

Humour in War Narratives: An Exploration of *Life is Beautiful* and *Hope and Glory*

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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Humour in War Narratives: An Exploration of *Life is Beautiful* and *Hope and Glory*** is a bona fide record of sincere work done by, Jovin Christo Francis, Register Number: 210021000938, Bharata Mata College, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature under the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam during the year 2023-2024.

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Declaration

I, hereby declare that the presented dissertation **Humour in War Narratives: An Exploration of *Life is Beautiful* and *Hope and Glory*** is based on the research that I did on under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Merin Jose, Assistant Professor, Research Centre and Postgraduate Department of English, Bharata Mata College, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. This is a report of my hands based on the research done on the selected topic and it is my original work and interpretations drawn therein are based on material collected by myself. It has not been previously formed basis for the award of any degree, diploma or fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Exploring the concepts of Humour Theory	6
Chapter 3: Finding Laughter in the Trenches	11
Chapter 4: Humour amidst the Chaos	16
Chapter 5: Conclusion	21
Works Cited	

This project follows MLA 8th edition

Chapter 1

Introduction

World War II was the deadliest conflict in human history, marked by 70 to 85 million fatalities. The deadliest conflict in human history, which lasted from 1939 to 1945, led to the deaths of millions of people due to disease, slaughter, starvation, and genocides, including the Holocaust. Nearly all nations, including the superpowers, were involved either as members of the Allies or the Axis. This war blurred the lines between civilian and military resources, as many participating countries threw all of their economic, industrial and scientific resources into it. It was the worst conflict in history which claimed millions of lives. The dark theme of World War II was taken by many artists to create visual art called cinema. More than 250 films were produced about World War II and its atrocities even before the war ended. By the end of 1940, it reached 300. In the 1950s and 60s there were more than 200 and in the 1970s and 80s, the numbers began to fall. During this time propaganda-based films dominated the screen and most of them featured the enemy, Germany. Most of the films were showcasing the bravery of American forces. *Battles in the Shadow*, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, *Hitler, Beast of Berlin*, *The Lion has Wings* are some of the films that was made during World War II. *Battle of the Rails*, *Before Him all Rome Trembled*, *The Best Years of our Lives*, *The Captive Heart*, were released in the late 1940s. Films which range from recent Oscar winners like *Oppenheimer (2023)* and *The Zone of Interest (2023)* to beloved classics like *Casablanca (1942)*, honor the conflicts that were fought in the air, on land, and at sea.

Governments utilized cinema to legitimize their acts and persuade the public to support the war activities in their daily lives. The depiction of the war's terrifying nature in movies

heightened tension and fear among people, preventing them from finding entertainment in such films. Even the inclusion of romance failed to alleviate the mental burden imposed by these portrayals.

In such a situation black comedy or dark humour finds a great role in the movies. Black comedy is also known as dark comedy, morbid humour, or gallows humour. Black comedy is a genre of humor that satirizes subjects usually considered painful or serious to address. It is a common strategy used by writers and comedians to explore filthy issues while making their audience laugh and uncomfortable.

Black comedy was initially used in American writing by authors like Nathanael west and Vladimir Nabokov following the release of Bruce Jay Friedman's *Mass Market Paperback* black humour in 1965, the idea of black humour gained widespread recognition. One of the earliest anthologies in America to focus on the idea of black humour as a literary form was the *Paperback*. A number of writers including J.P. Donleavy, Edward Albee, Joseph Heller, Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, Vladimir Nabokov, Bruce Jay Friedman and Louis Ferdinand Celine were classified as black humorists by Friedman in the book. The authors listed above were considered black humorists because of their humorous portrayals of serious or horrifying situations in novels, poetry, songs and other literary works.

In dark comedy films, humour is often blended with grim or morbid subject matter to explore taboo subjects or to show the ridiculousness of life's darker sides. *Dr. Strangelove or: How I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb* directed by Stanley Kubrick was the first dark comedy movie released in 1964. It is a satirical take on the cold war tensions and nuclear paranoia of the era.

The project has taken into consideration of an Italian movie named *Life is Beautiful* and an American movie named *Hope and Glory*. It is to explore the different humour theories used in these movies and to study its effect on the audiences in both Italian and American contexts.

