaker 5: Hi I was hoping we could return to our question that Agnes actually.

Speaker 6: Asked Earl at the.

Speaker 5: Beginning, which is why do we accept breakups? When? They're among romantic partners and we find them socially acceptable when they're not friends.

Agnes: Take 3 on that I don't know.

Brooks: Yeah. OK. We do find them socially acceptable in romantic relationships. I think part of that has to do with the idea that romantic relationships produce obligations and. And. There are institutions surrounding them and customs surrounding them where we don't consider it OK for somebody to not be able to back out of those.

Those are too serious, right? So we you need to, you need to have a a retreat, right? Like divorce for example. I mean, marriages are just too serious for us not to at least make some kind of fuss about. Of course it's it's, it's. They're, you know, they're the kind of thing you have to. That makes a big difference to your life. And so I I mean we we do consider that socially acceptable, though it's it's amazing how much damage it does to people given that. I mean, if you're all law abiding people, you'll never in your life do that as much damage to anybody as you'll do when you break up with them. I mean that that is the way that you will hurt somebody. The. Most in your entire life. And you'll do it 3 or 4 times at best, and it's like torture. I mean, if if you slapped the stranger in the street and it produced all that pain in them, you go to prison for five years. It's just really, really, really bad. And yet, somehow we have to just tolerate it. And I guess the the fact is, with friendships is that we don't. We don't allow ourselves to do that. I mean we, we we let things ease off in this slow way because the, the institutions around friendship are kind of loose and you can. Kind of back out of. Them slowly, but I think that really hurts too. I mean, I've I've backed out of friendships, but I've also been backed. Gone. And that it really sucks. I mean, I, you know, decades later, I still feel. It but it. I mean, I don't know that I have a much. Better answer than. That before I said it's impossible. The idea of backing out of friendship doesn't make any sense, and it's like a logical contradiction, and I still want to hold on to some of that point, but. I admit I don't have a theory of that.

Agnes: I think you're basically saying ohh well, romance is like more important. So that's why we're allowed to back. Out of it, but I think that's not true. That is, I think the answer. Is that the view that we have about friendship, which is that you can't just break up with people, is the true view, but we just become insane when it comes to romance, like romance makes us literally crazy. We behave in all sorts of ways where if you behave in that way. About anything else everyone would say you're a crazy person. You're being crazy. We need to, like, get you some help so you know, just stuff that's super familiar, right? Like just texting your ex a million times when you know you told yourself I'm not going to do it again and you know it's bad for you and you hate. Them and you've told everyone you hate them and. Your friends are. Like, don't do it. Don't do it. And it's regular. It's normal. We all just behave this way when it comes to romance. So we've all just accepted that romance makes us insane, and we just have to, like, deal with that. And, you know, live with the fact that people are going to be crazy and they're going to do crazy things. But then when it comes to friendship, like, that's like a real thing where we can be rational. Humans. And so we can't just like ditch people and do horrible stuff to them because that's not OK. So we just we somehow created this like zone of forgiveness for being insane. And that zone is romance.

Speaker 9: Hello one thing that I was struck with in the movie is the sort of metaphor between the fight between called and Azure and the Irish Civil War. You know, just sort of look over the ocean and they're kind of distance from the.

Speaker 10: So.

Speaker 9: And I think one of the. Main things we get. Is that there's sort? Of no reason why or there's no like. It's sort of irrational like Patrick and calm are engaging this fight. It doesn't. At the end of the movie, it seems like there's going to be a ceasefire of sorts, but it's that it's going to resume again. But we also get the sense that. That that calm is sort of maybe enjoying the fighting that after tearing off as, as Professor Brooks mentioned, after cutting off his fingers that he sort of he he's proud of doing that. And so I was wondering when you think of?

Speaker 5: Going on.

Speaker 9: This set this sort of dual sense that on the one side this war is completely irrational and it's never going to end. And on the on the same token that. It sort of provided maybe a sense of meaning for calm in doing this, and you know with the code of life is just sort of doing all this entertainment stuff until the event that and sort of just providing entertainment in that sense. So just curious, weird thoughts were there.

Brooks: Yeah. So I mean I, I I sort of looked this up because I was doing this event and so the the war here is for anybody who. Doesn't know this. There's the war for Irish independence. Which was fought in the the years previous to this. To the Civil War and in it the Irish are looking to free themselves from the British Empire, right? And then the there's a treaty that signed the Anglo Irish Treaty and it declares Ireland an independent. Region within the British Empire, so they still have to swear fealty to the king, but they get to govern themselves, and these 6 northern counties. Are permitted to actually stay within the British. That becomes Northern Ireland, right? So they're permitted to stay within the British sphere of influence. Political sphere of influence. And those are the Free State. People. Who want to sign this treaty right? So they get the Free State of Ireland? It's it's this independent thing and.

Agnes: The northern part is the Free State. Oh.

Brooks: No, no, sorry. The Free State people are the people who fought for Irish independence and signed the Treaty, and the IRA are the people who are like no.

Agnes: OK.

Brooks: What we got into this fight for was a completely independent Irish Republic. That's what we got into this fight for it. That's what we're going to have. And so the Irish Civil War was those two sides fighting. Because. The IRA didn't want to stop until they had what they were really promised, and it, in a way the last line. Least the line of the IRA. It's that sometimes you don't get overstuff, you know, sometimes you don't compromise, sometimes you don't. Swear piece. You just keep going until you've won and you've won everything that you that you wanted. And by the same token, calms attitude is almost like. Somebody who? Ostensibly wants peace, right? But in a way, he's satisfied with the punishment of the continued conflict like that that he sees. Maybe he sees some kind of justice in that. For himself like. He sees something appropriate about cutting off his own fingers as a price to be. Paid. For having cut Patrick out of his life, which in any case he, he, he he felt somehow necessary to do, but anyway.

