

A PINEWOOD DIALOGUE WITH TERRY GILLIAM

Terry Gilliam came to the Museum of the Moving Image in October 2006, ten years after his legendary visit on the day of the Blizzard of 1996, when hundreds of his fans braved a blinding snowstorm to see the director present *Brazil*. In 2006, Gilliam discussed his latest cinematic provocation, *Tideland*, a truly independent work that is one of his most shocking and surprisingly tender films. The film, which Gilliam describes as part *Alice in Wonderland* and part *Psycho*, takes us inside the mind of a young girl who develops a fantasy life to escape her harsh surroundings.

A Pinewood Dialogue following a preview screening of *Tideland*, moderated by Chief Curator David Schwartz (October 2, 2006):

SCHWARTZ: Please welcome Terry Gilliam.
(Applause)

GILLIAM: Thank you. Bless you all.

SCHWARTZ: So, you probably remember some of these people.

GILLIAM: Yeah. Everybody's a little bit older.
(Schwartz laughs) But not wiser, obviously. Turned up again.

SCHWARTZ: Fill us in on your last ten years.

GILLIAM: (Laughs) Oh, man, I don't know. It was funny—driving out here, I remembered the whole evening of the blizzard [on Gilliam's previous visit to the Museum of the Moving Image], which was quite extraordinary and memorable. Since then, it's been downhill, I guess. (Laughter) Those were the high points. *Twelve Monkeys* was a surprise hit. I was so convinced it wasn't going to work, opening on December 27—it turned out to be huge!

SCHWARTZ: It was the top film in the country.

GILLIAM: Yes, it was amazing! And then I made the fatal mistake of working with Johnny Depp, and making *Fear and Loathing [in Las Vegas]*. Boom! And ever since, it's been really, really bad...
(Laughs)

SCHWARTZ: Tell us a bit about how you got into this film, because you were working on *Brothers Grimm*... I guess, from what I understand, the book came to you first?

GILLIAM: Yeah... What basically happened is that actually, we started this project before *Brothers Grimm*. I was trying to get a couple of my other projects going, which were larger budgets. So difficult. And people, as they do, send scripts. People with dreams and hopes and aspirations send scripts and books to me, thinking that I can somehow get them made into films. And it's just not true, normally. And the stack sort of builds up. And one day I just said, "Oh." I was feeling guilty, and I grabbed one. And it was this book called *Tideland*. And I just started reading it. Within five or six pages, I was completely blown away by the book. I just thought, "Here's the voice, this voice of a child." And then the book went on. I couldn't work out where it was going to go. It was terrifying, and wonderfully exciting, so I said, "Let's do it."

I called up Tony Grisoni, who I write with, gave him the book. He said, "Let's make it." Then we hunted down Jeremy Thomas, who produced Bertolucci's movies. He said, "Let's make it." We all thought, "This is going to be easy; low budget—*pffft*—go." Couldn't get the money. Nobody wanted to touch this thing. It turns out, men controlled the money in movies, in most cases; and men didn't get the story, generally.

So, actually, what happens is, *Brothers Grimm* came along, and I was so desperate for work I said, "I'll get involved in that." (Laughter) And actually, I'd

better say, I like the movie. I don't apologize for it. I'm quite happy with the movie. (The experience was something else!) (Laughter) But we had reached a point in *Brothers Grimm* where we had cut the film. Lesley Walker cut both films. We were happy with it. We had had a couple of screenings. There wasn't anything that we could do to make it any better. And it reached a point where the brothers Weinstein felt, you know, the film wasn't there. There was another film there, there was a great film there, if only they could get their grubby little hands on it. And I learned, dealing with them, that the best way to deal with [it] is *not* to fight. It's something I've learned very late in life. Just as I've become an old-age pensioner in London, I've learned not to fight. So, I kept backing up. And I said, "Okay, I've got another film to do." Because Jeremy Thomas, at that point, had said, "We got the money." And so I said, "Okay. *Brothers Grimm*: you guys take it, do whatever you want with it. I've got another film to make." And I went off to Canada and made it, and then came back. And while I was editing this film, I got a call from the Weinsteins to finish *Brothers Grimm* my way. And so I ended up editing both films at the same time, running from one cutting room to the other. You learn to hate a film when you're cutting it, and then you can escape to another one. Until you learn to hate that one; then you're back to this one! (Laughs) And we did. And it worked well.