Before moving on to the nuances of a particular movie in hand, it is important to understand the filmography of the director, for he plays the role of an author in movie production.

The Italian movie 'Life is Beautiful' directed by Roberto Benigni, who is an actor, comedian and filmmaker. He has made a significant mark as a director in the world of cinema. Born in Tuscany, Italy, on October 27, 1952, Benigni's directorial ventures reflect his unique blend of humour, poignancy and social commentary. Benigni's 1997 film 'Life is Beautiful', a moving tragic comedy set against the backdrop of World War II, won him praise from all over the world. Benigni played the role of Guido Orefice, a Jewish Italian man who uses humour and imagination to protect his kid from the horrors of the holocaust, in this masterwork. The film won three academy awards including the best foreign language film and the best actor for Benigni, cementing his status as a director of profound emotional depth.

Benigni's directorial style is characterized by a whimsical yet profound approach to storytelling. He infuses his films with a sense of childlike wonder and innocence often juxtaposed with darker themes and historical events. His use of exaggerated facial expressions and physical comedy infuses his stories with layers of sadness and humour giving an unforgettable cinematic experience that deeply connects with the viewers.

Beyond 'Life is Beautiful', Benigni's filmography also features in the romantic comedy 'The Tiger and the Snow' set against the chaotic backdrop of the Iraq War, and the farcical comedy 'Johnny Zecchino' which explores the mistaken identity. Even though the tone and subject matter of his films vary, Benigni's artistic vision and humanistic philosophy are clearly

presented in each one of them. As a director, Benigni is not afraid to tackle serious subjects with sincerity and humour, using his artistry to shed light on the human conditions and complexities of life.

On the other hand, the American movie named 'Hope and Glory' is directed by John Boorman. A visionary filmmaker, John Boorman is well-known for his unique, aesthetic and creative storytelling techniques. Boorman, who was born in England on January 18, 1933, started out as a BBC documentarian before switching to filmmaking. His directing talent is evident in a variety of genres including thrillers and adventures.

Boorman's cinematic journey is marked by a fearless exploration of human complexities and social themes. Apart from his proficiency in narrative storytelling, Boorman is renowned for his technical innovation. He has a keen eye for cinematic composition and utilizes innovative techniques to enhance storytelling. Boorman has bravely taken on a wide range of issues across his career, from the existential investigation of identity in *Point Blank (1947)* to the complexities of human relationships and dark humour in *Hope and Glory*. His body of work reflects a deep understanding of the human condition and a commitment to push the boundaries of cinematic experience. Boorman's impact goes beyond his contributions to the cinema industry; upcoming filmmakers will continue to be influenced by his audacious storytelling and innovative technical methods. His works continue to enthrall and inspire viewers all over the world and his reputation as a visionary filmmaker is indelible in the annals of the film industry.

Both the movies *Life is Beautiful* and *Hope and Glory* were set during the time of World War II and both of them carry dark humour in different ways under humour theory. This project tends to find out how different humour theories were applied in these movies by exploring their technical sides. The aim of this project is to discover the positive impact of these movies among

the audiences in both Italian and American contexts. The next chapter will give a deep knowledge about the different humour theories and their origin. Now let it be presumed that the use of dark humour in these movies helped people to explore taboo or sensitive topics in a way that can be cathartic by providing a release of tension through laughter.

Chapter 2

Exploring the concepts of Humour Theory

Humour theory is a vast area with origins in linguistics, psychology and ancient philosophy. Plato and Aristotle, who saw humour as a kind of incongruity and superiority, developed the first ideas of humour in the Western thought. Later, in the 18th Century, theorists such as Thomas Hobbes and Immanuel Kant elaborated on these concepts, stressing the significance of surprise and incongruity in humour. The psychological and social components of humour were studied in the 20th Century by academics like Sigmund Freud and Henri Bergson. They explored how humour emphasized social norms and relieved tension. To comprehend how humour functions in diverse circumstances, modern theories frequently combine cognitive, social and linguistic viewpoints.

