

Date 4 / 19 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / LyricTitle Life as a HouseAuthor / Director / Irwin Winkler

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I watched *Life as a House* through Amazon Prime videos on my computer before I went to bed on the night before Easter Sunday.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc? )

*Life as a House* begins when George Monroe, an architectural model maker, becomes fired from his job that he has had for at least twenty years, causing him to go into a fit of rage and destroy all the models he had created throughout the years, except for one. On his way out of the building, he collapses and is later diagnosed with terminally ill cancer, of which no treatment can cure. Essentially free to live his life how he wants to, George tears down his decrepit and deteriorating shack given to him by his father and decides to build his dream house, recruiting his alienated and rebellious son, named Sam. Sam is utterly unhappy and miserable that he has to spend the entire summer with his dad that he never sees rather than spending the summer with his friends, who were going to go up to Lake Tahoe to get high, drunk, and who knows what else, refusing to work on the house with George and even threatening to become a male prostitute. Over time, however, George begins to reconnect with Sam and even with his ex-wife Robin, who begins to find herself rediscovering the man she once loved, and many others flock to aid in the construction of the house. Nevertheless, once George tells Sam of his critical condition, he feels severely betrayed and let down, causing him to take refuge at his neighbor Alyssa's house, whom he grows to have an intimate relationship with. George eventually ends up having to go to the hospital, nearly approaching death, and out of love, Sam makes a final act to please his father by showing him the Christmas lights he put up on the almost finished house. After George dies, Sam then gives the house to a girl who was put in a wheelchair because of George's father's actions in a drunk driving accident. Sam knows that that is what George always ultimately wanted deep down, and George speaks his last words to Sam in a voice-over, telling him how he was finally able to define himself with the construction of the house., encouraging Sam to build his life in a similar way.

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

*Life as a House* is about changing and transforming one's life and leaving behind all of the fears that restrict oneself from living. Particularly, there are thematic elements regarding personal renewal, the breaking down of walls and barriers, helping the mentally homeless, achieving true and profound intimacy, and dying well and fruitfully for others in this movie. Having been diagnosed with a terminally ill disease and knowing that his life was to end in only a few months, George undertook the task of building a new house, essentially a new way of living, one of which was built on a solid foundation and held him closer to the important things in life, namely, his son and his old relationship with his wife. George finally got to be who he wanted to be in life, portraying an exemplary instance of personal renewal. Ultimately, however, he could not have accomplished this sort of self-fulfillment had it not been for his destruction of his old house, the bondage that was holding him down and back in life. Once the building was destroyed, he realized the possibility of wholeness and integrity in life, which he took of advantage of in his last moments on earth. George's compassion and sympathy for his son Sam also shows how people need to be kind and benevolent towards others because, ultimately, they may not have any clue what other people, who may indeed be lacking some of the inherent desires of man, are going through.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

Various symbols exist in *Life as a House* that speak to great and quite profound truths about human nature and human existence. For example, George's old house symbolizes his past fears and inhibitions, the obstacles that were holding him back from living and being the person that he had always wanted to be in life. Moreover, the scene in which Sam and George knock down the home together represents them both leaving behind and conquering their personal fears as well as the relationship issues and troubles they had with each other, starting afresh and building new foundations in their lives. Finally, the new house itself symbolizes the recognition of the things that matter in life and the realization that the meaningful and significant needs to be taken advantage of because of the succinctness of life.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

*Life as a House* definitely fits the typical phrase of "saving the best for last" in terms of required movie logs for the poetic vision project. The movie was not only probably one of the most poetic movies I have seen for this project and in life in general, besides *Dead Poets Society*, but it also contains a lot of insight about human nature and the human condition all in a modern and contemporary context. The movie is so easy to relate to particularly because of the various typical familial relationships that exist between the characters, especially now because of the extremely high divorce rates in society. Although I am not specifically affected by the statistics on marriage and divorce rates, kids more than ever are experiencing relationship struggles with their families because of a change of standards and values in the modern era, and I think that this movie is poetic in the sense that it urges people to find a way out of the struggles they face and to discover the things that matter most in their lives. The movie opens the viewer up to the reality of how short life actually is through George's contraction of cancer and quick and sudden death, and it strongly encourages people to live how they want to live before it ultimately becomes too late. Moreover, *Life as a House* forces the viewer to contemplate what is actually of value and significance in life and to act upon the insight one achieves by truly contemplating and observing life in hindsight. Nothing is more poetic than accepting reality and taking advantage of all of the opportunities and possibilities that life has to offer, something that this movie portrays greatly. If I were to watch any of the required movies again for this project, *Life as a House* would definitely be the one.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)