

The Long Night's Journey into Sexual Identity Crisis in Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* (1959)

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Introduction

Billy Wilder (1906-2002) is one of the most important film writer-directors in the United States of America in the twentieth century. In his career of more than half a century, Wilder wrote, directed or produced over 60 movies in Europe and America, 14 of which brought him 21 Academy Award nominations and three of which won him six awards: *The Lost Weekend* (1945) for Best Director and Best Writing, Screenplay, *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) for Best Writing, Story and Screenplay and *The Apartment* (1960) for Best Motion Picture, Best Director and Best Writing, Story and Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen. Many other awards that Wilder, his pictures and his colleagues were nominated for or won include the Golden Globe Awards, the Directors Guild of America Awards and the Writers Guild of America Awards. Later in his life, Wilder received the Life Achievement Award and the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award from the American Film Institute and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences respectively. As these numerous honors indicate, most of Wilder's films are great success, while some are modestly received by critics and the audience and only a few are failure. In Wilder's five-decade filmmaking career, *Some Like It Hot* (1959) is a significant milestone, not only because it would be his greatest hit to date as the third best box-office smash of the year, but also because completing *Some Like It Hot* was both exhausting challenge for everyone concerned from Wilder and his crew to leading actors and actress and a hard-earned victory in a battle of wits against censorship in the still conservative American cinema industry in the late 1950s. In the context of the transitional period of the movie business in the mid-twentieth century, this paper will examine explicitly and implicitly represented sexual frustration and perversion in *Some Like It Hot* with a focus on the three main characters: Joe, Jerry, and Sugar.

I

Just like some other films written and directed by Billy Wilder such as *The Major and the Minor* (1942), *A Foreign Affair* (1948), and *Ace in the Hole* (1951), *Some Like It Hot* bears a witty title with double meaning in 'it' and 'hot.' The title comes from the popular nursery rhyme, 'Pease Porridge Hot,' originating in Mother Goose's nursery rhymes.

Pease porridge hot,
Pease porridge cold,
Pease porridge in the pot

Nine days old.

Some like it hot,
Some like it cold,
Some like it in the pot
Nine days old. (1)

However, the film has nothing to do with the short nursery rhyme, and considering the Jazz Age the film is set in, it is apparent that the pronoun ‘it’ and the adjective ‘hot’ should be interpreted respectively as music or jazz, and ‘hot jazz,’ a distinguished way of playing solo parts with warm, eloquent intonations, as opposed to ‘straight’ or ‘sweet’ playing without modification (2), just as Joe in the disguise of Shell Jr. and Sugar mention on the Florida beach:

Joe: Syncopators... does that mean you play that fast music... jazz?

Sugar: Yeah. Real hot.

Joe: Oh, well I guess some like it hot. But personally, I prefer classical music. (3)

However, both ‘it’ and ‘hot’ contain sexual connotations. Georges-Claude Guilbert points out that ‘jazz’ was used by African Americans as slang for sexual intercourse and that ‘it’ implies sex as in the Beatles’ ‘Why Don’t We Do It in the Road?’ and in William Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. ‘Hot’ means high body temperature as a result of surging sexual excitement such as when Jerry sweats while Sugar warms him by rubbing his feet with her own in his berth on the train and when Joe’s glasses steam up while she kisses him passionately in the cabin of the yacht. (4) Though ‘it’ and ‘hot’ are short and concise on surface, their double entendre is so subtle that the title of *Some Like It Hot* evaded the Production Code with a lot of juicy jokes underneath it.

Some Like It Hot starts sensationally with slow, sensual jazz music, ‘Sugar Blues,’ composed by Adolph Deutsch, followed by the hot and fast 1922 number, ‘Runnin’ Wild,’ written by A.H. Gibbs, Joe Grey, and Leo Wood, which makes the viewer imagine the film definitely as comedy, with the credit titles in a pop typeface which, unlike the traditional cursive type, anticipated the advent of the more culturally daring 1960s. The credit titles clarify the main source for the screenplay of *Some Like It Hot* as ‘a story by R. Thoren and M. Logan,’ though they omit the name of the story. As opposed to the upbeat opening credits, the first sequence is as silent as the grave with a funeral car running on a half-deserted wintry street at night. In the back seat of the car, two expressionless men in mourning in profile with a white coffin with flowers on its lid in between create a somber atmosphere that would be becoming to a person’s recent death. However, at the same time of hearing the plaintive sound of the siren, which suddenly breaks the silence and which might deepen the grief, the men with two more in the front seat whose faces are more like those of tough guys rather than of pall bearers exchange glances. As soon as the two men in the rear recognize the sound as the police patrol car siren, the two vehicles step on the pedal and gunfire follows. This car chase and gunfight is a typical example of gangster movies made in

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numbers in the 1930s with gun holes, and car skidding and collision, only sweetened with a few bits of Billy Wilder's sense of humor such as the silk curtains on the ceiling of the car and the coffin as the unexpected hiding places for the shotguns and bottles of drinking alcohol. The specification of the time and place as 'Chicago, 1929' superposed on the leaking liquor in the coffin represents the dark age of modern American history: the Prohibition (1919-33), the Great Depression (1929-41), and Al Capone (1899-1947). Of these three historical incidents, gangsters and their crimes are rarely expressed explicitly in the film because it is extremely dangerous for the public to call their names on one hand and because their mere physical presence and criminal commitment are visibly compelling enough for the viewer to understand the situation on the other, though the national teetotalism is mentioned a couple of times by the escaping musicians, while the horrible economic bust has not happened yet as of Saint Valentine's Day, 1929. Subtle use of explicitness and implicitness is a crucial factor in *Some Like It Hot* as a fusion of crime fiction and burlesque, as in other comedy films by Wilder.

As the fake funeral car arrives at Mozarella's Funeral Parlor followed by police cars, the chiefs of the two sides of the law, gang leader 'Spats' Columbo (George Raft) and FBI inspector Mulligan (Pat O'Brien), make their appearance. Both Columbo and Mulligan are stock characters in gangster movies in the 1930s and the 1940s, as Columbo is tight-lipped, dressed fashionably in a dark flannel suit and tie with a white handkerchief in the breast pocket, tilting his felt hat, while in contrast Mulligan is an articulate, imposing figure in a tweed overcoat, wearing a bowler hat straight on. In fact, gangsters and police detectives are signature roles of Raft's and O'Brien's respectively; Raft acted mobsters or criminals with Paul Muni, James Cagney, Humphrey Bogart and other fellow icons for gangster movies in *Scar Face* (1932), *Each Dawn I Die* (1939), *Invisible Stripe* (1939), etc., and O'Brien played criminal investigators or men of goodwill in such films as *Public Enemy's Wife* (1936), *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938), and *Riffraff* (1947). With the hearse merely as part, Mozarella's funeral parlor is a much larger architectural embodiment of dichotomy which establishes the structure of *Some Like It Hot*, which is a combination of comedy, and crime and violence at the same time. The funeral home is just a front for Spats Columbo's speakeasy with soundproof doors and walls in between separating the two different worlds. While it is solemn with candles, flowers, and funeral music outside the chapel, boozing and dancing are going on inside to the tune of 'Sweet Georgia Brown.' These two facilities represent the two facades of the same building. Though physically dark and subdued because it is mourning, the funeral parlor is, as a legitimate business, the bright side of Columbo's enterprise, while the speakeasy is the dark side, though visually and aurally bright, since it is against the law. As such, these two paradoxical dimensions coexist in the same entity. In the chapel-turned-into saloon, the twenties are still roaring without knowing that their end is coming soon. Indeed, the funeral parlor out front anticipates two deaths, one for the economic boom in the 1920s as the crash of the stock market and the other for the prosperity of Columbo's illegal barroom as Mulligan's police raid. Therefore, the organist is playing Beethoven's 'Missa Solemnis' for the dual living funeral in Mozarella's. The dual structure is linguistically identified at Columbo's bar. In the speakeasy, contrary to its literary meaning, Mulligan finds it hard to understand his waiter's language due to its underground technicality; all the items are listed as 'coffee' on the menu such as 'Scotch coffee,' 'Canadian coffee,' and 'sour-mash coffee,' though in fact they are whiskey

