

Contemporary Lit A: Film Studies
Documentary Film Analysis

Name:
Hour:

This is your opportunity to formalize your interpretations of key scenes in the film TAKING CHANCE. Specifically, how was the “reconstruction” constructed? Follow these steps for success. This will also serve as your score sheet.

1. Choose three key excerpts from Strobl’s text in order to analyze the effectiveness of its reconstruction. You can choose these from step 3 in your study guide.
2. Write a paragraph (or more) analyzing/evaluating the reconstruction of each chosen segment. Each paragraph analysis should be a critical discussion of:
 - a. The original text
 - b. How the reconstruction of it is represented on screen.
 - c. An explanation of the details that are “construed” or “verbatim” and how they support, explain, or present a different aspect of themes, moods, characters, plot, or whatever.
 - d. An analysis of how certain filming techniques are used to help meaning, mood, etc.

See an example paragraph, like the one we discussed in class, on side two.

_____ **/10 pts**

_____ **/10 pts**

_____ **/10 pts**

3. Then, go back and write an introduction that includes:
 - a. An attention getter
 - b. A thesis of some sort
 - c. A preview of main points

_____ **/10 pts**

4. Also write a conclusion that:
 - a. Summarizes your key interpretations
 - b. Uses a closing statement to bring a note of finality to the essay.

_____ **/10 pts**

5. The essay will be typed, single spaced, 12 point font of Times New Roman or Ariel, with you name and essay title at the top. There is evidence of planning, revision, and proofreading.

_____ **/10 pts**

6. The essay is due Wednesday, April 20 when you enter class. You will have two lab days to work on it Monday and Tuesday. Any other time will have to be arranged outside of class.

Total

_____ **/60 pts**

Notes:

Can you identify each of the requirements in this sample paragraph?

- a. Put a squiggly line under proof of the original text.
- b. Underline the description of what the reconstruction looks like on film.
- c. Put checkmarks (✓) in the margin next to the lines that explain the details that are verbatim or construed and how effective they are.
- d. Lastly, draw a square around the sentences that analyze the film techniques used in the scene.



When Lt. Col. Strobl talks about being depressed so early in the report, it is a little surprising because he did, after all, volunteer for the duty. But the way the film construes the details helps the viewer to better understand the character of Strobl and his brewing anxiety. In the report we learn that PFC Phelps was not yet prepared and Strobl would have to come back. These details are reconstructed in the film almost verbatim. However, in the report he directly says, "Now, at Dover with nothing to do and a solemn mission ahead, I began to get depressed. I was wondering about Chance Phelps. I didn't know anything about him; not even what he looked like. I wondered about his family and what it would be like to meet them. I did pushups in my room until I couldn't do any more." The film, however doesn't have Strobl directly speaking these lines, instead they are shown without dialogue. We see Strobl watching TV alone in a dim room with an indifferent expression on his face. When he lands on a channel reporting more war casualties, we understand that it is adding to his depression (along with the thought of the job ahead of him). Earlier in the film we see Strobl jogging and working out, so these construed details establish that Strobl deals with his emotions through doing some kind of physical activity, in this case, pushups. The filming techniques help reinforce a building anxiety because the lighting is dim, the music keeps building, Strobl is sweating, and when he can't do one more pushup the music reaches its crescendo and stops abruptly.