

# MAD MAN AND SOCIOLOGY

## Introduction

The paper contains the analysis of Mad Man movie. The movie was debuted in July 2007 and had a great impact on audience. This was due to the detailed storylines and well-crafted characters that developed at a natural pace in the drama. This was a time when the industry was playing an essential role in the cultural history of the society. In addition, it was the time when there arose the need to shape the contemporary society. This made the movie win the Emmy Awards as the Best Drama in their first and succeeding seasons. The movie is not only a critical darling for the viewing because of the quality of the play to the program fans, but the drama has elicited analysis in terms of philosophical perspective. This is because of the drama's characters that are unlike others in similar shows aired on the screens. The storyline and the characters make the drama easy for analysis by philosophers using varied sociological perspectives like conflict theory, functionalism or symbolic interactions. The analysis of Mad Man drama will involve the use of functionalism as the social perspective.

The creator of Mad Men, Mathew Weiner, has made a group of cast be caricatures and also fully formed persons. This is despite the fact that drama takes place in the 1960s. The cast have been made likable and filled with uncertain ethics and morals at the same time. Many philosophers regard the characters of Mad Men in terms of authenticity, objectivism, and existentialism. The Mad Men character is best exemplified by the aesthetic stage of Kierkegaard's first juncture. The character is explored through the philosophy that life is a series of stages. Sterling followed the footsteps of his parents as his deceased father was the founder of the company. This makes Sterling flee from despair, boredom, and burden of self-creation as they are seen as aesthetic people. These characters continue to pursue additional pleasures. In addition, the characters who are aesthetic people are likely to be doomed and collapse to despair and boredom. This life in contemporary times can give an incomplete outlook towards life. The life can make persons not to forge bonds. This can happen by making only transient choices and imperceptibly committing to projects. The aesthetic person becomes a spectator in life and the world; therefore, he/she fails in defining their lives as sharply as expected.

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The drama is taking place around 1960s when advertising on television as a form of marketing tool is starting to shape up. This is for selling products and services. In addition, this is the period when organizations are exceptionally expanding the available merchandise to their citizens. This gives the social perspective of functionalism of Mad Men. The philosophy of Mad Men is in the discussion of ethics of the advertising business. This is emphasized by the key protagonist in the drama, Don Draper. This is depicted in the season two episode where Betty who is Draper's wife throws a dinner party. "A Night to Remember" is the episode where the dinner party is for Betty's husband and his business associates. It is noteworthy that Heineken beer is chosen as the beer for the grand occasion. This happens as Betty is unaware that Don Draper has always been arguing that the Heineken beer should be marketed more to the fashionable housewives. This is proven by the fact that Draper has even gone ahead to install the beer in vital locations in numerous markets so as to prove his point. In this case, Betty was inadvertently manipulated by Draper to purchase the beer. This made Betty feel disrespected and angry.

The event indicates Draper's unethical actions. The concept by Enlightenment by Immanuel Kant illustrates this view. Kant says that each human being has a rightful claim to value. This respect should come from the other fellow human beings, and the person is also bound to respect the others. Therefore, as Kant puts it, influence is unethical. This is when a person is not in a position to reveal what he is doing to the other person who is affected by the action. Betty might not have agreed to

Draper's persuasion. At the same time, Ethics of Advertisement advocates for respect and honesty in advertisement. The advertisement would pose the question to the consumer of whether she would buy the product while knowing she is buying the beer. The influence on her decision might have been opaque as the aim of Draper in the advertisement was to make her buy the beer.

The advertisement by Don Draper in *Mad Men* is based on the premise of happiness. This fits in Kantian concept of Enlightenment. The advertisement should have both logical argumentation and scientific reasoning so that the customer can make a rational choice while purchasing the product. However, in most situations, the advertisement campaigns have failed to adhere to and deliver the message. Most of the advertisements do not meet the ethical standards set by Immanuel Kant, but fall on the ones of existentialism. The Existentialism concept promotes the profound cynicism reason and enlightenment. The concept sees the process of decision-making as an emphasis on the anxieties and desires instead of a reasonable process that drives the choices of consumers. Existentialism indicates the ways in which individuals strive to become selves, this is by shifting intention reason to the prejudiced excitement in the ways in which choices are made; this defines individual's existence.

The period of 1960s is one of the most turbulent periods of the nation's history. The time served as a bridge between the supposed virtuousness of the 1950s and the contemporary period of 21st century. The *Mad Men* drama illustrates this by telling an interesting story and also producing a reflective narrative of the people and how they reached the period. This is done from the cultural viewpoint. The narrative engages in a companion piece that expands on the varied issues raised in the drama. The drama shows the issues in more detailed form. This is indicated in morality of advertisement, role of women in the society, way of living a significant life as in the series. The lives of the characters are examined in the series, and this helps in the reflection of the characters to the audience.

The drama revolves around the men and women in New York in 1960s who work at Sterling Cooper Advertising Agency. The lead and master manipulator Don Draper is doing his business, but there are people who want to topple him down. The characters in the series interact well, and the women are most interesting to watch. The drama investigates the past of the characters of the advertising agency in their troubled private and public lives. This is done in the challenging periods of the nation's history by giving a chronological order of the events. The relationship between advertisement medium and message is illustrated to indicate the functionalism of the drama in a social perspective. This is done through television and message communicated to the audience. The movie's focus is on the medium of communication for the advertisements that gives quality output of academic as social topics addressed.