

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Survival Instinct in The movie *The Pianist*

directed By Roman Polanski

A Thesis

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Anil Shrestha has completed his thesis entitled "Survival Instinct in the movie *The Pianist*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from January 2012 to February 2013. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for *viva*.

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Abstract

Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* is a genuine depiction of survival instinct inherent in human being, which is marvelously outplayed by the protagonist, Szpilman and other characters at the time of crisis and killings. The movie crystallizes in what extent a human being has love for his life even in the mouth of death. The plot of the movie and the camera revolves around the pianist called Szpilman and his family who spent their life among the tortures, and hardship in the Warsaw Ghetto. Nevertheless, as the German grip tightens upon Poland, Szpilman and his family are selected for their unwanted exile to a Nazi concentration camp. Refusing to face certain death, Szpilman goes into hiding in a comfortable apartment provided by a friend. However, when his benefactor goes missing, Szpilman is left to fend for himself and he spends the next several years dashing from one abandoned home to another, desperate to avoid capture by German occupation troops. Protagonist fulfills his existential quest despite of his surrounding messed with corpses, killing, bullets and bombardments.

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I: The Pursuit of Existence and The Pianist

Current research entitled “Survival Instinct in the Movie The Pianist” extremely probes into the search of life and love of survival instinct among death and destruction and extinction. On the surface level, the movie is the depiction of hardships and tortures faced by a Polish family during the Nazi holocaust but on its deep analysis it is the demonstration of the desperate search of life and survival in the midst of bloodshed and devastation. Refusal to face the death provided by German, the struggle to be alive by the protagonist Szpilman, people longing for a drop of water to make their baby alive and all the plight of the people and their quest and desire to be alive tell that the movie is the depiction of the search of life in the Nazi Ghetto. Szpilman sees many deaths in front of him with his own eyes. He sees old men are shot down by the Nazi soldier, he experiences bomb blasting in his own radio station, and he witnesses the gruesome death of his own fellowmen from near. He faces lots of tortures and the experiences of deadly situation but he longs for death and moves from here and there in search of life and survival in between the devastating scenario.

The hero Szpilman, the protagonist is not only a mere observer of the holocaust but he is also the character who proves that human beings don't forget their love of life and humanity even in the midst of death and destruction. The hero's struggle for life shows that people want to live and spend their life time even if they know that it is their last time and they are going to die. They want to extend their lifetime even if it is certain that the death will not let them to live. It also presumes that how he struggles to survive for his own destiny and most of the Jewish characters don't lose their humanity even at the last step of their lives which shows the existential theme in the movie.

The protagonist Władysław Szpilman faces lots of ups and down in his life during the Nazi holocaust. He is a famous Polish Jewish pianist working for Warsaw Radio. He sees his whole world collapse with the outbreak of World War II and the invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939. Although there is death in life in the life of the protagonist, Adriane Brody, consistently from beginning to the ending of the movie, struggles his best to survive. The very interesting thing is that what a passion for life there is in such an unbearable situation. In first scene when there is the sound of bombs and a man signals that the whole city is being collapsed, he goes on playing his piano. The piano is his life.

Exploring the survival desire of people facing the death from too near this thesis revolves mainly three areas of concern: the depiction of the passion of life at the mouth of death, the portrait of the Nazi holocaust and the suffering of people and the tolerance power to live in this world. The main objective of the current research is to explore the survival instinct of the people who are facing their death in the Nazi concentration camps. This thesis has made a deliberate choice to analyze the text with the perspective of Existentialism by various authors. To describe the great effort of the protagonist to be alive in this world the method of existentialism will be the appropriate method to view the text from the viewpoint of the protagonist's survival instinct as a human being.

Roman Polanski has merged the perspective and grim, often nihilistic approach to storytelling in his movies. Mr. Roman Polanski has left an indelible mark on world cinema. Although his films have been compared to those of Alfred Hitchcock with their use of scaffold comedy, anxiety, and irregular surrealism to tell unprincipled stories of normal men struggling to deal with in an antagonistic, ironic world, Polanski, unlike Hitchcock, has chosen to experiment with a variety of genres. In this regard, the director has proved himself a "cinematic playboy"

intent on exploring the possibilities of all film categories. A uniformly pessimistic viewpoint provides the clearest link to entries in Polanski body of work, something that is widely traced back to years of childhood trauma. His movies often deal with theme of a person struggling with the state's policy to save himself from the attack of the wrong policy of a state.

Roman Polanski is a French - Polish film director, producer, writer and artist, who has proved to be one of the main dominant directors living today. A truthfully global filmmaker, Polanski has acknowledged many awards, including the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and five Oscar nominations. Polanski has tackled many genres, including the horror film (*Rosemary's Baby*), film noir (*Chinatown*), historical drama (*Tess*), and, more recently, the war film *The Pianist* (2002), about the holocaust, and the thriller *The Ghost Writer*. Polanski has also directed some of the most talented actresses of our time, including Catherine Deneuve, Mia Farrow and Kate Winslet. Polanski's films are dominated by a sense of claustrophobia and deal with the existential themes of being alone, terror and restlessness.

Roman Polanski is a great film director whose films have proved Hollywood as a landmark in the field of cinematography. He is an Oscar-winning director recognized for films that include *Knife in Water* and *The Pianist*. Mr. Polanski remains active as a director, but he is unlikely ever to resume the Hollywood career that was cut short by his flight. Famous as the director of *Rosemary's Baby*, among many other films, and as the husband of Sharon Tate, who was killed by the Manson crime family, Mr. Polanski became the center of a media storm that foreshadowed the later celebrity tsunamis of O. J. Simpson and Robert Blake. While talking about Roman Polanski's work, he has debuted through *Knife in the Water* his first feature-length film; *Knife in the Water* is also significant because it is the first Polish film after World War II that did not have a war theme.

Scripted by Jerzy Skolimowski and Polanski, *Knife in the Water* is about a wealthy and unhappy married couple who decide to take a mysterious hitchhiker with them on a weekend boating excursion. A dark and unsettling work, Polanski's debut feature subtly evinces a profound pessimism about human relationships with regard to the psychological dynamics and moral consequences of status envy and sexual jealousy. *Knife in the Water* was a major commercial success in the West and gave Polanski an international reputation.

In each and every work of Polanski he is seeking the existential quest. The movie *The Ninth Gate* also supports the thematic importance of the current research. It shows how Polanski searches existence in his works. *The Ninth Gate* (1999) which is a story of an authority on rare books which is drawn into a confrontation with the forces of darkness. Dean Corso (Johnny Depp) is a rare book broker who creates his living tracking down precious substance for rich bibliophiles. Corso is hired by Boris Balkan (Frank Langella), a millionaire New Yorker with a vast compilation of occult literature and an eager interest in "The Nine Gates to the Kingdom of Shadows." Legend has it that the book was co-written by Satan in the 17th century, and only three copies are recognized to exist. The owner of one book he recently sold the book to Balkan a few days before killing himself. Balkan desires Corso to discover the additional two copies (one owned by Mr. Corso is told to be thorough and extra no expenditure. Corso learns that the book contains clues to a puzzle that will allow people to call up the evil spirit, and certain people will stop at nonentity to find the missing parts of the formula. Similarly, *Chinatown* (1974) is a story of a betrayal and political corruption set in an expertly recreated Los Angeles of the 1930s.