SCHWARTZ: Was it true that Mitch Cullin sent the book only hoping to get a blurb from you?

GILLIAM: Yes, he just wanted something for the cover; a blurb—which I gave him. And it was printed on the British ones; I don't know if it was done here. It said, "Fucking marvelous." I wanted to see that word on the cover of a book. You know, "Fucking marvelous." (Laughter) And it got printed. And so, he was very happy. (Laughter)

SCHWARTZ: So, tell us a bit about the spirit of the production. It seemed like—as dark or twisted as some of the subject matter is, it actually felt like a fun, liberating experience to make it.

GILLIAM: It was a joy because, number one: Jeremy Thomas is a wonderful producer. He just leaves me alone. (Laughs) That's a good thing. And we were in Saskatchewan; we were away from the world. It was a great crew. And we just did it. There weren't

any problems. The whole thing was so easy, luckily. It's proved to be difficult selling the film; it was difficult getting the money. But the making was a breeze. It was—again, when you adapt a book, it's always a tricky feeling of being totally responsible. You don't want to make another film; you want to be true to the book. I think we did that pretty accurately.

SCHWARTZ: One of the things that you changed from the book is that the book is written in the first person, [from the perspective] of the girl, and you made the decision not to do that. Could you talk about that?

GILLIAM: Well, it just seemed that if you did it from the first person, it relaxes the audience, because you know she comes out okay in the end. And I thought there was a lot more tension to be had, not knowing where this thing was going and what was going to happen to this little girl. It seemed a better way of going. So, in some ways, the film is probably a little bit more difficult than the book, because you don't know... I think it's the thing I love about the film, as I did in the book: I don't know where it's going at any point. It doesn't take the normal forms. We're getting so used to the structure of movies now. I watch a movie now: I know exactly what's going to happen. I may not know the detail, but the rhythms are almost like a pop song now—bunk-a-dunk. And that's going to happen there, and then that's going to happen there, and that's got to move there. It's just getting boring! Let's see if we can go another route. And it does make it, for a lot of people, very difficult. And a lot of people can't stand it, because it's not telling them where it's going to go next.

SCHWARTZ: Could you tell us a bit, then, about the reaction? The introductory piece that we showed, with you preparing the audience, was a recent addition; could you talk about why you felt that you needed that?

GILLIAM: (Laughs) Well, I've been going to so many festivals this year, I'm bleeding. (Laughter) Somebody stabbed me in the back. That's blood, that's mine! (Laughter) You don't trust people in New York, do you? (Laughter) Jesus... Anyway, I'd been going to a lot of festivals this year to promote the film. And I do an intro at the beginning, which is, you know, a longer version of that, and a bit more

comic. But I thought, “I’m going to have to be doing this for every time this film is shown. I’m going to have to go out and tell people how to approach it.” Because people were always telling me after these screenings, “Oh, I’m glad you talked to us at the beginning, because you helped us get into it.” So, at the very last moment in London, just before it came out there, I said, “Come on; I’ll do an intro, and we’ll see what happens.” And I then showed it at certain screenings, and people seemed to think it was useful having a little bit of a lead-in to how to approach this film.

SCHWARTZ: What is it that you think might cause trouble? Is it more of a morality thing, or more of an aesthetic one?