served in cups and saucers. When Mulligan mentions the possibility of a police raid on the bar, the waiter insists that they are only having a funeral service and denies the possibility. Such bipolarity between the truth and the falsehood as between the funeral and the booze and as between the coffee and the whiskey is a hilarious but integral part of the film.

After Mulligan orders and sips a cup of ‘Scotch coffee,’ the focus of the scene is shifted from Mulligan onto two musicians in the jazz orchestra behind the Charleston dancers. The conversation between Joe (Tony Curtis), the saxophonist, and Jerry (Jack Lemmon), the bass fiddler, describes their personalities, relationship, and social status. Unlike well-off musicians in popular bands in the 1920s such as those in Guy Lombardo’s Royal Canadians, Joe and Jerry are poor in debt, wearing threadbare tuxedos, because they have been unpaid for the last four months. In such a financially underprivileged condition, they are rather discouraged on their job; they only play their instruments on and off, take a break, and even chat during the performance, which they repeat in the rehearsal of ‘Runnin’ Wild’ on the train and in the concert of ‘I Wanna Be Loved by You’ at Seminole Ritz Hotel later in the film. On an individual note, besides being a womanizer, as in that he cannot take his eyes off the dancing girls’ legs, Joe is an ego-centric, irresponsible, and fraudulent smartmouth, though he makes himself sound sincere by referring to paying off their debts to their creditors as their top priority, because he swindles Jerry out of his first salary in four months to bet on dog racing. On the other hand, Jerry is a young man solid enough to care about his dental treatment but is so submissive to Joe and so susceptible to influence from other people and even from himself that his life gets into turmoil throughout the film. Towards the end of the dialogue, Joe’s over-optimism sarcastically stands out in contrast with the bitter realities that would come true over the course of the twentieth century:

Joe: Jerry boy, why do you have to paint everything so black? Suppose you got hit by a truck. Suppose the stock market crashes. Suppose Mary Pickford divorces Douglas Fairbanks.
Suppose the Dodgers leave Brooklyn!

Jerry: Joe?

Joe: Suppose Lake Michigan overflows.

Jerry: Well, don’t look now, but the whole town is underwater. (5)

Most of Joe’s suppositions might have been unlikely to happen as of early 1929 but would become reality by the time the production of *Some Like It Hot* began in 1958. The stock market crashes called Black Thursday and Black Tuesday in late October, 1929, threw the world economy into the Great Depression, two Hollywood silent movie stars Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, who had got married in 1920, divorced in 1936, and, to Billy Wilder’s great delight as a big fan of baseball, the Dodgers left Brooklyn, New York, for Los Angeles, California, in 1958. However, the last supposition is about to happen, not in Lake Michigan but right in front of them in the form of a police raid, as Jerry likens it to the overflowing of the lake. At the arrest of Spats Columbo, Inspector Mulligan beforehand sentences him to life-long imprisonment for breaching the Prohibition in sarcastic figures of speech:

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Mulligan: Okay, Spats... the services are over. Let's go.

Columbo: Go where?

Mulligan: A little country club we run for retired bootleggers. I'm gonna put your name up for membership.

Columbo: I never join nothin' .

Mulligan: You'll like it there. I'll have the prison tailor fit you with a pair of special spats... striped!

Columbo: Big joke. What's the rap this time?

Mulligan: Embalming people with coffee... eighty-six proof. (6)

By using criminal terms such as 'bootleggers' and 'prison' and euphemism with leisurely nuances such as 'country house' and 'embalming' in turn, Mulligan satirizes Columbo and his camouflaged felony. Columbo, on the other hand, makes a self-mocking wisecrack to Mulligan about the academic background of his and his men's:

Columbo: You're wasting the taxpayers' money.

Mulligan: If you want to, you can call your lawyer.

Columbo: These are my lawyers... all Harvard men. (7)

It is unexpected enough to be hilarious that the buttermilk in Columbo's glass turns out to be genuine because, as a ruthless and straight-faced gang leader, he never looks like he likes to drink the dairy product that is produced mainly for children. Metaphorically, the sweet taste of buttermilk in Columbo's shot glass shows the essence of *Some Like It Hot* as comedy while the tough guys as the drinkers and their glasses suitable for hard liquor makes the film appear to be a gangster movie. Thus, *Some Like It Hot* consists of two completely different film genres, but it is extremely difficult to keep balance between them because comedy and film noir are poles apart and, in most cases, hardly compatible. Therefore, as soon as the gangster-movie side presents itself, Joe and Jerry as comic figures withdraw from the scene, just as they quickly and quietly evacuate themselves from the speakeasy/funeral parlor by way of the fire escape and walk off down the bystreet to avoid the turmoil of the police raid. With Columbo being arrested and Joe and Jerry leaving the speakeasy/funeral parlor, the focus on duality shifts from the former's criminal life to the latter's sexual life.

II

On their way back to their music agencies, Joe and Jerry lose their salaries on the dog race, and, as the result, they pawn their overcoats. The loss of Joe's and Jerry's overcoats is the symbolic start-up for the weakening of their manliness which leads ultimately to transvestitism and the repression of their sexual desire. However, at this moment, Jerry's masculinity is still manly expressed in hot anger and in empathic protest against Joe's gambling nature and irresponsibility:

Jerry: Greased Lightning! Why do I listen to you? I ought to have my head examined!

Joe: I thought you weren't talking to me.

Jerry: Look at the bull fiddle... it's dressed warmer than I am. ⁽⁸⁾

The state of Jerry's manliness is attributed to that of his bull fiddle throughout the film; judging from its long and round shape, Jerry's bull fiddle is a metaphor of his phallus. It is because Jerry's phallic bull fiddle is warm and well-preserved in the fiddle case as usual, and is carried erect carefully and tightly in his arms as if to protect his potency, though he has already lost his own over-wrappings, that he is still manly enough to get angry with and protest against Joe, but yet his virility gradually gets lost due to hunger and sickness in addition to coldness, and his anger withers into whining. Though Jerry's potency is still maintained, his weakening male mentality eats into his male physicality.

Jerry: I can't go on, Joe. I'm weak from hunger and I'm running a fever and I got a hole in my shoe...

Joe: If you'd give a chance, we could be living like kings.

Jerry: Yeah? How?