The movie is one of modern Hollywood's most successful re-workings of classic film noir. Jack Nicholson plays J.J. Gittes, a private detective who specializes in investigating false wives. As the movie begins, Jake is hired by Mrs. Evelyn Cross Mulwray, wife of the chief of

Los Angeles' Bureau of Water and Power, to tail and photograph Mr. Hollis Mulwray (Darrell Zwerling) in a minute of marital indiscretion. Jake does this, but soon realizes that he's been duped. His client is a fake. Jake meets the real Mrs. Mulwray (Faye Dunaway), who tells him of his error, but this meeting only proceeds to puzzle the investigation further. Now Jake must discover why Hollis Mulwray is so important but also who set him up to begin with. Matters are complicated further when a few days after their first encounter; Hollis Mulwray dies in a thinly disguised murder. For the rest of the story, Jake endeavors to expose who set him up, who then killed Hollis Mulwray, what Evelyn Cross Mulwray knows, and what all this has to do with water, property, and the future of Los Angeles. "Cynical, claustrophobic, and wallowing in murky moral depths no vintage noir would dare approach, *Chinatown* is one of the great films of the 1970s." (Jim Sinclair, Pacific Cinémathèque)

A drama film, *Death and Maiden* (1994) by Polanski is based on the story of Paulina Escobar (Weaver), wife of a lawyer in an unnamed South America country. When her husband Gerardo (Wilson) comes home with a charming stranger she is convinced that the stranger, Dr. Miranda (Kingsley) was part of the old fascist regime and that he tortured and raped her for weeks while she was blindfolded. Paulina takes him captive to determine the truth. Despite attempts by both her husband and Miranda to convince her that he is innocent she is not convinced. In the final scene Paulina and Miranda cast uncomfortable glances at each other, and look away in a concert.

Miranda glances down at the couple again as the camera shows Gerardo glancing up towards the balcony at the now off-screen Miranda.

Similarly in his film *Rosemary's Baby*, is an American horror film written and directed by Roman Polanski himself, based on the bestselling novel *Rosemary's Baby* by Ira Levin. The film, *Rosemary's Baby* released in 1968, is a box-office success and became his first Hollywood production, thereby establishing his reputation as a major commercial filmmaker in the world's largest film industry. The film, a horror-thriller set in trendy Manhattan, is about Rosemary Woodhouse (Mia Farrow), a young housewife who is impregnated by the devil. Polanski's screenplay adaptation earned him second Academy Award nomination.

The researcher's current concern, *The Pianist* has been taken very favorably and critically by various critics and reviewers. It has created a reign of responses after release. Roman Polanski himself has responded about the movie by recalling his past because his childhood is also linked with the theme and the background of the movie. Polanski's fascination with cinema began very early, when he was around four or five. He recalls this period in an interview:

Even as a child, I always loved cinema and was thrilled when my parents would take me before the war. Then we were put into the ghetto in Kraków and there was no cinema, but the Germans often showed newsreels to the people outside the ghetto, on a screen in the market place. And there was one particular corner where you could see the screen through the barbed wire. I remember watching with fascination, although all they were showing was the German army and German tanks, with occasional anti-Jewish slogans inserted on cards.

Similar to Polanski's above mentioned experience, *The Pianist* is a story of a European Jew during this period because the title character, Wladyslaw Szpilman (Adrien Brody is his Oscar winning performance), survives the Holocaust. There is an unforgettable shot of Szpilman walking down the street of the Warsaw ghetto after the deportation of the Jews and the streets are

littered with their possessions. Hundreds of characters in the film, thousands from the ghetto, and millions throughout Europe were eliminated by the Nazis. Szpilman is the exception, not the rule.

A variety of reviewer and intellectuals have expressed their views on this film that gave its wide recognition. Most of the critics have explored its holocaustic and horror aspect, while only few of them have interpreted it through the existentialist approach. But the fact, most of the critics agree, is that it is a good work of art that explores human desire to life. Most of the criticisms to this play concentrate over the protagonist's struggle to keep-up his life in hostile surrounding. A.O Scott in his review of the film, opines that this film explores the life of Jew in the hands of Nazi. He believes that it is a representative story that tells the life of Jews in the then Germany as well as Germany occupied territory in order to strengthen his claim writes:

Perhaps because of his own experiences, Mr. Polanski approaches this material with a calm, fierce authority. This is certainly the best work Mr. Polanski has done in many years, and it is also one of the very few non documentary movies about Jewish life and death under the Nazis that can be called definitive. And . . . again paradoxically . . . this is achieved by realizing the modest, deliberate intention to tell a single person's story, to recreate a specific and finite set of events. (2)

In the extract A.O Scott uses the word 'calm, fierce authority' to represent the intensity of the expressions of the life experiences. In his view this film documents the torture, and troubles and pains of the Jew citizen. Along with the tortures and the pain it has reflected the life instinct of the Jews and the victim of the Nazis who even in the midst of the tortures and pains seek their life and never given up the hope to live happily.

Similarly, another critic Steve Vinberg in his review of the film comments that Polanski projects his absurdist and existentialist inclinations to this film. With the naturalistic detail, Polanski attempts to give the life-like feature to this film. With a humor like events, Polanski attempts to demonstrate the Jew's life as the means to create humor among the other people. Their physical oddity is concerned with the starvation. Jews identity, for Polanski, is subjected to be either murdered or to be tortured. Vinberg in his review published by the Three Penny Review writes that:

Polanski is an Ironist and Absurdist: Spielberg like Dickens and Grimmith, is essentially a romantic even when as in schinder or saving private Ryan his waist deep naturalistic detail. When Polanski stages a scene in which Nazi Soldier force the Jew at the border of the ghetto to dance, he is not searching for a chaplain moment. He undercuts the pathos by choosing odd looking actors whose white faces drawn with, hunger makes them look grotesque like figures in Grimm Brothers fairy tale enthralled to some witch spell. (32)

Here, Vineberg compares Polanski with Dickens and Grimmith for his ironist and absurdist projections to this film. He believes that Polanski is capable to give humorous turn to the tragic scene. In his view Polanski undercuts the pathos by choosing odd looking characters dancing together in front of mass people. However, this scene aims more to give the details of Nazi torture rather than the purpose of humor. In this scene Vineberg notes the bowed faces of the characters as the defeated dignity of the Jews. Though, Jews live without any dignity in the hands of Nazi, their struggle and purpose of life to exist physically.

Likewise, Catherine Portuguese, another critic of the film says that this film remained as one of the best film that could interrogate the past. In her view, it has become a model that could represent the

true picture of the decade, 1935-1945. Moreover, it also captures the traumatic experiences of the Jews. She believes that it has brought past to the present generations so that present generations could express sympathy to the massacred Jews and solidarity to end violence. Portuguese in her review of the film entitled *American Historical Review* opines:

Despite or Perhaps because of a tendency to down play a sense of personal and emotional urgency. *The Pianist* makes a powerful contribution to the substantial number of recent films that interrogate World War II in general and Holocaust in particular. The brutality of some scenes in *The Pianist*, in particular in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, deeply affected the director whose return to his native country after nearly forty years absence in scenes by many as a vindication of Poland's place in the world. Least one forgets how firmly the past remains linked to the present in Eastern Europe, in July 2002, Poland's president Alexander Kwasniewski , apologized on the behalf of his fellow poles at Jedwabne, a village in northeast Poland where hundreds of Jewish residents were murdered by Polish townspeople in 1941. (623)

Portuges here links past with the present. He brings the reference of Poland's President Alexander Kwasniewski's apology for the massacre in 1941 by Nazi followers. This incident is remarkable because the historical records like this film make the governments bow before the tolerance of Jews amidst holocaust. Portuges believes that most of the eyes melt with sympathy watching the struggle of Jews for the survival. They adore how Jews preserve survival instinct amidst the bombardment.

Maria Kornatoswka, another critic opines that the film explores the traumas of holocaust. She is with the belief the still time has not eradicated the memories of the holocaust. In her view Polanski explores the pains and traumas related with the Nazi extremism. She says that film as a

powerful means of presentation, depicts the world scenario more effectively than literature. Kornatoswaka in her review published in *Indelible Shadows: Film and Holocaust* expresses sympathy to the massacred Jews.

