

Paul 2011 Film Review

Paul was out of this world, and the journey to get him home to his spaceship was fantastic! Sean Penn and Nick Frost are in another fantasy fiction film. They are dorky English dweebs on their journey traveling to the US to tour aliens hotspots, where they ironically meet Paul. Paul's character was everything I was hoping he would be, and that is a super cool alien stoner.

Aliens aren't just little green men and men in black suits following them; aliens represent the possibility that the universe is bigger than our problems. As a stoner, something is comforting in the idea of aliens that life is more than the chaos we deal with here. Things are out of our control, and society's a mess; everyone's future is uncertain because we don't know what will happen tomorrow, but that's the film's point, Paul. The unknown becomes a kind of hope. There's something greater out there watching, waiting, or just existing. The mystery becomes almost spiritual. It makes the weight of everyday life feel a little lighter knowing we're not alone, or at least not the literal center of the universe.

Moreover, the film structures the main characters as almost gay best friends in a comedy and sci-fi road trip.

The film is funny but also explores existential themes, such as the path to learning and obtaining new knowledge, like Paul and his galaxy secrets. Paul's existence challenges human belief systems, from science fiction obsession to conservative religious faith, asking the characters and audiences to embrace the

unknown. Unlike others, Paul accepts Graeme and Clive, unlike the thugs they met at the diner.

Tara is an interesting character, a woman raised in some ultra-orthodox sect of Christianity, essentially a cult. She runs her abusive father's RV park and has had very little exposure to the world beyond it. Her beliefs are entirely shaped by what her father told her, without question or outside influence. Paul's ability to heal Tara doesn't just restore her eyeball; it eradicates her limited inherited belief system from her father, of what she can and can't do, which once gave her the only meaning she has in her life. Seeing Tara's mind blown by Paul with all the truths about the known galaxies and worlds was incredibly impactful and symbolic of skepticism and blind faith. How can we judge others when we don't see the truth about our existence? That question is experienced by watching Paul.