

Quotes to Analyze:

The richest one percent of this country owns half our country's wealth, five trillion dollars. One third of that comes from hard work, two thirds comes from inheritance, interest on interest accumulating to widows and idiot sons and what I do, stock and real estate speculation. It's bullshit. You got ninety percent of the American public out there with little or no net worth. I create nothing. I own. We make the rules, pal. The news, war, peace, famine, upheaval, the price per paper clip. We pick that rabbit out of the hat while everybody sits out there wondering how the hell we did it. Now you're not naive enough to think we're living in a democracy, are you buddy? It's the free market. And you're a part of it. You've got that killer instinct. Stick around pal, I've still got a lot to teach you.

I don't throw darts at a board. I bet on sure things. Read Sun-tzu, The Art of War. Every battle is won before it is ever fought.

The most valuable commodity I know of is information.

Ever wonder why fund managers can't beat the S&P 500? 'Cause they're sheep, and sheep get slaughtered.

It's not a question of enough, pal. It's a zero sum game, somebody wins, somebody loses. Money itself isn't lost or made, it's simply transferred from one perception to another.

Gordon Gekko : [at the Teldar Paper stockholder's meeting] Well, I appreciate the opportunity you're giving me Mr. Cromwell as the single largest shareholder in Teldar Paper, to speak. Well, ladies and gentlemen we're not here to indulge in fantasy but in political and economic reality. America, America has become a second-rate power. Its trade deficit and its fiscal deficit are at nightmare proportions. Now, in the days of the free market when our country was a top industrial power, there was accountability to the stockholder. The Carnegies, the Mellons, the men that built this great industrial empire, made sure of it because it was their money at stake. Today, management has no stake in the company! All together, these men sitting up here own less than three percent of the company. And where does Mr. Cromwell put his million-dollar salary? Not in Teldar stock; he owns less than one percent. You own the company. That's right, you, the stockholder. And you are all being royally screwed over by these, these bureaucrats, with their luncheons, their hunting and fishing trips, their corporate jets and golden parachutes.

Cromwell : This is an outrage! You're out of line, Gekko!

Gordon Gekko : Teldar Paper, Mr. Cromwell, Teldar Paper has 33 different vice presidents each earning over 200 thousand dollars a year. Now, I have spent the last two months analyzing what all these guys do, and I still can't figure it out. One thing I do know is that our paper company lost 110 million dollars last year, and I'll bet that half of that was spent in all the paperwork going back and forth between all these vice presidents. The new law of evolution in corporate America seems to be survival of the unfittest. Well, in my book you either do it right or you get eliminated. In the last seven deals that I've been involved with, there were 2.5 million stockholders who have made a pretax profit of 12 billion dollars. Thank you. I am not a destroyer of companies. I am a liberator of them! The point is, ladies and gentleman, that greed, for lack of a better word, is good. Greed is right, greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed, in all of its forms; greed for life, for money, for love, knowledge has marked the upward surge of mankind. And greed, you mark my words, will not only save Teldar Paper, but that other malfunctioning corporation called the USA. Thank you very much.

Textual Analysis:

Style and Language: Michael Douglas portrays the character with a suave, sophisticated, charismatic performance to cement the identity of the character Gordon Gekko. Whenever he is speaking the listener cannot help to feel the need to pay attention if only to make sure no information was missed, yet also because the speaker commands attention with the presenter's style. It is not hard to see how the performance won Michael Douglas numerous academy awards.

Audience: The targeted audience for the movie is the casual viewer, and I believe the intent is for them to walk away with not only a sense of being fulfilled with good entertainment, but also to see the way that wall street is actually operated by some of those with power. Although the main character would be classified as a bad guy, he leaves the audience with a lasting impression and many lessons through his impressive dialogue.

Persuasion: I believe that the director and writers wanted to persuade the audience to start caring more about how they invest as making money falls on them. It is up to the individual on how to interact with capital and to either let it help them or drive them into an abyss of greed.

Bourdieu The Forms of Capital:

It is remarkable that the practices and assets thus salvaged from the “icy water of egotistical calculation” (and from science) are the virtual monopoly of the dominant class (Pg. 3)

Gordon Gekko embodies this very quote with one of his own during his speeches. He speaks of the dominant owning and ruling the wealth, with everyone else following in place...

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Bourdieu continues with an understanding that everything is looked at economically even things that some find priceless...

Bitzer Rhetorical Situation:

Virtually no utterance is fully intelligible unless meaning-context and utterance are understood; this is true of rhetorical and non-rhetorical discourse....Every audience at any moment is capable of being changed in some way by speech;

Gordon Gekko's Teldar Paper speech embodies this principle for a successful rhetoric filled dialogue. He pushes his view forward in hopes of swaying the audience with clear and concise wording backed with passion and evidence.