Humour is a universal human experience; its precise origins are hotly debated. There are a variety of concepts aiming to elucidate humor, endeavoring to outline its essence, explain its social purposes, and pinpoint its comedic elements. There are numerous humour theories namely, Superiority theory, Incongruity theory, Relief theory, Benign Violation theory, Social Identity theory etc. Although different classical theories of humour could be found, three theories of humour namely, Superiority theory, Incongruity theory and Relief theory appear repeatedly. These theories were used as the building blocks for the rest of the theories. Filmmakers had utilized these theories to create scenarios, characters and gags that make people laugh and connect with them. Both the movies *Life is Beautiful* and *Hope and Glory* are remarkable examples of how these three important theories are employed in filmmaking.

The Superiority theory of humour proposes that laughter arises from a sense of superiority over others, particularly when observing their misfortunes, shortcomings, or

foolishness. This theory suggested that humour served as a way for individuals to assert their dominance or feel better about themselves by highlighting the flaws or mistakes of others. “Superiority in humour involves a feeling of elevation over others, often through ridicule or mockery” (Freud *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*). Plato and Aristotle delved into the connection between laughter and feelings of superiority to establish the foundation for the Superiority theory existing today. However, it wasn't until recent times that this theory gained wider recognition and underwent more extensive examination.

Philosopher Thomas Hobbes addressed the notion of his 17th Century work, “*Leviathan*”, arguing that laughter results from a feeling of dominance over others. The popularity of humour and satire as forms of entertainment in the 18th Century contributed to the growth of this idea. Political cartoons and satirical literature frequently emphasized dehumanizing or mocking people or groups to appeal to the superiority complex of their viewers.

The concept of superiority was developed in the 19th Century by the French philosopher Henri Bergson in his seminal work, “*Laughter: An essay on the meaning of the Comic*”. According to Bergson, laughter resulted from the observer’s sense of intellectual superiority when they perceive others as being stiff or robotic. He thought that laughing acts as a social corrective mechanism, drawing attention to the behaviors that deviate from expectations thereby assisting people in adapting to social norms.

Psychologists like Sigmund Freud and Herbert Spencer investigated the concept of superiority during the 20th Century, using psychoanalytic and evolutionary theories, respectively as a framework. Freud believed that humour allowed people to let go of suppressed sentiments of anger or supremacy, whereas Spencer hypothesized that laughing originated as a means of social dominance for humans. The function of superiority in humour is still being studied in the

modern psychology researches, which look at new individual differences in personality traits, such as narcissism or self-esteem. It might affect how much a person enjoys humour based on feelings of superiority. In short, the superiority theory of humour highlights the intricate relationship between humour, social dynamics and individual psychology and offers insightful information about the psychological and social benefits of laughing.

The Incongruity theory of humour posits that laughter arises from the perception of incongruity, or a mismatch between what is expected and what actually occurs. According to this theory, humour arises from the deviations from regular thought or behavior patterns that result in absurdity or astonishment. “Laughter is a response to incongruities that cannot be resolved immediately but require a second thought” (Dewey *Art as Experience*) Philosophers, psychologists, and humor researchers have extensively explored the long-standing history of the Incongruity theory.

The Incongruity theory has its origins in early philosophical debates over the nature of humour and laughter. In his *“Poetics”*, for instance, Aristotle addressed the concept of incongruity and proposed that laughter results from the perception of something that is both familiar and unusual. But the Incongruity theory did not take shape as a unique framework for comprehending humour until the modern period.

Philosophers like Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer expanded on the concept of incongruity in humour during the 18th Century. In his *“Critique of Judgement”*, Kant postulated that humour results from an epiphany, the recognition of a connection between two seemingly disparate ideas. Similarly, Schopenhauer maintained that laughter arises from an abrupt change of viewpoint that highlights the absurdity of a situation.

In the 20th Century the Incongruity theory became even more well-known because of the contributions of academics like Max Eastman and Arthur Koestler. In his book, *'The Sense of Humour'*, Eastman stressed the importance of incongruity in humour, arguing that laughter arises when expectations and reality collide. In his seminal essay *"The Act of Creation"*, Koestler proposes the theory that humour results from the collision of two incompatible frames of reference, leading to a moment of insight or enlightenment.

