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## The Social Functionalism In Mean Girls

Social conflict theory and functionalism perspective are both important concepts in a sociological viewpoint and can be found in many areas of a society one being media, specifically many teen movies. A particular movie that has many issues such as social conflict is Mean Girls. Mean Girls is a very popular and iconic 2004 movie starring Lindsay Lohan. It is about a girl named Cady Heron that just moved to a new country and a new school. She grew up in Africa and was homeschooled all her life. She struggles to fit in a new environment and experiences hardship with her fellow peers and friends when she begins to chase after a boy who has interested in her. She sabotages her relationship with her friend Regina George who soon later becomes her enemy out of pure jealousy. She as well helps create a "Burn Book" where she includes many negative and rude comments about other peers which eventually leads to chaos among all students. Mean Girls gives many aspects of sociological viewpoints since it deals with many different types of people and it also shows the struggle of high school life with discrimination and power. In this assignment, I will focus on the movie Mean Girls and analyze its sociological viewpoint by using the Social conflict theory and functionalist perspectives.

To begin, in the movie Mean Girls, social conflict theory is a major theme that is being portrayed. The conflict theory because of the existing unequal distributions of authority and power within the social organization, that the society will be divided into two opposite quasi-groups in social structure: the ruler and the ruled (Guangshe et al. 2011). In Mean Girls, this is portrayed by the Plastics. Which is a group of 3 wealthy and popular girls; Regina George, Karen Smit, and Gretchen Weiners. They want and believe everything is about them and they are who matter while the other common or lower-class students need to listen to them and ably to their command. They wanted to rule the high school which in the beginning they did achieve. All the lower class and unpopular students who are the ones being ruled are the people that want social change. They are the once's that have been humiliated and made fun by the rich groups of society and want immediate change since they have been constantly bullied. They are being ruled by the ruler that they did not choose and begin to have no choice until something is done by someone. Karl Marx's views on conflict theory is a separation of classes such as the wealthy and poor. This can be seen in the movie when Cady Heron changes herself and gives up on her values and morals to fit in with the popular girls. She even abandons her true friends who are considered to be the lower-class and unpopular for her new popular and dominant group of friends who are known as the plastics. Cady as well starts wearing clothes that fit more to Regina's likes such as more expensive and revealing clothes.

In addition, in the movie, we can as well see the functionalism perspective being portrayed throughout the movie. Functionalism perspective according to Emile Durkheim proposed that to function smoothly, society relied on a collective consciousness commonly held norms and values that determined collective behaviour. These 'structures' largely held individual desires in check and contributed to maintaining social order (Pike, Elizabeth C.J, and Simon Beames. 2013). Regina George and the plastics are the ones that keep the social structure in the school. This structure gives a role to everyone in society for example in the high school Regina's role is to be the rich beautiful popular girl. In the way that school is structured allows Regina to continue being the popular girl. That is until Cady steals her role. As she becomes more popular

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and overpower Regina's position and becomes the new popular girl. But at the end of the movie, she decides to leave her popularity and ultimately apologized to the school and to finally stop sabotaging Regina. The plastics also give up their roles and the school finally have a social order is a more balanced high school society.

Mean Girls shows many aspects of sociological viewpoint throughout the movie and indicates all important factors of high school society. It as well as shows many stereotypes that go into a high school high-class student and low-class students. This movie also shows a viewpoint of social conflict theory and functionalism perspective. It allows us to analyze the movie from a sociological viewpoint and describes many aspects of high school society. In the way social group is structure no matter how many commonwealth and unpopular groups there is always going to be a group who is wealthier who begin to rule all the other ones. Having high school setting such as the one in Mean Girls it is easy for them to overtake all the other social groups. But in a society, such as the one in the movie social order and balance is important and it something that we see when in the end of the movie when the plastics and Cady abandon their positions as school leader. Therefore, Mean Girls is an excellent film to analyze in sociological viewpoint at it contains many perspectives and follows a stereotypical high school society and compares both the poor and rich class for the social conflict theory and as well as the functionalism perspective by the plastics and Cady Heron.