

**HORROR OF ETHNIC CLEANSING IN SPIELBERG'S  
*SCHINDLER'S LIST* MOVIE: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



**RESEARCH PAPER**

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for getting the Bachelor Degree of Education  
in English Department

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**2010**

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

*Schindler's List* is one of the most popular epic drama movies of World War II ever produced. The screenplay of this movie adapted from the novel with the same title written by Thomas Keneally. He is an Australian novelist, playwright and author of non-fiction. He is most famous for his *Schindler's Ark* (1982), but later retitled as *Schindler's List*, which won the Booker Prize and is the basis of *Schindler's List* movie.

*Schindler's List* movie is directed by Steven Spielberg, an American director, and screenplay by Steven Zaillian. Spielberg is better known as the maker of scientific and adventures movie, sometimes centering on children, were seen as an archetype of modern Hollywood Blockbuster movie making such as *Jurassic Park* (1993) and *War of the Worlds* (2005). In later years his movie began addressing such issues as the holocaust, slavery, war and terrorism such as *Amistad* (1997) and *Munich* (2005).

*Schindler's List* is a movie about German profiteer, Oskar Schindler. He is an opportunistic member of the Nazi party, lavishes bribes upon the army and SchultzStaffel (SS) officials in charge of procurement. Schindler acquires a factory for the production of army mess kits and gains a contact with Itzhak Stern, a functionary Jewish Council who has contacts with the underground Jewish business community in the Ghetto. They loan him the money for the

factory in return for a small share of products produced for trading on the black market.

Amon Goeth, the SS commandant arrives to Krakow for initiating construction of the new Plaszow labor camp. The hundreds of troops emptying the cramped rooms and murdering anyone, who protest, appear, uncooperative, elderly or infirm, even for no reason at all. Schindler watches the massacre from the hills and profoundly affected. During this time, Schindler bribes Goeth into allowing him to build a sub-camp for his workers. Originally, his intentions are to continue making money, but as time passes, he begins ordering Stern to save as many lives as possible. Ultimately, an order arrives from Berlin commanding Goeth to exhume and destroy the remains of Jews crops in the Krakow and to ship the remaining Jews to Auschwitz. But Schindler buy them from Goeth and take them to his factory in Moravia, away from final solution.

*Schindler's List* is a major critical success. It was made in March 1, 1993. This movie was taken for 71 days, which is the setting of place at Poland and setting of time is the World War II. The movie runtime is 195 minutes, released in VCD and DVD distributed by Universal Pictures. In United States it is played in 40 weeks with total performance on 9.379 screens from it firstly released on December 15, 1993. The successful of *Schindler's List* also happens in United Kingdom (played in 2.867 screens or 30 weeks), Poland (played in 38 weeks), Australia (played in 85 screens), and Germany (played in 16 weeks with over 5.8 million admission tickets were

sold). The good response from public makes *Schindler's List* which only had \$25,000,000 for their budget; finally gain \$321,200,000 for their worldwide gross (Raven, 1994).

The good acceptance does not only come from the market, but also from the movie expert. Shane Rivers (2009) said that this movie is a gateway into the past. It is an information source as to how the holocaust operated, an unthinkable that anyone could do such horrible things to their fellow man. How could anyone practice genocide on such a large scale? Such thoughts make one's blood run cold. It is not explaining evil, but it insists that the men can be good in the face of it, that good can prevail. It also portrays a distinctive relationship between two very significant characters named Oskar Schindler and Amon Goeth. Eric Enders in *The Times Newspaper* (1996) also enhancing that *Schindler's List* portrays a common man struggling against something he thinks he cannot control or change, only to discover that he can. He also stated that Spielberg was doing the amazing justice to the amazing movie.

*Schindler's List* is nominated for 12 Academy Awards and winning seven among them. It is sweeping Best Director for Steven Spielberg, Best Art Direction and Set Decoration for Ewa Braun and Allan Starski, Best Cinematography for Janusz Kaminski, Best Film Editing for Michael Kahn, Best Music Original Score for John Williams, Best Picture for Gerald L. Molen, and Best Adapted Screenplay for Steven Zaillian. Besides that,

*Schindler's List* also got award from other countries like from César Awards France and Golden Screen Germany (The Internet Movie Database, 2004).