GILLIAM: I hoped it was going to be a morality thing (Laughter) because the film really does push a lot of buttons. And I’ve always thought of it as a kind of litmus-paper test of people. I can’t predict who’s going to like it and who’s not going to like it, and why people are going to like it or not like it. But there are very strong reactions. I knew that would happen, and that’s what intrigued me. What’s been surprising: I thought it would start dialogues. Now, it does. When you leave tonight, I’m sure there are those of you who liked it and those who didn’t like it. And there are usually a lot of arguments over dinner afterwards. Which, I think—“Oh, that’s great.” Something to talk about, rather than leaving the cinema and saying, “Well, what did you think?” “Well, it’s okay.” “Okay, well, now what are we going to talk about?” (Laughter) That’s what normally happens when my wife and I go to the cinema. But so, this was a chance to get people really talking over drinks and dinner afterwards. And we’ve had some wonderful, almost-fist fights over the film, which is good. However, on a professional level, the critics—it’s quite extraordinary; they don’t even want to deal with the film. They dismiss it. “Unwatchable.” “Pathetic.” “Over the top.” “Gilliam can’t tell the story.” They rubbish it, so they don’t even deal with what the film is about. And I was saying earlier that, you know, to me, [it seems that] ten, fifteen percent of the critics get it and love it, and the rest just dismiss it. So, there’s no public dialogue about it, which is the disappointment.

SCHWARTZ: Well, let’s get some response. If people want to show their reactions or ask questions, I’ll open it up to the audience.

(Repeats audience question) You say [in Gilliam’s pre-recorded introduction to *Tideland*] that you discovered your inner child. But I guess [the audience member’s] implication is that a lot of your films have dealt with this. Some of the same ideas—imagination, fantasy versus reality...

GILLIAM: Yes.

SCHWARTZ: So, what’s different now?

GILLIAM: I think the difference was, it’s about a little girl. There is a difference there. I mean, it’s a half a joke, is what I’m trying—I’m trying to get the people to at least smile at the beginning of the film before they get into this thing. (Laughter) But it was actually true. It was a very interesting experience, because you start playing with dolls. I mean, you know, an old man—I’m playing with dolls again. And that’s the important thing, because each of those dolls’ heads—we had a pile, hundreds of them. And we had to choose it. You know, it’s like choosing a character when you’re making a movie. It’s casting the movie, and each one was discussed. And so, you have to learn to play again. And that’s how, basically, during the making of the movie, I was, in many ways, the child on the set. Jodelle was the adult. (Laughs) And it was an interesting thing. I would encourage her, oftentimes, to play more. It was interesting about her. She’s such an extraordinary actress. She’s been acting since she was four years old. And when we rehearsed with her... We had a couple weeks of rehearsal with everybody together. And for all the TV and film parts she’s had, she’d never rehearsed before. She didn’t understand what *playing* was about—that’s what rehearsal is, and one had to encourage her to do that. So, I was... It was a strange one. On one hand, I was the main character, and trying to be like that. But on the other hand, I was never directing her. I was always just, “There’s the scene; it’s written; there’s the situation: Jodelle, go to work.” And she would surprise us every time. She took us places that, you know, we wouldn’t, as adults, dare to go. I think in particular, the scene kissing Dickens, the first kiss. We were sitting there at the monitors: “What is she *doing*?” (Laughter) I mean, and that’s a little girl. And that’s a little girl playing. I felt a responsibility not to direct her, in many areas like that. I would try to encourage her to just have fun, and be free to do whatever she wanted to, but that was it. And then

she would go. And she constantly taught us. I mean, that scene was interesting. About the third take, Brendan Fletcher, who plays Dickens, completely lost his lines. And I said, "Cut, cut. What's happened, Brendan?" He said, "I don't know. I mean, it was like she was hypnotizing me. She had complete control of me. I...I was lost in her eyes, and..." I thought, "That's what that scene's about, and it's perfect." (Laughs)

SCHWARTZ: (Repeats audience question) Usually, a Hollywood film might have an explosion at the ending, but it's a happy ending, or it resolves things—and this doesn't. Could you talk about what you were playing around with in the ending?

GILLIAM: I think what bothers a lot of people is that she doesn't seem to react to all those people dying and bleeding to death. She's a child! It's just what I think is so extraordinary; we keep forgetting what children are. They're really selfish (Laughs) little creatures, designed to *survive*. And I keep saying: "You drop 'em, they bounce." They're tough. And we've somehow sentimentalized childhood. And this is a little girl who's obviously—she's been through quite a bit, and this thing happens. And the idea when Brendan (or "Dickens") apparently appears, it's like, "My hero! He's done it, he's blown it up!" She's not aware of the death and destruction. She's partly—I mean, the character is always aware of what's going on. But it's how she deals with it, and how she either suppresses it or ignores it. And she is ignoring it for a bit, but then I think she becomes very aware of what's happening—but there's a selfishness there.

