**Film as Literature**

**Mr. Mahoney**

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

**Discussion Questions**

1. How is the story framed? Discuss the **opening shot** and the literary approach to opening the film. How does it impact the audience? What are the director’s intentions?
2. How is William Munny developed as a character? Consider which scenes from the film help to shape our perspective of William Munny. How do the other characters contribute to his character development? How is he a complex character? Is he a hero as the protagonist? How is William Munny the anti-hero?
3. How is morality questioned in the film? What crime is committed early in the film? How is the crime resolved by Sheriff Little Bill in the town of Big Whisky? Is this justice? Given the circumstances should a harsher punishment be delivered or was it handled properly?
4. What effect does William Munny’s wife have on his life? The memory of his wife and the impact she has on William Munny surfaces throughout the story. Why is this motif significant?
5. Discuss William Munny’s relationship with his partner Ned. What aspects of William Munny’s personality are revealed through this friendship?
6. How does the Scofield Kid change over the course of the story? Why is this change so significant?
7. Compare and contrast the Scofield Kid with William Munny. How are they different? How are they similar?
8. What is the Scofield Kid’s physical flaw? What might this flaw represent in connection to the major themes and the greater context of the story?
9. Who is English Bob? Why does he come to Big Whisky? Who is travelling with English Bob? Why does this person accompany English Bob?
10. Ned owns a Spencer rifle. Is this rifle a symbol? If so, what does it represent?
11. How are good and evil ambiguous states in this film? Use details from the film to support your commentary and criticism.
12. Which particular shots in this film maximize the tension and suspense in this film?
13. How is Little Bill developed as the antagonist to the anit-hero? What is his advice about gunfighting? How does this advice foreshadow the conclusion of the story?
14. Consider the contrast between the sweeping landscapes of the rural countryside as William Munny, the Scofield Kid, and Ned head to the Big Whisky with the aura of the town of Big Whisky and the saloon where most of the action occurs.
15. Little Bill is building a house with his own two hands. What does the house represent in the story? Does it help to characterize Little Bill?
16. What is ironic about Ned’s fate near the end of the story?
17. What is the Scofield Kid’s reaction after he kills a man? How does this contrast with William Munny’s attitude? Why is this moment in the film significant?
18. Most western films end with the hero riding off into the setting sun. What is the effect of this image? How is it supposed to impact the viewer? How is this film’s conclusion paradoxically similar and different from the classic western conclusion?