

You've got an old fashioned idea divorce is something that lasts forever,  
'til death do us part.'

- His Girl Friday (1940)



## Divorcing the Comedy of Remarriage and the Screwball Comedies

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## Introduction

Film genres are created to allow the viewers to define films. By placing them in certain categories, they can more easily choose whether or not they want to watch something. In general the category is based on the narrative (and often stylistic) elements within a film. Things like setting, mood and topic will define the category a certain film can be placed in. The categorisation of a genre usually occurs after a few films with the same characteristic features have been made, and this trend is noticed. In this same way the screwball comedy and the comedy of remarriage were noticed as they each displayed common factors that were repeated in multiple films, thus warranting a new genre.

In 1981 Stanley Cavell produced his book *Pursuits of Happiness*, a book which distinguished and defined a new subgenre within the screwball comedy genre that was at the peak of its popularity from 1930's to the 1950's. The comedy of remarriage is a subgenre of the screwball comedy that deals with a male and a female character that divorce or are already divorced at the beginning of the film, and eventually remarry at the end. Because this narrative structure occurred in multiple films within the screwball genre, philosopher Stanley Cavell suggested it as a subgenre in a series of articles he wrote which were then made into this book.

This new subgenre has gained some attention, from the critics A.O. Scott and David Edelstein for instance, who have both suggested that *ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND* was a modern-day example of a film that could fit within the subgenre. There are however, some critics who have other views on this subgenre. David Shumway, in response to Cavell's articles, suggested that the whole comedy of remarriage seemed an unnecessary subgenre as all the films within it are also in the screwball comedy genre. Taking this into account, we must ask the question; to what extent is the comedy of remarriage a viable subset of the screwball comedies? What is the value of the distinction between the genre and the subgenre in question?

My motive for looking into the subgenre remarriage comedy is that it originally seemed like a good idea to single out these films, as they are structurally quite alike, and here I am referring to the films that follow the remarriage structure. Among these films are some of the most popular screwball comedies, and that would make it all the more interesting as they seemed to be quite popular. When looking deeper at Cavell's work on his devised subgenre, the explanations became more complicated and appeared to be stretching themselves to accommodate certain films. It became less clear what Cavell meant by the term 'comedy of remarriage' as many of the films did not, at first glance, suit the subgenre. While doing other research regarding the historical and social context of this subgenre, the question of Cavell's definition of this subgenre became more and more difficult. The question stopped being, what is the comedy of remarriage subgenre, and become why is the comedy of remarriage a subgenre? Very little has been written about Cavell's work and even less about the validity of it. This is what I aim to do.

## Approaching the questions

When trying to answer the questions regarding the validity of the subgenre, it is important to know how we are going to be doing this. Stanley Cavell's *Pursuits of Happiness* will be the starting point. This book is the centre of this analysis. In it he describes exactly what he believes to be inherent to the subgenre. What does Cavell have to say about the comedy of remarriage? This information and his own examinations of the films will provide apt information on why he thinks particular films should be labelled within this subgenre. His theories are the backbone of this analysis. After having discussed his works, what he believes the remarriage comedy is, the problems that arise out of his work will be considered and his work will be questioned and criticised. Why do half of the films not follow the standard remarriage structure? To what extent is it useful to even make a distinction between the remarriage and the screwball comedy? Does the structure of a few storylines warrant a new subgenre when all of the named films fit perfectly into the screwball comedy genre? In this section I try to answer questions like these, regarding the validity of the subgenre as a whole. I will do this by comparing the remarriage comedies with other screwball comedies to see in which ways they differ besides the marriage, divorce and remarriage of the characters. If they do differ greatly, it will be clear that the remarriage subgenre may have a purpose, whereas if they are rather similar, it may suggest the opposite, namely that the subgenre has little merit and could be considered invalid.

Following the critical section of this essay, I will briefly suggest another way of looking at the comedy of remarriage. How can we redefine the comedy of remarriage? Is it possible to keep and make it more valid as a subgenre by disregarding Cavell's definitions and creating my own? What purpose would this have?