SCHWARTZ: But she found this right away, so you were talking about her coming up with her own responses. And this ending, which is so extraordinary, was sort of how she found...

GILLIAM: Yes. We stage it; it's the way the book ends, and that's it. And I just said, "Jodelle, you start there, and you walk there, and you stop there, and you react. That's it. You do it." And that's what she chose to do. And it's—she's so bright. She thinks it out. But she's not thinking the way an adult thinks. An adult is thinking, aware of the reality of what's there. "Those lives destroyed, people..." That's what we as adults think. She's not thinking that. This child is not thinking that. She's thinking, "Wow, he did it. He did the big one. Just like in a

movie, isn't it?" I mean, I think there's a lot of that sense of what we get into. I mean, we watch television; it's happening all the time. It's nice entertainment, isn't it, as long as you're not there? Well, she's in it, and yet she's still behaving like we behave when we watch television. It's just this event. It's background action for what's really important: that her hero boyfriend has done the big one. (Laughs)

SCHWARTZ: The music does a lot in creating the mood for the film, in creating that spirit. I'm just wondering if you could talk about the musical score.

GILLIAM: Mychael and Jeff Danna did the score. Mychael does the scores for Atom Egoyan's movies, and he was originally doing this on his own, and then Atom's movie came in, and he had to work. So, we ended up with his brother Jeff being involved, so the two of them did it. It was a really fine balance, because it's got all the temptations to do what you do in kiddie movies—(hums an upbeat tune)—and sweet stuff. And Mychael's got this wonderful, strange... It's quite unsettling. It's very beautiful, but it never settles you. And I think that was very important. I was terrified of any kind of sentimentality creeping into this thing. Nor did I want anything that was overstating things. But the movie—I mean, there are moments when it gets very big; but that's her imagination. So when Dell appears, for instance, Dell is—I'm shooting Dell like a giant. It's like something out of *Thief of Baghdad*. And we've got big sound effects. And the music is doing the same thing. It's just, "She's in a movie! Ah!" I mean, of course, it's not a movie, it's just a woman there who's afraid of bees. "You're not a ghost at all." And it's constant playing with how a child would perceive a moment, and then the moment is taken away. I think it's a great score, frankly. (Laughs)

SCHWARTZ: (Repeats audience question) Did you have any dialogue with the author during the process of shooting?

GILLIAM: Oh, Mitch is actually in the film. He's there. He came up to Canada. Mitch was very much involved, both when we were writing the script—he read the script; he liked what we had done—and he's there. He's actually in the bus behind Jeff Bridges, when Jeff is in terrible trouble [with

stomach pains]. There's one moment he goes, "Oh, God." (Laughter) And that's Mitch Cullin. So, he was very aware. And the finished film, he saw it in Toronto, and he's delighted.

He's a little bit angry about one thing, because he's pissed off that I thought of something that he didn't, which is the grandmother's head being kicked in at the end by Jodelle. That's not in the book, but I just knew we needed some punctuation there that would really drive it. And Mitch said, "Oh! Why didn't I think of that?" So, Mitch is really delighted with it. I mean, it's... I'm always very nervous when I'm doing this. It was the same with *Fear and Loathing*. I mean, Johnny and I weren't really interested in what the *audience* was going to think of the film, it was what *Hunter* was going to think of the film. (Laughs) And so, it's a very fine line, because on one hand, Mitch is saying to me he doesn't want me to be restricted by his book, he wants a Gilliam film. But I just—I mean, I've got to stay within the world he's created, and try to be accurate. One of the most interesting things was, when I first read the book and I first contacted him, I said, "Did you have a picture in mind when you were writing it?" And he said, "Yes." He said, "*Christina's World*," which is this Andrew Wyeth painting. And I said, "And that's exactly the picture I had when I read the book." So, I knew we were visually in the same ballpark.

