

Analysis of the topic
of family as illustrated
in the essay: life is
beautiful, m...



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People thrive on relationships. The relationships that people make define who they are and family and friends are who we depend on for love and support. However, when obstacles are put in the way of relationships, it can result in the unification or separation of families and friends. When those situations are as tragic as the Holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima, where hundreds of thousands of people are killed, the damage seems irreparable. In sources such as *Life is Beautiful*, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, and *Barefoot Gen*, we see how different families react to difficult situations, and because of the theme of family is very relatable, those sources are able to resonate with readers very well. Sources that depict the dynamics of families and friends after the Holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima are more persuasive because they showcase the breakdown or strength in tragic situations that the audience, on a smaller scale, can relate to or fear.

In in the Italian film, *Life Is Beautiful*, one of the most attractive aspects of the movie that resonates with the audience is it's theme of family and protection. From the beginning of the movie, the audience falls in love with Guido Orefice. His antics make him get in trouble with the high-class people and earn him the women of his dreams. When they have a kid, the audience can feel the protection and love for Guido's son, Giosue. The play takes an unexpected turn when Guido and his family are sent to a concentration camp. However, despite the tragic subject, the movie is able to keep it's humor, without romanticizing the Holocaust. We can see this in many parts of the movie, one being when Guido goes to the loudspeaker to shout "Buongiorno Principessa", the one thing he would always say to his wife when he would see her. This symbolizes that despite the situation that Guido is put

in, his humor and his spirit stays with him until he dies. When Guido is executed, and he is being taken to where he will be killed, he spots his son and does the “ funny walk” that has been many times before in the movie as a way to tell his son and the audience that keeping yourself and your own sanity is most important in hard situations and his protection of his son’s childhood innocence and romancing the world for the sake of your children resonates with many parents as well. This act by Guido also serves as a way to remember the legacy and the humorous, fatherly nature that Guido showcases throughout the film.

In the anime film, Barefoot Gen, the movie follows a family of two boys, an older girl, a father and pregnant women. Despite a lack of food and the mother being malnourished, the family overcomes obstacles of hunger. This dynamic, however, is devastated by the bombing of Hiroshima, where the youngest brother, the eldest daughter and the father are all crushed by their house. Gen, the young boy and his mother Kimie are the only survivors in their family. Despite how humorous and unified the Orefice family stays in Life is Beautiful, the bombing of Hiroshima creates a breakdown of the mother. We see this immediately after Gen and Kimie’s family dies when Kimie starts to laugh hysterically when her family is crushed. Another place where we see the loss of family being is prevalent is when Gen’s infant sister, Tomoko dies and is cremated. When watching, the audience can see paralleling factors between this scene and the scene after the bombing of Hiroshima. There is similar music playing and an obvious parallel through the imagery. This symbolizes how although the bombing of Hiroshima was a devastation to hundreds of thousands all over Japan, the moment when

Gen's younger sister died was when he was truly devastated and that was when Gen felt as though the world was truly collapsing around him.

The final source that showcases family during calamity is *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. The graphic novel displays The Holocaust more raw than any of the others sources, despite it being showcased through pictures. In the graphic novel, one of the most interesting things to observe is the relationship between Art and his father Vladek. In the book, Art is bluntly honest about his relationship with his father. He cannot understand his father nor in many areas even likes his father. However, through the duration of the book, Art begins at last to understand his father's stinginess with money, his emotional isolation with all the losses he has absorbed, and his complicated relationship with his son. Art desperately wants to know exactly what happened to his father, mother and brother while Vladek is torn between allowing Artie to see the horror while having to relive the terrible memories, and as a result, his father often shuts him down and represses memories of the Holocaust. By the end of the novel, neither Art nor his father feel as though their relationship is resolved, most likely due to the fact that Art still resents the fact that his mother committed suicide and his belief that his father may have contributed to her depression.

The family dynamic from each of these sources differs and resonates with its audience because of it's of it's worldwide ideology. The most persuasive source for me was *Life Is Beautiful*. This is because it incorporates humor and is able to funny without romanticizing the Holocaust. I think it is also very powerful because it was able to make me think about losing a family

member and it gave me a good outlook on life and how I should act with family members.