Finally the conclusion will reiterate the points which have been made in the previous analysis and bring up the main points of critique. The questions regarding the validity will be answered and definitive conclusions will be made. At this point we will also be considering points of improvement. How could this analysis have been bettered, what could have been done to improve the outcome of the research? Following this I will provide ideas for further research, but also ways of furthering the work done in this essay. When a case is made, it needs to be debated and explored by third parties to allow for full recognition. The comedy of remarriage is an interesting topic to study and should be looked into more deeply, regardless of my conclusions regarding its validity. But some other interesting topics may pertain to the broader spectrum of screwball comedy in general or go deeper into the themes of specific films within this subgenre.

After making an analysis and looking at the results, I expect that the comedy of remarriage will not prove to be a valid subgenre. Although it may seem to be one, the way that Cavell has made complicated inclusions and exclusions will reduce its usefulness as a guideline to

view other films. It will be hard to say precisely whether a film belongs to this subgenre or not.

### **The Comedy of Remarriage and *Pursuits of Happiness***

Cavell writes “The explanation I have heard for this historical phenomenon (...) is that thirties comedies were fairy tales for the Depression.”<sup>1</sup> He is referring here to the screwball comedy, a genre that has entertained people for many years. Some of the greatest screwball comedies have been considered by Cavell to be a part of the remarriage comedy subgenre. The first screwball comedy is claimed to be *IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT*, which came out in 1934, right before the censors started heavily enforcing their new rules. Cavell claims this film to also be the first of the remarriage comedies.

The comedy of remarriage has a simple structure. The couple is married and get divorced and either before the beginning of the film (as in the case of *HIS GIRL FRIDAY*) or they get divorced during the film (as in the case of *ADAM’S RIB*), but they remarry or suggest remarriage at the end of the film. This is the structure that Cavell originally discusses, however Cavell himself uses a slightly broader definition to paint this subgenre, but because of this he is forced to prove his point with every film that fall outside of this compact structure. He believes that the structure of the remarriage subgenre can be traced back to earlier texts, like Shakespeare’s *Comedy: The Winter’s Tale*.<sup>2</sup> This recognition of past trends is for Cavell another reason to emphasise this subgenre. It seems to be a traditional structure, and should therefore be recognised as such.

The comedy of remarriage films that follow this structure have many commonalities. Characteristically the couple have become embittered towards each other, but they know the other intrinsically. This means they have the tendency to tease and manipulate each other to get what they want. In many cases the female characters have found another man to marry, and the male character uses his intimate knowledge of her to change her mind. This often leads to the new male partners to be confused, as in the case of *HIS GIRL FRIDAY*, where the new partner is accidentally arrested and put in jail three different times in the same day on the account of the original husband. The female character has to be as strong a personality as the male character, and in some scenes even stronger. They are each other’s counterweights and often get into heated arguments, yelling at each other without listening to each other, bickering like an old married couple. The new partner is often portrayed as good, hardworking but boring and naïve. He is the better man, but the female character still falls for the original husband, who is morally inferior to the new partner. While the male character is still in love with her, she eventually realises that she still loves him, and returns

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1981), 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, 19.

to him. The relationship they have the second time is less idealistic than the first, they have seen the best and the worst of each other but still chose that partner. Though they will continue having problems, they have come to realise that they can overcome them. Typically these films will have scenes in which the couple starts reminiscing about their time together, in some cases this is used as a ploy by the original husband to try to rekindle a relationship, or to suggest to the new partner that they have had good times together, that he already knew the wife intimately and that the new partner will never know her better than he does.

Cavell explains the singularity of the comedy of remarriage subgenre as follows; "The conversation of what I call the comedy of remarriage is, judging from the films I take to define it, of a sort that leads to acknowledgement; to the reconciliation of a genuine forgiveness; a reconciliation so profound as to require the metamorphosis of death and revival".<sup>3</sup> In the film *MY FAVORITE WIFE*, the wife is thought to be dead, so this can in some cases be taken literally. But in most cases, the relationship needs to die before being reborn as something stronger. A phoenix grows up out of the ashes of where it first crashed and burned. It will grow again to become strong. Where this analogy fails is that a phoenix lives in a cyclical pattern, dying and being reborn. The relationship is expected to only crash and burn once. Their 'remarriage' is final and forever and this is the true happy ending. The acknowledgement and genuine forgiveness can only come when the couple have lost and regained each other and realised they work better together. Cavell claims that the comedies of remarriage show that "the achievement of happiness requires not the [...] satisfaction of our needs [...] but the examination and transformation of those needs."<sup>4</sup> The accent that is placed on the idea of remarriage within these films emphasises the need for 'growing up', or experiencing life together with the significant other to strengthen the relationship between them.<sup>5</sup> The second marriage is stronger as they have seen the worst of each other and are still in love.