Joe: There's a dog running in the third race named Galloping Ghost...

Jerry: Oh, no!

Joe: He's fifteen to one. And this is his kind of track... he is a real mudder.

Jerry: What do you want... my head on a plate?

Joe: No... just your bass fiddle. If we hock that and my sax, we can get at least...

Jerry: You out of your mind? We're up the creek... and you want to hock the paddle!

Joe: Okay, so go ahead and starve! Freeze! ⁽⁹⁾

This dialogue foretells that both Joe's and Jerry's masculinity will be endangered soon. Though Jerry's mention of his head on the plate is obviously unusual in the context of borrowing money and betting on the dog race, it connotes his castration and therefore his renunciation of his manhood. This is because 'a head on a plate' is reminiscent of episodes of the beheading of John the Baptist in the New Testament. In the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, John the Baptist, who was captured by Herod Antipas, King of Israel, for censuring the king and his wife for their incestuous marriage, is beheaded at the request from 'the daughter of Herodias,' who dances to celebrate the king's birthday, and who is identified as Salomé in *Jewish Antiquities* written by Josephus in the first century, AD. ⁽¹⁰⁾ After great painters such as Caravaggio and Titian painted the beheading of John the Baptist and Salome's dance through centuries, Anglo-Irish aesthete, poet, novelist and playwright Oscar Wilde added the undertone of castration to John the Baptist's decapitation in *Salomé* (1892), ⁽¹¹⁾ and, in the early twentieth century, German composer Richard Strauss made the German translation of Wilde's *Salome* into an opera. These two theatrical masterpieces established the modern image of John the Baptist and Salome. Considering the history of representations of the biblical episode, Jerry's mention of his head on the plate compares himself to John the Baptist and hints at the loss of his own virility. Besides, Joe's reckless proposal to hock both his saxophone and Jerry's bass fiddle suggests that not only Jerry but even Joe should give up his own masculinity

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temporarily, which is soon to be realized in the form of transvestitism by the three-week job offer in the all-girl band, Sweet Sue and her Syncopators, at Seminole Ritz in Miami, Florida, as Joe's girlfriend Nellie's revengeful joke on him at Sig Poliakoff's music agency. The following conversation between Joe, Jerry, and Poliakoff takes over the undercurrent of Jerry's castration from the previous dialogue.

Joe: You need a bass and a sax, don't you?

Poliakoff: The instruments are right, but you are not. (Into the phone) I want to speak to Mr. Morris.

Jerry: What's wrong with us?

Poliakoff: You're the wrong shape. Goodbye.

Joe: The wrong shape? What are you looking for... hunchbacks?

Poliakoff: It's not the backs that worry me.

Joe: What kind of band is this, anyway?

Poliakoff: You got to be under twenty-five...

Jerry: We could pass for that.

Poliakoff: ...and you got to be blonde...

Jerry: We could dye our hair.

Poliakoff: ...and you got to be girls.

Jerry: We could...

Joe: No, we couldn't! (12)

This job negotiation contains racy jokes. Poliakoff's denial of Joe and Jerry as the job candidates due to 'the wrong shape' apparently distinguishes the general physical difference between men and women in the body structure. However, the difference Poliakoff points out narrows down to the one part: the sexual organ. In terms of physical descriptions, Joe's reference to 'the hunchbacks' is not totally strange but still somewhat uncommon in comparison with adjectives such as tall, short, fat, and thin. This is because Joe's unorthodox choice of the word, 'hunchbacks,' functions only to draw Poliakoff's next line: 'It's not the backs that worry me.' Though the back is merely a part of the human body just like the head, the arms, and the legs, the opposite of the back is the front, namely, the genitals. Therefore, the question of this trialogue is whether the phallus is present or absent, and it is almost answered by Jerry. Just as Jerry accepts Poliakoff's work conditions such as under twenty-five and blond hair, so does he nearly agree with the sexual change by habitually saying, 'We could...', when Joe interrupts him right before he completes the sentence. The second half of Jerry's sentence might be 'be girls,' but, if it would routinely follow the sentence structure of his last answers, it would probably be 'cut our penises,' which would become Jerry's self-declaration of his castration and subsequent sex transformation from a man to a woman. In fact, despite Joe's interruption and his attribution of Jerry's willingness to accept the job offer to his misjudgment due to hunger, Jerry's insistence on the stint in the girls' band testifies to his subconscious desire for crossdressing, with his clear memories and detailed descriptions of their outfits for their female parts in their past performances on one hand and with their new names, Josephine and Geraldine as would-be women in the Florida tour in the very near future on the other.

Jerry: Wait a minute, Joe. Let's talk this over. [To Poliakoff] Why couldn't we do it? Last year, when we played in that gypsy tearoom, we wore gold earrings. And you remember when you booked us with that Hawaiian band? [Pantomiming] Grass skirts!

Poliakoff: [To Joe] What's with him... he drinks?

Joe: No. And he ain't been eating so good, either. He's got an empty stomach and it's gone to his head.

Jerry: But, Joe...three weeks in Florida! We could borrow some clothes from the girls in the chorus...

Joe: You've flipped your wig!

Jerry: Now you're talking! We pick up a couple of second-hand wigs... a little padding here and there ... call ourselves Josephine and Geraldine...

Joe: Josephine and Geraldine! Come on! (13)

Nevertheless, by Joe's decision, the duo takes up a one-night stand for the St. Valentine's dance at the University of Illinois, Urbana, for six dollars for each. This job acceptance is, as it were, an attempt to retrieve Joe and Jerry from sexual perversion to the traditional gender role. For one thing, the St. Valentine's dance is a conventional occasion for heterosexual love based on Christian faith as the name of the saint shows, where transvestitism is an absolute taboo. There, Jerry would become part of the romantic gathering of men and women and consequently take back his male identity. For another, Joe intends to get one of their overcoats out of hock for the twelve dollars they would earn, and, by putting the coat back on, either Joe or Jerry could recover his manliness on Guilbert's overcoat-metaphor theory. (14) Furthermore, Joe's seduction of Nellie out of her car key in revenge for the all-girl band job and for her sarcasm, 'How did it go, girls?', suggests their extrication out of their sexual dilemma. However, the restoration of their male sexuality faces a great threat from extremism of manliness: the Chicago gangsters' violence and murder. While Jerry is still obsessed with the Florida stint, the duo goes to pick up Nellie's car at Charlie's Garage, which is the point of departure to their long journey into sexual ambiguity. As opposed to Jerry's dream land, Florida, the seaside resort where they could be safe and secure, disguised as women, under the bright, warm sun, Charlie's Garage is a hangout of Chicago mobsters and a dark, cold theater of heinous crimes, and is so much exclusive to men that it is, as it were, the observation point for the masculinity of the three parties, that is, Spats Columbo and his men, Toothpick Charlie and his, and Joe and Jerry in order of greatness of masculinity, which is measured by their 'instruments.' Though frightened by Joe and Jerry because he mistakes them for the assassins who might be sent from Spats Columbo, and their sax and fiddle cases for machine gun cases, Charlie, as the leader of the garage, holds up Joe and Jerry with his pistol, but eventually lets them go without firing a single bullet. As such, Charlie's exertion of violence on them is considerably limited, though even his small firearm is much more powerful than Joe and Jerry's musical instruments. However, Charlie is not strong enough to confront Columbo. Columbo is thoroughly ruthless as a gang leader; he and his bodyguards raid Charlie's Garage and shoot Charlie and his gang to death on the spot with Thompson submachine guns, which are larger, faster, and more lethal with more bullets than Charlie's pistols. This significant distinction in the phallic weapon between the two gang leaders equals those in masculinity between them; Charlie's unfiring gun indicates his lack in virility, and that his signature toothpick, which

