

# Terry Jones movies and operas film studies essay



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BUSTER**

Jones co-directed " Monty Python and the Holy Grail" with Terry Gilliam, and was sole director on two further Monty Python movies, " Life of Brian" and Monty Python's " The Meaning of Life". As a film director, Jones finally gained fuller control of the projects and devised a visual style that complemented the humour. His later films include " Erik the Viking" (1989) and " The Wind in the Willows" (1996). Terry Jones, date unknownIn 2008, Jones wrote and directed an opera titled " Evil Machines". In 2011, he was commissioned to direct and write the libretto for another opera, entitled " The Doctor's Tale".

Terry Jones in Terry Jones's War on the War on Terror, 2004Success as a writerTerry Jones co-wrote " Ripping Yarns" with Palin, and wrote the screenplay for " Labyrinth" (1986), although his draft went through several rewrites and several other writers before being filmed. Jones has also written numerous works for children, including " Fantastic Stories", " The Beast with a Thousand Teeth", and a collection of " Comic Verse" called " The Curse of the Vampire's Socks". Jones has written numerous editorials for " The Guardian", " The Daily Telegraph" and " The Observer" condemning the Iraq war. Many of these editorials were published in a paperback collection titled " Terry Jones's War on the War on Terror". His most recent book, " Evil Machines", was launched by the online publishing house Unbound at the Adam Street Club in London on 4 November 2011. " Evil Machines" is the first book to be published by a crowd funding website dedicated solely to books. Jones provided significant support to Unbound as they developed their publishing concept. He is also a member of the UK Poetry Society, and his poems have appeared in Poetry Review.

## **Graham Chapman[2]**

### **Writing**

Chapman co-wrote (with Bernard McKenna) and starred in *The Odd Job* alongside David Jason who had previously appeared on *Do Not Adjust Your Set* with Idle, Jones, and Palin. The film was only moderately successful. Although writing had begun in the late 1970s, Chapman was finally able to secure funding for his much cherished pirate project *Yellowbeard* in 1982. Chapman collaborated with writer Bernard McKenna and for the first time with Peter Cook. The film, which starred Chapman as the eponymous pirate, also featured appearances from Peter Cook, Marty Feldman, Cleese, Idle, Spike Milligan, and Cheech & Chong. Graham Chapman, date unknown

### **The Graham Chapman Archives**

Graham Chapman had written a lot of plays, both for theater and film, but since he died so early many of those scripts would go lost. These projects were saved so they could be brought back even after the original creator had died. Despite the existence of the Graham Chapman Archive, only a few of his projects have been released. One of these projects is a play entitled *O Happy Day*, brought to life in 2000 by Dad's Garage Theatre Company in Atlanta, Georgia. Cleese and Palin assisted the theatre company in adapting the play. Chapman in *The Graham Chapman Archives*, published 1997

### **Eric Idle[3]**

Idle as a news anchor for Monty Python, date unknown  
Idle's first solo work was his own BBC Radio One show, *Radio Five* (pre-dating the real Radio Five station by 18 years). This ran for two seasons from 1973 to 1974 and involved Idle performing sketches and links to records, with himself playing <https://assignbuster.com/terry-jones-movies-and-operas-film-studies-essay/>

nearly all the multi-tracked parts. Idle also created his very own sketch show on BBC2, called "Rutland Weekend Television" (or RWT for short). One of the most famous creations of RWT was "the Rutles", a parody on the Beatles. In 1978 Python members and Saturday Night Live would collaborate to create the Rutles "mockumentary film" which was fully written by Eric Idle. Idle also appeared in the film as a Paul McCartney-styled personage, and he also voiced the main commentator. In 1986, Idle provided the voice of Wreck-Gar, the leader of the Junkions in *The Transformers: The Movie*. In 1987, he took part in the English National Opera production of the Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera *The Mikado*, in which he appeared in the role of the Lord High Executioner. In 1989, he appeared in the U. S. comedy television series *Nearly Departed*, about a ghost who haunts the family inhabiting his former home. The series lasted for six episodes as a summer replacement series.

