

American film paper essay sample



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Moreover, this film contains two major contrasting characters who display the different classes, portrays conscious and unconscious gender roles, and some themes of reform integration) throughout the era of Hollywood cinema. Comedy films during the Great Depression were supposed to unite different social classes. Firstly, the two main actor's display a couple that is mismatched socially in the movie to uncover an unspoken idea about power and class. It shows how when the two classes are thrown together it can create a big misunderstanding and the implied threat to the status quo which has a positive feedback.

Furthermore, Ellen Andrews displays the high class society during the nineteenth thirties in that she is pampered and expects everything to go her way. Everything about her, from her dad's yacht to the way she dresses displays a sign of wealth and aristocracy. For example when she tells the bus driver to wait for her when she know she will be late or when Peter tells Elli that he knows who she is and that she is on the run, she quickly tries to bribe him. On the opposite side; Clark gable plays peter, a lower working class newspaper reporter who rescues Ellen and teaches her how he lives and how to survive without money.

His first scene in the movie shows him being fired from his job and down on his luck. Throughout the movie peter is shown eating raw carrots, sleeping in straw beds with Elli and hitch hiking. He knows how to get by and what to expect from others. Secondly, the film represents some gender roles and social mobility towards every character in the movie. This is shown throughout the movie as existing gender roles of the asses and social theory

concerning gender roles. In addition, some scenes from the film provided gender roles unconsciously and consciously.

For instance when Peter puts up the “ walls of Jericho” to divide their sections of their room or when Ellen teaches Peter how to hitchhike, making her more street-smart and sexually adventurous than Peter by lifting her skirt to get a passing car to pick them up. She also never backs down from a fight and has something to say. In contrast, gender roles in the 1930s exposed men to be more dominant and women to be weaker and dependent on the male. Furthermore, the movie portrays Peter as the male who is the controller in relationships as well as in society.

Also, Peter taking care of Ellen which was the social norms of how men and women should act around each other in those times. Finally, the film also addresses the themes of reform or (re)integration. It shows how “ American screen comedies demonstrate the flexibility of our democratic social structure in its ability to absorb new members and integrate them into a new social order whose unity and diversity exceed that of the old. This is shown through the scene of the bus where everybody, from poor to rich are in the same bus and they sing in unison.

Another example of regeneration of society was the last scenes of the movie in which Elli marries and falls in love with Peter instead of her fiancé. This final marriage is right not only because Clark and Gable really love each other but also because it heals the divisions in society, establishing a new order through the symbolic marriage of representatives of different social

classes”(166-167). In addition, the social expectations of a man and woman traveling together at the time was unheard and outrageous.

Ellen and Peter both learn some things from each and how the other half lives.. Ellen wants to be free to make her own decisions, but her father is always choosing for her. She is also reformed by Peter when he teaches her how to survive without food, money, or shelter. Additionally, Peter is changed because he fell in love with Ellen when she is so opposite of him and everything he despises. Remarkably, in this film it is not the poor who miss out on their freedom but the rich.

In conclusion, it happened one night by Frank Capra captivated audiences with hilarious themes of American comedies. The film introduces new ideas and techniques that transformed comedic films and mixed high and low comedy. “ and because comedy is never taken seriously, American film comedy can often deal with these issues more openly than can other, more official genres, such as the historical film or the western”(164). The film invented a message that audiences wanted to hear without it being too real.