### **Remarriage and the Screwball Comedies**

Because the remarriage comedies are a subgenre of the screwball comedy, there will be certain overlapping features. The subgenre is merely an extension of the original genre; it adheres to the stylistic elements that define the screwball comedy as a genre, and adds on to it certain factors that are not in all of the films in the original genre, like the idea of remarriage. However, the question is whether the difference is great enough to warrant this whole new subgenre. By comparing and contrasting the genre and the subgenre; looking at the ways in which they are similar and different, a case may be made for or against the validity of the comedy of remarriage. But let us first examine the screwball comedy; the original genre from which sprung the comedy of remarriage.

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<sup>3</sup> Cavell, 19.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, 136.

“When two people fell in love, they did not simply surrender to their feelings, they battled it out. They lied (...) often assuming indifferent personas toward each other. They often employed hideous tricks on each other, until finally after running out of inventions, they fall into each other’s arms.”<sup>6</sup> This quote accurately describes the typical narrative structure of the screwball comedy. The main theme is the building love between two characters that they express in unconventional ways, by humorously battling the object of their affections, often not realising the love they feel. The comedy of remarriage also ends in this way, but the beginning is different to that of the screwball comedy. The remarriage comedy follows this, but begins with an already married couple who get divorced. Throughout the rest of the film, they gradually realise that their love was special, and they end up in each other’s arms. A screwball comedy will always have a happy ending.

The words screwball originated as a baseball term, whereby the screwball was a certain way the pitcher would throw the ball, creating an erratic and unconventional movement towards the batter. This is exactly why the screwball comedy got its name; it contains scenes and characters that are unconventional, typically juxtaposing the upper and lower class but most of all males and females. Andrew Sarris, a film critic, defined the screwball comedy as “a sex comedy without the sex”<sup>7</sup> According to different sources; the screwball comedy was a solution for the major film studio’s to avoid the wrath of the ever increasing censorship by the Production Code Administration. They were able to include some more risqué and sexually tinted scenes into their films.<sup>8</sup> This is also clear in the remarriage comedies, the use of metaphors and double-entendres within the films suggest they were trying to find ways of dealing with sexuality without upsetting the censors too much. Evidence of this may be found within this subgenre, particularly in the film ADAM’S RIB. Although this on its own does not show any form of sexuality in deeds, it allows for the sexual interpretation of many of its dialogues, and by obscuring some moments of physical intimacy. Through the use of marriage in the film, the producers are suggesting that the characters will have intimate sexual knowledge of each other, allowing the producers to make some more suggestive moments than in non-remarriage films. This is something which most definitely affects their characters and their behaviour towards each other. The Code made it clear that the characters could only have consummated their love within a marriage, and therefore they had to be married to create the confidence they exude toward each other, in both their hatred towards each other and later their regained love. However, the remarriage comedies are not the only screwball comedies that contain married couples. Most famous among the

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<sup>6</sup> “Screwball Comedy,” *Modern Times*, accessed June 19<sup>th</sup>, <http://moderntimes.com/screwball/>.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Sarris, “You Ain’t Heard Nothin’ Yet: The American Talking Film, History & Memory, 1927–1949.” *Oxford University Press*, published in 1998, accessed 19/06/2012, <http://www.newsradioart.com/Pages/2.Introduction.html>.

<sup>8</sup> “Under the Radar, The Hays Code and the Birth of Screwball,” *The Screwball and its Audience*. Accessed 12/06/2012, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~UG03/comedy/historicalcontext.html>.

