

The Buffalo Film Seminars



Conversations about great films with Diane Christian and Bruce Jackson

HOWARD HAWKS (30 May 1896, Goshen, Indiana—26 December 1977, Palm Springs, California, aftermath of a fall) directed 47 films (and was producer on most of them) and wrote 24 screenplays. The last film he directed was *Rio Lobo* 1970; his first was *Road to Glory* 1926. Some of the others were: *Man's Favorite Sport?* (1964), *Hatari!* (1962), *Rio Bravo* (1959), *Land of the Pharaohs* (1955), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), *I Was a Male War Bride* (1949), *A Song Is Born* (1948), *Red River* (1948), *The Big Sleep* (1946), *To Have and Have Not* (1944), *Sergeant York* (1941), *His Girl Friday* (1940), *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939), *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), *Come and Get It* (1936), *Barbary Coast* (1935), *Twentieth Century* (1934), *Scarface* (1932), and *The Dawn Patrol* (1930). He won an honorary Oscar in 1975.

CARY GRANT (Archibald Alexander Leach. 18 January 1904, Horfield, Bristol, England—29 November 1986, Davenport, Iowa, stroke) was, novelist Ian Fleming once said, the model for James Bond. Grant would later turn down the Bond role when the novels went to film. Grant acted in 105 films, the last of which was *Walk Don't Run* (1966). Some of the others were *Father Goose* (1964), *Charade* (1963), *Operation Petticoat* (1959), *North by Northwest* (1959), *Houseboat* (1958), *Indiscreet* (1958), *The Pride and the Passion* (1957), *An Affair to Remember* (1957), *To Catch a Thief* (1955), *I Was a Male War Bride* (1949), *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* (1948), *The Bishop's Wife* (1947), *Notorious* (1946), *Night and Day* (1946), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944), *Destination Tokyo* (1943), *Suspicion* (1941), *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), *His Girl Friday* (1940), *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939), *Gunga Din* (1939), *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), *Topper* (1937), and *This Is the Night* (1932). He was nominated for two best actor Oscars (*None But the Lonely Heart* 1944 and *Penny Serenade* 1941) but his only win was an honorary award in 1970.

KATHARINE HEPBURN ((12 May 1907, Hartford, Connecticut—29 June 2003, Old Saybrook, Connecticut) acted in 53 films. **Biography from Leonard Maltin's *Movie Encyclopedia*:** "She was branded "box-office poison" by the nation's exhibitors in 1938, but Katharine Hepburn has come to be regarded as a national treasure. One of the most frequently honored screen actresses with eight Academy nominations and four Oscars to her credit, Hepburn came to films in *A Bill of Divorcement* 1932, as John Barrymore's daughter, following a sometimes tempestuous career on stage in amateur theatricals, college shows, stock, and finally on Broadway. Her unusual looks and manner-and her unique New England voice-put off some moviegoers at first, but her endearing performance as a naive, impulsive young actress trying to crash Broadway, in 1933's *Morning Glory* won her her first Academy Award. Hepburn proved her versatility in such pictures as *Little Women* 1933, *The Little*



Bringing Up Baby (1938) 102 min

Katharine Hepburn...Susan Vance
 Cary Grant...Dr. David Huxley
 Charles Ruggles...Maj. Horace Applegate
 Walter Catlett...Constable Slocum
 Barry Fitzgerald...Mr. Gogarty
 May Robson...Aunt Elizabeth Random
 Fritz Feld...Dr. Fritz Lehman
 Leona Roberts...Mrs. Hannah Gogarty
 George Irving...Dr. Alexander Peabody
 Tala Birell...Mrs. Lehman
 Virginia Walker...Alice Swallow
 John Kelly...Elmer
 Asta...George, the Dog
 Nissa...Baby, the leopard
 Ward Bond...Motorcycle cop at jail
 Jack Carson...Roustabout

Directed by Howard Hawks
 Story by Hagar Wilde
 Screenplay by Dudley Nichols & Hagar Wilde
 Produced by Howard Hawks
 Original Music by Roy Webb
 Non-Original Music by Jimmy McHugh & Dorothy Fields (song "I Can't Give You Anything but Love, Baby")
 Cinematography by Russell Metty
 Film Editing by George Hively
 Art Direction by Van Nest Polglase
 Gowns by Howard Greer
 RKO Radio Pictures Inc.

