Philosophical Discussion Regarding Life In Shawshank Redemption

Shawshank redemption. A movie where an improbable friendship transcends all societal expectations and provides security in a perilous place.

This film would be essential to incorporate into the relationship study guide as it deepens the audience's understanding of the importance of companionship within daily life and causes them to reflect upon how mateship has benefitted their lives. Shawshank redemption is about Andy Dufrane, an innocent banker who has been convicted to a corrupt prison on back to back life sentences for murder. In his time in Shawshank prison, he befriends Ellis Reding, a prisoner known for smuggling contraband.

Numerous fundamental lessons concerning platonic relationships are taught throughout this film through the use of various cinematic and literary techniques. These can be seen through Andy Dufrane (the protagonist) and Red (the narrator)’s unlikely friendship which we see develop. The narration provides us with context on Red’s first impressions of Andy. Most of their initial interactions seem casual despite the unusual setting. The director, Frank Darabount features medium angles and point of view shots to emphasize how both these individuals are equals despite their differences in age, race and class boundaries. These film techniques contrast with the high shots used when a member of authority such as the warden is interacting with the prisoners.

These scenes begin to develop friendship and allow the audience to reflect upon what factors truly matter within a friendship. In a society where social status is considered prior to interacting with individuals this question brings to light the true purpose of friendship which would be highly valuable for specifically adolescents to contemplate. This would be fundamental to the relationship study guide as it would captivate students, enriching their focus and connection to the module.

The meaning of genuine friendship is again brought up within the script, “every man in here is innocent”. This statement is repeated throughout the film by all prisoners, including Andy. On the surface, this anomaly appears to be highlighting the irony of guilty men not taking accountability however the mystery of Andy’s innocence emphasizes the actual purpose behind it in conjunction with the moral of the movie. This being, that sincere friendship is not about who you were or what you may have done, but rather who you are and what you will do. Their non-judgemental and somewhat unconditional friendship is a vital aspect within the film and is a colossal part of all relationships. This teaches the concept of loyalty and the importance of feeling accepted and understood as an individual human experience.

Commentary is a common occurrence throughout the film. Red and Andy specifically look out for each other as companionship is a necessity in everyone's life, however even more so in unlawful circumstances. Examples of this are Andy using his connections to build a library, Reds gifts to Andy when he had been beaten, negotiating to get beers on the roof and playing music throughout the shawshank prison. The scene where Andy plays music through the speakers utilizes a bird’s eye view shot to show the positive effect his sacrifice has on the

happiness of all prisoners as their attention is drawn to the speaker. This then cuts into a low shot, featuring dim lighting. The mise en scene is confined, appears dirty and inhumane. These scenes all depict how despite being in diabolical circumstances, friendship can provide security, knowing someone is looking out for you.

The relationship between Andy and Red is one that evolves over time into a deeper however unique bond. Initially, Red is seen as the mentor, the man who “knows how to get things” despite conversely being cynical and hopeless. As the story is told through Red’s perspective the audience learns information at the same time as him. Situational irony occurs during the pivotal moment within the film when both Red and the viewer discover Andy’s escape. Tracking shots are used to emphasize the long, treacherous journey Andy undertook, providing Red with hope. This mateship manifests the concept that relationships are mutually beneficial as others can provide you with ideals that you never once considered, however, it can positively implicate the remainder of your life. This becomes evident in the ending of the film when Red takes on Andy’s hopeful mindset, “I hope I can make it across the border, I hope to see my friend and shake his hand, I hope the pacific is as blue as it has been in my dreams, I hope”. The repeated use of hope draws emphasis on the strong impact relationships can have in both positive and negative ways. During this scene we see both protagonists reunite as the camera pans out into a birds-eye view shot, illustrating an example of an abiding bond that will prevail through the utmost dire circumstances. Non-diegetic triumphant yet mellow music accompanies this scene, leaving the respondent to contemplate the relationships within their personal lives.

This global phenomenon captures a broad range of viewers due to its uplifting and thought-provoking nature. Audience perceptions of the world are challenged as Shawshank Redemption ignites new ideas, opening up a philosophical discussion regarding life. This film offers a personal spiritual experience for viewers due to its eloquent portrayal of human qualities and emotions. As this is an adaptation of the Stephen King novel novella, the sophisticated narration allows an opportunity for students to improve and refine their skills concerning metalanguage and syntax. It is imperative that this film is undertaken into the relationship study guide. Thank you.