is another sign of his sexual inadequacy, is knocked off by Columbo at his death kills off Charlie's masculinity while Columbo and his men's automatic magazine rifles with drumfires embody their inexhaustible sexual energy as they make an amorous approach to Joe and Jerry dressed as women, believing in their femininity, in the elevator in Seminole Ritz Hotel in Florida much later. On the other hand, faced with Columbo's overwhelming brute force, Joe and Jerry are sheer powerless. The gushing gas tank hose, at the fall of which Columbo finds out Joe and Jerry hidden between the cars, is a metaphor for their wet pants and impotency due to their scare to death. At the height of tension of the showdown, Jerry's frustrated virility becomes decisive when Columbo and his men shoot and make holes in his bull fiddle while the two jazzmen flee from the scene of carnage.

Jerry: [As they run] I think they got me.

Joe: They got the bull-fiddle.

Jerry: [feeling himself all over] You don't see any blood?

Joe: Not yet. But if those guys catch us there'll be blood all over. Type O. ⁽¹⁵⁾

Though Jerry is physically unharmed since it is his bull-fiddle that has been shot, Jerry poses self-identification with his damaged fiddle, which is now more like a 'cow-fiddle,' so to speak, rather than a 'bull-fiddle,' because he is mentally castrated as predicted in his question 'What do you want... my head on a plate?' Joe and Jerry's subsequent acceptance of the Florida job in the all-girl band is Hobson's choice between death and self-inflicted sexual repression. Contrary to their initial plan to pick up Nellie's car to play for the St. Valentine dance, where they might restore themselves to heterosexuality, and by which they might symbolically get back their manliness by getting one of their overcoats out of hock for the wages they would earn, Joe and Jerry lose their masculinity to the Chicago gangsters in Charlie's Garage, where they instead get involved in St.-Valentine-Day-Massacre-like cold-blood mass murder, only to disguise themselves as women in the all-girl band to Florida. Thereafter, the Prohibition is laid not only on alcohol but also on Joe and Jerry's sexual desire for women.

III

Joe and Jerry's physical transportation from Chicago to Florida represents their mental transformation from men to women. ⁽¹⁶⁾ When they appear on the platform of the railway station, though fully attired and made-up as women, they are not mentally women yet. While Joe assumes a subdued, dame-like grace to a considerable degree, Jerry is rather unsuccessful in pretending to be a woman, feeling drafty in his skirt and finding it hard to walk in high heels, and he is still self-conscious about himself as a woman as if he were 'so naked' and everybody were looking at him. Jerry's struggle for sexual paradigm shift shows itself in the way he carries his phallic fiddle; unlike he held it upright when he was dressed as a man, he carries it horizontally with its neck turned back. This back and down displacement of Jerry's bass suggests his sexual inhibition. However, Joe and Jerry's painful female impersonation not only pales

beside real women, especially with Sugar Cane (Marylyn Monroe), but also shows their vulnerability to the fair sex since Sugar is ‘the dream girl of every red-blooded American male.’ Forgetting for a moment that they are supposed to be women, the two cross-dressers keep a male gaze on her buttocks when she passes them, walking sensually. Jerry’s comparison of Sugar to ‘Jell-o on springs’ is based on her sex appeal and his appetite for her; moreover, the steam suddenly spurting out of the locomotive onto Sugar depicts Joe and Jerry’s hidden sexual excitement as if it were snorting out of their nostrils. Upon their embarkation on the night express, Joe and Jerry set forth on the long, mentally transformative journey from men to women, which comes to the end after some sexual twists and turns among the girl musicians. Introducing themselves to Sweet Sue and Beinstock, Joe and Jerry make a sheer contrast with each other in playing the part of their female alter ego. Since Joe simply needs to pretend to be a woman just to save his life from Spats Columbo, his self-reinvention as the opposite sex is well-accomplished, though it was planned at the last minute, with such contrivances as readily feminizing his name to be ‘Josephine’ as Jerry suggested before and wittily faking up ‘Sheboygan Conservatory of Music’ as their alma mater. During the trip to Miami, he keeps a low profile, while he maintains his gentility as a lady, so that it will not be discovered that he is a man. Jerry, on the other hand, enjoys living out his new life as a woman while playing his part as one. In fact, he suddenly brightens up when he meets the band, contrary to his initial diffidence on the platform, and eradicating all the traces of his name as a man and giving himself the new name ‘Daphne’ is a rebaptism for his rebirth as a completely different entity. Tracing its origin back to Greek mythology, the name of Daphne foreshadows Jerry/Daphne’s cross-dressing and amorous pursuit with millionaire Osgood Fielding III later in the plot, though the ancient anecdotes and Jerry’s entanglement are not exactly correspondent in detail. According to the legend in Arcadia and Elis of ancient Greece, Daphne is a mortal girl who is fond of hunting, and is loved by Leucippus, a son of King Oenomaus of Pisa. Since she first refuses him because she is determined to be a virgin, Leucippus then approaches her disguised as a daughter of Oenomaus’ in braided hair, which grows long for Alpheus the river god in Elis, and in a maiden’s clothes, and finally becomes her best friend due to his better hunting skills as well as his better birth and upbringing than any other friend’s of hers. However, Apollo, who is jealous with Leucippus, makes Daphne and her friends feel like bathing in River Ladon and take off his clothes. As soon as she finds out his male sexuality, Daphne stabs him to death with a dagger and a javelin. (17) Nonetheless, Apollo’s love to her is only unrequited. In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Daphne is a river nymph and a daughter of a Thessalian river god, Peneus, and of a Naiad, Creusa. Apollo teases Eros for his archery skills, in revenge for which, Eros shoots Apollo with a golden arrow, which makes the hit target fall in love with the other sex at first sight, and Daphne with a lead arrow, which makes the hit target reject the suitor. As the result, Apollo, passionately in love with Daphne, runs after her and she runs away from him. Pursued to the riverbank of Peneus, Daphne is turned into a laurel tree by her father at her request to escape from Apollo. (18) Thus, cross-dressing is an essential attribute to the mythical Daphne, and her unasked-for romantic entanglement with omnipotent and passionate Apollo bears a crucial resemblance to that between Jerry/Daphne and multi-time married, superrich Osgood.