Speaker 11: If.

Brooks: We're supposed to draw a strong metaphorical connection to the Civil War. That was the best I could.

Agnes: I think that point about wanting punishment. Is really right? Like it's I almost. You know, you have to ask yourself, why did calm escape his house? Like what? Why? Why didn't he just let himself die? Right. He seemed to sort of want to die. He it's clear that he showed up and sat in his house with the sort of thought maybe I'll just die. But then in the end, he, like, gets out and. And when he asks, Parag, are we even now? And Paris, like, no, if you die, we would have been. But I'm just gonna keep going after you. You don't get the sense that calm is so disappointed, like almost like he was a he's. He's definitely sort of a glutton for punishment. He watches it. It's like he was punishing himself by cutting off his fingers. And he's this guy doing it for him. And. If he's going to keep getting punished, he's willing to stick around for that. That that feels to him like a reason to stick around, and so maybe likewise, the analogy is supposed to be that. And. Punish. You know being punished or inflicting punishment can become a source of meaning for your life. It can become like a reason to live. And in fact, you could sort of easily imagine the people who are embroiled in that look at a life that doesn't involve it. A life where you just sort of sit around. And I don't know, you make lunch and you hang out and you have aimless conversation. And you pet your donkey or something and or. Whatever we all do with our. Lives is, that's. Kind of nothing to it. It's it's it's kind of insubstantial, right. Whereas it feels very substantial. If you feel like you're fighting for A cause or you're or you're, you're you're being punished for the cause, you're you're getting your due or something like that.

Speaker 12: Hello. I wanted to ask about, like, depression and despair, because there seems to be this, like mixed definition throughout the movie. Like for example, the priest is a gravely asking called like, how is your despair like this? Very present sort of entity or like a clinical depression now I guess whereas like shibon and what's his name paric or told like sort of lightly offering like oh, maybe he's in, he's in a depression now and they can ask him and it seems a bit more ridiculous.

Speaker 2: Hmm.

Speaker 13: Mm-hmm.

Speaker 12: So. I guess in a way there's a mix of like. A deeper depression. And like a true suffering versus more like what we were discussing before with a thinker, just someone who's like suffering because of the kind of person they are. But I wanted to ask, do you think that home is really in a despair what that question might mean? You and. I also wanted to ask. Was a bit more interesting. Maybe does being in a depression or despair provide you with an excuse to be? A bad friend.

Agnes: Yeah, that's a great question. And it like, there's a thought that I had that I had on this viewing of the movie, which is. Maybe Colin said to himself. I'm gonna kill myself unless I stop being friends with her. Like, this is it's just one day and, like, clearly killing yourself is like a real thing. That happens pretty regularly in this world, right? We hear of like a suicide early in the movie and then dominate commit suicide. Like suicides all over the place. So that's a real thing that could happen. And it's

there's a strong provision against it and called has clearly talked about it at the pretty strike. So maybe he said to himself with some magic. Maybe, he said. To himself. Look, it's either break off this friendship or kill myself. So I got to break off the friendship. And then the question is like, is that justified? And I guess it would certainly be a way of justifying to oneself that one would do such a thing like I could imagine if I were talking to myself and I. Wanted to justify. Breaking up with a friend that would seem to me like a good justification for like, well, I'll have to kill myself otherwise. Or or I'll end up killing myself otherwise. So it certainly seems like a way of convincing yourself there's a question you know, is it really true? And I guess that gets us to the the substantiality or reality of the Depression, right, where Park's first response to hearing about the depression is, why doesn't he bottle it down like the rest? Of us, right? Where? So he sees it as very insubstantial. And it's almost like you can imagine home anticipating that response from Paris, where it's like he's not going to understand. He's not going to understand just how deep I'm under. And that's why I can't even talk to him about it. Right. So. So there is like, it feels like the movie almost. Ask us to make a choice of how seriously to take the depression, or if we take it seriously enough and if we say home could be in a position where he's saying to himself I. Will kill myself. Otherwise it it's almost like hard to argue with that. It's hard to argue that then he should break off the front like that. That that's not the right choice. And so yeah, I guess we are in taking sides between park and home in some sense, we are making a judgment about whether comes depression is real. They're not.

Brooks: Yeah. So I like what I. Took your theory where your your your your view of it to be which is that there's sort. Of two theories of. What's going on here? There's the despair theory where despair is not a word for an illness. Right? It's a word for an emotion. It's a word for a pain in response to something real. Like we despair when we are actually faced with a hopeless situation, right? And depression, which is the counter theory where it's treated as an illness. It's like, you know, maybe you really are sick, calm or something. Or maybe he's just depressed. Where and and I. You know, there's this worrying thing that we do. Where? On the one hand, I think that there are really good reasons to treat something like. What Colin was going through as a sickness, right to to kind of distance, distance it from reality in such a way that you can say, look, this is the thing you have to be patient with and just try. And you can get past it. Hopefully one day, or at least you can find a way to live with it or you can. Mitigate it or something like. That. But then it's, you know, there's this. Kind of slide. Where we could do that for every emotion, we could just make all of the whole human experience and do a kind. Of. Disease that we have to recover from where what it means to. What it means to be cured is to just go on right to push it down or something like that. And I don't know. I mean, I I think the. What what it would mean to side with calm on the idea that it really is despair is to identify, be able to find a reason for it. That is find what it is that's really bothering him. And that's that's a hard question, right? So he says that it's he's he. He feels the passage of time. Clearly there's something hopeless about his life. That his life should come to