film about already married couples are those of William Powell and Myrna Loy. These films include *LOVE CRAZY* and *THE THIN MAN* series. It has often been suggested that the use of remarriage as a theme had to do with the producers trying to allow for more sexuality, while skirting the Production Code. Showing already married couples in other films suggests that marriage was not used only as a ploy to please the audience with sexual innuendos. The endings of many of the comedies involving marriage, including the remarriage comedies, is that the female will be in or on her bed, and the male approaches her. At this point the shot pans away, or the 'curtains close', allowing the couple to have some privacy, and suggesting that they are about to get intimate. This seems typical of comedies involving married couples, and not just couples in the remarriage subgenre. However, the ending in bed is in the case of the remarriage comedies the point at which it becomes certain to the audience, and to the characters themselves that they are rekindling their relationship and that they have overcome their divorce. This is unique to the remarriage subgenre. It is important to point out that only about four of the films end this way, so not even every remarriage comedy follows this pattern. The role of the male and female had changed with the coming of the screwball comedy, it "traded upon this antiheroic element, such as the ritualistic humiliation of the male."<sup>9</sup> The female character is strong and often quite manipulative. But in the end she is conquered by the male character, as he approaches her bed when the film ends.

Screwball comedies are commonly filled with fast-paced, witty conversations often filled with double-entendres and an overlapping delivery style; characters will talk at the same time as each other and disregard what the other is saying. This mostly occurs between the main protagonists in the story. This quirky way of communicating is typical in both screwball and remarriage comedies. The theme of class distinction is present in many of the screwball comedies, and also the remarriage comedies. The most obvious example of this is in *MY MAN GODFREY*, where a rich woman finds a vagrant and cleans him up to pass him off as an upperclassman. While this is an extreme case, in many remarriage comedies the male is of a lower social standing than the woman. While she is typically an heiress, he is typically a newspaper man, as in the case of *HIS GIRL FRIDAY* and *THE PHILADELPHIA STORY*.

A notable difference, however is the way that the couple know each other, "a pair who recognize themselves as having known one another forever (...) They have discovered their sexuality together," this creates an intimate bond between the couple that the unmarried couples in the non-remarriage comedies (and may I suggest, even some of the remarriage comedies as Cavell defines them) may not be able to experience. This is perhaps the biggest difference between the screwball comedy and the comedy of remarriage. The claim for validity hinges mostly on this factor.

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<sup>9</sup> Wes D. Gehring, "Screwballs of the Silver Screen," *USA Today Magazine*, vol. 132, issue 2706 (2004): 62.

What is noticeable in the comedy of remarriage is the standard narrative structure that some of the films hold. The marriage-divorce-remarriage theme is prevalent in a couple of the films within the subgenre, but not all of the films that Cavell considers in his book. This, along with some other points is where some critics have issues with his work, as his understanding and definition of this trend has been quite problematic.

### **Problems with the Comedy of Remarriage as a subgenre**

The critic Shumway disagrees with the idea that the comedy of remarriage should be a subgenre. Shumway makes a point of the fact that “only two of Cavell's seven comedies deal with characters whom we actually see interacting as husband and wife for any length of time...”<sup>10</sup> Cavell has managed to define a subgenre and placed films in that category when they do not deal with remarriage at all. Particularly BRINGING UP BABY and IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT are problematic films, as none of the main characters are or have been married when the film starts. He manages to force these films into the model he creates. Cavell argues that it can be considered as part of the remarriage subgenre, “I justify its inclusion in the genre of remarriage by emphasizing the pair’s efforts to extricate their lives from one another, in which the attempt at flight is forever transforming itself into (hence revealing itself as) a process of pursuit.”<sup>11</sup> When looking at all of the films mentioned in Cavell’s book, it becomes clear that only four (or arguably three) of the seven films within the subgenre follow the simple remarriage narrative structure as Cavell originally describes it. Those films feature a married couple who divorces at the beginning or has just been divorced. In the end of the film they get back together (whether we see them remarrying or not). Taking into account that Cavell was a philosopher and not only concerned with the format of the films. He looks more closely at the relationship between the characters, what the intentions are, and how they relate to each other. This however, does leave a lot of room for interpretation of the relationships between the main male and female characters. What Cavell may experience as being something belonging to the comedy of remarriage, may for others seem like a stretch, as they do not see the relationship in the way that Cavell sees it. This is why Shumway’s critique can be considered valid, as Cavell makes something concrete, namely what does and does not belong within the genre, which could be argued to be more relative, regarding how the audience understood the relationship presented in the film they are viewing. But because of the philosophical way that Cavell treats the films; most of my analysis is based on my own experience while watching them. This may lead to my generalisations, but I believe them to be justifiable as they allow for a more general overview of the typical Comedy of Remarriage.