Under this especially sexually oriented pseudonym, Jerry/Daphne gets aboard the limited-express train with Joe/Josephine, which, in a long, phallic shape, driven with the virile steam engine at full strength,

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transforms them psychologically from men through a series of sexual frustration to women by transporting them physically from the cold, barren, male-dominated gangland of Chicago through vaginal tunnels to the warm, fertile seaside of Florida welcome to women. Despite its phallic form penetrating the tunnels, the train is ironically within the bounds of the Prohibition on sex as well as on alcohol, as the law-enforcer of the band, Sweet Sue, declares, 'There are two things I will not put up with during working hours. One is liquor... and the other one is men!' Indeed, to set a good example of total sexual abstinence as the watchdogs for the members of the band, Sue and the band manager, Beinstock, are described as virtually desexualized. In fact, Sue is much older and taller than any other member of the band and is as bossy as if she were a tough drill sergeant in a military squad who almost always shouts orders, or rather an irritable company executive with some worries on her mind because she often takes pills for her ulcer caused by the untimely vacancy in her band. So much so that Sue hardly ever emits sex appeal, as opposed to Sugar. Beinstock, too, is so sexually unattractive, being overwhelmed by his boss Sue and obedient to her orders on top of his physical disadvantages such as shortness and baldness, that he is obviously not considered for a sex object by any member of the all-girl band but rather he is a eunuch in a harem. In other words, Beinstock is another image of castration, though he is dressed as a man, not as a woman like Jerry. On the other hand, the members of the band sexually suffer in depth under the in-house Prohibition inflicted by Sue. Indeed, what causes the original saxophone and the bass players to leave the band is their unbearable sexual discontent. The former ran off with a Bible salesman and the latter got herself pregnant while another girl despaired of Rudolph Valentino's early death and impulsively slashed her wrist. The difference between the band members and Jerry/Daphne in self-consciousness of sexual frustration is epitomized in the exchange of greeting between them:

Jerry: Hello, everybody! I'm the bass fiddle. Just call me Daphne!

Joe: I'm Josephine. Sax.

Mary Lou: Welcome to No Man's Land!

Girls: You'll be sorry!

Rosella: Take your corsets off and spread out.

Jerry: Oh, I never wear one.

Olga: Don't you bulge?

Jerry: Oh, no. I have the most divine seamstress that comes in once a month... and my dear, she's so inexpensive...

Joe: Come on, Daphne! (19)

'No Man's Land' means not only literally that the girl musicians live ascetic lives while onboard but also figuratively that the train is the sexually ambiguous sphere between Chicago as the gangsters' home ground and Miami as the all-girl band's musical arena. Rosella's recommendation that Jerry/Daphne take off his/her corsets suggests that he/she relieve sexual stress by removing her chastity belt and by enjoying smutty talks with the girls as well as ease physical strain by unbinding his/her underwear. However, Jerry/Daphne, who does not wear a chastity belt, lets off sexual steam in a different way. When

Jerry/Daphne ‘bulges’ once a month, that is, when his/her sexual excitement is at peak, he/she has sexual intercourse with a cheap prostitute euphemized as ‘so inexpensive’ a ‘seamstress.’ The conversation with this salacious undercurrent almost goes overboard with lewd Dolores joining them:

Dolores: Say, kids, have you heard the one about the girl tuba player that was stranded on a desert island with a one-legged jockey?

Jerry: No... how does it go?

Beinstock: Now cut that out, girls... none of that rough talk. They went to a conservatory. (20)

In correspondence with Joe’s brass, Jerry’s fiddle, and the gangsters’ guns that measure their sexual potency, the girls’ musical instruments such as Rosella’s fiddle, Olga’s trumpet, and Dolores’ trombone, represent their sexual desire that they crave to satisfy. The one-legged jockey undoubtedly figures a phallus and Dolores’ attempts to repeat it through the night is the alternative sign of her sexual abstinence syndrome. Stimulated by these racy jokes, Jerry, who has not yet mentally been transformed into a woman, feels strong sexual appetite for the girls, as opposed to Joe, who puts control on himself despite usually being a womanizer:

Jerry: How about that talent? This is like falling into a tub of butter.

Joe: Watch it, Daphne!

Jerry: When I was a kid, I used to have a dream... I was locked up in this pastry shop overnight... with all kinds of goodies around... jelly rolls and mocha éclairs and sponge cake and Boston cream pie and cherry tarts...

Joe: Listen stupe... no butter and no pastry. We’re on a diet! (21)

Jerry’s recollection of his dream of cooping himself up in the pastry shop bears a manifest sign of his sexual reawakening, with no shortage of allegories for women as sex objects or for female sexual organs. Joe’s call for Jerry’s attention to the emergency cord immediately after his declaration of their diet is a visualization of strict self-restraint on his amorousness. (22) Joe’s subsequent but coincidental tear of one of Jerry’s bra straps depicts an intense conflict between Jerry’s surging sexual desire and Joe’s constraint on it. On their way to the rest room where they are going to fix Jerry’s bra, Jerry’s reawakening identity as a man leads himself to the door to the men’s room, though Joe pulls him into the women’s, when the other bra strap of Jerry’s comes off at the jerk. Joe’s guidance of Jerry into the powder room metaphorically detracts him from getting back on the right track in terms of gender. This tug-of-war between Joe and Jerry just in front of the two adjacent lavatories is the gender conflict between them; while Joe insists that they continue to play their roles of women, Jerry is almost unable to keep his sexual excitement as a man in check and his unstrapped bras indicate that the suppression of his carnal desire is reaching the limit. However, in the lady’s room, contrary to their intention to quench his sexual appetite, their chance encounter with Sugar Cane adds fuel to the fire. Sugar is the most sexually appealing woman in Sweet Sue and her Society Syncopators. Indeed, as it sounds the same as a sugar cane which is a tall tropical

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plant from which sugar is produced, 'Sugar Cane' connotes the very sweetest while it is also the name of the ragtime piece composed by King of Ragtime, Scott Joplin in 1908. Besides, 'Cane' is the anglicized renaming of Polish 'Kowalczyk,' the pronunciation of which is suggestive of '(Stanley) Kowalski,' who is represented by Marlon Brando as a young man full of extreme masculinity in the 1951 film adaptation of Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947).⁽²³⁾ In addition to the sexiness in her physical beauty and in her name, Sugar insinuates sensuality into her words and gestures without directly mentioning anything about men. As Sugar's confession that all the girls in the band sneak alcohol rephrases that their indulgence in alcohol is the alternative to that in sexual pleasure, her alcoholism equals her insatiable desire for sex with a man. Therefore, carrying her flask of bourbon whiskey, which is a metaphor for a phallus, tied around her thigh, relatively close to her private parts, with a garter belt in the skirt reveals her profound, unsatisfied carnal desire. Sugar's hopeless sexual frustration is summed up in her line: 'I always get the fuzzy end of the lollipop.' Originally, 'the fuzzy end of the lollipop' is an idiom that means the dirtier, rougher side of a thing, dating back to Abraham Lincoln in 1860, but it contains an extremely sensual innuendo; judging from its shape, the lollipop is unmistakably another phallic trope and Sugar's getting its fuzzy end denotes her failure in sexual consummation, or in attaining orgasm, with a man. This secret conversation among the three 'women' in the lady's room ends with further double entendre:

Sugar: Are my seams straight?

Jerry: I'll say.

Sugar: See you around, girls.

Jerry: Bye, Sugar. We've been playing with the wrong bands.

Joe: Down, Daphne!

Jerry: How about the shape of that liquor cabinet?

Joe: Forget it. One false move, and they'll toss us off the train... there'll be the police, and the papers, and the mob in Chicago...

Jerry: Boy, would I like to borrow a cup of that Sugar.

