

## An Evaluation of *Schindler's List*

The film I am evaluating is the 1993 classic *Schindler's List*. It has an outstanding director, Steven Spielberg, and an even more outstanding cast. It features Liam Neeson as, at first a Nazi, but later turned savior, Oscar Schindler. It also has Ben Kingsley as the loveable and sad faced accountant Itzhak Stern. Or perhaps the best known actor Ralph Fiennes as the bitter hearted Nazi, Amon Goeth. I chose this film because I believe it embodies all that a film can be. It utilizes all the factors and elements of that make films what they are. This film rightfully earns its place on AFI's Top 100 list, and should be recognized by all critics as one of the best films ever made.

The basic plot is that a man named Oscar Schindler starts a pots and pans company for the Nazi's and starts it with the money he borrowed from some Jews. He starts off making much progress. However, he later runs into some problems when the WWII catches up with him. All his Jewish employees are taken away, including his much needed accountant Itzhak Stern. When he realizes what is happening to the Jews, because of the very people he was helping, he decides to start helping and hiding the Jews. After a while the war ends, and the Jews are saved. The Nazi's lose and Amon is hung. The film is riddled with subplots, all of which make up the main plot. One of which is a key plot point in the film, the well known girl in red. Almost all of the film is in black and white, except for about halfway there is a girl in a red riding hood. That is because Oscar Schindler is captivated and focused on this little girl, even though all around him all the Jews are being tortured, beaten, and kicked out of the ghetto's and moved to concentration camps. Schindler is up on a hill with a woman and they are both on horses.

Yet all he can focus on is this little girl in red, and it is at this point that he realizes that he must stop helping the Nazi's and start helping, and hiding the Jews.

The theme of the plot is one of evil turned good to fight against its old evils. It is very simplistic, yet is one of the oldest tales in history. It is an honest and traditional tale that has been repeated throughout history, even if *Schindler's List* is based off a true story. One of the motifs is the theme of money; it is the circle of the story. It all starts because Oscar Schindler wants some money, and that eventually leads him to his revelation that he is done making money and needs to start helping people. He himself states "I have made enough money." Then, in the end, after all is said and done, one of the Jews at his funeral states that he "died one of the richest men I knew." This is because so many people loved him and miss him, that in the end he was not rich in money, but in friends and family. One of the main symbols is definitely the girl in the red dress; she symbolizes all of the Jews running from the Nazi's. And Schindler, at the moment he watches the girl in red, symbolizes the entire world. Realizing that the Jews need help, that somebody needs to stop the evil that the Nazi's represent.

The script is based of the story and book *Schindler's List*. It is a true story of a man in WWII that did all the things mentioned in the section about plot. The dialog is very believable for that era. Oscar Schindler really did talk and act as he was portrayed in the film. The script flows and makes sense. The script also flows well with all the other elements.

The acting in *Schindler's List* is absolutely outstanding, and should be commemorated for its excellence. The way Liam Nelson acts and drives the character of Oscar Schindler is the exact way I could imagine the way it all happened. I could imagine the actual Oscar Schindler in real life acting swave, cool, and collected. Or Ralph Fiennes playing Amon, which really blew me away. I actually started to hate this guy for being such a cold hearted, cruel character. The way he hates and acts toward everyone really helps you along and develop a hatred of not just him, but of all Nazi's. Not that they shouldn't already be hated. Even the small roles were outstanding, such as the girl in the red dress. When she is doing anything, even just walking, you want to know why she is doing everything she does. You want to know why she is hiding, what did she do wrong? She's just a little girl, and because of this she is a pivotal character in the film.

The setting, costume, and makeup are very well done. All the sets are real, so they should be commemorated just for that. The costume and makeup by themselves are also some of the best in film history. They put the Jews in costume and makeup that make them just seem oppressed and sad, or the Nazi's that are dressed and have an evil glow about them. The Nazi's stand out in the entire movie, just because they seem to be filled with a deep seeded hatred of all the other characters. That they themselves don't want what's going on to continue.

The direction of the film works well with all the other parts of the film and all other elements. The film's purpose is to show you the evils and nature of WWII and the Nazi regime, and succeeds in this aspect very much so. When you are done viewing

Schindler's List you are filled with an emotion that, itself, was the purpose Steven Spielberg was trying to get across.

This film also has much notable photography; it really utilizes it to its full potential. And of course, the girl in the red riding hood is one of the best scenes using photography. In the chaos of all that is happening around the ghetto, which is zoomed out on so you may view the entire thing, all you can seem to focus on is the girl in red. And not just because she is the only thing that is in color, but because she seems to be the most important part of that scene.

The editing in *Schindler's List* was nothing out of the ordinary. It flowed together fluently, and there were very few scenes that were affected by aging. Even though the film was made in 1993, it seemed like they could have done a better job of changing the scenes location to location. All in all, the editing in this film wasn't anything special.

The sound, however, was spectacular. During any of the action scenes you could hear anything in the background, and in a very good way. When Schindler is atop the hill when the ghetto is being evacuated, you look at Schindler and hear him. However, in the background you hear the screams of crying and injured Jews. You hear the muffled and angry sound of the Nazi's. In a scene where Amon grabs a sniper rifle and starts shooting Jews from his villa, you hear the sniper rifle go off and Amon laughing, but you also hear the women in his bed cry and the Jews fall and cry out in pain and agony.

So in the end, *Schindler's List* should be remembered, and is rightfully placed on AFI's Top 100 greatest movies of all time list. It has almost completely mastered all the elements of film making, and the flow is nearly perfect. This film does not only use and perfect all the elements; however, it keeps you entertained. It doesn't make you want to leave, or fall asleep. It also serves to educate, on the evils the Nazi's brought about. So, *Schindler's List*, definitely one of the greatest movies ever made. It deserves all the awards and nominations it received, and should be remembered by generations to come.