nothing, that it should sort of have nothing. In it. That it should have no structure, no texture, that he should sort of end up being nobody. And is he wrong about that, I mean? Is that a reason to despair? I mean if you. Is there any? Is there any day of anybody's life that you'd be OK? Living. Every day that way, just forever, with no texture to your life at all. It's just that one even note. I mean that that that really would be horrible. And that's what he's actually living with. And that's like most of human life. I mean that that a lot of it is that not to be a bummer. That is really a lot of what we have in our lives. It's just that, you know, making lunch and and all of that stuff. So I don't know. I I I I I kind of feel like it really is despair. It really is something but it's also the kind of thing maybe that from the outside you can't make sense of. And so maybe from the outside it has to look like depression and there's no way to to understand. It otherwise I as far as. Is it an excuse to be a bad friend? Umm. Yeah. I I think sometimes we. Maybe it's the cause of being a bad friend in the sense that you might say in the name of this despair, I'll cut off my fingers. I'll destroy my friendships. I'll let my house be burned down because he could have stopped it, right. He looks the policeman in the eye, in the church, and he could have said go get him. The policeman would have been very happy to beat up Patrick at that point, but he doesn't. He doesn't. Stop any of this stuff. He's he's like Patrick becomes the kind of engine of his own destruction that he's but that that that he does that very deliberately, right. He he creates that for himself. So I I mean, it doesn't seem like he has any interest in being a bad friend except to destroy all of the things in his life. Just to give it some kind of. Texture or something?

Agnes: It just occurs to me actually that like. If I think about my own life. Whenever I'm a bad friend, it's because of despair. Like if it's an excuse, then it will always work.

Unknown Speaker: Like.

Agnes: It that's it's it's our own suffering that makes us indifferent to the suffering of others. And that's sort of it. That's the only thing that makes us indifferent to the suffering of others is our own suffering. Right. And it's never anything else. And clearly, sometimes some of that is unjustified because, like, there's such a thing as being a bad friend, and it's always motivating. I think by by despairs of kind. So there's then just going to be a question about, like, what's the, you know, what's the limit point or something, how much despair can you feel? Where that now is sort of like legitimates the way that you're treating your family, maybe maybe it never legitimates it. Maybe it's just that it can be forgiven, I guess I guess that's what I would say, it might be forgivable, but not legitimate.

Speaker 13: Yeah. So when I was watching this movie, I think there's this thing that really jumps out to me that it feels in in many ways to be kind of the dialogue with James Joyce is the dead, which I mean situated a very similar time period. And I mean that, that.

Speaker 6: Hmm.

Speaker 13: I don't want to spoil. It's probably one of the greatest short stories in the English language, but there is this normal realization of the holiness of. Kind of the relation. In the kindness life, and I think that our world and having us here kind of a similar moment where he realizes that the relationship between him and home is actually, perhaps didn't even exist. I mean, that's sort of further. But just by the fact that we don't ever see. Any. I mean, we're only ever told. That they were great friends. You don't actually see any like with our own eyes. We cannot ever shows us and demonstrates to us that they're good friends. And in fact, it's me.

Speaker 11: Nick.

Speaker 13: Is the only one that it. Seems is actually good friends with that. I mean, they're they're these continuous scenes. Where they, you know, kind of have this journal banter and they talk and they really share each other's, you know, kind of deeper problems and sort of tragic moments. And so I think it's. It's it's funny. To me that we're framing this movie through. The idea that. That Coleman and Patrick were friends, but I don't think it's actually clear. I think this sort of realization of the movie is that they were never friends. This was an illusionary idea, and that Patrick has now reached a state where, you know. He understands that.

Agnes: I mean. So I guess I I guess I think so, like if you think about what happens with Dominic where Dominic says I thought you were nice, but actually you're not any better than any of. The rest of them. They're like Dominic has almost like the self respect to have that realization and say you're not nice and I don't want to be friends with you anymore. And parent never has that. He never has that moment. I mean he, you know, 1. This. Call his kill his donkey. Now he wants to kill him, but he he doesn't like. This is sort of Arnold's point about the speech in the bar, the drunken speech where parent doesn't move on from that and say, OK, now that I know who you are, I I want to have nothing to do with you. He moves on from that to like once again try to, you know, get him to be his friend.

Speaker 11: That's. If anything, I don't think that that's this kind. Of notion of felia or brotherly love. That's more so. It's kind of almost. ***** idea of being like.

Speaker 13: Transfixed with the.

Agnes: Maybe, but it's I I don't have a sense that it's so different from whatever it was they had before. That is, I feel like so like, I think that, you know what happens in the dead and I won't give it away either. But it is like someone. Having their illusions about their life really pierced in this, like sudden moment of epiphany. Which you know, the book that it's part of, Dubliners, is actually each of the stories involve some kind of epiphany or Joyce was really into epiphanies. And I don't think the parent has an epiphany. Dominic has an epiphany, right? But parent doesn't have one. He just, you know, keeps pushing and pushing and pushing until this thing happens. And now he wants revenge. And he has a pseudo if. Anyway, he's like, maybe you were never nice, but it it proves not to be a dominant style epiphany. So it seems to me not to be a movie that foregrounds this idea of epiphany. In a way, the movie has the kind

of skepticism about epiphanies that I. I've come to think under Arnold's pressure is more.