Joe: Look... no butter, no pastry, and no Sugar!

Jerry: You tore them again!⁽²⁴⁾

Though Sugar's care about the seams in her stockings might seem unnecessary in the plot, it bears a very important meaning in the hidden context of the sequence. It is because she tied the whiskey bottle, the phallic metaphor, around her thigh that she cares if her seams are straight or not. Obviously, Sugar's seams represent her vagina and her anxiety about their straightness is figuratively about her sex appeal and vaginal function, which have not worked sufficiently for her and her lovers for some time, but which still definitely will be based on Jerry's connoisseurship of her 'liquor cabinet,' which is another euphemism for her sexual organ. Ironically, Joe and Jerry's visit to the women's room contributes to bringing Jerry's sexual re-arousal as a man into complete wakefulness by their first contact with extremely voluptuous Sugar Cane rather than to putting it back to sleep by fixing Jerry's bras. Jerry's fixed and then once more

unstrapped bras signify so much enhanced sexual excitement of his.

IV

In the next sequence, the rehearsal of 'Runnin' Wild' is a jam session for Jerry and Sugar to form a closer relationship. In fact, upbeat 'Runnin' Wild' together with the speeding locomotive with pounding wheels creates an enthusiastic and integral atmosphere, where Jerry, though still dressed as a woman, stirs up his virility musically. Since Joe and Jerry play the saxophone and the double fiddle in a dainty ultra-refined manner as in a square dance as they are supposed to be graduates from the Sheboygan Conservatory of Music while the other players swing, Sweet Sue tell them to 'goose it up a little.' She only means playing faster and more vividly, but 'goose' or 'to goose' is also a slang word for touching or squeezing a person's bottom and for sex, to which Jerry responds with a smile, saying, 'We'll try.'⁽²⁵⁾ Just before the run-through resumes, Sweet Sue's notice brings the bullet holes in Jerry's bull-fiddle into question for the first time with the holes fully shown. After attributing them to mice, Jerry starts playing the bull-fiddle hot and hard. This vigorous playing style of the fiddle by Jerry is a symbolic action for regaining his male virility. In fact, Jerry indulges in sexual pleasure, gazing at Sugar's bottom while she swings, playing the ukulele. When Sugar's whiskey flask drops from her thigh onto the floor at the end of the rehearsal, first Beinstock picks it up and then Jerry takes it as he claims it. This fact that though Beinstock picks up the flask, which is a metaphor for the male sexual organ or virility, it soon leaves him for Jerry implies that manliness is coming back to him while it easily eludes Beinstock, who reclaims the flask, being angry with Jerry taking it away from him. As even Beinstock is no exception to the general rule that manliness is represented in the male characters' outfits and accessories such as overcoats and musical instruments, his reclaim on the elusive flask indicates his desperate cling to manliness, while some other attributes of his weak manliness such as his pair of thick glasses and his sea resort clothes readily disappear, or more precisely, are stolen by manlier Joe. Jerry's sexual desire as a man that completely resurges in the closer relationship of trust with Sugar, whom he smiles at 'like a kid in a pastry shop' with 'his mouth watering a little,' in the rehearsal scene, however, faces an agonizing dilemma between frustration and gratification at bedtime.⁽²⁶⁾ Sticking his head out of the upper berth of his, Jerry enjoys getting an eyeful of young, beautiful girl musicians in their pajamas, negligees, and night gowns, when Joe removes the ladder from his berth so that Jerry would have no other choice but to stay in his bed.

Jerry: Good night, Sugar.

Sugar: Good night, honey.

Jerry: Honey... she called me honey... What are you doing?

Joe: I just want to make sure that honey stays in the hive. There'll be no buzzing around tonight.

Jerry: But suppose I got to go... like for a drink of water or something?

Joe: Fight it.

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Jerry: But suppose I lose? Suppose it's an emergency?

Joe: Then pull the emergency brake! (27)

Since Jerry is sexually wide awake though it is at bedtime, the 'pillow talk' between Joe and Jerry is full of lewd connotations. Apparently, 'honey' is just a friendly call from Sugar to Jerry, but 'honey' has two more meanings about Jerry here: semen and a lesbian. Joe and Jerry interpret 'honey' as semen and the 'hive' where the honey should stay is Jerry's testicles, 'buzzing around' connotes promiscuous sex between Jerry and the girls, and 'a drink of water' means satisfying his desire by having sex. Likewise, 'an emergency' is Jerry's limit to endurance and 'pulling the emergency brake' suggests 'going above his limit,' which culminates in ejaculation. Besides these copulatory jokes, Joe's removal of the ladder not only physically prevents Jerry from climbing up and down the rungs but also figuratively desexualizes him because there is a biblical phrase, 'Jacob's ladder,' which has a slang meaning for the female sex organ and because it is Joe, short for Joseph and named after the biblical eponym, who is one of Jacob's twelve sons, who become the fathers of the twelve Israeli tribes in the Old Testament, that gets rid of it. In actuality, twelve girls clamber the ladder up into Jerry's berth in the scene that follows soon. As the result, Jerry would have no other choice but to sleep alone with continence in his berth, where the other meaning of the 'honey,' 'a lesbian,' comes in as a variation of Jerry's male sexual suppression dressed as a woman. Just to kill his sexual desire that has been greatly stimulated, Jerry attempts to brainwash himself as a woman by chanting, 'I'm a girl... I'm a girl... I'm a girl.' Jerry's insertion that 'I wish I were dead' into his mantra shows his unbearable agony in his severe sexual suppression, which leads to his virtual mental death as a man. Jerry's sexual dilemma gets lost into oblivion while he falls asleep, but it soon comes back with an unconscious seductress. In the dead of night, Sugar sneaks out of her berth, puts the ladder back against Jerry's, and climbs it up there. Sugar's reset of the ladder re-sexualizes Jerry as a man, and her intrusion by the rungs into his bunk makes herself his sex object but also stages a seeming act of lesbianism between them, which, in fact, merely covers up Jerry's uphill battle against sparsely dressed Sugar's excessive sex appeal. The whisper and huddle between Jerry and Sugar in his bunk bed is full of innuendos about ambivalence between their inner heterosexual desire and their outer lesbian caresses.

Sugar: Daphne...

Jerry: Oh...Sugar!

Sugar: I wanted to thank you for covering up for me. You're a real pal.

Jerry: It's nothing. I just think us girls should stick together.

Sugar: If it hadn't been for you, they would have kicked me off the train. I'd be out there in the middle of nowhere, sitting on my ukulele.

Jerry: It must be freezing outside. When I think of you... and your poor ukulele...

Sugar: If there's anything I can do for you...