The complexities of the Incongruity theory are still being explored in modern researches, which consider aspects like individual variances in the cognitive style and the cultural impact on humour perception. Thus, the Incongruity theory of humour offers insightful information about mental and perceptual mechanisms that underlie laughing, emphasizing the significance of surprise, ambiguity and departure from the usual in producing hilarious experiences.

Relief theory of humour, proposed by Sigmund Freud in the late 19th Century, suggests that humour can be used to relieve psychological stress or suppressed urges. According to Freud, humour offers a momentary escape from social limitations by allowing people to safely and appropriately communicate thoughts or urges that are socially unacceptable. Freud claimed that humour frequently included the expression of taboo topics like anger, sex, or other forbidden urges. Through the use of humour people could face and accept their inner struggles without worrying about criticism or negative consequences. "Laughter results from the release of nervous energy built up by the tension of social constraints" (Spencer *Principles of Psychology*)

The foundation of Freud's theory is his more comprehensive psychoanalytic framework, which highlighted how the unconscious mind shapes human emotions and behavior. He opines that humour functions as a defense mechanism, helping people deal with discomfort or anxiety by changing upsetting or frightening inputs into something more acceptable or less frightening.

The Relief theory of humour has been influential in the fields of psychology and literary theory, shaping the minds of people to find certain things funny and how humour functions as a coping mechanism in everyday life. Even though Freud's theories have been challenged and modified over time, the fundamental idea of humour as a means to let go of stress is still important in the discussions about comedy and laughter.

It's important to comprehend humour theories since they explain why people find certain things humorous. It deepens the understanding of the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of humour and how it influences the behavior in people. It also sheds light on many situations in which humour can be employed successfully, including persuasion, entertainment and stress relief. The three important theories explained above are well used in the movies *Life is beautiful* and *Hope and Glory*. The coming chapters will provide a clear idea about how these theories are applied in these movies by exploring their technical sides.

Chapter 3

Finding Laughter in the Trenches

Life is beautiful is a poignant film set during World War II and tells the story of Guido Orefice, a Jewish man who protects his little son from the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp by using humour and creativity. Guido's undying love and optimism come through despite the unfathomable difficulties they face as he turns their harsh reality into a game, telling a story of hope, resiliency and the enduring strength of the human spirit. Through heartfelt and humorous moments, the movie honours the victory of love and the human heart's resiliency in the face of unfathomable tragedy.

According to the superiority theory of humour, individuals laugh at other people's tragedies or blunders because it makes them feel better than them. In *Life is Beautiful*, the idea is delicately examined via the lens of Guido Orefice, a man who turns to humour to help him deal with the atrocities of the Holocaust and to protect his kid from the difficult realities of their circumstances.

The scene in which Guido outwits the Nazi officers by using cunning tactics and deception is an illustration of superiority humour in the movie. Guido temporarily achieves power and dignity over his captors by outwitting and making fun of them, which enables him to survive in a setting that is dehumanizing. For example, when posing as a Nazi officer, Guido hilariously exaggerates his actions and gestures, making himself superior to the Nazi officer. Then he imitates the Nazi officer through his humorous gestures, creating a comedy there, through the superiority theory of humour.

Furthermore, it is possible to see Guido's attempts to construct a fictional world for his son Giosué while he was confined to the concentration camp as an instance of superiority humour. To keep Giosué from realizing how dire things are for them, Guido creates intricate games and stories. Through this Guido becomes the one who is in charge of the games and the one who plans it. This makes him superior to the current situation in front of his son. And then Guido turns the serious situations into humorous ones in the name of the games. Guido briefly escapes the brutal reality of their existence by portraying the camp as a fantasy journey rather than a place of sorrow. It is crucial to remember that Guido's use of humour may offer them some momentary respite from their horrible situation. It also has a deeper function of safeguarding Giosué's innocence and shielding him from the tragedy of the Holocaust. In this way, Guido's humour is about sustaining humanity, hope, and tenacity in the face of unfathomable misfortune rather than just bragging about one's own superiority.