The holocaust is one of the most traumatic events of our time. It envelops the world in its dark, overwhelming shadow. The consciousness of this seems to increase with years and the distance of time does not heal the wounds and scars. Film images speak more strongly, more suggestively, than literature. They reach the subconscious, secret or muffled memories, experiences and emotions. (220)

According to Kornatoswaka this film unveils the memories, experiences and emotions suppressed in the subconscious state of mind. She compares holocaust as the traumatic event of her time. She recalls her time as traumatic memory. This film prinks to the heart and feels that how human can turn cannibals in politics. Kornatoswaka is with the opinion that the Nazis enveloped the world in dark and shadows. She finds the movie, *The Pianist*, as strong and suggestive presentation which is able to reach the subconscious, secret of muffled memories, experience and emotions too.

Though the protagonist is shown as passive observer and presented as mere escapers for survival from the holocaust, he is important character in which the whole story moves and depends on. *The Pianist* is presented mostly from the perspective of Wladyslaw Szpilman (Adrian Brody), who escapes the concentration camps by luck and is briefly involved in smuggling gum into the Warshaw Ghetto. He escapes the Ghetto with the help of the Polish resistance and spends the rest of the film struggling to survive. Regarding the situation of the hero J. Hoberman, published a review in *The New York Times*.

"Roman Polanski's world is predicated on violent absurdity, and in the first few moments of his new movie, *The Pianist*, war breaks out with alarming matter-of-factness. Giving a piano recital of a Chopin nocturne in a Warsaw radio station, Wladyslaw Szpilman (Adrian Brody) is barely distracted by some agitation in the control booth. The sound of bombs shatters the glass, but the composed performer keeps playing until he is literally blown off his stool—the first of a series of precise notes that smash one illusion after another. (65)

Here, J. Hoberman admires Polanski's work. Polanski has depicted the violent details of the holocaust without much restraint. After the radio station is ruined by explosions from German bombing, Wladyslaw Szpilman does not distract from the sounds of bombing. Hiding from place to place, the protagonist saves his life from the hand of Nazis.

A.O. Scott in his review published in "The New York Times" writes about the position of the protagonist.

"He is neither an especially heroic nor an entirely sympathetic fellow, and by the end he has been reduced to a nearly animal condition -- sick, haggard and terrified. But then the film's climax offers the most dramatic paradox of all: a glimpse of how the impulses of civilization survive in the midst of unparalleled barbarism. (95)

The movie beautifully presents the scenario and events and masterfully handles the circumstances of the characters. Through the details of scenario of late 1930s and early 1940s, in Warsaw the director Polanski masterfully captures the audiences' emotions and feelings. The intolerable situation encountered by the Jews in the hands of Nazis is presented in the film.

Examining the lively presentation of the scenario, Jay Janson in his review published in *The New York World* with the title "Ways to Think about Veterans and Patriotism" writes:

Polanski adds an on looking crowd. When a man licks up soup from the street, a darkened face in a window watches— and we too are forced to watch. In the second half of the movie, even our stand-in—the pianist—is reduced to watching the Holocaust happen through the window of his hiding place, as if evil itself were a movie. (63)

Janson presents his views on what a man could do when he is starved to the extent. He applauds the director for his lively presentation of the protagonist's struggle to quench his thirst and to fill his belly. Here, Janson is with the view that in all cases the wish to exist precedes the essence of life. No matter what a Nazi victim eats, but the central question is that he is able to protect himself against the extremity or not. 'To live' always comes at the first priority than life with meaning. Polansky has drawn such a power to the film that no audience could remain idle watching the protagonist's struggle to preserve the life instinct.

Existentialism is the philosophic perspective, which gives precedence to existence over essence. Existentialism affirms the final significance, the primacy of existence as this flickering point of consciousness of myself and of objects of which I am aware, my existence as this conscious being against all efforts to define me, to reduce me to a platonic essence, or to a Cartesian mental substance, or to a social security number.

Jean Paul Sartre defines existentialism as an attempt to continue life by creating a system in which one realizes human loneliness and "human subjectivity". In this way, the focus of existentialism is on "Being" and "subjectivity" as opposed to logical reasoning and "objectivity". It based on individual experience rather an abstract thought and knowledge, which is fore

grounded in this philosophy. In context Levine describes, "Existentialism is a set of philosophical ideals that stress the existence of the human being, the anxiety and depression which pervade each human life" (322). Existentialism is less of an "ism" than any attitude that expresses itself in a variety of ways. However, it suggests a major theme that is the stress on concrete in individual human existence.

Thus the movie *The Pianist* is a kind of movie in which there is the desperate search of life. The movie presents human being's search for life in the middle of absurdities. Like Sisyphus, human beings clearly know that they are doing the absurd job by moving the stone of life. But they are continuing it without any objection. So, here, in this movie, the protagonist searches his life desperately and discards the death and never lets it come near to him. To explore all these things this current thesis has made a deliberate choice to view the movie from existential perspective. The overall thesis has been divided into three chapters. The very first chapter will be the introduction containing introduction with the elaboration of hypothesis, objectives and literature review. The second chapter will be analysis of the scenes with the theatrical model in its embedded form and the final chapter will be the conclusion which will summarize the overall thesis. This project will incorporate the theoretical modality of various authors like Albert Camus, Jean Pal Sartre, Martin Heidegger and others.

II: Survival Instinct in the Movie The Pianist

The movie, *The Pianist*, successfully depicts the world where a human being searches life in the midst of absurdities, pains and death. The scenes of the movie play a significant role in showing a character presenting survival instinct among horror and sufferings. The protagonist faces hunger, persecution and humiliation from the Nazis and the ever-present fear of death, torture and starvation. In the movie, Nazis treat Jews in an extremely brutal way. We cannot see any kindness and compassion in the Nazis towards much ruined circumstances of the poor Jews. No one is safe in the palm of the Nazis. It is clearly depicted in the movie that the Jews are forced to live in the cruel and harsh condition. Nazi armies come and throw an elderly man from the balcony that is in the wheelchair. In the Nazi empire there is no any space for those who are helpless, old and physically weak. The families of the Jews are taken out into the street and shot to be dead. Jews have to work too hard for the Nazis ,there is no safety of existence, no significance, and compassion at all over the place there is devastation , terrific, ruthless sound of bombs and bullets , children are dying of hunger and thirst. We can see the children searching their parents and vice versa. In such a situation, we can see that the protagonist saves his life by hiding himself from all these ruthless attack on humanity.

The movie begins with the scene of a pianist called Szpilman playing his piano. There are the sounds of bombs are being blast everywhere. A man in the radio station warns him to leave because bombs are blasting outside. But Szpilman goes on playing his piano which is the symbol of life. Szpliman's life is hanging on the piano so he continues to play his piano even in the midst of death. People are running outside to save their life but he hangs on the piano. It means he is hanging on his own life. When then a bomb bursts even closer. The glass screen separating booth from studio implodes, showering Szpilman with glass. He stops, frozen. There

is Chaos everywhere. People are rushing in all directions, many people are carrying files, boxes, papers, shouting, and calling. Some of the men are in military uniform. The bombing is continuous. Szpilman fights his way down the stairs. He has a small cut on his forehead and is wiping it with his handkerchief. While other people are rushing here and there, Mr. Szpilman has patience and faith on his existence. He does not become afraid and smoothly moves from his radio station destroyed by the attack of bombs and bullets.

The Pianist, which marks the return to form of director Roman Polanski, records one man's escape from sure death into an uncertain day-to-day survival in the hell that was the Warsaw ghetto. Adrien Brody plays Wladyslaw Szpilman, a classical pianist who played the final live music on Polish radio before the German attack in 1939. After German grenades destroy the studio as he plays, he returns home to find his family making plans to evacuate Warsaw. As they collect their belongings, a radio broadcast announces that Britain and France have joined the war to fight Germany. Convinced that with the combined might of France and Britain on their side, the German occupation of Poland will be short-lived. They decide not to leave Warsaw.