Jerry: Oh, I can think of a million things...And that's one of them. (28)

Though Sugar is heterosexual and intends to find and marry a rich young man, she is running away from her exploiting former boyfriends and hiding in the all-girl band, where so much sexually frustrated girls' libido may turn to their fellows while they play the phallic instruments and drink alcohol for consolation. Sugar's referring to Jerry/Daphne as 'a real pal' can be interpreted not just as a sign of her friendship with Jerry/Daphne but also as a signal of her lesbian attachment to him/her. Jerry's response that 'us girl should stick together' welcomes both Sugar's friendship and her special intimacy. Nevertheless, Sugar's unquenchable desire for a man shows up in two metaphors. Getting kicked off the train means that she could not get a man, not merely because she could not arrive in Miami, where there are supposed to be a lot of rich men, but also because she no longer could stay on the phallic means of transportation. Her possible sensual over-frustration after desertion can be epitomized in 'sitting on my ukulele,' which is commonsensically understood as Sugar resting on her ukulele laid flat and being at a loss what to do, but which also could envisage her bstride the erected ukulele and sexually comforting herself. (29) Jerry points out cold-bloodedness about her self-consolation, saying, 'It must be freezing outside. When I think of you... and your poor ukulele,' and leads her to warm, hot-blooded, fleshly contact with him. The 'million things' that he can think of as what she can do for him in return for covering her up are a variety of her sexual behavior to him, and the 'one of them' is sharing the bed with him for a starter.

Sugar: Sssh. Sweet Sue. I don't want her to know we're in cahoots.

Jerry: We won't tell anybody... not even Josephine.

Sugar: I'd better stay here till she goes back to sleep.

Jerry: Stay as long as you like.

Sugar: I'm not crowding you, am I?

Jerry: No. It's nice and cozy.

Sugar: When I was a little girl, on cold nights like this, I used to crawl into bed with my sister. We'd cuddle up under the covers, and pretend we were lost in a dark cave, and were trying to find our way out.

Jerry: Interesting.

Sugar: Anything wrong?

Jerry: No, no.

Sugar: Why you poor thing... You're trembling all over.

Jerry: That's ridiculous.

Sugar: And your head is hot.

Jerry: That's ridiculous.

Sugar: And you've got cold feet.

Jerry: Isn't that ridiculous?

Sugar: Let me warm them a little. There... isn't that better?

Jerry: I'm a girl, I'm a girl, I'm a girl... (30)

As long as their intimate space and time are in moderation, Jerry takes advantage of them, but when

they go too far, he cannot mentally afford it. Feeling extremely sensuous sticking close to her, smelling her good smell, and being intoxicated with her pheromone, Jerry can barely hold himself back, but Sugar's sexually allegorical story about herself and her sister as children excites and excruciates him at the same time. It makes Jerry imagine a lesbian behavior and even feel pedophilic that Sugar and her sister cuddle up together in bed. In addition, finding the way out of the 'dark cave' is provocative of Jerry's desire to penetrate Sugar. The antithesis between sexual pleasure and sexual agony in Jerry manifests itself in that between high and low in his body temperature. Jerry's tremble all over his body physicalizes the conflict between the two extremes as well as his resistance against voluptuous temptation from nonchalant Sugar. In fact, Jerry's high and low temperature is polarized into the two ends of his body: his feverish forehead and his cold feet. While the high fever on his head shows an upsurge of his male sexual potency, his cold feet represent his conscious effort to be as sexually numb as possible. However, Sugar rubs Jerry's cold feet to make them warm. This nursing care by Sugar for Jerry gives the opposite effect to all his perseverance in sexual abstinence; she succeeds in making his feet warm or even hot, which means that Jerry is sensually titillated against his will. As in the later case where Joe's glasses steam up and one of his feet gradually cocks up, the heat and Joe and Jerry's feet are major metaphors for their sexual excitement and their virile members, their erection, and their regain of sexual identity as men. Jerry's proposal of having a 'surprise' drinking party to Sugar on the pretence of preventing her from catching cold from him connotes his intension to fire up their sexual desire, to which alcohol is the alternative, and then to become 'hot' enough to have sex after his self-revelation of his male sexuality. In actuality, Jerry's getting a bottle of bourbon out of Joe's traveling bag signifies a near comeback of his sexual function at the moment while Sugar's holding his feet implies a fair chance for them to have sexual intercourse. However, the fact that Jerry falls onto the floor because his feet slip off Sugar's hands and that he finds the bottle only half-full indicates that his male sexual potency is still inadequate, though it still has the potential for further restoration because when they drink, Sugar says, 'This'll put hair on your chest,' which idiomatically means that Jerry will feel energized and hot and which literally means that Daphne will become a man, and to which he replies: 'No fair guessing,' that is, 'Not close but not far.' At this moment, Jerry's mental sexuality is more on the borderline between a man and a woman than ever.

However, their private party develops into a spree, with first Dolores, Mary Lou and Stella, and then Olga and others joining them in Jerry's bunk. They are so sexually obsessed and frustrated that they cannot go to sleep and their alternative greed for alcohol is insatiate and overflowing with sexual connotations. For example, while Southern Comfort corresponds with the fact that the girls are on their way down south to Florida, where they will have some comfort after work, in down south of the human body is located the sexual organ, and the comfort they seek for there is exclusively sexual. The snacks the girls want are their equivalent to the sweets that Jerry previously likened them to; cheese, crackers, peanut butter and salami are metaphorical variations of male genitalia and ejaculation. Especially, a long package of salami, which one of the girls presents vertically in the foreground, saying, 'Anyone for salami?', represents their appetite for men. The drinking utensils are no exception; the cocktail shaker they need to make Manhattan evokes a phallic image from its cylindrical shape and its phonic structure as a 'cock-tail' while the corrupt pronunciation of the first part of the 'corkscrew' sounds like that of the 'cocktail' and

the ‘screw’ is a slang for sex. Indeed, the girls are so gluttonous that their orgy soon gets out of control.

Jerry: Please girls... this is a private party... a party for two... go away, no more room... ssh, the neighbors downstairs... you’ll wake up Josephine... please, no crackers in bed... go someplace else, form your own party... be careful with that corkscrew! Sugar... where are you, Sugar? (31)

As Jerry says, the party is private, not just in the sense that it is originally held only for Sugar and him, but in the sense that it is closely related to their ‘private parts’ as Sugar’s ‘dark cave’ pillow talk indicates and because Jerry has intension to have sexual relationship with her in the end. Therefore, the girls’ break into Jerry’s berth is not merely an invasion of his privacy but also an invasion of his private parts, as it were, that is to say, promiscuous sex, or even their gang rape on him. Jerry’s remark, ‘Be careful with that corkscrew,’ even though no corkscrew appears on camera, is an implicit warning against the girls going sexually overboard with him. On the other hand, Sugar gets out of Jerry’s bunk into the lady’s lounge, where she has a chat full of sexual insinuations with Joe while crushing the ice for the drinks. The lady’s room is a place of privacy for women, so the content of their talk is naturally private there. Sugar elaborates on her personal life that she hinted in her first encounter with Joe and Jerry there. With Joe in private again, Sugar confesses her past life with men to him for the first time in a sexually suggestive speech.

Sugar: I used to sing with male bands. But I can’t afford it any more. Have you ever been with a male band?

Joe: Me?

Sugar: That’s what I’m running away from. I worked with six different ones in the last two years. Oh, brother!

Joe: Rough?

Sugar: I’ll say.

Joe: You can’t trust those guys.

Sugar: I can’t trust myself. You see, I have this thing about saxophone players.

Joe: Really?

Sugar: Especially tenor sax. I don’t know what it is, but they just curdle me. All they have to do is play eight bars of “Come to Me, My Melancholy Baby”... and my spine turns to custard, and I get goose-pimply all over... and I come to them.