According to the incongruity theory of humour, we laugh when something surprises or is unexpected, especially when it goes against what we expect. The movie *Life is Beautiful* employs incongruity humour to contrast the melancholy backdrop of the Holocaust with humorous and joyous parts.

A notable instance of incongruity humour in the movie is Guido's lighthearted and carefree attitude towards the terrible conditions he finds himself in the concentration camp. Even though their circumstances are dire, Guido stays upbeat and uses innovative strategies to shield his son Giosué from the atrocities of the Holocaust. For example, Guido makes their captivity into a game, persuading Giosué that the camp is nothing more than a sophisticated contest to win a tank. This situation turns into a comedy because Guido defied the preconceived notions of how someone should react to such misfortune. Rather than weeping with his son about their current

situation his creative thinking, inventive narrative and fast thinking provide absurdity and thus created humour to this unexpected twist on the tragic scenario.

Incongruity theory of humour can also be observed in Guido's dealings with the Nazi officers. A normal man would fear his captors and will be an obedient slave to him, but Guido behaved exactly opposite to the viewers' expectations. He used his wits and cunning nature to outsmart his captors through his humorous gestures rather than giving them fear or despair. Another example for incongruity theory of humour is that when Guido posed as a German commander in one scene. He used his extravagant motions and spoke in bad German. The audience laughed at the ridiculousness of a Jewish man posing as a Nazi officer in the concentration camp, emphasizing how out of place the situation is. This absurdity creates a humour there and thus employs the incongruity theory of humour. The mix of comedy and sorrow throughout the movie emphasizes how resilient the human spirit can be when faced with unimaginable adversity. *Life is Beautiful* honours the ability of laughter to transcend even the most catastrophic circumstances by defying our expectations and finding humour in the worst of situations.

According to the relief theory of humour, laughing relieves stress or worry that has been building up inside you. This principle is used in the movie *Life is Beautiful*, which uses humorous moments to break up the overpowering solemnity and sadness of the Holocaust. The very first scene in the movie itself is a perfect example of relief theory of humour. The car in which Guido and his friend Ferruccio travelled lost its brakes and created a panic situation among the audience. Their travel through the hilly area in a car without brakes added more tension in the mind of the viewers. When Guido's car accidentally came in between the escorting vehicles of the king of Italy, it relieves the tension among the audience. Later the released

tension turned into a comedy when Guido was mistaken as the king of Italy and the people treated him with waving hands and band troupes. Here the relief theory of humour worked out and the audience were able tackle the situation easily.

In addition, relieving humour is frequently present in Guido's ideas actions since the moment Guido and his family had been captured by the Nazis. When Guido and his family was captured by the Nazis, the mother of Giosue got separated from him and was put in another train. This situation developed tension among the audience because of the thought that whether the young boy would be able to see his mother or not. But Guido, in this situation, persuaded his son to make him believe that they were going on a trip to celebrate his birthday and his mother went to buy cakes for him in the other train. This cheered up the boy and also released the tension from the audience. Here the drama created by Guido thus reflects the use of relief theory of humour.

Moreover, relief theory of humour can be used to interpret the movie's ending, which offers a happy yet melancholic resolution. Guido's son was saved by the English army who destroyed the camp of the Nazis. The audience feels cathartic and relieved as Guido's unselfish deeds and unwavering love for his kid finally prevail over the hopelessness of the Holocaust. The significant effect of humour as a coping mechanism and source of hope in the face of tragedy is shown by the release of tension that occurs when people laugh and cry.

There are many technical sides which contributed to the creation of humour in this movie. Timing, physical comedy, protagonist's gestures and actions, character dynamics are some of the technical elements used in this movie. It is important to time humorous situations perfectly. Roberto Benigni, who directed *Life is Beautiful*, skillfully combined clever dialogues and physical comedy to make the audience laugh. For instance, witty dialogues and humorous

gestures were used by Guido when he acted as the translator of the German officer, turning his orders into a game for his son Joshua. Benigni effectively incorporates slapstick humour into sequences by utilizing his physicality. Layers of humour were added by his exaggerated actions and facial expressions, such as when Guido played a hilarious expression of a Nazi officer who was goosestepping to amuse Joshua.