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<sup>10</sup> David R. Shumway, "Screwball Comedies: Constructing Romance, Mystifying Marriage." In *Film Genre Reader III*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2003), 7.

<sup>11</sup> Cavell, 113.

While films like *BRINGING UP BABY* and *IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT* have been included in Cavell's, the film *MY FAVORITE WIFE* has been completely neglected and ignored, when its structure is more like that of the other comedy of remarriage films. It deals with a couple, who are separated, when the wife is pronounced legally deceased, the husband marries another woman. The original wife returns and eventually they reunite as husband and wife. It seems absurd that Cavell would choose to ignore this whereas stories that do not contain any marriage or divorce are included. Another film which fits the remarriage description better than some of the films that Cavell has described is Hitchcock's *MR. AND MRS. SMITH*, which also deals with a married couple separating and coming back to each other at the end. Although it seems at first glance that Cavell bases his grouping of these films on the structure of the storyline, this does not seem to be the case. To some extent the storyline is important, but he uses the relationship between the characters as another defining point. With *MY FAVORITE WIFE* he may have a point for not including it, as the separation is not caused by relational problems, and so the relationship between the original married couple is different than in some of the other remarriage comedies. A side note here, however, the relational elements still apply, as the original wife teases him and manipulates him into coming back to their relationship, as punishment for having married another woman. But they are in love with each other throughout the film, unlike the couples in the remarriage comedies where the structure is more typical of the subgenre. Regardless of how close they seem to this subgenre, neither of these films are what I would describe to be a 'pure' remarriage comedy.

When taking the basic narrative structure as a guideline, it may be possible to suggest that only about six films accurately fit the description of the comedy of remarriage, following the marriage-divorce-remarriage narrative structure. These are: *THE AWFUL TRUTH*, *THE PHILADELPHIA STORY*, *HIS GIRL FRIDAY*, *LOVE CRAZY*, *THAT UNCERTAIN FEELING* and *PHFFFF!*, the last three are not even mentioned by Cavell in his book. The subgenre could have been less complicated and more valid had it been strictly following this structure, but because of Cavell's interpretation and definition of this subgenre, he makes it less definitive, and decreases its validity because he has made it more vague. He repeatedly attempts to force the films into the subgenre he has created, and by doing this he seems to distort the original subgenre. The mere fact that he has to defend his choices and opinions on this matter suggest that it is not logical to place these films in this category; this subgenre, as the point he tries to make is not immediately clear.

Genres do not have strict boundaries as they always contain films that will not completely fit the description, and are therefore difficult to define wholly. But what is the use of having the comedy of remarriage as a subgenre? Genres are generally used to allow an audience to make assumptions about the film; the genre will generally follow a certain structure or adhere to certain principles that are inherent in the genre. By knowing broadly what kind of film this is going to be, certain expectations can be formed. The previous analysis has suggested that though the structure of the remarriage comedy may vary from that of the screwball comedy, it is quite similar in most of its essentials. For an audience, the distinction

will most likely not be note-worthy. The wacky screwball elements and the happy endings are a common factor in both the genre and the subgenre. Though it is possible to say that the relationship between the main protagonists may have matured beyond the early stages of a romance, the main features of the comedy, the screwball essence, still remains.

Cavell's remarriage comedies are not all very similar; some of them sit far closer to the screwball comedy, which is a broad term, than that it fits in the remarriage comedy subgenre. Meanwhile, other screwball comedies suit the subgenre much more. So it is perhaps possible to suggest that the differences between the remarriage comedies themselves may be as great the similarities between some of the screwball comedies and the remarriage comedies. There is hardly a gap between the two and the boundaries are blurred.

The films that Cavell includes in this subgenre are generally quite popular, mainstream screwball comedies. They do not lie on the border between this genre and another; they appear to be right in the middle of the genre. Some of these films, like *BRINGING UP BABY*, *IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT* and *THE PHILADELPHIA STORY* are among the most well-known within this genre. They all fit the genre perfectly, so because there are not that many actual comedies of remarriage, it seems illogical to create a whole other subgenre for a group of films that all fit the genre. On top of this, the remarriage comedies have been produced over quite a few years, which doesn't suggest a sudden trend. The trend was recognised many years later, after it had indefinitely ended. Cavell's recognition and definition of this trend has not been unproblematic.