Speaker 7: Appropriate. More appropriate.

Agnes: Way of thinking about epiphanies than Joyce's way of thinking about epiphanies. Joyce is very optimistic. Joyce thinks you can just suddenly in one moment come to understand your life, and now all of a sudden you've got it and that's somehow stable, like, as though Gabriel Conroy is stably going to understand this thing that he sees in this snowy window or whatever. And I think the person who made this movie thinks more than Arnold thinks it, which is that like, OK, you have this, like, momentary thought. And then you go on, as you did. Before it's, it doesn't really change your life.

Brooks: Yeah, I mean so. You know, I think that that that that's a good question. That is how, how, how real that their friendship have been. And I mean so, so the movie does take some pains to give us some signs that it was substantive, or at least that calm really does. Have some tenderness and protectiveness towards Patrick right when he picks him up off the ground after he's been beaten where he seems to be pained by what he's doing to Patrick. And where, you know, like at the end of the movie where he sort of chats with him, he has like, a little small talk with him, small talk sort of important to the movie in a in a way like. And it's it's the impossibility of small talk that is precisely the problem. He says we we can just chat about something. Else like it's. In a way, all Patrick wants a small talk and and he gets offered it. A couple of. Times and and so yeah, it could have been that that they weren't really friends, but. Oh yeah, sorry. The last thing is. At the bar, he says. I I like him again, you know, suggesting that he did like him before. But it it. It it has, you have to be right that they were never a good match. He always thought Patrick was dull. He always thought he was stupid and not on his level and not a serious person the way he was a serious person because he's an Irish fiddler and Patrick is just this. Silly coward who talks about his his animals too much, but that I that in some sense he must have liked that right, and that has ceased to be something that he can have in his life. I'm also a little skeptical about the friendship with Dominic, like in a way, it's a mirror, right? Patrick looks down on Dominic. He he doesn't see him as an equal. He sees him as a kind of. It's really important to him, actually, that he sees him as as stupider than him, and that's why it bothers him so much. When Dominic uses the French word and but and Dominic situation maybe. Maybe is the way that Patrick sometimes looks to calm, which is that.

Unknown Speaker: Yeah.

Brooks: Dominic follows him around at a desperate need. Because Patrick is the only one. That's. But that it's sort of like Dominic wouldn't choose him. And it's only when Dominic leaves does Patrick, I think have. The. Understanding that Dominic had chosen. It wasn't just that he was the only person that would tolerate his presence. He's. That. Dominic actually saw something in it in him that was valuable, but now now he didn't. But I guess both of them seem like. Imperfect, but substantive or real

friendships and and I guess, I guess really the question is just what does time do here? I mean. You know, can we evaluate a friendship on the basis of properties? Shared by the. Or relations shared by two people, because then you know two people could be friends having hardly met. So like or as a friendship made-up only of time. In which case? Umm. You know. The idea that they're an odd match is like that's neither here nor there, or even that their friendship is flawed or based on. Contempt or something like that is neither here nor there. As long as there's time. But I don't know which of those it's supposed to be. It seems like it's a weird mix of those two, but I I guess I hesitate to call it unreal just because there was contempt. And just because there was. That kind of intellectual distance, I mean that maybe that can be a part of friendship.

Agnes: I just want to add one thing. So it's just occurring to me what this really brings out is like how important is equality in either a friendship or a romantic relationship? And it looks like when there is inequality, then you get this setup where the one person appears to be sort of desperate. And the other person, the the higher person is he's sort of serving this role of almost validating the lower person by being their friend, whereas the lower person is not serving any role for the higher person. So there's something unstable there. And so so that. That like we all sense that. And so then there's this conceit of equality in many friendships like. And and romantic relationships. Right. There's a conceit. There's a kind of pretense of equality, but in fact, that's just going to rarely be the case. Maybe there's enough ability to look away from it or something in many cases, so that you can create equality through fuzzy vision. Right. But if we were to say that. No unequal relationships are ever real relationships. I think we'd be carving off like most many relationships.

Unknown Speaker: Just.

Brooks: Well, I I do want to point out that this thing that I just noticed on this viewing, which is that Patrick, when column starts playing the tune that he wrote, Patrick rolls his eyes. As if many, many times he's heard, called go on about his music and everybody knows to. Older eyes and it's not a big deal. So there's like a kind of symmetry in the contempt, almost like almost a page could be like, look at this guy pretending he's there's something better than being a. Coward and I don't understand what?

Speaker 11: That also gets at the idea of delusion, right, like calm is kind of delusional by his own ability as like a heroic figure that, like, he isn't actually that good of. Loser or that important as a figure like he compares.

Speaker 10: Himself to Mozart. Not that.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Unknown Speaker: Hi.

Speaker 5: So there's the.

Speaker 10: Scene in the pub where calm, I think asks. Part like Please remember for being nice. And while there's like a painting or like a picture of like Jesus Christ hanging right.

Brooks: That's a good.

Speaker 7: Good catch.

Speaker 10: That kind of leads to my question of, you know, there's a ton like an overwhelming amount of religious like symbolism in the film. Like, you know, between like transitional. Like, there's just cuts to like a cross in the palm on top of the hill, like in a field or something, right? There's like, there's so much like religious stuff going on. So I'm just wondering what you guys's thoughts about, like all the religious symbols in the film about Christianity.

