Sociological Perspective From The Blues Brothers Essay, Research Paper

Sociology in The Blues Brothers

The Blues Brothers is a movie with hilarious comedy and nonstop action. The two main characters are Jake and Elwood Blues. These brothers have consistently been in trouble with the law but find themselves searching for redemption. The quest begins when the Blues brothers set out to find and re-enlist the members of their old band. Unfortunately, for the Blues brothers, the other band members have steady jobs that they will not easily give up. The manipulative Jake and Elwood Blues soon convince them to come along. Finally, the band is together and they can begin to raise the money needed to save their childhood home, an orphanage.

The Blues brothers may be classified as a sub-culture. A sub-culture may be defined as a group that participates within the dominant culture, while engaging in original and different behavior. One scene that demonstrates this behavior is when Jake and Elwood Blues try to re-enlist Matt “Guitar” Murphy. The brothers step into the soul food restaurant. An observant customer would notice the original attire of the brothers. Their clothes of black pants, black shoes, black tie and hat, and a plain white shirt. The outfit is not complete without their black sunglasses. Some would not consider this a type of specialized dress but the Blues brothers have not changed this outfit for countless years. Their clothing separates them from the norms of society and reflects their blunt

behavior. A semiotic viewpoint could leave you with endless possibilities for the reasoning behind their dress. To prove that they are responsible, willing to conform, or businesslike. The meaning behind the message is hard to decipher. It could simply be a look for their band. The only attachment to their dress is the “significant other” that cared for them in the orphanage. This significant other, played by Cab Calloway, dressed exactly the same. So their specialized dress may show their loyalty, commitment, faith, and love for Cab Calloway.

When Ray Charles plays the keyboard and sings Shake A Tail Feather one may find a simple example of semantics. In this scene the band members are considering the purchase of a keyboard from Ray’s music shop. To try to get a cheap deal they tell Ray that the keyboard is out of tune. Ray proves the keyboard is in excellent condition by giving an outstanding performance of his song Shake A Tail Feather. Meanwhile, there are people cheering and dancing to the song. They do this in conjunction with the lyrics of the song showing an obvious connection between verbal and non-verbal communication. The hidden message is well received and the Blues brothers purchase the keyboard at full price.

Jake Blues may be classified as an aggressive neurotic. Throughout the movie Jake Blues claims that there is nothing to worry about and that he has everything in control. Religion has a big part for this idealized image. This scene is at a gospel church with James Brown acting as the reverend. James Brown gives a tantalizing and hypnotic sermon that opens Jake Blues to the light of God. So the misguided Blues brothers

achieved a “mission from God” and will conquer all obstacles to complete their task, which is to save the orphanage. This “mission from God” feeds into the aggressive neurotic behavior of Jake Blues. Now that the Blues brothers have gone through this rite of passage they redeem themselves worthy of existence and know they can not fail. Unable to make a mistake because the Lord is on their side. This revelation characterizes a sense of their ideal world.

A feministic viewpoint of The Blues Brothers would likely be negative. The female characters are portrayed as dependent women who are easily manipulated. Throughout the movie a young lady, Carrie Fischer, attempts to kill the Jake Blues. She never catches up to Jake until after the big performance that saves the orphanage. Jake Blues and his brother find themselves staring down the muzzle of an automatic weapon. We learn that the assailant is Jake’s ex-fianc who he left at the altar. The audience is given the portrayal of a tense woman bent on revenge. To save his life the instincts of the id begins to work and the ego allows Jake to beg for mercy. That tactic fails and his next plan is too manipulate her. By staring into her eyes Jake is able to confuse her with her own undying love of her ex-boyfriend. One has to wonder if Jake has a superego because he lacks any feelings of guilt. He quickly escapes the grasps of his annoying girlfriend and does not look back. His girlfriend appeared to be weak and easily manipulated. Dependant on the artificial love of Jake Blues. This portrayal directly contradicts the ideal view a feminist would like to see woman depicted as. That depiction would be similar to a scene of a woman who has a strong personality and can live independently.

This movie is full of psychoanalytical concepts. Strong instincts are what drive the Blues brothers throughout the movie. Psychic energy is produced at the gospel service. Their destructive instinct overcomes when Elwood Blues drives his car through a shopping mall. They experience external conflict because of their need to reorganize their band. Jake’s religious revelation is an example of his internal conflict. To be accepted as trustworthy and pious.

This paper has applied abstract reasoning to particular scenes to better understand sociological concepts and the effects on human culture through mass communications. The sociological viewpoint of seeing and being. To point out certain viewpoints and hidden messages that may be developed by the audience. To show the idealized image that is depicted and to understand the meaning.