Funny moments can be enhanced by clever wordplay and puns. In *Life is Beautiful*, Guido's witty vocabulary and fast thinking gave a lighthearted contrast to the sombre background of the Holocaust. For example, the story is made more endearing and humorous by his clever banter with the other characters, particularly with Dora, his wife. Comic moments could arise from the interactions between characters. In *Life is Beautiful*, there are some endearing and funny exchanges between Guido and other characters, especially his son Joshua. Throughout the entire movie, Guido's unwavering optimism in the face of misfortune and their strong relationship serve as a source of humour and inspiration.

Life is Beautiful succeeded in blending humour with poignant storytelling, by effectively utilizing the above-mentioned technical aspects and made it a memorable cinematic experience.

Chapter 4

Humour amidst the Chaos

Hope and Glory is an American film about a young kid named Billy who experienced growing up in England during World War II. As the war unfolded, Billy experienced the ups and downs of wartime living and found humour and happiness amidst the chaos. In the face of hardship, the movie examines the themes of family, resiliency, and the transformational potential of innocence in youth. *Hope and Glory* provides a nostalgic and moving window into a turbulent but unforgettable time through Billy's experiences. *Hope and Glory* employs the superiority humour by showing scenes in which the characters frequently get comfort by feeling better than others through humour, in the face of chaos or hardship during World War II

There are many scenes in the movie where the protagonist, Billy and his friends outwit the grownups. Billy and his friends feel independent and superior when they pull practical jokes on their professors. The humour used here was the superiority humour when they play pranks on their teachers. Funny and empowering moments rose from their small-scale defiance of the authoritative figures. And, when Billy and his friends went into forbidden places, they felt a sense of superiority over the area. This superiority feeling over the place turned out to be a comedy when the audience realized that the area Billy and friends gather around was the area destroyed by the bombs.

The movie also explores the complexities of the socio-economic class, mainly as seen through Billy's neighbours, the Bilson family. The Bilson family was a working-class family and Billy's family was higher in status than the Bilson family. So, Billy's mother asserted a superiority over Bilson. But then this superiority turned out to be a comedy when Billy's mother

asked for milk and Bilson gave water instead. This was due to the heavy sounds of the bombs which resulted in improper communication between people.

Hope and Glory examines the cultural gap that existed between American soldiers and the English stationed in England during the war. Billy and his buddies laughed at the American soldiers' who were naive or ignorant of English customs and culture. They felt superior to the American soldiers and started to imitate them in a humorous manner leading to the superiority theory of humour. Thus, *Hope and Glory* highlights the ways in which characters express their control or have moments of empowerment despite difficult circumstances by employing humour. This display of dominance adds to the playful atmosphere of the movie and provides humorous contrast to the grim subject matter of warfare.

The incongruity humour theory postulated that laughing is a reaction to something surprising or unexpected, especially when it goes against what we expect. Throughout *Hope and Glory*, this notion is used in several scenarios where the characters laugh at the ridiculous or unexpected aspects of war circumstances.

The effect of bombing raids on civilian lives during World War II is one of the movie's main themes. There are moments when the characters in the movie reacted to the explosion of bombs that was fully opposite to the expectations of the audience. For example, there was a scene when bombs fell all around Billy and his family, and they found themselves smiling and joking instead of fleeing in dread. For Billy and his friends bombs sounded like crackers, and they were just enjoying the explosion. A clear perception of absurdity and incongruity is created by this unanticipated reaction to danger.

The juxtaposition of infantile innocence and the carnage of war serves as another source of incongruity humour in the movie. Billy and his buddies frequently act jovial and naughty, not

realizing the seriousness of what is happening all around them. Their casual activities such as playing and dancing here and there during the time of war provide humorous moments to the audience and drew their attention at a large.

The application of incongruity theory of humour could be seen in *Hope and Glory* through examining the collision of cultures and generations during the conflict. For instance, there is a cultural rift between American soldiers and the English locals when they arrive in England. Due to their lack of familiarity with English language and habits, Americans often found themselves in awkward situations and hilarious misunderstandings that illustrated the cultural differences between the two groups. Ultimately, *Hope and Glory* found moments of humour despite the chaos and uncertainty of wartime life by highlighting the absurdity and unpredictability of such a life. These paradoxical situations demonstrate the human spirit's ability to bounce back and adjust in the face of difficulty.

