

A marxist analysis of the accra mall



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3rd December, 2012. Marxist analysis of the Accra Mall Marxist describes the power struggle between different social classes in society. Marxism is further explained by certain concepts, such as ideology and hegemony, base and superstructure and reification. Ideology is a set of ideas or viewpoints that one social class has of another which influences the way they behave towards each other while hegemony refers to the way people act based on the ideas or ideologies that they hold and act out regarding other classes.

Base and superstructure refers to the system whereby the working class, which represents the majority of the people, is ruled by the few, the owners of the sources of production. Marxism in essence can be seen in all walks of life and in various parts of our society. The Accra mall in Greater Accra is one such place. The Accra Mall is more than just an avenue to shop. The Accra Mall is the place to see and be seen. It is strategically located at the very tip of the Spintex Road, at the Tetteh Quashie Roundabout, in close proximity to a number of hotels, high end residential apartments and corporate buildings.

In essence the mall caters to a certain class of people; the affluent in the Ghanaian society. It contains about twenty or so shops with mostly overpriced goods. There is a food court located right in the middle of the shopping mall with a playground for children. The mall's general ambience, of money, expensive food, high end clothing and a large parking lot, usually overcrowded with flashy and expensive cars gives one a good idea of what to expect in the mall.

The air of spending is further heightened by the presence of the numerous automated teller machines (ATM) placed at one part the mall. The neighborhood and the mall in general gives a clear cut distinction of who

they serve and who serves them- it caters for the rich and wealthy that are served by the working class or the poor. The large parking lot mentioned earlier, constantly has a greater ratio of flashy cars to a very small number of not so nice cars. Without a doubt, it is evident that the mall is frequented by the upper classmen, or those who can afford to drive them.

The price tags does not encourage the lower class to frequent the place because the products or items sold at the mall are above the financial means of a person for instance, the price of a bottle of soda at Rhapsody's, one of the restaurants is ludicrously expensive and hence caters to the high class or the middle class that can spend extravagantly. On the other hand a restaurant like Pizza Inn prices the goods somewhat moderately to cater to all the classes. Another case is of two supermarkets, Game and Shoprite. It is common to see people coming out Game with few items.

In contrast, Shoprite prices their goods that most people could at least buy a cookie from their bakery or a little toy for their children or a plate of nicely decorated and somewhat tasty meals. The people in the mall fall into two categories, as society dictates; the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The proletariat is made up of the janitors, the shop attendants, security guards and basically people who are not likely to spend in the mall. The other group, mainly made up of the business men and women, doctors and lawyers are mainly the customers; the proletariat.

The shop attendants, the janitors and security guards depend on the purchasing and patronized services of the customers, in this case the bourgeoisie, to spend at the mall, so that they can earn money. The bourgeoisie are catered to by the proletariat at the mall. They serve them at

the mall and are the people who work “ behind the scenes” to make things the way they are for the bourgeoisie to enjoy. The proletariats on the other hand are employed by the bourgeoisie and depend on them for their livelihood. At the Accra Mall, there is a general reaction by the shop owners and the other people, based on the way people look.

People are profiled into either whether they are of high class or a low class, in other words, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The society has a way of classifying people by the way they dress. If your clothes appear trendy or fashionable enough then you must be in the upper class. The proletariats on the other hand are looked down upon immediately because they are judged to be the lower class based on their dressing and are hence treated as potential shoplifters or people up to no good. Marxism permeates all areas of our society; healthcare, in education and in a number of other aspects of life. The Accra Mall is one such place.

People of all sorts can be identified here, and there in lie the groups of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. There is a constant, somewhat passive struggle for power. While the bourgeoisie (the rich, upper class, wealthy customers) continue to revel in their spending and high end lifestyle, the proletariat (the janitors, the security guards and staff in general) work long hours to try to attain a respectful position in life, to become like the bourgeoisie. As long as the society continues to go on in this manner, Marxist theory of power struggle will continue to be relevant in explaining such conflict.