Joe: That so?

Sugar: Every time!

Joe: You know... I play tenor sax.

Sugar: But you’re a girl, Thank goodness.

Joe: Yeah.

Sugar: That’s why I joined this band. Safety first. Anything to get away from those bums.

Joe: Yeah.

Sugar: You don’t know what they’re like. You fall for them and you love’em... you think it’s going to be the biggest thing since the Graf Zeppelin... and the next thing you know they’re borrowing

money from you and spending it on other dames and betting the horses...

Joe: You don't say?

Sugar: Then one morning you wake up and the saxophone is gone and the guy is gone, and all that's left behind is a pair of old socks and a tube of toothpaste, all squeezed out. So you pull yourself together and you go on to the next job, and the next saxophone player, and it's the same thing all over again. See what I mean?... not very bright.

Joe: Brains aren't everything.

Sugar: I can tell you one thing...it's not going to happen to me again. Ever. I'm tired of getting the fuzzy end of the lollipop. ⁽³²⁾

It is noteworthy that Sugar repeats the 'lollipop' metaphor from their previous short conversation. Obviously, her repetition of the phallic expression is a sign of her unendurable sexual frustration with men, and her sexual desire turns out to be strangely specific. She instinctively narrows it down to saxophone players, especially tenor saxes, and, of all brass instruments that signify the alternative organs for phalli in this film, only saxophones do so for her. The dairy-related metaphors for her sexual vulnerability such as 'they just curdle me' and 'my spine turns to custard,' and such an analogy of her romantic expectations from her love life with her boyfriend to the phallic-shaped airship as 'the biggest thing since the Graf Zeppelin' imply how much hopelessly she gets sensually excited with saxophone players. Joe typifies this rigid specification of Sugar's idiosyncratic sexual taste, which suddenly reawakens his suppressed male sexuality and identity as a qualified candidate as her new lover, as the result of which he unconsciously reveals his male tone of voice in saying, 'Really?' Her heartbreaking episode about her former boyfriends borrowing money from her and spending it on other women or betting it on horses epitomizes Joe's exploitative relationships with Nellie, jazz dancers and even Jerry. Sugar's disappointment with her ex-lovers is embodied in the distinct gap between what is gone from her and what is left with her. The disappearance of the saxophone before that of her boyfriend means her sexless life with him first and then his departure from her. The pair of socks and the tube of toothpaste all squeezed out signify used condoms and the penis after ejaculation respectively. ⁽³³⁾ After they exchange a few more words, Joe wraps up the conversation, when another girl comes in to get the ice, by saying, 'I hope this time you wind up with the sweet end of the lollipop,' and this remark by Joe to Sugar predicts that he will make love to her after they arrive in Florida as he 'studies her like a cat studying a canary.' On the other hand, the possible bisexual undertone is detected in this private conversation. Sugar's reply that 'Buy you're a girl, thank goodness' to Joe's comment that 'You know...I play tenor sax' implies Sugar's bisexual potential because her remark can be interpreted as her disappointment with her sexual relationships with men in the past that lead to no marriage or pregnancy and as her sexual preference to women in the future, based on her intimate physical contact with Jerry as Daphne in his bed, her story to him about herself and her sister in bed, and Joe dressed as Josephine kissing Sugar towards the end of the film. ⁽³⁴⁾ Joe's remark to Jerry that 'Nobody's asking you to have a baby' earlier in the film also has a connotation that can approve Jerry's homosexual intimacy with Sugar while he is disguised as Daphne and with Osgood Fielding when Jerry reveals his male sexuality to Osgood, who says at the very

denouement of the film, ‘Nobody’s perfect,’ which is another possible affirmative to male homosexual relationship. Though Joe, Jerry, and Sugar are supposed to be heterosexual throughout the film, and especially Joe and Sugar are represented extremely good-looking and sexy, they have their own share of bisexual nuances here and there in the plot.

In the meantime, the party in Jerry’s berth is in full swing and everyone is drunk, that is, alternatively, their sexual excitement is at its peak, which is represented in the racy joke that Dolores finally completes after she was interrupted by Sue and Beinstock a few times earlier.

Dolores: ... so the one-legged jockey said...

Jerry: What did he say?

Dolores: The one-legged jockey said, ‘Don’t worry about me, baby. I ride side-saddle.’⁽³⁵⁾

The one-legged jockey is obviously a man none other than as a phallus and a sex object for the women in the band whom Dolores speaks for. The word ‘jockey’ sounds precisely the same as ‘jocky,’ which is a slang word for a penis, and extensionally the jocky fashion is a sexual position, while a ‘jockey’ has a slang meaning of a lesbian butch. Thus, Dolores, whose heterosexual frustration is nearly beyond her limits, is reactively on the edge of bisexuality. As if in response to Dolores’ joke overloaded with homo/hetero-sexual innuendos, Jerry starts hiccupping as an alternative sign of his own sexual frustration reaching its limits, and as he cannot bear the girls tickling him all over the body, his bras unstrap once again and he pulls the emergency cord at last. These two successive quick actions with the two different kinds of strings are metaphors for Jerry’s erection and possible ejaculation.

Conclusion

The long voyage on the night train from Chicago to Miami transforms Joe and Jerry both mentally and physically as much as possible into women, while almost all the members of the band feel sexually ultimately frustrated and some of them even have the potential to awake their dormant homosexuality in confinement of the train. Their sexual departure develops further sexual crisis in Miami, where millionaire Osgood Fielding III courts Jerry as Daphne, who stays trapped in transvestitism, and Joe, disguised as another millionaire Shell Jr., contrives to make Sugar seduce him under pretense of regaining his sexual potency while Spats Columbo with his gang and other groups of mobsters present themselves as violent virility and pose a death threat to sexually disoriented Joe and Jerry. As the turning point of the plot, the pseudo-transformation of Joe’s and Jerry’s sexuality in transportation from male-dominated Chicago to free-wheeling female Miami creates their sexual anxiety that is not completely relieved after going through twists and turns towards the end of the film.

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Notes

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- (2) Ed Sikov, *On Sunset Boulevard: The Life and Times of Billy Wilder* (New York: Hyperion, 1998), 404.
- (3) Alison, Castle, *Billy Wilder's Some Like It Hot* (Cologne: Taschen, 2001), 91.
- (4) Georges-Claude Guilbert, 'Gender in Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*,' George-Claude Guilbert ed., *Literary Readings of Billy Wilder* (New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 72.
- (5) Castle, 9.
- (6) Castle, 11.
- (7) Castle, 12.
- (8) Castle, 13-14.
- (9) Castle, 15.
- (10) Mark, 6: 17-29, Matthew, 14:3-11, New Testament. Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Book 18, Chapters 4-5.
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- (12) Castle, 22.
- (13) Castle, 22-23.
- (14) Guilbert, 112-113.
- (15) Castle, 32.
- (16) Gerd Gemünden, *A Foreign Affair: Billy Wilder's American Films* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), 103.
- (17) Peter Levi trans., Pausanias, *Guide to Greece 2: Southern Greece* (London: Penguin, 1971, reprinted 1985), 418-419.
- (18) David Raeburn trans., Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (London: Penguin, 2004), 28-33.
- (19) Castle, 38.
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