As time passes, however, no help seems imminent and the Germans begin tightening their grip on the Jewish citizens of Warsaw. First, they ban them from certain restaurants and stores, then they ban them from parks and public benches and then make them bow to German officers in the street. Soon, Jews are to identify themselves by wearing a Star of David on their right arms. Ultimately, the Jewish inhabitants of Warsaw are forced to leave their homes and are relocated into a section of the city that is much too small to hold them all. From there, they are told they are to be "relocated" to the eastern part of Poland which, of course, means the concentration camps where they will be slaughtered en masse by the Nazis.

In the movie, we can see the elements of anxiety and despair. The anxiety is also the element of search of life instinct. The scene of Szpilman's family becoming worried truly reflects the survival instincts in the movie. The Jew families are in great anxiety. The Nazis become increasingly sadistic and his family witnesses many horrors inflicted on other Jews. Therefore the families are being worried regarding their fatal condition caused by the ruthless attack of the Nazi soldiers. The anxiety and the worry of Szpilman is an example of the life instinct in the movie. As Sartre claims: "anxiety reveals fundamental aspect of life" (506). It is the symbol of the longing of life by the Jews family which represents the yearning for life by Jewish family.

When the blast is over we can see the room of Szpilman's family. The Szpilman family in a great dread: coming and going out of rooms, packing clothing and possessions into unlocked luggage and a box in an easy, attractively furnished bourgeois apartment building, the living room lined with books, paintings and boasting a boudoir grand, silver platters and candlesticks. The family consist of Mother, in a state of great anxiety, Father, Regina, twenty-six, Halina, twenty two, and Henryk, twenty-four, the only one not in movement. He sits by the radio set, ear to the speaker, trying to tune to a station. No bombs now, just the distant sound of artillery fire. Father, holding a silver-framed photograph, comes near to Mother. We can see the anxiety in the eyes of the mother regarding Szpilman's life. But she is controlling her sorrow to show that nothing great is going to be happened. But her anxiety is apparent. We can see such anxiety in the following dialogue:

Father: What you think, should I take Uncle Szymon's photograph?

Mother: Take it, don't take it, and take what you like. Can't you see I'm worried sick? Father: He'll come home, he'll be all right.

Regina: Mama, Wladek's home. Mother dashes out of the kitchen.

Mother: Thank God - Wladek! You're wounded.

Szpilman: It's a little cut nothing.

Mother: I've been worried sick.

Henryk: I told her not to worry. You had your papers on you. If you'd been hit by a bomb, they'd have known where to take you. The girls suppress smiles.

Mother: Henryk, don't say things like that, God forbid, God forbid.

Halina:(calling through a door)Papa, Wladek's home. (02 min: 57 sec-04 min: 22 sec)

The mother is extremely worried about the safety of the protagonist the Szpilman. The father is absurdly searching harmony in his life within the photograph of Szymon in the midst of death and devastation. The anxiety shown in the heart of the mother is the symbol of search of life and wish to live longer among the cruel faces of death and destruction. They are extremely worried. The fear and worry comes together in their life together. the photograph is not the matter in their life. It is the matter of life and existence and struggle like the Sisyphus. A small cut in the central characters' face becomes the matter of big cause of worry and stress in their life because there is everywhere bombs and bullets causing life in existential crisis.

The anxiety and fear leads human being to the ultimate fate. There are various roles in life an individual has to play which are absurd and have no meaning. Likewise, the life is also given us the only one role which we should have to play ultimately. We should play the role of the Sisyphus who has to pull the rock to the summit of the mountain which falls down the hill

and Sisyphus has to push it to the summit again having the fear of losing the rock again. As J Wild a great Existential thinker argues:

In anxiety, as in fear, I grasp myself as threatened or as vulnerable; but unlike fear, anxiety has no direct object, there is nothing in the world that is threatening. This is because anxiety pulls me altogether out of the circuit of those projects thanks to which things are there for me in meaningful ways; I can no longer “gear into” the world. And with this collapse of my practical immersion in roles and projects, I also lose the basic sense of who I am that is provided by these roles.
(55)

According to J Wild it is clear the anxiety and fear makes human being vulnerable and depressed like the family of Szpilman in the movie. There are various roles in life for which human being should be aware and careful. That leads him into the direction of anxiety and absurdity.

The family is a Polish family. They are becoming worried to fulfill their duties in this world. As claimed by the existential philosophers people are endowed by various roles in this earth. So the family of Szpilman is playing its role. So anxiety and fear are the two things which teaches us ‘who we are’. Anxiety helps us to group the identity and the essence of life. “This aspect of existential freedom can be understood by imagining oneself on the edge of a cliff and realizing that one fears not only the possibility of falling, but also the possibility of throwing oneself off; there is, essentially, nothing holding one back, no predetermined course of action” (Cooper 129-30). So man has endowed his role from which he is unable to escape which is the real essence of human kind which is covered by absurdity and nothingness. An existential

philosopher Jean Paul Sartre elaborates that the fear and anxiety are the two things which plays vital role in human beings life. As Sartre argues:

As you will soon see, it is very simple. First, what do we mean by anguish? - The existentialist frankly states that man is in anguish. His meaning is as follows
When a man commits himself to anything, fully realizing that he is not only choosing what he will be, but is thereby at the same time a legislator deciding for the whole of mankind - in such a moment a man cannot escape from the sense of complete and profound responsibility. There are many, indeed, who show no such anxiety. (4)

In the case of the family of Szpilman they cannot escape their role of tolerating the tortures and pains given by the Nazi. They have the minor roles of mother, father and children by which they are being worried. They have the role of a family by which they have the anxiety which leads them to search their identity. But they also have the major role given by the legislator the god which they have to fulfill at any cost. Life has not given any kind of excuse to the family of the Szpilman and all the Jews of the Nazi Ghetto. They should play the role given to them by the almighty God. They are moving here and there to play their role. They are responsible what they do or what they chose to search the meaning and the essence in their life. Even if there is absurdity among them they must choose life. Even if there are challenges he must continue to live. As Albert Camus argues:

Sisyphus has to accept the absurd around him in order to overcome it. Camus uses the lack of information about Sisyphus to create his own story about the man alone with a rock. Nothing seems to be scarier than working for no results and always starting all over again, apparently with no aim. This is the point where

Camus, like a lawyer, takes position for Sisyphus and works in his theory of the absurd. (102)

That is the role they should play. There is the scene of moving here and there to save their life from the ruthless attack of bombs and bullets. As we can glance this picture:



Fig No. 1

In the given picture, The Jews are wandering to search their life in the midst of the inhuman behavior of the Nazi soldiers. Szpilman exemplifies that human being does not be unable to find the eagerness of existence even at the final hours of his life. This passion of life justifies everything what he did to save himself from the impending death. That is to say Szpilman, throughout his great effort takes recourse to food in the ash field and other garages to hold his breath.

The life of the central character Szpilman is difficult. It is full of impossible circumstances. There are obstacles in living. It is almost impossible to choose life in the middle of the ruthless attack of the Nazi over humanity. The Jews cannot think of living in the scenario

where an old man is killed ruthlessly. They cannot even think of love and compassion among the death and destruction of the lives and properties of the Jews. But they choose life that is their destiny. That is their compulsion. They should chose life as Sisyphus has chosen the task of pushing the huge rock at the top of the mountain even if he knows that it is impossible to place it to the top where he had led it to the summit. There are the scenes of children starving. People are begging for a drop of water. They are fragmented from their family.



Fig No 2.