SCHWARTZ: Was that a house that you found or built? Because that references both the painting and also *Psycho*, at the same time, so...

GILLIAM: Yeah, I know. (Laughter)

SCHWARTZ: Was it just there, or...?

GILLIAM: No, we found the house, everything is there. Except the porch on the house was—I saw on a house about a mile away. And I said, "Let's recreate that porch on the front of that house." But basically, that's the house. It was extraordinary. Everything fell into place on this film in the shooting, because Dell's house was just a couple kilometers away... Everything was there. It was like it was waiting to be made.

SCHWARTZ: (Repeats audience question) The scenes between the girl and Dickens. A line might be crossed, he's saying...

GILLIAM: I kept saying to everybody, "We have to maintain our innocence when we do this thing. There's a line that we cannot cross." Now, interestingly enough, in the book, when she's lying on the bed and he crawls on top of her—in the book, his hand goes up her thigh. And I said, "Can't show that. On a film, that's going to be too strong." It had to be kept right at that edge. Seeing if we could just do this tightrope act, and just stay on it without going across. Because I know the audience is squirming. I know the audience is saying, "Oh, no. Oh, no." Because all of our worst thoughts are floating around, waiting to (Laughs) have their moment on screen. And I keep taking it away. And I think Brendan was incredibly important in those scenes, too, because he said, "Not for one moment can I be predatory in any way." It was actually, again, it was Jodelle leading in all of those scenes! There're moments, like when they go into the house at the end, and they're about to go upstairs—she's pushing him. She wants to get up there. And he was embarrassed. It was constantly like that with it. So, I think that was what intrigued me, how a little girl on the verge of sexuality, not being aware of the danger and the power of that, and yet... And so you stay on that line. And I never knew what was going on in Jodelle's head. Even today, I don't know. She's a very smart girl. Her mother worked with her a lot. Her mother was fantastic. She seemed to know everything that was going on, and yet there is that thing of not quite understanding what we know and what we've experienced—and she's innocent.

SCHWARTZ: (Repeats audience question) The cast is amazing. Did you know right away who you wanted for the roles, or was it a long process?

GILLIAM: Jeff Bridges, the minute I decided to do this, I said, "He's got to be the father." There's no way. Because the father: you know, he's a junkie, he's a bit of an asshole, he's a selfish bastard—and you've got to love him like she loves him. And that's Jeff. I mean... (Laughter) Jeff walks in, he can do anything! He can kill half the audience—you'll still like him! And I just thought, Okay, Jeff's got that one. And then after that, it was—because half the money came from Canada, I had to work with Canadian actors. And I was very worried about that, because I thought, "I don't know how many are out there." (Laughter) And Dickens—Brendan—was the first time I've ever cast anybody who I haven't met

in the flesh. He sent his tape in and I said, "Jesus! That guy's good." And I said, "He's got the part." And Jodelle, we were right at the edge. We were... I'd been looking for quite a long time, and we'd seen a lot of girls, some really good ones, but they just didn't have what she has. And I kept saying, "We're going to have to get more desperate here. We've got to look in the papers and see if we can spot an accident where the whole family's wiped out, except for a little girl—that's who we need! Let's start looking in orphanages. We need a scarred child here, somebody really damaged!" (Laughter) And I was getting really desperate, because we were about to start shooting, and we still didn't have that part cast, and I...

SCHWARTZ: So, you started blowing up trains? (Laughter)

GILLIAM: And I was so worried that I was going to have to tell Jeremy Thomas, "We can't do the movie. We're spending all this money; we can't do the movie, because we don't have her." Because she's it. Without her, it doesn't work. And then this tape came in from Vancouver, and there was this little girl in this tape, tiny, running. And she just ran in, did this scene. I said, "That's interesting." I brought her to Toronto, did the scene—in fact, it's the scene on the bus, with the farting and all. And she really—she was working with another actor, and there's the moment when he doubles over in pain. And all the other little girls were saying, "And it serves you right." It was that kind of thing. Hers was like—it was like she was saying, "Fuck you! Serves you right." Without saying the words "fuck you." And I was like, "Jesus! That's powerful." And I said, "You got the part." And she was better than I could've hoped for. I can't—I keep... You're an expert on these things. I keep trying to think of the movie where there's a child actor in every single scene, never offscreen. And I can't think of one that demands as much onscreen presence as this one.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: *Walkabout*.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: *Crooklyn*.