Agnes: That's a great point about Jesus being remembered for being nice. I had it occurred. To me, do you have thoughts?

Brooks: Yeah, I mean, so, so. Patrick is not religious in any discernible way. Where we see no religious expression for them at all, calm goes to confession. Price we don't ever see Patrick going to confession. Come goes to confession twice. And but he's skeptical. That is. He sounds a little like an atheist to me, especially this remark about pride that he has. He doesn't understand why that's a sin. Or or if not an atheist, somebody who's sees himself at a certain distance from religious practice or or or belief really, or sees it as mere practice or something like that. And then there's this moment, maybe, of understanding at the end. I guess the way I'd read the. Maybe God should care about miniature donkeys. Lying is as the opposite of the Pride line, right? It's that like, maybe you really do have to. Notice tiny little things and see moral significance in everything or something like that, which is, you know. That's. Something like the Christian idea. And that's the problem with pride is that you just become blind to. Miniature donkeys and their moral significance. You're right. The other thing that I've been trying to sort out in my in my head was the statue of Mary at the crossroads. And I mean, this clearly played a really big. Role in the movie this crossroads and these decisions that were sort of made around the crossroads, people splitting up and going separate ways or meeting there. I I don't know. I I I I find all of all of that pretty puzzling, but. I guess I see religion ultimately as having a kind of negative presence. In the movie. As if it were written by somebody who is just really deeply disappointed in. The force of religion in our lives. There are these sort of ruined crosses there. There's this iconography around it. It seems to matter not at all. People just ignore the statue of Mary. They they don't pay any real attention to it. The priest is saying these things. I mean, he's obviously a terrible priest.

Agnes: He's speaking in Latin, which no one can understand.

Brooks: Yeah, well, yeah, that's the Catholics, that's.

Speaker 9: You gotta go.

Agnes: Yeah, I know. I like that.

Brooks: But you're right, you could see it from a Protestant point of view that that's that. That's that. That's a problem. And then there's this last shot right there of, like, soaring over the.

Agnes: Which is also the first shot, yeah.

Brooks: Coming over the you know the the light coming out from behind the clouds, soaring over Ireland is as if God is watching all of this and just there's nothing.

There's no. Presentation and I guess my thought with the idea of that the end of the friendship as a kind of miraculous event. Is that it's a kind of anti miracle and that there's no corresponding miracle that that's the thing that's really. The way in which the movie is disappointed in religion is that there is no countervailing real miracle or positive miracle. There's just the anti miracle. And then the the eventual collapse of the.

Agnes: Violence. The Silence of God. Yeah, to quote bourbon. Yeah, I the thing that strikes me about the movie is how irreligious Dominic is. And so if you recall, in the scene where he's just been beat up by his dad and he meets. Park and Javon on their way to church. And he like curses, and I can't remember what the curses and he says, but they're, like, shocked by. It right and he's. Like I'm not going church. And yet Dominick clearly is in touch with goodness and it matters to him. And so it does seem to me that the movie is presents religion in a skeptical way, but maybe I like Arnold, thought I didn't know. Really. I really didn't know what to make of the religious stuff in the movie. And maybe the thought is that the movie is expressing a kind of disappointment with. Religion is not where it's supposed to be. There's a certain kind of solace, a certain kind of order, a certain kind of goodness, that it could be providing, and it isn't, and this is the world that, like the world where God is silent and the world where instead of like, religion, what we have is almost like witches like this, this banshee woman. Right. And this kind of sorcery. And magic and yeah.

Speaker 10: Thank you.

Speaker 6: So my question is about Dominic. I was wondering what the role you play is for him to die. I was almost thinking is it an analogy saying that our government is nice, people die first. And they're basically we're like.

Agnes: Yeah, great question. I was thinking about this time too, because like in some way, this movie is a tragedy and the really tragic thing that happens is Dominic dying. But it's sort of backgrounded in this weird way where it's like, serves as the narration. Of paris's. Letter to Shiva. On, you know, on our way to finding out whether or not come died or not. And it it like it's sort of it's sort of passes us by in this weird way like it it's like something had to be done with the character and he was gotten out of the way. But you're not really. It does. It's the the death of of Dominic isn't really presented in a way where you can warn him. And. And I found that at least in this view, I found that to be interesting, but. I'm not. I'm not sure what to make of it.

Brooks: So I I I feel less good about Dominic than I think some. Of you do. That's a. You know his his speech about. I thought you were one of the nice ones does make him really seem like he's. Good at heart. And he's the one that's supposed to stand for goodness. But it, like Patrick, is really pained by what he does to that guy, and it's not that bad of a trick. And it it's like he is a nice guy. I mean, he is a basically good person. I mean, I, they're all basically good people. I don't think that there's anybody in there that's.

Unknown Speaker: Like.

Brooks: Really deep down bad. Except the police officer. And but but but that said, I. I mean it's. I guess my thought about Dominic is that. One of those things that's that the movie is about maybe the maybe the main line. Of thought of the movie. Is that there are things that we need from other people that. They don't owe. Us, but we still need them anyway. That there was nobody that owed Dominic Salvation, right. There was nobody that owed him a night away from his father. There was nobody that owed him. You know. Love right? The way that Siobhan denied him love and that that this was his hope, like from the beginning of the movie. You, you get the sense that. This. Is his hope for himself is that he can have a. House and a place and have a you know, I I don't know that it was shevon. If she was really important to the the fantasy, but that that was the thing keeping him alive. And it's like, you know I. All of these characters in some sense have something that they need from other people that they really desperately need from other people, but that those other people do not owe them. And that they deny them. And that there's nothing wrong with denying them. But it's fatal when we don't get those things, we die. And and I. I guess the way what I took from the the death of Dominic was that it was a. Way. Of expressing that point. Umm. That ultimately, there's something fatal about. That need even though. The tragedy of human life is that it cannot be structured such that we can owe people the fulfillment of that need. We just have to hope that it gets fulfilled like nobody can make a law about. Who should love who or any?