The above mentioned figure is the example of the torments given by the Nazi to the Jew family. The picture shows that there is absurdity and insecurity everywhere in the Nazi Ghetto. There is no any kind of security. Their life is a kind of dewdrop in on the leaf of a plant. But whatever the situation may be they are doomed to choose life. At those gruesome scenarios the people are longing for their life which is their choice. They have no excuse. They have the only one choice that is their life.

Existentialism is a kind of philosophical movement or tendency which emphasizes individual existence, freedom, and choice exploring the theme and supporting the picture's theme. Joseph P Fell argues that:

The message of existentialism, different that of many more difficult to understand and academic philosophical movements, is about as simple as can be. It is that every one of us, as an individual, is accountable for what we do, dependable for whom we are, responsible for the way we face and deal with the world, responsible, ultimately, for the way the world is. It is, in a very short phrase, the philosophy of "no excuses!" Life may be difficult; circumstances may be impossible. There may be obstacles, not least of which are our own personalities, characters, emotions, and limited means or intelligence. But, nevertheless, we are responsible. We cannot shift that burden onto God, or nature, or the ways of the world. If there is a God, we choose to believe. (358)

We cannot distinguish existentialism as a philosophical movement. It is vague and difficult to grasp the meaning easily. Nobody knows; what is the real identity of a human being and the entire life. It is related with the absurd nature of human existence and the futility of existence and the pursuit of meaning in this world. Similarly, in the movie, the protagonist does not leave the responsibility to the hand of god. He himself chooses to struggle in this hostile world to live and struggle hard.

When the father reads the newspaper he finds that the Jews are insulted. They are ordered to be tagged with visible emblems. It is very embracing and insulting act of the German authority. They don't want to be tagged as another creature in this world because they have lost

their identity. However, they have no option. First they have to live in this world and to live also they should wear those visible emblems. As the father reads the newspaper:

Father (reading)

'Re: emblems for Jews in the Warsaw District. I hereby order that all

Jews in the Warsaw District will wear visible emblems when out of doors. This decree will come into force on the 1st December 1939 and applies to all Jews over twelve years of age. The emblem will be worn on the right sleeve and will represent a blue Star of David on a white background. The background must be sufficiently large for the Star to measure eight centimeters from point to point.

The width of the arms of the Star (reading) must be one centimeter. Jews who do not respect this decree will be severely punished. Governor of Warsaw District, Dr. Fischer.' (10 min: 37 sec-10min: 44 sec)

The authority orders the Jews to be visible while coming outside so that they can easily recognize the Jews and give them pains and tortures.



Fig No. 3

That stars are the symbol of the stone of the Sisyphus which gives nothing more than tortures and pain. But they have to wear it at any cost. Because of the star he has to suffer too much. It is the rule given to him by his life. Destiny has provided him the gift of carrying the sign of star in around his arm. He should wear it. He should face the challenges. It means he must fulfill his duty. He has no any excuse.

In this given picture, the director has utilized the field of view technique. Use this as a short shot following the actor turning to look in a specific direction. This gives audience a perspective of seeing through your actor's eyes. This technique allows to set up the shot separate from the actor and create a scene that would be difficult to shoot with the actor on screen. Directors use this shot to give audiences an insight into the character's perspective.

The motion picture *The Pianist* is based on the theme of continued existence by a pianist of Poland throughout the Nazi holocaust. It has its base on the biographical war movie *The Pianist*. The film is directed by Roman Polanski who is a Polish-French film director, producer, writer and actor. The story is the story of Polish-Jewish musician Wladyslaw Szpilman, who continues to live World War II in opposition to all odds and threats in human being's life. Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002) was sold as a motion picture concerning the conquest of the human spirit. It portrays the sufferings of a Jewish musician Wladyslaw Szpilman who narrowly survived the holocaust and sees the death from too near. Moreover, the writer of this film Ronald Harwood was also a victim of the Nazism. That is to say, the film is the artistic reflection of the life experiences of the characters as well as the director. This project unveils how the sufferer preserves his life instincts and attempts to alter his destiny at the brink of his destruction. That is

to say, it explores how Jewish people preserved their hope of life and struggled to exist in the apocalypse. This projects the existential theme in the film.

Here, in the movie, the pianist, Szpilman meets the death several times from very near. He sees severe pain and the gruesome death very often from too near. For example there is the scene of beating Szpilman by a Nazi soldier by whip very ruthlessly. At that time ordinary people cannot think of life. But here Szpilman is not convinced by death as he is guided by life force. He is totally endowed by survival instinct. He does not give up the hope to live in the midst of pains and tortures. So here the survival instinct is expressed with the binaries of pains tortures and devastations. Here as Camus states, death is “an illusion” that “never quite convinces us, a fundamental fact that will nevertheless always be intangible to the living (Sisyphus 14)”. The death is that things which become the matter of avoidance even among many deaths. Szpilman touched death, he feels death and sees death but he never accepts death to take himself in this realm. It is his existential power and life-force which helps him to be alive in this world and to choose life even if he has to faces many deaths minute after minute.

Life is a kind of torture for Szpilman. He faces the ups and down of his life as a deer running away from the tiger. So existence becomes too much complex for him. It becomes like a kind of curse for him. He becomes like the Sisyphus of Albert Camus who is doomed to live in this world doing a futile effort. So he also does the same thing like Sisyphus doing every futile attempt of running towards the life. Life becomes extremely hard for his but he chooses to live. His choice is a kind of curse for him. He has to face starvation, thirst, pain, tortures, fear of death, and lots of sufferings and punishments from the Nazis. Kierkegaard sees the whole world as a corporation of ambiguities and paradoxes. Considering the difficulties to exist in such paradoxical condition Kierkegaard describes:

Existing is ordinarily regarded as no very complex matter, much less an art, since we all exist; but abstract thinking takes rank as an accomplishment. Nevertheless, really to exist, to interpenetrate one's existence with consciousness, at the same eternal and as if far remove from existence, and yet present in existence and in the process of becoming: that is truly difficult (Concrete Existence 814)

Therefore, for Kierkegaard, real existence is possible only when one becomes aware of the paradoxical presence of God, Christianity and man. For Szpilman also existence becomes complex. Life for Polanski's protagonist becomes not only complex but almost impossible. He faces various deaths. Yet, he chooses to be alive in this hostile world. It is a good example of survival instinct.

A great column of Jews of all ages make their way towards the area that will become the ghetto. On foot, on bicycles, on horse-drawn platforms and some pushing prams loaded with belongings. There is a great moving mass of humanity to save a tiny amount of hope and desire of life. They are watched on either side of the street by Poles. On a horse-drawn platform, the Szpilman and his family can be seen with their belongings. All wear armbands. Szpilman, Halina and Henryk walk beside the platform with Mother, Father and Regina seated on it. Szpilman catches sight of someone among the onlookers, smiles and pushes through the crowd to Dorota, close to tears.

Szpilman: Dorota!

Dorota: I didn't want to come; I didn't want to see all this, but I couldn't stop myself

Szpilman: How are you doing?

Dorota: Fine, no, not really, they arrested my cousin, but Jurek says they'll let him out. (Stops, tears in her eyes.) This is disgraceful.

Szpilman: Don't worry, it won't last long.

Dorota: That's what I said, it's so too absurd!

Szpilman: I'll see you...soon. (14 min: 53 sec – 15 min: 46 sec)

In this dialogue we can clearly see the life force and life instinct in utterance of the protagonist Szpilman. He says to Dorota that the injustices and tortures will not last long. He has the sense of hope and strong will power to live. Whenever he sees Dorota we can easily notice a strong sense of life and happiness. He is seeking a life in the midst of absurdities. The survival instinct is so strong within him that he sees life even in the midst of death and tortures.

