

Wall street

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The movie “ Wall Street” is a classic movie and one of my personal favorites. It’s a fictional story with real world implications. The movie is about an up and coming junior stockbroker named Bud Fox who I doing whatever it takes to get to the top and make big money, like his hero and eventual mentor, Gordon Gekko. Gekko is a legendary player on Wall Street who’s values and intentions are never clear to anyone but himself, and he is always looking to make money no matter who he hurts in the process. Eventually Bud meets Gekko and impresses him to the point that Gekko takes Bud Fox under his wing.

The two begin business together seemingly always using insider information to make deals. Bud Fox goes to extreme lengths to impress Gekko throughout and does. Eventually Bud gives Gekko inside information about a company Bluestar Airlines, which Bud’s father works for. When Gekko decides to break up the company Bud decides to do something to get back at Gekko by using insider information causes Gekko to lose millions. Eventually being charged with insider trading, Bud turns on Gekko further by wearing a tape recorder to gather evidence of insider trading on Gekko himself.

When analyzing the movie, the one quote that best sums it all up is Gekko’s statement, “ Greed is good”. The social-conflict approach is the best approach to take when analyzing the events and message of the film. The movie was very clear on showing how social standing and class ranking in society, and power allow for certain groups of people to exploit other groups. In this case we are looking at a group of people, in the movie Gordon Gekko and eventually Bud Fox, which have wealth, power, and social prestige to

use it to their advantage to gain more wealth and power at the expense of others.

Gekko has the power and social standing to get information others cannot, and use them to his advantage to make money while causing others, usually lower class workers to lose money and jobs. One quote he made was, “ Money is never gained or lost... but simply transferred. ” He tried to rationalize what he did by basically saying money is always moving and it’s the way things work. The fact that he used his power to in many cases illegally gain was never analyzed by him. The movie shows how people with power and wealth among other things, will use it to their advantage and do what’s best for them no matter how many people it hurts.

It is an ideal example of the social-conflict approach in action. It’s an example of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. It shows how its easy to gain when your already on top, and hard to climb from the bottom. Even in Buds case, in order for him to climb the social and economic ladder he has to break laws and step on the average working class to get there. “ Wall Street” is somewhat of a criticism of the capitalist system. The “ good” characters in the film are themselves capitalists, but in a more steady, hardworking sense.

In one scene, Gekko scoffs at Bud Fox's question as to the moral value of hard work, quoting the example of Gekko's father, who worked hard his entire life and died in relative mediocrity. Lou Mannheim as an early mentor of Fox’s, says early in the film, that “ good things sometimes take time”, in contrast, Gekko's “ Greed is good” credo, sums up the different views of different types of men. While the film did show how the wealthy and

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powerful can help those in lower classes, the idea of the film was based around greed and taking advantage of others. Specific events in the movie highlight the social-conflict approach well.

When looking at an event early on they were talking about Gekko's habit of purchasing companies then breaking them apart, firing the workforce and making millions in the process. If nothing else happened in the movie, that would be enough to justify a social-conflict approach analysis. It is the very definition of it. A powerful wealthy man with the ability to purchase the company and profit from it while leaving the working class out of the job, while that working class has no control over it simply because they do not have the same power and wealth.

There are also multiple scenes where Bud Fox and Gekko gain insider information to exploit others to make a profit. This again is due to social prestige and the ability to gain access to information that the majority does not have. Due to social prestige, power and wealth, they are able to hide this illegal activity and continue to profit from it. The climax of the movie is when Bud Fox's father's employer, Bluestar Airlines, is in trouble and Bud convinces Gekko to get involved to turn the company around and make a profit at the same time, again using inside information.

In this case Bud has generally good intentions, though Gekko has other ideas. Without Bud's knowledge Gekko has arranged to liquidate all the assets and break up the company, causing the workers to lose money from their pensions and lose their jobs. Gekko's greed is overpowering and this is an example of the rich and powerful maintaining control leaving the lower class helpless. Even the way Bud ends up saving the company is using inside

information and causing Gekko himself, along with countless more “less important stock holder”, to lose money in order for him to save the company and get back at Gekko.

The only sociological perspective that fits the analysis of this movie and what it's about is the social-conflict approach. Everything and almost every event displays this in an effective and almost textbook fashion. This movie gives us a great view of society and the way it functions. Events like that in the movie have occurred countless times in the real world. It gives us a view of how the rich and powerful are easily able to take advantage of the average working class without anyone ever knowing it happening. The movie's events give us a view of how power, wealth, and status can lead to greed, and the damage it can do.

In many ways it shows us a negative view of capitalism and how people interact solely for the purpose of profiting and benefiting themselves by whatever means necessary. However Bud's father, and Bud's actions himself towards the end of the movie show us there is good in the world. It shows us that even people that have used power and wealth to gain have morals and values that lead them to do things that will not benefit themselves but others. Overall the movie was a great look at society and the interaction of people from class to class.