Besides the good responses, *Schindler's List* also gains some protests, especially from anti Semitist. Steven Kellman (*Newsweek*, 1993) said that *Schindler's List* is Zionist affirmation, a lustrous assertion that Israel is the only alternative to persecution if not eradication of Jews. Will Franklin is enhancing that there is so many people have a notion that *Schindler's List* story is simply scenery chewing or hyperbol from fact and even simply as Jews' propaganda. Even there is mentioning that this movie is manipulating and dictating the audience to sympathize on the side of certain whereas cursing other party, exploiting sensitive theme for capitalizing the holocaust as the propaganda at the same time disguised as an entertainment for the masses. Sen Alfonse D'Amato, a New York Republican said that to equate the nudity of the holocaust victims in the concentration camp with any sexual connotations is outrageous and offensive (Airing Wednesday, 1997).

*Schindler's List* is an interesting movie; there are four aspects that make this movie really interesting. The first is *Schindler's List* has the uncommon story; this is a historical movie about historical events. That history is not only expansive and international, it is also intensely personal for a race of people, for Spielberg himself, and for all of the people as they confront their notions of tolerance. Human are challenged not only by the staggering acts of cruelty they see, but by the equally acts of kindness. As the audiences witness

the opposite of push-pull of good and evil, the audiences are forced to recognize those qualities within themselves that are both light and dark.

The second aspect is the visualization and the cast of the movie. Spielberg makes the audience feel enthusiastic with this epic drama movie, even when the movie shows about the crimes conducting in physical crimes and the nakedly shooting and the Jews corpse exhumed and being carted to be cremated. The casts of this movie also have a valuable part. In this movie, Ralph Fiennes who was play as Amon Goeth is wonderful actor. He makes the character of Amon Goeth alive. So, when people talk about Amon Goeth, they will also talk about Ralph Fiennes because Amon Goeth and Ralph Fiennes are already like one person. Liam Neeson also plays Oskar Schindler very well. His acting is successfully representing the man as the member of Nazi party and the hero for his Schindlerjuden. *Schindler's List* is not only well acted, but technically superior. The thoughtful of black and white cinematography, the lightning speed of editing, and the wonderful poetic score. But as good as they are, it is not the acting, the camerawork, or the music that makes *Schindler's List* so special. It is the meaning and love that Spielberg puts into every frame.

The third is the passion for humanity that reflected in this movie. How Schindler who was an alcoholic, war profiteer and a womanizer can be considered a hero? What would possess him, with all of his power and money, to risk his own life to save the lives of thousands people that he has never met before from the genocide of war and ethnic cleansing. More than

anything else, *Schindler's List* is an uplifting affirmation of the human spirit. It shows to the audience that even in the most hopeless of circumstances, humanity can prevail and the thinking and motivation behind the Nazi characters' actions, Spielberg gives the audience a greater understanding of how this nightmare could have possibly happened.

The last is the horror of the ethnic cleansing which is reflected in *Schindler's List* is one of appealing aspects that is interesting to be studied. Spielberg, the director, wants the audience to underline ethnic cleansing that happened in World War II in 1930's leaves the bad effects to the society especially in social aspect. The society is drawn in anti-Semitism and causing again the genocide event both for what happened in Rwanda and Yugoslavia. They are caused by the World War II. The effects can be studied in sociological term which studies the social life of a human.

Based on the previous reasons the writer will observe *Schindler's List* movie by using sociological theory. So the writer constructs the title **HORROR OF ETHNIC CLEANSING IN SPIELBERG'S SCHINDLER'S LIST MOVIE: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH.**

## **B. Literature Review**

The first study about *Schindler's List* conducted by Irira Veronica, a Petra Christian University student (2005), entitled "A Psychoanalytic Study Of Oskar Schindler's Reasons To Save The Jews In Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's List*". She uses psychoanalytic to analyze the data. The aim of the study is to find how the superego of Schindler overcomes his id and his ego.

The result of the data shows that Schindler's id is dominant and the imbalance of Oskar Schindler's id, ego, and superego does not always end in bad things, but it can result in good things as Schindler does. She tries to give a moral message through this novel that life is about love and respect.