Roman Polanski's film *The Pianist* is the best example of the movie which encompasses the theme of existence among death. Based on a real character, Wladyslaw Szpilman, a classical pianist who survived to tell the tale of his years of concealment during the Nazi occupation of Poland, it accurately portrays the existence of a fugitive living a shadow-existence for years in the Warsaw Ghetto, narrowly evading capture and death, as the city is methodically gutted about him. The devastation of a whole people as seen through the eyes and travails of a single, vulnerable, lucky witness is made emphatically clear, and immediate, in a way that no dramatized account of personal heroism or valor could accomplish. Indeed, the value of witnessing history is raised to a high level here, as opposed to futile sacrifice.

Szpilman manages to get labor permits for his family unit, which he considers will exclude them from "relocation." Unfortunately, his entire family is rounded up with hundreds of

other families and forced to wait for a train that will take them to the camps. At quite possibly the last minute, Szpilman is pulled out of line by an old friend working for the German-appointed Jewish police. What follows is his journey through life on the streets of the ghetto, living hand-to-mouth, depending on strangers who are part of the resistance movement and, of course, his own survival instincts.

Even though Adrien Brody is on-screen for almost the film's entire two and a half hour running time, the viewer does not really learn much about the man he plays. Yet his story allows the audience to see the horrors of the Warsaw ghetto on a personal level.

There are no slow motion shots or overly-dramatic effects used to manipulate the viewer as events take place in Szpilman's life in the ghetto. One notable exception, however, is a scene where a bomb explodes near Szpilman's home rendering him temporarily deaf. (All of the sound in the scene is temporarily muted and a high-pitched whistle simulates the ringing in his ears.) At first, this detached approach seems ineffective but, as film progresses, the viewer begins to feel the weight of the proceedings on Szpilman. The continual emotional and physical torment he endures will hopefully make those who see the film take a new look at the things they might now take for granted.

Director Polanski, who himself was a survivor of the Krakow ghetto, has never made a better film than this. Coupled with Academy Award-nominated cinematography by Pawel Edelman, the fantastic performance of Adrien Brody and a script culled from the true story of Szpilman's struggle for survival, Polanski has crafted an unforgettable tale of hope in the face of total despair. The central concern of existentialism is "existence precedes the essence", which suggests that an individual is an independent actor and he is a responsible conscious being. To

exist takes priority over how s/he exists. The labels, roles, stereotypes, definitions, or other fixed categories associated with the individual, come to the second position. Regarding the notion of 'existence precedes essence' Martin Heidegger in his essay "What is Metaphysics?" writes:

With that the answer to the question of the nothing is gained. The nothing is neither an object nor any being at all. The nothing comes forward neither for itself nor next to beings, to which it would, as it were, adhere. For human existence the nothing makes possible the open-endedness of beings as such. The nothing does not merely serve as the counter concept of beings; rather it originally belongs to their essential unfolding as such. In the being of beings the inhalation of the nothing occurs. (6)

For Heidegger who is one of the prominent leading existentialist thinker. His interest was in the 'question of being'. For him being is not realized in normal situation. It does not occur all the time. It is realized in the state of boredom and anxiety as he states in what is Metaphysics? as , "It erupts when one is bored, profound boredom drifting here and there in the abysses of our existence like a muffling fog, removes all things and men and oneself along with it into a remarkable indifference, this boredom reveals being as whole" (4).

Heidegger explained the distinction between Being and being. " The oblivion of Being (individual) into beings (group) has made us lost in the unreal universe" (Ellmann 879). He believes that we have been living in an incompressible, indifferent world. The universe is alien to us. According to Heidegger, to consider individual only the representation of mass is the recurrent mistake of metaphysics. He held the belief that, man should face explicitly the problem of being; he has to determine his own existence, create his own possibility and make choice and commitment. Human beings can never hope to understand why they are here in the world.

Instead, each individual must choose a goal and follow it with passionate conviction. The principle object of investigation, for him is the search of being and more particularly man's being.

The Pianist, Szpliman searches his being desperately. He has to face the problem of being which he is facing in the Warsaw Ghetto. Here he is determined to live and chooses not to choose the Ghetto life and flees from there. He rather made a choice of living in hiding. He faces a lot of tortures and pains. When his family separates from him, he cries loudly. At that time he sees people are dying. Everywhere there are dead bodies on the road. Everything is destroyed and broken. The houses are destroyed by bombs and bullets. He enters the destroyed house. Inside a man hiding under the broken cupboard calls him. He is Benek. As they talk to each other he finds its Benek:

Benek:(looking at him, mystified) Why are you here, Mr. Wladek? Szpilman: It's like this... I...we...all of them.

Benek: Perhaps they're lucky. The quicker the better. (Brief pause)It isn't over yet. We'll stay here for a couple of days. Until things die down. (Another pause)I've bribed a policeman. He'll come when it's over. (53 min: 01 sec-54 min: 39 sec)

The meeting with Benek becomes a little source of happiness and life. Altogether Polanski's hero gets company in the midst of horror and terror. He meets life in the midst of death and destruction. Here, he has made all these choices to be alive in the midst of the death and devastation and chaos.

Regarding the concept of existential philosophy, another distinguished philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre illustrates the two important philosophical issues concerning freedom. The first is an

individual's freedom which is restricted by others' judgment of his action and the second is the definition one's self-identity. An individual suffers not only when others restrict his freedom of action but also when others define him.

Similarly, in the movie the pianist Szpilman and other Jews are suffering because they have restriction in their freedom and identity. They have to live and come out wearing a visible emblem with the sign of star. They have been defined as Jews the contaminated bold. Although he acts freely and defines himself through his actions, his activities occur in the social circumstances where his activities are judged by others. As a result, these social circumstances contribute to the definition of the individual's self. Sartre in his article No Exist sees the conflicting interpersonal relations as, "each individual aims to be free and to avoid becoming subject to others' control" (69). Szpilman is trying to be free from the ruthless control of the Nazi which becomes the sources of tortures and pain in his life. He flees from the Nazis control all over the movie.

Moreover, the individual-self is defined by our actions. If our actions come to half in death, they become our essence. Only our actions determine our essence because there are no alternatives chances. The sense of loneliness, estrangement and alienation are the inflexible situation of being bound by our own actions. The sense of other is the unavoidable human situation of being free which confines the individual's own judgment. There is no way to define individual's freedom without the consciousness of loneliness and alienation.

Existentialism, as a philosophical movement, flourished after the devastating world Wars. Disaster of the First World War was followed by the great economic depression of thirties. Before healing such wounds, humanity saw the nuclear holocaust of the Second World War. Social and intellectual situation of that period was influenced by the Nietzschean declaration of

the death of the God. People realized the lack of unity and order in the society. They could not believe in rationality. So, they denounced traditional form of norms and values. Faith on God had already begun to decline. There was no center or central authority that could bring peace and harmony in the world.

As the result of sense of loss, alienation increased and people suffered from frustration, anxiety and absurdity. Existentialism became an appropriate philosophical perspective that could address the contemporary situation. Existential scholar and artists vividly depicted the alienation of individuals as well as their essential and inescapable – loneliness and uncertainty along with individual's reaction to the predicament in their fictional and non-fictional writings. Negative aspects of human existence such as pain, frustration sickness, and death became, for existentialists, the essential features of human reality. Though existentialism, as a philosophical movement, flourished during the aftermath of world wars, we can see the seed of existential thought rooted in the philosophical investigation from the ancient Greek period. Human being was the center of classical philosophy too. The actual life of the individual is what constitutes what could be called his or her "true essence" instead of there being an arbitrarily attributed essence used by others to define him or her.

Szpilman the protagonist of the movie discard the authority forced by the Nazi and flees. He desperately tries to save his life from the nasty life of the Gheto. He involves in smuggling guns. He flees from there. He lives many days starving and in thirst but he does not choose to surrender in front of the Nazi. The identity given to him is a Jews which is arbitrary. In fact he is a Polish citizen. He has created his own identity which is the identity of a pianist. Thus, human beings, through their own consciousness, create their own values and determine a meaning to

their life. Although it was Sartre who explicitly coined the phrase, similar notions can be found in the thought of existentialist philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Heidegger.

