San andreas and family

Unlike the spectacle and indiscriminate destruction of early disaster films, modern disaster films take a more personal and internalized look at disaster. Films from the golden age of disaster, like Guillermin's The Towering Inferno, set the standards for the extravagance of disaster films, as a group of individuals try their best to escape the flaming tower unscathed. As the genre progressed, focus of the films shifted. While the spectacle of the disaster was still vital to the plot, it became more of an instigator for another, more important plot point. As Matthew Sorrento mentions, Danny Boyle's 127 Hours is an excellent example of this trend of " character-disaster" (Sorrento) in disaster films. While the disaster itself (the boulder falling, and trapping Franco) is the instigator of the plot, the climax and focus of the film is Franco cutting off his own arm. Though a less drastic topic, the same can be said for Brad Peyton's San Andreas and the importance of family.

San Andreas was released in the summer of 2015. The film tells the tale of Ray Gaines, a member of the Los Angeles Fire Department Air Rescue, and his broken family. His wife, Emma has filed for divorce, and is planning to move in with her new architect boyfriend, Daniel. Ray's daughter, Blake, is in the process of moving to university with the help of Daniel when the San Andreas Fault line becomes active, and a series of natural disasters occur. It is during and following these events that characters reveal themselves through their survival instincts. Through this, the film is able to express a positive message regarding family values and the strength of familial love. Additionally, the framing of this film allows it to fall into Sorrento's genre of " character-disaster". Despite the large-scale events of the film, the integral

disaster of the film is a family that has fallen apart. While Ray's relentless love for his family is eventually able to save them (and from the perspective of the film, save the day), Daniel is ultimately depicted as a villain as his instincts and motivators focus solely on his own survival. The importance of family is established early on in San Andreas, prior to any disasters occurring. This is done through the introduction of one of the main conflicts of the film: Ray and Emma's impending divorce. The divorce is introduced to the film in a very short scene. Ray is on the phone with his daughter, Blake, and suggests they and Emma go out to celebrate Blake moving to university. Blake informs her father they have plans with Emma's new boyfriend and the conversation ends shortly after, the camera focusing and zooming in on a stack of divorce papers, emotional music playing in the background. This introduction of the divorce indicates to the audience Ray's feelings towards it: he is against leaving his wife, and hopeful in rekindling their relationship. This is the initial establishment of Ray's family driven values. He is not eager or willing to sign the divorce papers as he hopes to repair their relationship.

In addition to casting Ray in a family-centric light, the divorce also presents itself as a conflict point rather than a cemented moment of character history. It is clear that the divorce is meant to be seen as a problem, not something viewers are intended to accept and move on from. Ray and Emma's impending divorce is one of the overarching conflicts within the film that is solved over a variety of interactions between Ray and Emma during the earthquake, and through it does not hold as obvious a role as reuniting with Blake or the earthquake itself, it is vital to the message of the film. When the film ends, Ray and Emma are shown embracing each other in a loving and

affectionate manner. By concluding the film in a way that implies Ray and Emma are going to remain married, the audience is reminded of the power of love and familial bonds and suggests its vitality in order to survive disasters. Much like the falling boulder in 127 Hours results in Franco's character cutting off his own are, the activation of the San Andreas Fault line caused Ray and Emma to look at and improve their failing relationship, therefore contributing to and advancing the storyline.

Even aside from his conflict involving his potential divorce, Ray holds strong family values throughout the entirety of the film and that is seen most clearly through his relationship with Blake. The movie establishes a strong and important relationship between the two characters upon Blake's introduction as the two plan for their trip to Blake's university. When their plans fall through due to Ray's job, the significance of their relationship is further established by Daniel who remarks that he will " never try to change [their relationship]", reinforcing the idea that there is strong bond between Ray and Blake. Ray is able to prove his strong, family oriented values, as well as the importance of his and Blake's relationship when he ventures into dangerous situations to rescue her. Ray, and recently retrieved Emma, move towards the disaster in hopes of saving their daughter from peril despite the dangers that lay ahead for themselves. Repeatedly Ray is depicted rushing into dangerous situations to save young women, all visual placeholders for saving his daughter. When Ray is finally met with the potential death of his daughter, he is able to use newfound strength brought forth by love to save her. Ray is willing to risk his own life for the security of his family, allowing him to be the hero of the film. The progress of rescuing Blake is also

symbolism for the current state of Ray's family. When he is furthest from her, Ray's relationship with his family is more distant. As he and Emma get closer to rescuing Blake, they become closer connected, concluding, as previously addressed, with the assumption that they will remain married. This again acknowledges and enforces the importance of strong family relationships as the closer Emma and Ray became co-related to the rescue of their daughter.

To create a contrast involving the importance of family values, the film uses Daniel, Emma's new boyfriend, as the antagonist. While initially his villainous role is solely based on his role in keeping Ray and Emma apart, as the film progresses into the disaster he is seen taking a survivalist role which causes him to make some questionable decisions. Daniel being portrayed this way is important because unlike the other characters within the film, Daniel is not family-oriented. During their flight to San Francisco, Blake questions Daniel's decisions to not have children. Daniel replies that he has " never had any kids cause [he] was too busy raising [buildings]". This is the first indication that Daniel is not a family-oriented person but instead focuses on his own career success. This is an important distinction between Ray and Daniel; while Ray acts more selflessly as the film progresses, Daniels actions become more self-serving. When Daniel and Blake's driver crashes their car during the earthquake, Blake's legs become pinned and she is unable to get out. Daniel leaves Blake to get help, reports the incident to a security guard, witnesses his first casualty of the disaster, and leaves the scene for his own safety, leaving Blake in an incredibly dangerous situation. It is this incident that indicates to the audience that Daniel does not possess familial instincts

and is instead much more self-serving. This perception of Daniel is only further enforced later in the film as Daniel physically removes a man from safety in order to take his place and witness the man die. These actions and their great contrast from Ray's enforce Daniel's role as a villain. While Ray is willing to rush towards danger to protect a life, Daniel is willing to risk a life to protect his own, furthering the idea that Daniel's selfish instincts during a disaster are a result of his absent family values. San Andreas is a character-disaster revolving around a broken family that uses the occurrence of a natural disaster to reconcile their relationship. While the earthquake is a very present occurrence within the film, it is used to put Ray and his family is a situation where close allies are needed, and emphasizes that the best allies are family.

As the film progresses Ray is able to bring his family back together due to the events of the earthquake. It is also through the earthquake that characters are able to reveal their true selves with Ray becoming more in touch with his emotions and Daniel placing his own worth above everyone else. Though San Andreas takes place during an earthquake, the focus and intended lesson of the film is the importance of familial values.