GILLIAM: Yes?

SCHWARTZ: *Walkabout?* *Crooklyn?*

AUDIENCE MEMBER: *Mommie Dearest*.

SCHWARTZ: In every scene? (Laughter) I'm sorry, *Mommie Dearest*?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: *The Exorcist*.

GILLIAM: No, but she's not onscreen all the time. We're talking about every scene. The whole—a film that is based on one child, almost.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: *Welcome to the Dollhouse*.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: *Empire of the Sun*.

GILLIAM: *Pirates of the Caribbean?* (Laughter)

SCHWARTZ: Wait, wait, wait. (Laughter)

GILLIAM: *Welcome to the Dollhouse?* Okay, I'm going to have to go check it out.

SCHWARTZ: We have a lot of experts in the audience. (Laughter)

(Repeats audience question) Okay, advice for filmmakers who want to follow in your footsteps.

GILLIAM: I think get a decent job, like spot welding or plumbing or something like that, is what I would do. (Laughter) No, there's no hope. I'm the last of a breed. I don't even—I can't get a job. I can't get money for my films. It's really true. It really is hard right now. I think all you can do is: you get a digital camera and you go and shoot stuff, and you make it that way. You make a little DVD; you sell it. You start sending it around the place. I don't know what else to do. The studios right now are in turmoil. They're living in constant fear. You're not going to get money there. Independent? There's no such thing as independent filmmaking. It's a lie. I mean, they're all owned by the studios; they're just a façade stuck up in front of another bit of a studio. It's really hard. I mean, Jeremy Thomas, who produced this, has produced Bertolucci's films. He's despairing at the moment. He says, "I don't know what to make next." Because this has proved to be a real problem. We don't have distribution in Germany, in Italy, in Spain. It's been a nightmare to get something like this released. I don't know. I just think you do what you do with... You know, you can edit at home—a DVD; you can make stuff. And then you just start putting it on the web, handing it out on the street corners, and maybe, maybe... But it's

persistence, patience, and giving up the rest of your life, basically. (Laughter) If you're ready to do that, you're on. (Laughter)

SCHWARTZ: One thing I wanted to ask you, since you brought up the word "digital": something I like about the film a lot is that it has this handmade feeling. I think the only heavy digital computer-graphics scene might be the scene when she goes down into the hole, but it seems like...

GILLIAM: Even that, even that isn't. I mean, we built a model for the hall, so—and everything you see in there are real objects, which we've all put together.

SCHWARTZ: Yes, but there's so much use of real landscape, and just...

GILLIAM: Well, that was part of the, you know, joy from having done *Grimms*, which was just big, cumbersome—everything was slow and complicated. It was, like, 113 days of shooting, with 3 units. It's just this huge army. And then rushing off to Canada with a small group of people, and in fifty days, you make the movie. And it was nice, exactly.

But isn't—that's what I love about stories. And that's why I liked Grimm's fairy tales when I was kid. I love being scared, and coming out of things: "Oh, I made it. Oh, that wasn't so bad." After all, it's this kind of way of developing muscles against what life is going to throw at you later. This one is such a strange one, because people who like it can't understand how people can't like it. And yet there's an awful lot that don't, that hate it. And yet I find—somebody said it's the most tender film I've ever made. I think it is. I think it's a very sensitive—I'm really proud of this film...despite what the critics tell me! (Laughs)