Agnes: I think it's really great. Like I think that that's in. I think that's what this movie is about. I'm just going to. I wrote down what Arnold said. I'm going to repeat it because I think it's really good. There are things we need from other people that they don't owe us, but we need them anyways. That makes sense to me as like what this movie is depicting and then the death of Dominic would fit there. I mean, the weird part would be, and I guess the the other side would be paric needs calm as his friend and calm does not owe that to him, but paric just. Needs it anyway.

Brooks: Nicola has these sort of like libertarian lines about like, you know, I'm me and I don't know other people and things and it can be about me and and it's like it can he's right. I mean he's not wrong about that. I mean and and the most the most. It it it, it's almost like the Siobhan Dominic story is there to put a point on that because the calm Patrick story is a little ambiguous. You sort of wonder, maybe they do owe each other. Something or something?

Agnes: Right. It's like, very clear that she doesn't owe.

Brooks: Dominic, nobody could. I mean it's it's. It's a little funny even to think that she could owe him that or that he he could somehow expect it and he doesn't. I mean, he doesn't think she owes it anything, but nevertheless he dies of its lack.

Speaker 5: That's.

Speaker 14: Hello so I think there's like this implicit assumption we have when we.

Unknown Speaker: Hey.

Speaker 14: Do like philosophy? Just think of. For thinkers in the movie generally, that, like every question like should be. Asked and that? Like seeking an answer for it is useful. But then this movie seems to kind of suggest that like it might be that like if. Hedrick hadn't been thrown into, like, kind of this anti miracle like you were like. Always been fine and and similarly with with cold, cold and so like I I guess my question then is like is, is that like the fundamental assumption of like thinking wrong like? Yeah, I think the the question of like, like Professor Books for example, I said like a couple places that for example, having this time with the pub is what gives. Patrick's life significance or that this project of like having the families would gives domains like me but it seems to me that almost like before the question is asked, none of those characters would say my name. My reason of getting up in the morning is for this to happen right? There's something about asking the question which makes it a problem. And so is that fair? Could you see this movie as like, almost anti being a thinker?

Brooks: Yeah, I mean the the dream of philosophy is to have a. Life and an understanding of that life. Such that you could live it and be stably happy with it, right? That's what ethics is sort of about. And the reality of the situation is that. Most of us can find ways to get along as long as the self understanding. Part gets to be skipped. Right, as long as we don't have to ask. Ask questions about. Sort of who we are and like. You know what? What? We're really up to. And so I mean, maybe one of the things that sort of. Narratives do for us is that they contrast that. You know, maybe sometimes very distant philosophical dream with the reality of of life lived without it, right? I mean, with life that where understanding is destructive. And I I mean this is this is. A little, just like the question. Is philosophy a bunch of *****? Because you know, if it's destructive all the way down, if that self understanding always destroys what we have than it is, then it's better just not to do it. And part of the thing, I mean, one of the things that's interesting. I think about. The story is that these people who are really unhappy, the people who blow up their lives in a way, are are precisely these thinkers. They're they're these people who look for points of stability, look for points of meaning when they could have gotten along right. And and maybe in answer to my question. Like, what is time doing in this story? Like, how could something be changed by time alone? Maybe it's something like that, that for a human being something can be changed by time alone. Just because eventually you are faced with the question about what your life is about. I don't know if Patrick could have gone the whole way. I mean, he really does seem like. An animal sometimes like. He he he literally. Becomes a kind of barnyard animal at the end. Like he, he's like inviting the animals in to live with him. And and he seems to really identify with them. I mean, in, in some sense, the love of his life is this donkey, which is admittedly extremely cute. And it's very sad when it dies, it's the second death, I think, right. She says there's going to be a death. Maybe too, and maybe it's a death.

Unknown Speaker: Uh.

Brooks: It's the second one I. Mean it gets a whole.

Agnes: Grave and everything, right. I think about that. That's why it's maybe 2 because it's not clear whether. It can, yeah. But.

Brooks: If your question is is philosophy a bunch of *****? I don't know the. Answer to that question. Yeah. So is it, I mean what's?

Agnes: Your thought. So I feel like there are two things you can say and they might both be true and 1 is that the examination of 1's own life is like the most self-destructive thing that one can do. On the one hand, you could think that you could think it's the source of the. Greatest kind of self destruction. And you could also think the unexamined life is not worth living. Notice the claim that the unexamined life is not worth living doesn't even say that the examined life is worth living, right? It's just like, well, if there's going to be thing we're living, it's going. To be in the examined life. And so like the real question, I think is whether we think about parents life before this movie started as like a perfectly good and happy life. And I suppose that the movie, what I feel the movie is telling me if I'm not thinking as a philosopher, I'm just thinking as a viewer of this movie, I feel like the movie was trying to tell me, yes, that he was fine. That it was good. There were rainbows behind him. Everyone was saying hi, like he was having a good day. He was having a good life. And like you can just be perfectly fine without any philosophy. And then this thing comes in now. That's what the movie I feel wants to tell me. I don't think that's true. But but in a way. Even if I don't think it's true, I could agree with the claim about self destruction.