Eric Idle in *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, 1988 Idle received good critical notices appearing in projects written and directed by others - such as Terry Gilliam's *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1989), alongside Robbie Coltrane in *Nuns on the Run* (1990) and in *Casper* (1995). He also played Ratty in Terry Jones' version of *The Wind in the Willows* (1996). However, his own creative projects - such as the film *Splitting Heirs* (1993), a comedy he wrote, starred in and executive-produced - were mostly unsuccessful with critics and audiences. In 1994, he appeared as Dr. Nigel Channing, chairman of the Imagination Institute and host of an 'Inventor of the Year' awards show in the three-dimensional film *Honey, I Shrunk the Audience!*, which was an attraction at Walt Disney World's Epcot from 1994 until 2010 and at Disneyland from 1998 until 2010. In 1999, he reprised the role in the second (and controversial) version of the *Journey Into Imagination*

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ride at Epcot. Idle is also writer and star of the 3-D film film *Pirates - 4D* for Busch Entertainment Corporation. In 1995, he voiced Rincewind the "Wizzard" in a computer adventure game based on Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels. In 1996, he reprised his role as Rincewind for the game's sequel, and composed and sang its theme song, "That's Death". In 1998, Idle appeared in the lead role in the poorly received film *Burn Hollywood Burn*. That same year, he also provided the voice of Devon, a dragon, in Warner Bros. Animated film *Quest for Camelot* and as Slyly the albino arctic fox in *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Movie*. Idle has also voiced DR. Vosknocker in *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut* and has made three appearances as famous documentarian Declan Desmond in *The Simpsons*. In 1999 to 2000, he played Ian Maxtone-Graham on the NBC sitcom *Suddenly Susan*. He has also acted as Narrator to the Audio Novel version of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl and Waddlesworth the parrot in *102 Dalmatians* and the video game of the same name. Eric Idle, date unknown

In 2004, Idle created *Spamalot*, a musical comedy based on the 1975 film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. The medieval production tells the story of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table as they journey on their quest for the Holy Grail. *Spamalot* features a book and lyrics by Eric Idle, music by Idle and John Du Prez, direction by Mike Nichols, and choreography by Casey Nicholaw. More recently, Idle provided the voice of Merlin the magician in the DreamWorks animated film *Shrek the Third* (2007) with his former Python co-star John Cleese, who voiced King Harold. Idle's play *What About Dick?* was given a staged reading at two public performances in Hollywood on 10-11 November 2007. The cast included Idle, Billy Connolly, Tim Curry, Eddie Izzard, Jane Leeves, Emily Mortimer, Jim

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Piddock and Tracey Ullman. The play returned on 26-29 April 2012 in the Oprheum Theatre with most of the cast returning with the exception of Emily Mortimer who was replaced by Sophie Winkleman. Russell Brand also joined the cast. The play was made available for digital download on 13 November 2012.

## **Songwriting**

Eric Idle in Life of Brian, 1979 Idle is an accomplished songwriter, having composed and performed many of the Pythons' most famous comic pieces, including " Eric the Half-a-Bee", " The Philosophers' Song", " Galaxy Song", " Penis Song (Not the Noel Coward Song)" and, probably his most recognized hit, " Always Look on the Bright Side of Life", which was written for the closing scene of the Monty Python film Life of Brian, and sung from the crosses during the mass crucifixion. Idle, his fellow Pythons, and assorted family and friends performed the song at Graham Chapman's funeral as well. Idle performed the song at the closing ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games on 12 August 2012. In 1990, Idle sang and co-wrote the theme tune to the popular British sitcom One Foot in the Grave. The song was later released, but did poorly in the charts. However, when " Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life" was adopted as a football chant in the late 1980s, Idle's then neighbor Gary Lineker suggested Idle re-record and release the popular track. With help from Radio 1 breakfast show host Simon Mayo, who gave the song regular airplay and also used the chorus within a jingle, it became a hit, some 12 years after the song's original appearance in Life Of Brian, reaching number 3 in the UK charts and landing Idle a set on Top of the Pops in October 1991. He recorded a special version of the song

for Mayo's own use on air ("Come on Simon, get another song on now; why don't you put on a nice Cliff Richard record?") and changed the line "life's a piece of shit" to "life's a piece of spit" in order to get daytime airplay on radio. In 2004, Idle recorded a protest song of sorts, the "FCC Song", in which he lambastes the US Federal Communications Commission for fining him \$5,000 for saying the word "fuck" on national radio. Fittingly, the short song contains 14 uses of that expletive. In 2004, the musical comedy Spamalot debuted in Chicago and opened in New York's Shubert Theatre on 14 February 2005. Idle wrote the lyrics and book for Spamalot, collaborating with John Du Prez on much of the music. The original 2005 Broadway theatre production was nominated for 14 Tony Awards and won three: Best Musical, Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical (Sara Ramirez), and Best Direction of a Musical (Mike Nichols). He wrote, produced and performed the song "Really Nice Day" for the movie The Wild. Idle contributed a cover of Buddy Holly's "Raining in My Heart" for the tribute album Listen to Me: Buddy Holly, released 6 September 2011.