### **Rewriting Remarriage**

If the comedy of remarriage were to be revisited and reconsidered, I would like to make some suggestions as to its definition. The idea of the subgenre may have some merits; it does reveal a trend within the screwball comedy that is interesting to analyse. But to do so, it may be important to rethink Cavell's definition of the comedy of remarriage. He overcomplicated the subgenre by adding in exceptions to the rules. By taking the five aforementioned films and labelling them as a subgenre, the structure will allow for a more thorough analysis. Because they have this structure, and therefore character growth, in common, they may provide critics with a base from which further research can be done. The different films that Cavell labelled 'remarriage comedies' were too varied to create a backbone for further research into the historical and social context of the remarriage comedy as dealing with actual remarriage. Perhaps Cavell could have chosen a different option, namely to change the name of the subgenre. When more than half of the films suggested within the comedy of remarriage do not contain married or remarried people, there appears to be something wrong with the label. Perhaps it is the label that confuses the critics more than anything else. What is important to the subgenre is that it should remain

within the confines of the screwball comedy. The structure, while being the most important aspect of the subgenre, must be held up by the stylistic elements inherent in the screwball comedy.

## Conclusion

In general, it can be said that the comedy of remarriage as a subgenre adds little to the landscape of film theory. What is most difficult is the way that Cavell used his philosophical background to deal with narrative structure. It became quite theoretical and impractical for actual use. Hence my choice to create a possible alternative to use for further research. Cavell's choices for films within the remarriage comedy subgenre have been detrimental to disproving its validity. If the definition that Cavell uses changes to focusing merely on the narrative structure, while remaining within the boundaries of the screwball comedy genre, the subgenre could perhaps become more valid. The relationship between the male and the female character is one which can only be seen within the representation of a marriage, but even while considering this, there are only a limited amount of films that fit into this category. The comedy of remarriage, as a part of the screwball comedy, does not add greatly to it, and the narrative structure could perhaps be more easily seen as a recurring trend in the screwball comedy. According to Arthur C. Danto, in a review of Cavell's book, Cavell "offers trivialising proof that his is not the only interpretation, that another can be gotten as easily as pulling a rabbit out of a duck."<sup>12</sup>

There are some points on which this research analysis could have improved. What was lacking the most was more material on the Comedy of Remarriage. Stanley Cavell wrote his book over thirty years ago, but since then his work has only been mentioned in passing in other papers, whether they are reflecting on it or criticising it, very little has been written about it since. This meant that the information in this paper is rather one-sided. Some of the critique on it is my own as there was very little else to come by. Besides some critique questioning why this subgenre exists, very little has been written to extend the research or work with what Cavell has written.

At this point it is important to look at what kind of further research could be done regarding this topic. The use of sexuality in these films is quite intriguing, and especially the relationship between the male and the female make for an interesting research concept. The film, *ADAM'S RIB*, seemed to try on feminism but in the end it discarded the idea, or at least it seemed to. The main female characters in the screwball and remarriage comedies are usually headstrong with a definite opinion, but in many cases, they are eventually

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<sup>12</sup> Arthur C. Danto, "Philosophy and/as Film and/as If Philosophy," *October*, no. 23 (1982): 13.

'(re)conquered' by the male character. Another possible research topic is to see if there are any modern-day examples of the Comedy of Remarriage. The critics A.O. Scott and David Edelstein have both suggested that *ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND* was a modern-day example. This would be quite a difficult feat, but comparing the different times could show what marriage has become in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century films. Perhaps it has become more symbolic rather than a literal marriage. Some research that I started on regards the relationship between the comedy of remarriage and the Production Code that came into use around the time of the first screwball comedies. My aim was to try to prove that marriage was used as a concept for producers to allow for more sexual innuendo than would have been allowed when depicting an unmarried male and female protagonist.

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The Following films have been referenced:

- HIS GIRL FRIDAY (1940)
- ADAM'S RIB (1949)
- IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT (1934)
- BRINGING UP BABY (1938)
- THE AWFUL TRUTH (1937)
- ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND (2004)
- LOVE CRAZY (1941)
- THE THIN MAN (1934)
- MY MAN GODFREY (1936)
- THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (1940)
- MR. AND MRS. SMITH (1941)
- THAT UNCERTAIN FEELING (1941)
- PHFFFT! (1954)
- MY FAVORITE WIFE (1940)