Brooks: I I disagree about what the movie's trying to tell us. I think that the movie's message about Patrick. Might be like. Very darker that because it matters whether or not we can admire Patrick and they don't make him admirable until they put him in a nice suit and have him threatened to burn somebody's house down and then right at the end where he's like all.

Speaker 13: Hmm.

Unknown Speaker: Hmm.

Speaker 2: *** ***. That's true. That's true.

Brooks: Like then then. He he seems admirable. Then he seems like a real person with a. Kind of internal. Machinery. He you can see that he no longer worries about the contempt others might have for him, right. He doesn't have the kind of social anxiety that invites our can. He is a mission now. There's like something that he's going. To do right. At the end of the movie and that last scene in the movie, he ceases to be an interesting character in a certain way because he suddenly becomes every movie character ever. He's just got this, like, stupid, destructive vision. He's like John Wick. Now he's going to, like, go off and just be be violent for. Good reason and and like. But but that's. That's the moment where he fits into somebody that like the heroic type, that that's the moment. We we can really. Admire him. So I I I sort of think that the movie sang something like maybe he was happy, but he wasn't a real person. But maybe those are actually separate things and maybe the thought is you know you can be happy, but you can't. Also be a real person.

Agnes: OK, I think we can take. Let's take two more.

Unknown Speaker: Questions.

Speaker 7: Just a reminder, you can if you ask questions.

Speaker 2: You can get down there.

Agnes: Yeah, yeah. T-shirt or do. We have tote bags. Too yeah. So you can have your choice unless.

Speaker 7: OK.

Speaker 5: We run out.

Speaker 10: Just.

Speaker 7: My other question about like the difference between niceness and goodness, because niceness is like the predominant theme around. Maybe everyone is trying to be as nice or stop being nice, but like. The idea of religion or Jesus related to niceness is kind of calling intuitive. To me, because. I don't think niceness like how do we draw the line. Between niceness and. Goodness. A person being really nice could be. It feels to me like there. Could be virtue or. Advice in disguise behind this veil of niceness? So like I just want to ask you about your guys opinions on. Should we be nice or be good?

Agnes: I think that's a really good point. It sort of it relates back to the question about religion, because maybe religion gives you a way of substantiating niceness as so that it really counts for something. And then without that religious backdrop.

Speaker 6: Business.

Agnes: It can be hard to know whether somebody is just. Making a situation socially smooth, or whether they're actually like displaying some real virtue of kindness or beneficence or something like that.

Brooks: Yeah. I mean, I think it's it's it's only from a sort of modern or maybe Christian inflected point of view that we would even associate them, right because. Niceness is sometimes thought of, as you know, we might think of it as coming apart from goodness in being the mere show of it. Whereas goodness is. The deep thing and and so we often write characters like House MD, which it was a show that I I loved when I was in college though and now it. Has an age. Well, but.

Agnes: No. Well.

Brooks: Yeah, some people are watching the scene. *****. But he's supposed to be good, right? And so we often we will write characters that are *****. Who where the goodness is supposed to be, especially you know, to to especially shine through because they're as. Right. And. And so they're not nice, but they are good. So like there's that real sense that they, those things can come apart in that way. But of course, you know, like the the perspective on life on which you have to write great poetry or something like that or or great music in order to be somebody that's got nothing to do with niceness. Or kindness or genuine generosity, or real empathy, or any of the things that we might associate with the deeper goodness. So it's almost as if the conflict is. Between niceness and something that you know, like like maybe niceness is something that's reaching for something like Christian goodness, and of you, which is totally alien to that right, the, the, the sort of pride that he's talking about as being a kind of. Like

like Glory or something like that. But, but I think you're right, I mean so, so 11, the problem with niceness, I take it is something like. It doesn't last in precisely the sense that it's not maintained by a deep sense of the good that you're accomplishing. It's just. As long as everything is going well one. Is nice, right? The the cliché about nice guys in is that they're nice, but then. You know, there's a point of rejection where they cease to be nice and some very, very bad or.

Agnes: This is run deep.

Brooks: Right. Yeah, it's this. It's a superficial presentation of goodness that doesn't run deep, but I think I sort of think that the way that the word is being used in this movie, it really does mean something deeper than that. Patrick really is nice. I mean, he doesn't like Dominic either. I mean, he he almost can't stand it, but he really does. I mean, he offers him. His instinct is to offer him. A place to stay. He's the one that's sort of like is willing. To protect him. He really does seem nice to me in a way that's deeper than circumstances. It's like he's willing to suffer costs from being nice to somebody. I don't know. I that's a little indecisive, I think. But that's what I've got.

Unknown Speaker: That's not having a limit.

Brooks: Does it not have?

Speaker 4: A limit right? If you say like, oh, you're gonna be nice up to a point then then. You're gonna, like, burn the house down, but.

Brooks: Yeah. Yeah. So maybe maybe the best way to put it is that niceness is a relational thing. Right. We can we can, we can be nice to each other and that depends on a certain kind of. Relation that we have. For each other. But goodness is something that just comes from me. Right. So if I'm good, then I'm going to treat you well regardless of how you behave. And the thing that. Everybody kept looking for and Patrick, and he kept failing to provide was something that came from within him. It always seemed like it was just the relation, right? He never seemed to have like an inside. And then he finds it with rage. That's the thing that gives him an interior. It gives him a personality. And that's like the first thing that he. But somehow the problem is that he really does seem nice. It's like it's almost like it's not it that really was somehow deeper in him than a mirror.