## **Terry Gilliam[4]**

### **As a director**

Terry Gilliam, date unknown Gilliam became a screenwriter and director, building upon the experience he had acquired during the making of Monty Python and the Holy Grail. Gilliam says he used to think of his films in terms of trilogies, as he created Time Bandits (1981), Brazil (1985), and The Adventures of Baron Munchausen (1988). All are about the "craziness of our awkwardly ordered society and the desire to escape it through whatever means possible. Throughout the 1990s, Gilliam directed his Trilogy of

Americana: *The Fisher King* (1991), *12 Monkeys* (1995), and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1998), which were based on scripts by other people, played on North American soil, and while still being surreal, had less fantastical plots than his previous trilogy.

## **Gilliam and Harry Potter**

An example of Gilliam's style. J. K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series, is a fan of Gilliam's work. Consequently, he was Rowling's first choice to direct *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 2000, but Warner Bros. ultimately chose Chris Columbus for the job. In response to this decision, Gilliam expressed that "I was the perfect guy to do Harry Potter. I remember leaving the meeting, getting in my car, and driving for about two hours along Mulholland Drive just so angry. I mean, Chris Columbus' versions are terrible. Just dull." In 2006, Gilliam added that he found Alfonso Cuarón's *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* to be "really good... much closer to what I would've done." In retrospect, however, Gilliam has stated that he wouldn't have liked to direct any Potter film. In a 2005 interview with *Total Film* magazine, he said that he would not enjoy working on such an expensive project due to interference from studio executives. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - Part 1*, director David Yates paid homage to Gilliam's 1985 film *Brazil*. *Parnassus*, released 2009 Most successful project *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*, directed and co-written by Gilliam, was released in 2009. In January 2007, Gilliam announced that he had been working on a new project with writing partner Charles McKeown. One day later, the fan site *Dreams* reported that the new project was titled *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*. In October 2007, *Dreams*



confirmed that this would be Gilliam's next project and was slated to star Christopher Plummer and Tom Waits. Production began in December 2007 in London. Eventually, this \$30 million-budgeted film had grossed more than \$60 million in worldwide theatrical release.

## Opera

Gilliam made his opera debut at London's English National Opera in May 2011, directing *The Damnation of Faust* by Hector Berlioz. The production received positive reviews in the British press. On 16 September 2012, the production opened at the Vlaamse Opera in Ghent, Belgium, in the opera's original French language version and received praise from critics and audiences alike. After a number of performances in Ghent, the production moved to the opera house in Antwerp for sold-out run of performances. During the second half of 2011, Gilliam wrote a screenplay, co-authored by Paul Auster, for a film adaptation of Auster's novel *Mr. Vertigo*. In July 2012, Gilliam revealed plans for a future film, which would be shot in Bucharest, Romania, but although he denied that it would be *Don Quixote*, refused to give any details.

**Most Successful:** In terms of numbers of productions, Cleese has the most prolific solo career, having appeared in 59 theatrical films, 22 TV shows or series (including *Cheers*, *3rd Rock from the Sun*, *Q's assistant* in the James Bond movies, and *Will & Grace*), 23 direct-to-video productions, six video games, and a number of commercials. His BBC sitcom *Fawlty Towers* (written by and starring Cleese together with his then-wife Connie Booth), is considered the greatest solo work by a Python since the sketch show finished. It is the only comedy series to rank higher than the *Flying Circus* on the BFI TV 100's list, topping the whole poll. Idle enjoyed

critical success with Rutland Weekend Television in the mid-1970s, out of which came the Beatles parody the Rutles. Idle has had success with Python songs: " Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" went to no. 3 in the UK singles chart in 1991. The theatrical phenomenon of the Python musical Spamalot has made Idle the most financially successful of the troupe post-Python. Written by Idle, it has proved an enormous hit on Broadway, London's West End and also Las Vegas. This was followed by Not the Messiah (He's a Very Naughty Boy), which repurposes The Life of Brian as an oratorio.

