

This is a man's world (or is it?)

Literature, Russian Literature



The 1920's, as described by The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, was a “roaring decade and an age of exuberant, freewheeling popular culture”. It was known as a time when society rebelled against the laws of prohibition, explored new styles of dancing and dressing, and rejected many traditional moral standards. These new and sensational ideas are illustrated in Billy Wilder's film, *Some Like It Hot*. Although made in 1959, the movie is set in Chicago, 1929, and it challenged moral gratification by shining light on some very controversial ideas during the 20's.

The movie “speaks to female objectification and misogyny, condemns male insensitivity, and hints at homosexuality” (Saporito). Jerry and Joe defied the social norms of the time by disguising themselves as Daphne and Josephine to join an all-girls band. Misogyny and the objectification of women become evident to Jerry and Joe through the use of male authority, cat-calling, and societal expectations of women. From the beginning, it becomes apparent that Joe and Jerry are very interested in meeting and deceiving women. Their main interest in women is sex; however, they selfishly do not consider the emotional perspectives of these women. When Nellie is introduced, she's described as “the usual secretary behind the usual desk a brunette, somewhat past her prime, but still attractive” (Wilder 15), whose description illustrates the misogynistic viewpoints of the two male play writes, Billy Wilder and I. A. L Diamond.

By including that she was “somewhat past her prime, but still attractive” in the stage description, it generates the idea that women are only valuable for their looks. As Joe speaks to Nellie, the secretary working in the corridor of music building, he uses his charming nature to persuade her to forgive him

after standing her up on Saturday night. " JOE: Now look, Nellie — if it's about last Saturday night — I can explain everything.

NELLIE: (to Jerry; pointing at Joe) What a heel! I spend four dollars to get my hair marcelled, I buy me a new negligee, I bake him a great big pizza pie. (to Joe) — and where were you?

NELLIE: Oh?

JOE: Nellie baby, I'll make it up to you.

NELLIE: You're making it up pretty good so far. " (Wilder 16). This interaction exemplifies the use of authority by a male figure, in this case from Joe using Nellie to help him find a gig, by portraying the stereotypical idea that women can be easily manipulated by a few sweet words.