Agnes: Maybe it's just that those relationships, the superficial, whatever relationships were really quite important. So. So yes, the niceness was just a feature of of this setup of these relations. But you know, in a small on a small island where everybody knows everybody, you've captured all the relations you're ever going to have.

Speaker 5: OK.

Agnes: And if those are all nice, then you're nice. And of course, what the movie reveals is that that isn't enough right? Cause you have new people showing up to the island and then Patrick being willing to be like, extremely mean to them and then also willing to turn on his old friends. But I I think it can be harder to distinguish niceness from goodness when, like, the set of relations is in some way closed like. On a small island.

Brooks: Yeah, I mean it it. May be one of the the the tragedies. Of. The movie and maybe of human life and maybe. This is sort. Of what the movie is about that. He's the only one that really finds like a lot of the characters I think are looking for something in themselves to build a life around or to build a personality. Around or to to. Some kind of inner source in themselves, and he's the only one that finds one, and the only thing he finds his murderers rage. And it's like and reflecting on that and again, I don't want to be a bumner, but reflecting on that, it it really is like. That's the only thing that. Feels like an answer for sure. Is that rage is the kind of thing where you you can be like, yeah, OK, this is what a life can be about. And it feels like that for sure. Whereas everything else we have, which all the other stuff is much better. That's a terrible answer. But everything else we have doesn't feel certain. It feels like. Yeah. Is this really what a life could be about because, like? This philosophy is, is that really a thing that you could? Have your life be about. As family really a thing that you. Could your life be about you have doubts all. The time about. That stuff nobody ever doubts rage, though.

Agnes: OK. Last question.

Unknown Speaker: Yes.

Speaker 4: One thing that's the that to me, when I was watching it was kind of this, like, lack of romantic relationships. I mean, that sort of between like Dominic and had that kind of just delusion all all of that but. Like so it it almost seems like the world existed kind of in this in this vacuum of relationships, and also that they were portrayed as these carriers weren't good enough for that. Like this idea that like. Like like didn't like Warren. So like, he seemed like undesired. And like, how, like Dominic? Saint Patrick's sister was like. Gotten mad when? Somebody brought up the idea of having a. Family. So it seemed like you live in. This world where, like romance, wasn't even. An option and it. Almost felt like the. World was really crumbling and I I wonder how that kind of played into. The the way the friendship was displayed and that was kind of like the second best option that they were kind of like clinging on to.

Agnes: That's a great point. I really haven't thought about that fact about this movie, that it's very unromantic, that there are like no couples, right? Like, I mean, they're, yeah, they're the grown, you know, Siobhan and parent have, like, parents, but they're dead. So they're no young children, and we really don't see.

Unknown Speaker: No children.

Agnes: We really didn't even see many young children. There must be some, but I'm not recalling and.

Brooks: Sorry, the police officer.

Speaker 10: Yeah.

Agnes: Ohh yeah yeah. Yeah, that's right. That good point. OK. So that that's maybe the only one. So there's like. Yeah. So there's there's not romance and there's not children. And so you just have these adults that are sort of aimless. Trying to do. Something with their lives by friendship, by music. But I don't know what I I I guess I don't have a a a thought about why romance is cut out of the picture. Maybe it's

to simplify like to to tell you about a certain problem and not muddy the waters by adding all the complexity that romance would add. But I don't know.

Brooks: Yeah, I mean like. The big problem in or like the the consistent problem for the characters in the movie is. Is this relationship to hope? Right. So. Patrick is sort of tortured by his. Hope for his. Like having some kind of relationship with calm and. Calm himself just seems hopeless. Siobhan seems to be on the edge of that hopelessness. You can I I took the line about. Aren't you ever lonely to be something like a line about? Marriage. For her, I mean, they bring up a bunch of times. Why hasn't she gotten married? Why isn't she mean? She's, like, sort of the best person there. So she could sort of, like, be interested in, in going and finding a life elsewhere that there's something sort of hopeless about the situation and and no children. Is a great way to present hopelessness right that there's no, there's no future. Here it's just this sort of mundane. Petering out of of human beings and. And and and and then Dominic has this hope that he can have a relationship with Japan and the collapse of that hope is just the end of it. So maybe I I mean. That romantic relationships really are maybe more than anything else sort of about hope, right? That and and maybe that's why they need to move, they need to have a kind of. A kind of sense of forward progress like it it's it's very hard to have a romantic relationship and think, oh, it can just be like this forever, right? It's like that, that nobody's very happy with that. People want it to be going somewhere because the the idea of hope is sort of built into it. In a really deep way, and I don't know, maybe that is something to do with children or something. I I don't. Know but yeah. All of these characters are sort of struggling with that, that kind of hopelessness and the impossibility of a romantic relationship is just. The hope the the way that that hopelessness takes shape to them. I don't know. Maybe, maybe that's the. I don't know hate symbolism, but maybe that's the crown. I mean, right, that she's this horrible old woman. And she's sort of alone, and she's like. She's sort of beckoning. She seems kind of happy and she's delighted by this whole thing, but she's kind of she, she kind of beckons to almost as if she's saying, like, you know, this is your future. You're the old Crone of this island in a in a little bit. That she's a kind of symbol of hopelessness or something like that. But I don't know I. That's all I've got.

Agnes: OK. On that note of of its being all we got. Thank you guys so much for coming. Thank you for staying and look forward to seeing you at our next night house early in. The spring quarter bye.

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