The relief theory of humour proposes that when faced with challenging or stressful circumstances, laughing could help relieve tension and anxiety. In *Hope and Glory*, this notion is put to use in a number of situations when characters are using humour as a coping mechanism to get through difficult times of war.

In spite of the fact that bombing raids during World War II were inherently dangerous, the protagonist and his friends in the movie frequently react humorously to defuse tension and anxiety from the viewers. For instance, Billy and his friends first reacted with terror and despair when bombs began to fall, but soon they started joking and smiling in the middle of the chaos. Billy and friends aimed at different places and started acting as if they were bombing the houses. Billy acted as the major, who ordered his friends to bomb the places and this drama created comedy helping the audience to release their tension caused by the bombings.

The movie also looks at the complexities of family life in the midst of the war, showing how humour can be a coping strategy for day-to-day struggles. Billy's family frequently found lighthearted and humorous moments in their interactions with one another, despite the disturbances brought about by the war. In the middle of the chaos of war, Billy's family pokes fun at each other which brought joy among them as well as among the audience. When Billy's family turned on the music and started dancing at night it actually gave relief to both the characters in the movie and also to the viewers. Here the relief theory of humour worked well, relieving the stress from the audience caused by the wars.

Hope and Glory depicts the community's tenacity and cooperation as they band together to support one another during a time of war. The characters in the movie found comfort and relief in each other's presence through the deeds of kindness, solidarity and comedy. For instance, there are situations where neighbors get together for spontaneous get-togethers or to exchange amusing anecdotes, which promotes a feeling of community and offers a brief reprieve from the horrors of war. Thus, *Hope and Glory* made use of relief theory of humour to show how resilient and adaptable people can be when faced with hardship. In the middle of the turmoil and uncertainty of war, the movie conveys a sense of hope and optimism through moments of humour and companionship.

A film like *Hope and Glory* required a few technical skills to create humour. Funny moments can be enhanced by clever and witty dialogues. The jokes and lighthearted conversations of the characters added immense comedy to the movie. For instance, amusing remarks and repartee were frequently exchanged among the family members, neighbors, and friends, causing the audience to chuckle.

Timing is everything when it comes to delivering funny lines and situations well. In *Hope and Glory*, humorous moments are timed perfectly to deliver the most effect. The right amount of humour, whether in the form of a sight gag or a well-timed punchline, elevated the film's humorous components. A film could gain additional humour by incorporating physical comedy. Physical comedy elements like slapstick sequences and exaggerated gestures can be found in *Hope and Glory*, which added to the film's humorous tone. For instance, characters might act or respond in a humorous way that made the audience laugh.

Comedy can also come from the way the characters interact with one another. In *Hope and Glory*, the interactions between neighbors, friends, and family members led to amusing moments because of their individual characteristics and bonds. Character dynamics, such as sibling rivalry, parental supervision, or neighborhood gossip, contributed to the humour of speech and circumstances.

Hope and Glory skillfully employed these technical elements to successfully integrate humour with its nostalgic depiction of life during the war. It provided the audience moments of fun among the difficulties and uncertainties of war.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

War narratives typically concentrated on capturing the dramatic, violent, and frequently terrifying parts of combat. Themes like bravery, selflessness, the cruelty of battle, and the human cost of war might be covered. These films frequently provide the audience with a realistic and poignant portrayal of the hardships of war by putting them in the shoes of either troops, civilians, or both. Examples of war drama movies include *Saving Private Ryan*, *Schindler's List*, and *Apocalypse Now*.

War comedy movies, on the other hand, employed humour as a primary tool to examine the absurdities, ironies, and lighter moments amidst the chaos of war. War comedies sometimes take a lighter approach to important subjects and historical events, but they might still touch on them. Sarcasm, slapstick humour, and clever language were frequently used to give comic relief. These films frequently highlighted the absurdity of war, the soldier-to-soldier bond, or the inefficiency of military bureaucracy.