It's twenty-five years since I made *Time Bandits*. And this is somehow my version of the same kind of thing—a child's imagination—twenty-five years on. And both films were done in a very handmade way. And it's nice. Scenes like the underwater house: again, had I had more money, I would've been very nervous about it and done it in a proper way. We just—I got the whole crew to put every bit of furniture and picture frame and everything on a wire, and we drilled holes in the ceiling of the room. And they were all on top of the room. And we came in with a camera, and we're running at, like, ninety-

six frames, to slow it down. And the curtains were on wires, and people were swinging. The whole crew was just wiggling this stuff around! (Laughter) And that's the background plate for that. And then—and we did sort of her swimming down the stairs, we just had one of her doubles, somebody holding the double in the air and walking through; we're going, "One, two, three, four, five." Okay. And then when it came to shooting her: different speed; we had to do it faster, so, "Onetwothreefourfive." And we did the moves like that. It was all done without the normal motion-capture tracking digital stuff. None of that was used. It was just, *who!* And it works. (Laughs)

SCHWARTZ: And I already asked if we could have Jeff Bridges's carcass for the Museum. (Laughter) I guess that's taken.

GILLIAM: It's in his garden, yeah. (Laughter) That was part of the deal; he wanted it. (Laughter)

SCHWARTZ: (Repeats audience question) Question about the incredible sense of detail in your films, and how do you work with the constraints of the budgets, in terms of getting what you want up on the screen?

GILLIAM: There's never enough money to do what I want to do. That's basic. Which is a good thing. If I were allowed to have all the money I wanted to do it, it'd be just the most awfully tedious, overwrought thing. So, I actually like working against restraints, as a way of deciding what's important and what isn't important. But the detail is just what I do. I love all the detail. It gives a kind of—to me—a believability about the thing; it's a world that you can actually get lost in. And it's also—with DVDs, it gives people a chance to watch the film again and again, and discover new things. It wasn't planned that way; it's just my obsession with detail. And when you're shooting, you know, things take time to light. So, okay, I get bored. So, let's go and fiddle, put a little something in there to... But it's always working to a budget. So, in this case, this is a low-budget film, but we crammed a lot of detail in. It's also working with really good people, who also want to put things in. Once you encourage people to, say—not so much "encourage" them, but let them know that I see all the detail, and appreciate it all... Then they're there to please. And they just

throw in more stuff than I need half the time. I don't—did you see the Python albums in there?

SCHWARTZ: Yes.

GILLIAM: I didn't—I mean, that was just the prop guy doing it as a joke, you know, and it was great. So, I thought, "Fantastic!" It's not my idea... (Laughs)

SCHWARTZ: It was *Monty Python's Contractual Obligation*.

(Repeats audience question) Well, a question about critics, and do you read reviews? And you seem kind of indignant to some critics, but do you really read these reviews?

GILLIAM: Yeah. I try not to, but I end up doing it. I'm always peeking. And I'm always astonished. I mean, I don't mind bad reviews if they tell me something interesting. They just don't tell me anything interesting. I mean, I don't know what film they're talking about—it's not the one we made. It's like, I keep thinking there's a doppelganger going on out there, another film out there that is pretending to be my film, that they're watching... There's too many people reviewing, to be quite honest. There's too many people. They're just opinions. So, a reviewer's opinion is no more important to me than your opinion or the person next to you. I mean, it's just opinions. It's just when

it's in your face in the press—that hurts more. (Laughs) But I'm getting better at not reading them.

SCHWARTZ: (Repeats audience question) Okay, this is meant as a compliment, but your films make her feel nauseous and dizzy. (Laughter) So, I was hoping to end on an upbeat note, after the film critics...

GILLIAM: Do you vomit ever, after my films? (Laughter) No. I mean, to me, I'm satisfied if I actually get that kind—any kind of reaction. Something that would get you buzzing, gets you thinking, disturbs you, makes you look at the world in a different way, makes you think. These are the things. If you were to come and say, "Oh, your films are okay," I'd die! I mean, that's just awful. Who wants to be okay? I actually want to get responses out of people. And I don't really care what they are. I like the fact that to films like this, there are so many varied responses, and the ways people see the film are very different—but it's got them thinking and reacting, and that's all we try to do. And your version of the film might be better than my version. (Laughter)

SCHWARTZ: Well, if anybody needs to run to the bathroom, out the back... And otherwise, good luck with the film, and thanks a lot for being here.

GILLIAM: Thank you, thank you. (Applause)

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