

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Symbolism and Color in Schindler's List

### The Girl in the Red Coat

A snapshot of a little girl in red during Schindler's view of her. The red coat is one of the extremely few instances of color in black-and-white films.

While the film is shot primarily in black-and-white, red is used to distinguish a little girl (portrayed by Oliwia Dabrowska) in a coat. Later in the film, the girl appears to be one of the dead Jewish people, recognizable only by the red coat she is still wearing. Although it was unintentional, this character is coincidentally very similar to Roma Ligocka, who was known in the Kraków Ghetto for her red coat. Ligocka, unlike her fictional counterpart, survived the Holocaust. After the film was released, she wrote and published her own story, *The Girl in the Red Coat: A Memoir* (2002, in translation).

The scene, however, was constructed on the memories of Zelig Burkhut, survivor of Plaszow (and other work camps). When interviewed by Spielberg before the film was made, Burkhut told of a young girl wearing a pink coat, no older than four, who was shot by a Nazi officer right before his eyes. When being interviewed by *The Courier-Mail*, he said "it is something that stays with you forever."

According to Andy Patrizio of IGN, the girl in the red coat is used to indicate that Schindler has changed: "Spielberg put a twist on her [Ligocka's] story, turning her into one more pile on the cart of corpses to be incinerated. The look on Schindler's face is unmistakable. Minutes earlier, he saw the ash and soot of burning corpses piling up on his car as just an annoyance."

Andre Caron wondered whether it was done "to symbolize innocence, hope or the red blood of the Jewish people being sacrificed in the horror of the Holocaust?" Spielberg himself has explained that he only followed the novel, and his interpretation was that:

"America and Russia and England all knew about the Holocaust when it was happening, and yet we did nothing about it. We didn't assign any of our forces to stopping the march toward death, the inexorable march toward death. It was a large bloodstain, primary red color on everyone's radar, but no one did anything about it. And that's why I wanted to bring the color red in."

### Candles

The beginning features a family observing the Shabbat. Spielberg said, "to start the film with the candles being lit...would be a rich bookend, to start the film with a normal *Shabbat* service before the juggernaut against the Jews begins." When the color fades out in the film's opening moments, it gives way to a movie in which smoke comes to symbolize bodies being burnt at Auschwitz. Only at the end do the images of candle fire regain their warmth when Schindler allows his workers to hold Shabbat services. For Spielberg, they represented "just a glint of color, and a glimmer of hope."

### Schindler's List Essay Outline

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Develop an **expository** (inform, describe, explain, or define) **writing prompt** for the movie *Schindler's List*.

**Expository Prompt**

Introduction

Thesis

Example #1

Example #2

Example #3

Closing