

Agrégation interne d'anglais

Session 2018

Épreuve ESP

**Explication d'un texte
extrait du programme**

ESP

224

Explication de texte

Ce sujet comprend 2 documents :

- Document 1 : Chris Smallbone, "Film Review: *Broken Arrow*, Delmer Daves, 1950", *Nativeamerican*, February 2008.
- Document 2 : *Broken Arrow* (Delmer Daves, 1950, 20th Century Fox). [0:01:25 – 0:04:03]

Le document 2 est à consulter sur la tablette multimédia fournie.

Explication de faits de langue

Le candidat proposera une analyse linguistique des segments soulignés dans le texte du document 1.

Document 1

Critics of *Broken Arrow* like Frank Manchel ("Cultural Confusion" in *Hollywood's Indian*, Rollins & O'Connor (eds), 1998) like to find fault rather than seeking out true worth. Since the film uses the device of presenting itself as a true account of what happened Manchel takes exception to perceived historical inaccuracies. Certainly the complete fabrication of events relating to Geronimo just to use his well known name outside its historical context is reprehensible, but is not sufficient to condemn the film as a whole. Neither is the misrepresentation of reservation life, cinema audiences would hardly be swelled by a realistic portrayal of this. It is not just reservation life that is sanitized, the whole portrayal of life in the west is sanitized in westerns as a whole. Manchel's misunderstanding of history and its relation to art forms is complete. He does not have sufficient knowledge of historical "facts": he seems to suggest that the 1867 Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek was relevant to the Apache when it was not, and that the Apache relied on the buffalo when they were pushed off the plains by the Comanche, following on from the Spanish. More seriously his understanding of methodology leads him to condemn the film for his History is preoccupied with "facts" rather than values. Even worse, he seems to think that films reflect their subject matter rather than being a reflection of the social mores of the times they are made.

Manchel dismisses the film's possible merits as it being "well intentioned", that "in 1950 people (sic) did not know any better", and that it was "a significant step forward compared to what had happened earlier." But Manchel is merely creating a straw man. We are told that the film is a "justification for the disastrous termination policies that Congress pursued in the 1950s whereby federal responsibility for Indian lands, treaties and individuals was ended". That the policies were disastrous is undoubted. That *Broken Arrow* is culpable is highly likely, since it was contemporaneous. However, this does not reduce its effectiveness or quality in presenting a set of values which were part of a movement towards breaking new ground for the western, albeit in a rather treacly and simplistic way. Nevertheless this does not rid the film of either its charm or merit.

Broken Arrow instills humanity in its native American characters. As Mankel states "It portrayed Indian/white relations in the old West not as they were, but as euro Americans wanted them to be." Exactly. And it did so very well, just as many westerns have done so since and before. It was no more or less historically accurate than *Dances with Wolves*, *Little Big*

40 *Man or Geronimo, an American Legend*. But in a number of ways its values shine through.

History itself cannot set out what Indian/white relations were, nor should it purport to, so why should a film, an art form, be criticized on this ground? History can only reconstruct what happened from the sources
45 selected from those available. Films reflect the times in which they are made. In this film humanity shines out like a beacon. Idealistic yes, historically accurate no. A fine film, I think so.