The protagonist of Polanski's movie defines himself as a pianist. But the circumstance tries to define his identity as a Jew and his identity is in crisis. Then Szpilman seek his identity in the midst of the storm of death and destruction. It is often claimed in this context that a person defines himself or herself, which is often perceived as stating that they can wish to be something—anything, a bird, for instance—and then be it. According to most existentialist philosophers, however, this would constitute an inauthentic existence. Instead, the phrase should be taken to say that the person is (1) defined only insofar as he or she acts and (2) that he or she is responsible for his or her actions. For example, someone who acts cruelly towards other people is, by that act, defined as a cruel person. Furthermore, by this action of cruelty, such persons are themselves responsible for their new identity (a cruel person). This is as opposed to their genes, or 'human nature', bearing the blame.

Roman Polanski directs the harrowing story of Wladyslaw Szpilman, a Polish pianist and Jew who survived the horrors of the holocaust in WWII. Adrian Brody' performance is the centrepiece as it is a very personal journey as you watch with despair and revulsion as Polish jews are stripped of their livelihoods, their rights and their dignity by a brutally oppressive regime. Like all human being Szpilman exist as a pianist in Warsaw radio and makes his own identity as a good pianist. After that he has to encounter many kinds of ups and down in his life caused by the injustices of Nazi soldiers. As Sartre writes in his work 'Existentialism is Humanism': "man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards" (65). Of course, the more positive, therapeutic aspect of this is also implied: A person can choose to act in a different way, and to be a good person instead of a cruel person.

Here it is also clear that since humans can choose to be either cruel or good, they are, in fact, neither of these things essentially.

There's a scene in Polanski's film where a Jewish ghetto police officer pulls the main character out of a line waiting to climb aboard a train to a death camp. After being told that his life was just saved, the protagonist begins to run away, but the police officer snarls at him: "Don't run!". That last part was actually included by the director himself. Wise from experience Polanski knew that he shouldn't be running but walking. At a young age, the director survived the Krakow Ghetto while his parents were sent to the camps. Along with Wladyslaw Szpilman's story, which he published as early as 1946, this is the kind of experience that forms the backbone of **The Pianist**.

Szpilman has created his own identity. Now it is more important for him to live. He is running after his being. He wants to define himself. He chooses life than death by the Nazi tormentors. The horror of his survival is that is so random and very little of what Szpilman does contribute to his being alive at the end of the film. The explanation, such director Roman Polanski provides in this film, is that Szpilman has value as a classical pianist, a cultural icon of sorts to the people of Warsaw, whether they are Jewish or not. That is the key factor in the decisions, often spontaneous ones that save Szpilman's life. Here Szpilman is free to chose his life in the midst of death. He is condemned to be free. Existential thinkers believe that man is free to choose and condemn to be free. The freedom which man has received can be the source of anxiety and angst. Whatever he becomes is the result of the choice he has made in his life. As Crowell sees:

Because there is no inherent meaning in life or in the world itself. “Man is condemned to be free” Freedom gives the individual the responsibility to choose what to be, to choose the values one wishes to hold, and, in a sense, to engage in creating one’s own meaning in the world. However this freedom can also be a source of angst, or anxiety. (Crowell 23)

But there is also a factor called luck: whether it is both German and Russian soldiers being poor shots, or simply where you stand in line. You can see where the story would resonate with Polanski, who was pushed through the fence of the concentration camp by his father, who also survived.

One of the principle tenets of philosophy of existentialism is the theme of loneliness or the sense of alienation. Because of these world becomes rude and unfriendly to the individuals as they cannot commit themselves to the choices they make, a sense of alienation from the lives governs their existence. Humanity's primary distinction, in the view of most existentialists, is the freedom to choose. Existentialists have held that human beings do not have a fixed nature, or essence. Each human being makes choices that create his or her own nature. In the formulation of the 20th-century French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, existence precedes essence. Choice is therefore central to human existence, and it is inescapable; even the refusal to choose is a choice. Freedom of choice entails commitment and responsibility. Because individuals are free to choose their own path, they must accept the risk and responsibility of following their commitment wherever it leads.

Szpilman is free to chose life and he is responsible for the risk and the ups and down in the way of searching life. So he faces many upheavals in his life. He moves here and there. **In August 1944, the Polish resistance increases the Warsaw Uprising in opposition to**

the German occupation. Szpilman views the Polish insurgents combating the Germans outside his window. Strongly after that in another scene, Szpilman narrowly escapes death when a German tank shells the apartment he is hiding in. Warsaw is virtually razed and abandoned as a result of the fighting (see Aftermath of the Warsaw Uprising). After the existing Warsaw population is expelled from the ruins and the German SS escape from the approaching Soviet Army, Szpilman is left entirely alone. In buildings still standing, he desperately searches for food. While trying to open a can of Polish pickles, Szpilman is discovered by a captain of the Wehrmacht, Wilm Hosenfeld (Thomas Kretschmann). Upon inquiring Szpilman and discovering that he is a pianist, Hosenfeld asks Szpilman to play something for him on the grand piano that happens to be in the building. The decrepit Szpilman, still a musical genius, plays "Ballade in G-Minor, Op. 23" by Frederic Chopin, moving Hosenfeld to spare Szpilman.

The German Captain :(stern) who the hell are you?

Szpilman: just stares at him.

The German: Captain:Who are you? What the hell are you doing?

Szpilman: (barely audible, in German) I was... I was trying to open this tin.

The German Captain:Where do you live?What's your work?

Szpilman: I am... I was a pianist.

The German Captain: A pianist. Play. Are you hiding here? Jew?

Long pause. Szpilman just stares at him.

The German Captain: Where are you hiding?

Szpilman:(in German)In the attic.

The German Captain: Show me.Have you anything to eat?

Szpilman shows him the tin.

The German Captai: I'll bring you something. (1:55:41-2:01:56)

The dialogue between the protagonist and the German soldier clearly shows how strong choice does Szpilman have made and how he becomes able to achieve life at the end. He moves here and there in search of food while he is hiding in the destroyed buildings and in the broken houses. When the German soldier call him a bit forward to play the piano which is accidently found to be in the same building where they meet, he is still carrying the tin which he is trying to open with a metal.

Significantly, try to open the metal tin symbolises to try to search life among the destroyed things. He searches foods among the destroyed buildings. This picture shows how passionately he searches food to eat to continue his life among the destruction. In the given picture Polanski's hero is searching the way of living i.e food to be alive in this hostile world. Even if there are lots of absurdities and death the survival instinct leads him to searches for food and life among the bombardment and destruction. he moves from one destroyed building to another building to save his life. he has eaten nothing for many days. his hunger also becomes one of a obstacle in his path to quest life amidst death and destruction.



Fig No. 4.

Here the camera angle is managed properly. If the angle is not matched and arranged it may not be the scene of death and destruction and not the scene of existential crisis. The light and shadow of the building is matched properly. It has contributed to the visual effect causing the scene a true example of existential quest. The technique of Field of View is famous in most of the director. Here in this movie also it is applied. "The Field of View (FOV) is the angle described by a cone with the vertex at the camera's position (Charles 26)." Here also this technique seems successful to explore the theme of the movie and to achieve the goal of the movie.