End of chapter 4

## **Chapter 5: Distribution**

Monty Python has made several movies, sketches, television series and they have produced numerous albums, computer games and they have also written a couple books. Besides all the previously productions, Monty Python has certain merchandise as well, including a stuffed animal version of the killer rabbit from Monty Python and the Holy Grail, Black Knight slippers (Holy Grail), a toy version of the Trojan Rabbit (Monty Python and the Holy Grail) and a plush lumberjack (based on Monty Python's Lumberjack character).

## **Commonwealth**

Even though the English language, originating from the United Kingdom, has spread all over the world using the commonwealth system, there is no connection between Monty Python's area of distribution and the commonwealth's. Many members of the commonwealth are merely small (groups of) islands, and the other members are countries subject to modern technology. Monty Python could not easily reach the small islands and their

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productions would have been known in the bigger countries because of modern technology. Conclusion: the commonwealth system did not contribute to Monty Python's area of distribution.[5]Here is a list of Monty Python's overall productions and distributions[6]7:

## **Books:**

Monty Python's Big Red Book (1971)The Brand New Monty Python (1973)  
 [8]9This is a story (The adventures of Walter the Wallabee) where a wallaby tries to spend some time with his friends, but some spilled ink blocks his way... Monty Python and the Holy Grail (book) (Also named Mønti Pythøn ik den Hølie Gräilen - this is Danish) (1977)MONTYPYTHONSCRAPBOOK/ The Life of Brian (1979)Monty Python's Flying Circus - Just the Words Volume 1 (1989)Monty Python's Flying Circus - Just the Words Volume 2 (1989)The Complete Monty Python's Flying Circus Volumes 1 & 2 (1989)The Fairly Incomplete & Rather Badly Illustrated Monty Python Song Book (1994)  
 [10]11" Well, there's egg and bacon, egg sausage and baconEgg and spamEgg, bacon and spamEgg, bacon, sausage and spamSpam, bacon, sausage and spamSpam, egg, spam, spam, bacon and spamSpam, sausage, spam, spam, spam, bacon, spam tomato and spamSpam, spam, spam, egg and spamSpam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, baked beans, spam, spam, spam and spam." - The Spam SongMichael Palin Diaries 1969 - 1979 (2006)Michael Palin Diaries 1989 - 1988 (2009)The Pythons: Autobiography by the Pythons (2005)The Life of Brian/Jesus (2011)

## **Albums:**

Monty Python's Flying Circus (1970)Another Monty Python Record (1971)Monty Pythons Previous Record (1972)The Monty Python Matching Tie  
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and Handkerchief (1973)[12]" John Stuart Mill, of his own free will, On half a pint of shandy was particularly ill. Plato, they say, could stick it away; Half a crate of whiskey every day. Aristotle, Aristotle was a bugger for the bottle, Hobbes was fond of his dram, ..." - The Philosopher's Song[13]Monty Python Live at Drury Lane (1974)The Album of the Soundtrack of the Trailer of the Film of Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975) (this title is hard to take seriously, as we are used to with Monty Python...)Monty Python Live at City Center (1976)The Monty Python Instant Record Collection (1977)Monty Python's Life of Brian (1979)The Monty Python Contractual Obligation Album (1980)Monty Python's The Meaning of Life (1983)The Final Rip Off (1988) [14]" Sit on my face and let my lips embrace you I'll sit on your face and then I'll love you truly Life can be fine if we both sixty nine If we sit on our faces in all sorts of places And play till we're blown away ..." - The Sit On My Face song[15]Monty Python Sings (1989)The Monty Python Instant Record Collection Volume 2 (1991)The Ultimate Monty Python Rip Off (1994)The Instant Monty Python CD Collection (1994)Spamalot (2005)The Hastily Cobbled Together for a Fast Buck Album (unreleased (ironically))

## **Movies:**

And Now For Something Completely Different (1971)Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1974)Monty Python's Life of Brian (1979)Monty Python Live at the Hollywood Bowl[16](1982)This is a concert film (originally shot on videotape) made of their live performances at the Hollywood Bowl in 1980. This concert included many of their greatest sketches and filmed inserts which were mainly taken from two Monty Python specials (Fliegender Zirkus)Monty Python's The Meaning of Life (1983)A Liar's Autobiography: The Untrue Story

of Monty Python's Graham Chapman[17](2012)This film has not been produced by Monty Python themselves, but by " Bill and Ben Productions", who made this film after Graham Chapman's autobiography. This biography was fiction. Cover of A Liar's Autobiography the book.

