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On the outside looking in

When viewing the opening scene of the 1961 iconic film, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, viewers can probably hear the director's call, "Lights! Camera! Action!" The movie begins at early dawn in the upper echelons of Manhattan, New York City. A taxi travels hastily down a deserted Fifth Avenue and stops in front of Tiffany's, the jewelry store, where the slim figure of the exquisitely chic and regal Holly Golightly emerges, like a princess, looking magnificent in a black, Givenchy gown, a pearl and rhinestone necklace, a pair of arm's length, black, silk gloves, and breakfasting on a bagel and coffee to, apparently, window shop. She peers through one window and then another, admiring the opulence therein, but it is through an observation of Holly's sullen walk home from Tiffany's, however, where director, Blake Edwards, gives his audience their initial glimpse into the actual world of Holly Golightly, a world of the lower echelon, of prostitution, of crime, of the "mean reds," and of utter despair.

In the first few moments of the film, Edwards sends a powerful message, for the scene displays only two tiers of a socioeconomic pyramid: the aristocracy and the proletariat/working poor. In this scene, Edwards proves that social class is more than just a bump in the road for people to overcome, for it directly affects the overall quality of an individual's life. For instance, if an individual is a member of the aristocracy or middle to upper-middle classes, he or she is more likely to find respect from society and have a greater access to life's necessities: better housing, better education, better jobs, better healthcare, etc. On the other hand, if an unfortunate

individual is born to a family of the working poor, he or she is more likely to be denounced and shunned by society with little to no access to the aforementioned essentials. This, in many cases, results in that person's feelings of despair, anxiety, and insecurity. Therefore, an argument can be made that Blake Edwards seeks to prove through a Marxist lens and Aristotle's persuasive appeals ethos logos, and pathos that Holly Golightly's self-loathing stems from her poverty-stricken background which are the results of a corrupted, capitalist system.

Initially, an example of ethos is illustrated in scene twenty-two when Paul Varjak upbraids Holly by trying to convince her that at some point in her life, she is simply going to have to "woman up" and "Take the bull by the horns" by being responsible and not running away from her problems. He says, "You call yourself a free spirit, a "wild thing," and you're terrified somebody's gonna stick you in a cage. Well baby, you're already in that cage. You built it yourself. And it's not bounded in the west by Tulip, Texas...It's wherever you go. No matter where you run, you end up running into yourself" (*Breakfast at Tiffany's* 1:27:23). Furthermore, an example of ethos is exemplified at the start of the film when Holly talks about wanting to shop at Tiffany's. The lifestyle and class of its clientele is an example of ethos. Tiffany's is a symbol of luxury and success as it features the highest end of designer jewelry with concomitant prices to go with them. For example, Holly says, "I don't even want to own anything until I find a place where me and things go together. I'm not sure where that is, but I know what it's like. It's like Tiffany's... If I could find a real-life place that made me feel like Tiffany's (*Breakfast at Tiffany's* 1: 33:12).

Work Cited

Breakfast at Tiffany's. Directed by Blake Edwards, performances by Audrey Hepburn, George Peppard, Mickey Rooney, Patricia Neal, Buddy Ebsen, and Truman Capote, Paramount Pictures, 1961.