**Sample Critical Analysis Outline: *Five Minutes of Heaven***

**Audience/forum:** The audience would be people interested in Ireland and more generally those interested in world events and the continual struggle for peace. I’d want this in a national forum, say, in the *NY Times*, since it’s a theme of universal relevance, but that’s a stretch, so instead I’d choose a site for Irish/Irish American news and culture, such as <http://www.irishcentral.com>.

**Intro:** I’d begin with a reference to the *kairos* (specific cultural and historical context): why I’m talking about this 2009 film now. I’d publish this around Easter, the time of year when the Irish celebrate their revolution against British rule. It’s also the time, several decades later, when the Irish agreed to stop killing each other over the unresolved conflict over sovereignty. I’d relate it to whatever civil wars were bubbling at the time—Israeli-Palestinian struggles, Syria, Nigeria, etc. Then I’d introduce the message of the film, what it has to show us about human nature and the struggle for peace and reconciliation that we can apply to current conflicts.

1. **One significant theme of the film**: (enduring human concern) how long-lasting the effects of political violence can be on an individual’s psyche. This would let me introduce the two main characters, a former IRA terrorist (Alistair, played by Leeson) and the brother of one of his victims (Joe, played by Nesbitt), both still suffering from one long-ago act of violence.
2. **What the film shows about the healing process**. (enduring human concern)
3. One way to heal is to help heal others. (Alistair)
4. One way to *not* heal is to cherish a grudge, make it part of one’s identity. (Joe)
5. **Context**:
6. **Historical context**: The film brings in Alistair’s work with Nelson Mandella, which provides a parallel between racial violence and sectarian violence, shows that it transcends borders and eras.
7. **Filmic context**: I’d mention a couple of other films that deal with this kind of violence and this kind of healing in South Africa and Ireland: *Invictus, In My Country, Long Walk to Freedom, The Boxer*.
8. **Insights the film offers:** (enduring human concerns, my analysis/interpretation)
9. Sometimes the barriers that really divide people aren’t what the combatants think they are. Here we see it is as much about class resentments as sectarian (religious) differences that keep Joe from seeing Alistair as anything but a monster.
10. Sometimes recognizing the suffering of your enemy is what allows you to see him as human, and what allows you to see his transgressions as forgivable.

**Conclusion:** Finish by returning to the theme of political violence and how long-lasting its effects can be, but reveal what finally helps Joe get past his own enduring fury—empathy for his enemy’s pain, and a genuine wish to put his own behind him. Bring this out from the personal to the societal—explain how what is true for individuals is true for societies. Refer to one or more of the other films that shows this better, maybe *The Boxer*, since it’s Irish.