So he is passionately seeking survival in the aftermaths of the Nazi holocaust. The soldier helps him. **Hosenfeld lets Szpilman continue hiding in the attic of the building and even brings him food regularly, thus saving his life. Another few weeks go by, and the German troops are forced to withdraw from Warsaw due to the advance of Red Army troops. Before leaving the area, Hosenfeld asks Szpilman what his name is, and, upon hearing it, remarks that it is apt for a pianist (Szpilman being the Polish rendering of the German Spielmann, meaning "man who plays"). Hosenfeld also promises to listen for**

Szpilman on Polish Radio. He gives Szpilman his Wehrmacht consistent greatcoat and foliage. Later, that coat is almost deadly for Szpilman when Polish troops, healing the ruins of Warsaw, take him for a German officer and shoot at him. He is finally capable to convince them that he is Polish, and they stop shooting. One soldier asks him why he is wearing a Wehrmacht coat, to which Szpilman replies, "I am cold." So even in the mouth of death he searches his life. He never gives up hope to live like Sisyphus who never gives up the hope of carrying the stone. Soren Kierkegaard wrote one of his first existentially sensitive passages. In it, he describes a truth that is applicable for him:

What really lack is to be clear in my mind what I am to do, not what I am to know, except in so far as certain knowledge must precede every action. The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do: the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die [...] I certainly do not deny that I still recognize an imperative of knowledge and that is what I now recognize as the most important thing. (49)

Here people in this world are doomed to perform certain role. They should not say that what is their duty and what is their knowledge. They should consider what is their role and choice.

People should know what god wishes us to do.

Similar to Kierkegaard's notion of existentialist Polanski's hero finds himself changing his role and choice of living in the movie. Szpliman is a pianist but he cannot remain as a pianist forever. He becomes a Jews and faces a lot of tortures and pains. Instead of tremendous tortures and pain he chooses to be alive and flee from the Nazi Ghetto.

There is the scene of people involving in many activities. There are officers coming and going, orderlies typing. Officers ring on field telephones. There are desks, filing cabinets. The German Captain, carrying a bulging shoulder bag, marches into a room just off the hall and goes to his desk just as an orderly drops papers in his in-tray. On the desk, there's a framed photograph of him with a woman and two children. German Captain glances at the papers, takes a pen, initials one or two and then goes. The German Captain marches up the stairs purposefully; as if he's on urgent business. The German Captain enters. He puts two fingers in his mouth and whistles.

The German Captain: Open up.

After a moment, the trapdoor shifts and Szpilman looks down. The German Captain takes a package from his shoulder bag and throws it up into the loft. He turns to go. Szpilman: Please. The German Captain stops.

Szpilman: What's all that gunfire

The German Captain: The Russians. On the other side of the river (Turns to leave stops; with a touch of irony :) All you have to do is hang on for a few more weeks. (2:04:00-2:05:06)

Szpilman becomes able to get his life. He becomes successful to live in the world where there is nothing more than sorrow, pains and sufferings. He becomes a true existential man. The movie encompasses all the elements of a human being struggling hard for his survival and successfully depicted the theme of existential search. The given picture shows how he searches his life in the mids of absurdities and sorrow. the picture below is crystal clear which vividly focuses Szpilman's survival attempt amidst of bombing, suffering and killings.



Fig No 5. Even if he knows that there is almost impossible to live with harmony he chooses to be alive. He makes a quest of life in the midst of dead bodies. The theme of loneliness can be traced with the given. A camera shot is the amount of space that is seen in one shot or frame. Camera shots are used to demonstrate different aspects of a film's setting, characters and themes. As a result, camera shots are very important in shaping meaning in a film. Reviewing the examples on the right hand side of this page should make the different camera shots clearer. Camera angles and movements combine to create a sequence of images, just as words, word order and punctuation combine to make the meaning of a sentence. Here in this picture the angel of the camera has told many things about the existential crisis of the character who is standing in front of the dead bodies.

III: The Existentialist's Search for Life Amidst Death and Casualties

After the analysis of the movie with the perspective of existentialism the researcher has come to the conclusion that though there is horror, terror, pains and sufferings in Nazi ghetto the Jews has never left their motive of surviving and the sense of humanity. The survival instinct has crystallized by the struggle of the pianist Szpilman who even in the mouth of death has longed for life and endeavors to be alive among the death and destruction of Warsaw. Seemingly, the novel is only the presentation of the condition of Nazi ghetto and the suffering faced by a pianist's family. However, after the close analysis of the text from existential perspective it is found that the movie is a clear depiction of survival instinct of human being in the middle of death and destruction. It is the demonstration of how much people have the passion of life even if they know that there is nothing more that death in each step and every second in their life.

There is horror and destruction, people are dying of thirst, women are begging water for their dying children, everywhere there is nothing more than death. But whatever the situation Szpilman has not given up the hope and aspiration of continuing his life. He loved his life too much because he has made the choice of living. People have choice so they must choose. To support the claim Sartre clarifies, "Whatever the situation, we have choices. We are all responsible for what we do, what we are, and the way the world is (321)". So the protagonist has no excuse he should chose life. Szpilman has become successful to choose life and has got it. Anybody can not be successful to make a choice of life. He has successfully played his role give to him. He has successfully made his choice of life which every people cannot. "This does not mean that everyone can do anything they choose (321)". Szpilman has shown his intense passion of life and successfully made his choice. He became able to be a true absurd hero in the midst of absurdities.

The Szpilman has his family sharing love and compassion which become a strong means for him to live in this world. The emotions and sentiments within his family have become strategies of living earlier. But when he becomes distracted from his family, the hope of meeting with his family members become a strong method to life in the world surrounded by horror and terror. "There are reasons for one's emotions. An emotion is a strategy for dealing with the world. (Sartre 350)". So the emotion becomes the strategy to deal with the world hostile to him. There are father mother and brother and sister who share intense love to each other which become a medium for them to live among the sound of bombs and bullet. this picture shows how much love and passion they have to each other by the force of which they are living in this hostile environment. There is no any certainty of life. Anybody can die any time. Szpilman works at Warsaw radio. He goes out from his house but it is not sure that he will return or not. In such situation the family suits together and listen radio, read newspaper and drink wine to have the choice of living.

Emotion becomes the method of living for Szpilman when a German soldier caught him opening a can. Because of the emotion the soldier gives him food and the entire necessary item for survival. So emotion and anxiety becomes the strong sense of living for the protagonist in the midst of absurdities. As : "From a theoretical perspective, anxiety is essential, because through anxiety we have direct access to authenticity, individuality and existential death and we break through from the sphere of the they self, no longer thinking like simulacra or clones, no longer thinking like we imagine the others think. (Strawser 116). Anxiety is the thing which gives life force and his peculiar individuality for Szpilman. The worry becomes the method by which the protagonist lives. He worries about his family and tries his best to save it. "Szpilman: I'm sorry, I did my best, I thought the certificates would save us all. (37:34-37:35)."

On 15th march, 1942, in the scene where the Jews families are taken to another place we can see the plight of the poor and helpless Jew people. They have to move from here and there. The families are in line. One of a German soldier orders to come out of the line that are polish further, he orders rest of the family to pack their belongings up to 15 kilo only. A woman asks the soldier “where they are being taken” them. The cruel soldier despite of giving answer shoots the women dead on the ground. In such horrific situation, Szpilman does not give up the hope of living in this world. Each and every thing becomes destroyed at last and he moves here and there in search of something to eat among the destroyed houses and dead bodies. Whatever the hostile the world may be he accept the challenges and feces the hostile world as Ames states that “By accepting the rules of the game and going along with the world he gets out of making real choices and decisions”(252). So the protagonist accepts the rules of the game of life he has to play and obviously he performs very well.

Thus the movie *The Pianist* directed by Roman Polanski is a motion picture reflecting the theme of existential quest. It has successfully depicted humanity struggling hard for its survival. In the midst of death and devastation how a person struggles for life, how human being faces challenges in front of him etc are very well shown in the movie. It has presented the survival instinct of human being even in the mouth of death. Even if the pianist sees that the Nazi killing human being in the row one by one, he does not give up the hope of living and escapes the brutality of the Nazi and saves his life ultimately.

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