***Unforgiven*, directed by Clint Eastwood**

**Film and Literature: The Western**

**Masculinity in Film**

**The Western Genre**

* **We enter a world** where law and community must be created by rugged, individual men; the land is both precious and dangerous.
* **Emotions activated:** Respect or admiration for **tough men** and expansive landscape, awe at natural beauty, internally conflict over issues of morality, justice, and the pursuit of revenge.

“In western and gangster films, the cultural ideal of sacrifice and self-restraint – allowing the law to take its course, respecting due process – often conflicts with an ideal that defends revenge or vigilantism as necessary way to right wrongs.” (Bill Nichols, *Engaging Cinema*)

**The Western Hero**

Western heroes are often local lawmen or enforcement officers, ranchers, army officers, cowboys, territorial marshals, or a skilled, fast-draw gunfighter. They are normally masculine persons of integrity and principle - courageous, moral, tough, solid and self-sufficient, maverick characters (often with trusty sidekicks), possessing an independent and honorable attitude (but often characterized as slow-talking). The Western hero could usually stand alone and face danger on his own, against the forces of lawlessness (outlaws or other antagonists), with an expert display of his physical skills (roping, gun-play, horse-handling, pioneering abilities, etc.).

Concepts to Consider (*From Engaging Cinema: An Introduction to Film*)

How does the text define or develop the following terms? Once you have defined these terms, begin to apply them to *Unforgiven*, directed by Clint Eastwood. How do these terms apply to the development of male characters in the film?

**Masculinity**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Male Privilege**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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The Performance Principle: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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The Pleasure Principle: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Performance Anxiety: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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The Adolescent Male: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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The Male Characters from *Unforgiven*

“Under the dominant performance principle, men, threatened by the risk that power will be denied them, must measure up. Measure up to what? In practice they must measure up to impossible cultural ideals of autonomy, mastery, and self-control, even though these ideals may be sugarcoated with notions of love, creativity, wisdom, and community.”

“Men test how they measure up by means of comparison and competition. Deriving a sense of identity from what one does rather from who one is feeds into the sense that the only thing that matters is performing successfully.”

Consider how the terms linked to defining masculinity apply to the male characters from *Unforgiven.* How do these men “measure up”?

1. William Munny (Clint Eastwood)

2. Little Bill Daggett (Gene Hackman)

3. Ned Logan (Morgan Freeman)

4. English Bob (Richard Harris)

5. The “Schofield Kid” (James Woolvet)

6. W.W. Beauchamp (Saul Rubinek)

7. Davey Bunting (Rob Campbell)

8. Quick Mike (David Mucci)