### **Computer Games:**

Monty Python's Flying Circus: The Computer Game[18](1990)Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time[19](A collection of mini games, screen savers, desktop wallpapers and icons) (1994)Monty Python's The Meaning of Life video game[20](1997)Monty Python & the Quest for the Holy Grail (1996)Blazing Dragons (1996)

### **Live shows:**

Monty Python performed multiple live shows and tours, but only a few were recorded for public release. These are the few released: Monty Python Live at Drury Lane (1974) (Released as an album)Monty Python live at City Center (1976) (Released as an album)Monty Python Live at the Hollywood Bowl (1980) (Contains Monty Python's Flying Circus sketches) (Released as a video record)Monty Python has also written two musicals: Monty Python's SpamAlot (21 December 2004 - 23 January 2005, Chicago. This musical has later been performed by other companies and actors in other countries) This is a musical adaptation of the film Monty Python and the Holy Grail. Not the Messiah (June 2007, Toronto - December 2007, Australia and 2009, England and 2010, BBC Radio 3)[21]

## Television Series:

Monty Python's Flying Circus (1969-1974) Monty Python's Fliegender Zirkus (1972) These were actually two 45-minute specials made by the WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk / West German Broadcasting) for the 'Westdeutscher' television. The first episode was in German, but the second episode was recorded in English with German subtitles. Monty Python's Personal Best (2006) At Last the 1948 Show [22] (Produced by Paradine Productions, in association with Monty Python)

## Miscellaneous Merchandise [23] 24:

3-headed Knight plush (Holy Grail) Black Beast of Aaaarrggghhhh plush / mini plush (Holy Grail) Black Beast of Aaaarrggghhhh plush hat Black Knight backpack / helmet / plush / mini plush / slippers / talking bop bag / mini bobber [25] / talking plush (with removable limbs) (Holy Grail) 3-headed Knight plush Killer Rabbit plush / hand puppet / medium plush / giant plush / stapler / plush slippers (Holy Grail) Caltrop plush God mini bobber (Holy Grail) Grim Reaper plush / mini plush Holy Grail plush (Holy Grail) King Arthur plush (Holy Grail) Lumberjack plush (Lumberjack song) Knight of Ni plush / plush hat / bobber (Holy Grail) Tim the Enchanter plush / plush hat (Holy Grail) Spanish Inquisitor plush (Flying Circus) Sir Bors - Headless Knight bobber (Holy Grail) In Your Pocket talking keychain Talking Coconut keychain (Holy Grail) Trojan Rabbit toy (Holy Grail) Voice Abuse keychain (Monty Python 'foot') Vomiting Mr Creosote statue (The Meaning of Life) Albatross plush Monty Python Fluxx [26] board game / castle expansion pack (Holy Grail) Monty Python Fluxx board game. As expected, many of the Monty Python dry wits and ironies are found in this game; the Trojan Rabbit, the

quest for a Shrubbery and the 3-headed Knight.... Cow Catapult toy set (Holy Grail)Dead Parrot plush (Dead Parrot sketch)Holy Hand grenade of Antioch plush / mini plush / danglers[27](Holy Grail)Horse action figure (actually 2 coconuts - this is yet another piece of irony, because in the movie the two knights seem to be riding horses, but then sight of them is added to merely a clacking noise. The horses seem to be nothing more than Patsy banging two coconuts) (Holy Grail)The Horse ' action figure'Python-opoly board game (Holy Grail)This is a list of productions and distributions that involved the whole Monty Python troupe. For information about individual work of all the Monty Python members, search Chapter 4 ' Going Solo'. This has been quite the list, and one can easily conclude that Monty Python must have caused some rather occupied times. All these albums, books and computer games are not ' hastily cobbled together for a fast buck', but a lot of effort has been put into it.