The second writer is conducted by Garry Schmidt (2006), a Doctor of Ministry Candidate at San Francisco Theological Seminary, entitled "Spirituality and Justice in *Schindler's List*: A Case Study Informed by Karl Barth and Gustavo Gutierrez". In this paper he uses the life of Oskar Schindler as a case study for demonstrating how the spirit hovers in the midst of lived experience and inviting to love and justice, all the while honouring whatever form of freedom Schindler feels the necessity to choose. The result is that love, justice, freedom, gratitude and the passion of humanity, success to arouse Schindler from isolated and opportunistic individualism and transform it into a passionate and gratitude filled preferential treatment for the poor and disenfranchised.

The differences between the writer and the two previous writers are the theme and the perspective. Ira Veronica writes about the reasons why Oskar Schindler save the Jews by using Psychoanalytic Perspective and Garry Schmidt writes about the spirituality and justice by using Theological Perspective, while the writer means to analyze the movie based on Sociological Approach. The writer analyzes horror of ethnic cleansing in *Schindler's List* movie using sociological approach.



### **C. Problem Statement**

Knowing that the problem is the important part of research, the writer proposes, “How is horror of ethnic cleansing reflected in *Schindler’s List* movie?”

Ethnic cleansing is the elimination of an unwanted ethnic group from society, as by genocide, forced migration, or forced assimilation (Hallinan: 2009).

### **D. Limitation of the Study**

The writer focuses this research in analyzing the horror of ethnic cleansing in Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* movie based on sociological approach.

### **E. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows:

1. To analyze Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* movie based on the structural elements of the movie.
2. To describe the horror of ethnic cleansing in Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* movie based on sociological approach.

### **F. The Benefits of the Study**

The benefits of the study are:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The study is hoped to give a new contribution and information to the larger body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on *Schindler’s List* movie and novel.

## 2. Practical Benefit

The study is hoped to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer and other students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or another Universities who have interest with literary study on the movie from Sociological Approach.

## G. Research Method

### 1. Type of the Study

In this research, the writer uses a qualitative research. It is library research while data source are using literary data. It purposes to analyze the movie using sociological perspective. The steps to conduct this research are (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining data and data source, (4) determining technique of data collection, and (5) determining technique of data analysis.

### 2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is *Schindler's List* movie directed by Steven Spielberg and publishing by Universal Pictures in 1993. It is analyzed by using sociological approach.

### 3. Types of the Data and the Data Source

The type of data used in the study are text and picture. In the movie, text is the form of dialogue in movie script. Meanwhile, the picture is describing overall events and the visualization of the movie. The type of data sources consists of primary data source and secondary data sources.

a. Primary Data Sources

The primary data sources of the study are *Schindler's List* movie directed by Steven Spielberg from Universal Pictures and the script movie written by Steven Zaillian.

b. Secondary Data Sources

The secondary data sources are books such as *Sociology of Literature*, *Sociology of Literature and Drama*, *Theory of Literature*, *The Art of Technique*, *Film: an Introduction*, and other sources that support the analysis.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The technique of data collections are capturing of the picture and note taking, with the steps are:

- a. Watching the movie for the several times.
- b. Reading the movie script.
- c. Determining the character that will be analyzed.
- d. Taking notes of important parts in both primary and secondary data.
- e. Classifying and determining the relevant data.
- f. Taking notes from the material and some other resources related to the movie and the analysis.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. It concerns with the structural elements of the movie and sociological approach.

## H. Research Paper Organization

The research paper organization of *Horror of Ethnic Cleansing in Spielberg's Schindler's List* Movie: A Sociological Approach is as follows: Chapter I is Introduction; it consists of Background of the Study, Literature Review, Problem Statement, Limitation of the Study, Objectives of the Study, Benefits of the Study, Research Method, and Paper Organization. Chapter II is Underlying Theory; it consists of Sociology of Literature, The Perspective of Sociology of Literature, Structural Elements of the Movie, and Theoretical Application. Chapter III is social historical background of American society in the late twentieth century which covers social aspect, political aspect, economic aspect, science and technology, cultural aspect, and religious aspect. Chapter IV is Structural Analysis of *Schindler's List* movie; (1) The Structural Elements of *Schindler's List* movie; it consists of Narrative Elements and Technical Elements; (2) Discussion. Chapter V is Sociological Analysis of *Schindler's List* movie. It consists of the social aspect, political aspect, economic aspect, science and technology, cultural aspect, and religious aspect. Chapter VI is Conclusion and Suggestion.