

Crazy Rich Asians Conflict Analysis

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CM310: Conflict Resolution and Negotiation

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September 27th, 2023

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Tangible or Intangible

In the film *Crazy Rich Asians*, Rachel and Eleanor are experiencing intangible conflict. Rachel Cohn, author of the textbook *Managing Conflict Through Communication*, states intangible conflict involves “immaterial resources that we value, such as esteem, power, love, etc.” (Cahn & Abigail, 2014, p. 31). Eleanor takes pride in her family’s status, is very particular about the success of her family, and pushes those standards onto her son Nick (Chu, 2018). Rachel coming from a single mother, who also had a secret affair, would unintentionally tarnish Eleanor’s family status. Status is immaterial, and more specifically a relationship issue, defining Rachel and Eleanor’s conflict as intangible.

Applicable Theory

Rachel and Eleanor’s conflict is most accurately explained by Freud’s psychodynamic theory. The superego contains the ego ideal, an “internalized idea of what a person would like to be” (Cahn & Abigail, 2014, p. 57). Eleanor wanted to maintain a certain status for her family. Her ideal spouse for Nick is someone of their stature who would not only uphold the family fortune but also move back home with him and run the family business (Chu, 2018). Rachel’s superego, however, drove her to live a life of passion instead of status, even if that meant not marrying Nick to live her ideal life (Chu, 2018). Eleanor and Rachel have conflicting superegos, one wanting to follow family tradition/expectations, while the other wanting to navigate her life by her own hands.

Article Insights

America’s Influence on Motherhood

Author Caitlyn Collins strove to understand how women balance the contradicting roles of being a successful worker and a caring mother. She raises the question “Why has the US done

so little to support parents?” (Collins, 2020, p. 2) and claims that America is individualistic. As for Crazy Rich Asians, Rachel was raised with America’s individualistic standards, that put all responsibility onto the parents to look out for their family. Furthermore, women are applauded for obtaining managerial roles in America, as it is very rare (Collins, 2020, p. 10). Rachel’s success as an economics professor is a testament to her hard work, dedication, and strong will. In other countries, even as Eleanor stated, women should care for family over passion (Chu, 2018). The different cultural expectations for women influence how Eleanor and Rachel want to pursue their lives with Nick.

Effect of Family Conflict on Children

“The maladaptive ways in which families communicate and solve problems together... [leads to] children’s emotional dysregulation and internalization of problems” (Morelli et al., 2022). Family conflict does hurt children, especially when there is a daily pattern. Ironically, although Rachel’s family structure was looked down upon by the Young family, she was raised with more independence and resistance to abuse than Nick (who most likely was exposed to violent behaviors by his controlling and clique-like family). This concept can be applied in reverse, in that children’s anxiety of depressive symptoms caused by violent families can in turn negatively influence their family. Once again applying this to Rachel and Eleanor’s conflict, Rachel attempted to break the cycle of negative behaviors within the Young family. Their oppressiveness and violence cause Nick to withdraw himself, only for the family in turn to treat him negatively because of his withdrawal.

References

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