gassed, the mutilated corpses when the viewers known they’re actors? This is true of ALL film subjects, but the holocaust is unlike any other subject. There are techniques that must and must not be used. In order to not betray the dead and humiliate the living, this subject requires a special sensibility, a different approach and faithfulness to memory

• Theodor Adorno: “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric” Adorno doesn’t just mean writing poetry but also portraying it via artistic production

• The piano is an essential symbol or object in the film as it is key to Wladyslaw’s survival. Being forced into isolation, his fate completely unknown, the thoughts of music and playing the piano are what keeps him going – this is very evident in the scene where Wladyslaw discovers a piano in his hiding spot but plays the air piano instead so he doesn’t get caught – its moments like this which provide Wladyslaw Szpilman a moment of escapism to help maintain his willingness to survive – after witnessing so much death + destruction the music is key to restoring peace and a calmer atmosphere

• The raw energy that Polanski presents through keeps the reality of the holocaust organic and honest. He does not fabricate the movie with glorified music in the background of traumatic scenes. An example of this is the family interrogation by the SS – no music is played, allowing the viewer to really internalise the agonizing reality of barbaric and inhumane evil – this scene has no score capturing the drama nor are there any close-ups on the faces of the shocked family – Polanski leaves us emotionless, and numb to such violence

• A main underlying theme: dehumanisation and degradation of the Jewish people: Best exemplified by the change in the visual representation of Szpilman – starts off as an accomplished, smartly dressed pianist, gradually slides into a state of inhumanity as the film progresses – by the end he’s got somewhat of a caveman-like appearance. Jews are segregated first (made to walk on the road, not the pavement), Jews are placed in a situation in the ghettos where they have to fight for their food and living space like animals competing for territory, Wladyslaw scavenges for food – his last aspects of humanity slip away – only after the war that the restoration of his humanity occurs – demonstrated by the closing scene of him playing in a concert

• Violent scenes shot from a distance, no close ups – these designs are designed by Polanski to leave the audience in a position where the only feeling they can generate is one of distance, violence and shock – it is vital the audience cannot comprehend the violence on screen in case to try and comprehend an event such as the Holocaust is not possible

• Recurring theme revolves around the streets of Warsaw where streets = visual tool to indicate status or mood. Old Jew made to walk on the street rats, young Jew, Jews are humiliated by being forced to dance in the streets, streets are littered with corpses, streets are littered with luggage and other stuff, streets are empty as Szpilman wanders around – holocaust is so OPEN, its not kept a SECRET, its happened everywhere and the Nazi’s don’t conceal the fact it was open because the streets are tellable and its happenings in the streets

• Colour: Progressive change out all colourful in dark colours everywhere like when playing the piano the more progressively darker – colour is also used to demonstrate how crap life is for the Jews in the ghetto – Warsaw street markets, colourful fruits and vibrant life emphasise the vitality of local life compared to the grey depressing colours in the ghettos. As Szpilman’s situation worsens, the colours get darker – in the end they’re bright again for instance where he plays the piano

• Polanski presents the holocaust in a very different way to other Hollywood films, Polanski doesn’t strive to be cinematically obvious and he has a more layered vision. When Szpilman’s family finds out about the German invasion or that they will be deported; rather than feel sorry for themselves a wide range of ideas surface from each family member, one wants to leave the country, the other wants to fight, another is just confused. These are NATURAL human responses that bring the victims to life, it becomes easy to identify with the victims and engages the audience in considering what their own plan of action would be – it’s a few minute scene but it is highly effective compared to cliché scenes of the victims faces being upset and crying

**Pretty Village, Pretty Flame, Srdjan Dragojevic – General Notes**

• A representative of Josip Tito cuts his finger at the grand opening of the tunnel – blood spatters everywhere, this represents the blood that will be splitt in the future

• In the end the tunnel is renamed “the tunnel of peace” and the movie ends but the final frame again displays the finger being cut – this shows that the bloodshed is far from being over

• Nazim passes by Milan and Halil when fleeing to another city – Milan smashes his glass on the table, causing his hand to bleed – represents the bloodshed to come

• Icons of memory are also used to show how war changes an individual’s thinking, mentality and persona. Throughout the flashbacks we witness a close friendship between Milan and Halil who don’t care or acknowledge their ethnic or religious (Halil is a Muslim) differences – children don’t see religion or ethnicity. Even when they do mention their differences, it is done in a joking-manner (e.g. when Milan asks Halil to prove he’s