Both war dramas and war comedies deal with comparable issues pertaining to war; they are not the same in terms of tone, strategy, or emphasis on comedy over drama. War comedies employ humour to present a lighter, frequently sarcastic take on the intricacies of battle, whereas war films typically emphasize realism and seriousness.

Movies became more enjoyable to watch when humour was incorporated into them. Laughter is a common language that united people, lifted their spirits, and offered a much-needed reprieve from the demands of everyday life.

By evoking laughter and releasing endorphins, humour acted as a natural stress reliever and encouraged emotions of well-being and relaxation. A humorous movie could give viewers a much-needed break from the rigors of job or personal life by helping them temporarily forget their problems and relax.

Empathy and an emotional bond between characters and viewers can be fostered through humour. Laughing at a character's pranks or clever conversation makes the audience feel more connected to the tale and increases their level of involvement and interest in the movie's conclusion.

Numerous health benefits of laughter have been demonstrated by studies, including the enhancement of cardiovascular health, the reduction of stress hormones, and the stimulation of the immune system. Filmmakers can enhance their audience's general well-being and spread joy and optimism by using humour in their works.

In short, humour in films could enlighten, inspire, and bring people together by enhancing their general pleasure and well-being. Whether it was in the form of sharp dialogue, slapstick humour, or witty satire, humour added depth and dimension to films and stayed with audience long after the credits had rolled.

The film *Life is Beautiful* struck a profound chord with Italian viewers because it captured the humour, tenacity, and spirit of the Italian people despite unfathomable suffering. The film promoted a sense of pride and identity in Italy by telling the tale of Guido, an endearing and upbeat Italian Jew. The film did this by highlighting the resilience and humanity of the Italian spirit.

For the audience as well as the characters in the movie, humour was a coping strategy. The humorous and lighter moments offered resilience and respite from the horrible realities of

the Holocaust. This made it possible for viewers to comprehend the challenging material while finding hope and moments of happiness amid the gloom.

The film's humour helped to draw the viewers in and foster a stronger bond with the characters. By adding humour to the narrative, the movie made itself more approachable and relatable to audience engrossing them in the protagonists' emotional journey and encouraging compassion and understanding.

The movie *Life is Beautiful* tackled extreme sombre subjects including persecution, conflict, and genocide. By acting as a counterbalance, the humour allowed the movie to smoothly navigate between the tragic and humorous parts without diminishing the seriousness of the subject matter. This careful balancing made a lasting impression on the audience by effectively portraying the whole range of human experience and emotion.

The humour in *Life is Beautiful* gave the characters and the audience cathartic and restorative moments. Overall, the humour in *Life is Beautiful* helped the audience by promoting emotional resilience, encouraging participation and connection, counterbalancing sombre themes, and delivering cathartic and restorative moments. With its distinct fusion of sadness and humour, the movie had a profound and enduring effect on audience everywhere.

Similar to *Life is Beautiful* the humour in *Hope and Glory* functioned as a coping strategy for the viewers as well as the protagonists. The amusing and lighthearted moments offered strength and respite amidst the chaos and challenges of conflict. This made it possible for viewers to negotiate the challenging subject matter while still finding humour and moments of happiness in the face of hardship.

Hope and Glory addressed universal themes of childhood, family, resilience, and the passing of time despite its particular location in wartime England. These topics struck a chord

with American audiences, who saw similarities to their own relationships and experiences. Because of the movie's global appeal, American audiences were able to relate to the narrative on a personal level, which encouraging empathy and emotional involvement.

Thus, Both the movies had an everlasting effect on the audiences in both Italian and American contexts. In short, the use of humour theories in these movies helped the audiences to easily accept the horrors and atrocities of war, as humour was infused in it. They enjoyed the movies well while accepting the dark themes of war. Different humour theories such as superiority theory of humour, incongruity theory of humour and relief theory of humour were found applicable in both the movies. These theories were discussed in detail in the third and fourth chapters. So, the conclusion is that the usage of different types of humour in movies would definitely make a great impact on the viewers by influencing their minds to easily accept the darker themes such a war, genocides, holocaust etc...

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