National Film Preservation Board, USA
 1990 National Film Registry

Minister 1934, *Alice Adams* 1935, for which she received an Oscar nomination, *Mary of Scotland* 1936, and the wonderful *Stage Door* 1937... But for every success in her early Hollywood career, there was also a major misfire, including such all-time oddities as *Christopher Strong* 1933, in which she played an aviatrix and *Sylvia Scarlett* 1935, in which she disguised herself as a boy.

"By the time she made the classic screwball comedy *Bringing Up Baby* 1938...and the equally delightful comedy-drama *Holiday* also 1938, Hepburn's film career was on the skids. Although it was that same year that Walt Disney immortalized her in cartoon form, as a haughty Little Bo-Peep in his animated short subject *Mother Goose Goes Hollywood*. She returned to Broadway to star as spoiled socialite Tracy Lord in Philip Barry's "The Philadelphia Story," forsaking a huge salary for a percentage of profits and title to the screen rights. Her successful gamble paid off, and led to an equally triumphant return to Hollywood in the 1940 film version, which earned her another Oscar nomination. She was nominated again for her next film, *Woman of the Year* 1942 which cast her as an opinionated newspaper columnist opposite Spencer Tracy (as a down-to-earth sportswriter). It was a match made in movie heaven; the two would star in eight subsequent films over the next 25 years. (They also commenced an offscreen relationship that lasted until his death.)

"Some of the early Tracy-Hepburn collaborations were heavy dramas such as *Keeper of the Flame* 1942 and *The Sea of Grass* 1947. Dramatic fireworks flew as well in *State of the Union* 1948, but the team is best remembered for its humorous skirmishes in the battle of the sexes with *Without Love* 1945, *Adam's Rib* 1949, *Pat and Mike* 1952, and *Desk Set* 1957. While Hepburn's work in the 1930s and 1940s receives the most attention today, many of the star's peak achievements were realized in the 1950s and 1960s. She picked up Oscar nominations for her work in *The African Queen* 1951, opposite Humphrey Bogart, as a missionary whose personality she patterned after Eleanor Roosevelt, *Summertime* 1955, *The Rainmaker* 1956, *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1959, as Elizabeth Taylor's shrewish, sinister aunt), and *Long Day's Journey Into Night* 1962. Offscreen for five years, she returned to costar with Tracy in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* 1967, which proved to be his final film; it won her a second Oscar. Hepburn received her third gold statuette the following year for her work in the period drama *The Lion in Winter* as Eleanor of Aquitaine, which showed the aging actress in full command of her inestimable talent. She followed this triumph by making her Broadway musical debut as couturier Coco Chanel in "Coco." Other films around this time include *The Madwoman of Chaillot* 1969, *The Trojan Women* 1972, and *A Delicate Balance* 1973.

"A much-anticipated pairing of Hepburn with John Wayne yielded disappointing results, as *Rooster Cogburn* 1975 turned out to be a watered-down reread of *The African Queen*. But her teaming with another screen giant, Henry Fonda, in *On Golden Pond* 1981, brought her a fourth Best Actress Academy Award, and proved to be her finest latter-day film."

RUSSELL METTY (20 September 1906, Los Angeles—28 April 1978, Canoga Park, California) shot 165 theatrical and tv films. His last job was the 1976 tv series "Delveccio." He also was cinematographer for "The Waltons" and several "Columbo" episodes. Some of his films were *The Omega Man* 1971, *Madigan* 1968, *The Appaloosa* 1966, *The Misfits* 1961, *Touch of Evil* 1958, *Magnificent Obsession* 1954, *All My Sons* 1948, *The Stranger* 1946, *Hitler's Children* 1943, and *West of the Pecos* 1935. He was nominated for a best cinematography Oscar for *Flower Drum Song* 1961 and won for *Spartacus* 1960.

from World Film Directors vI Ed John Wakeman HW Wilson Co NY 1987 (entry by Gerald Mast)

Director, producer and scenarist. Son a wealthy paper manufacturer and grandson of a wealthy lumberman. Moved west w/family in 1906. Settled in Pasadena. The movies themselves traveled west about the same time.

East & west for education. Phillips Exeter, Pasadena High School, degree in Engineering from Cornell.

In 1917 prop boy for Famous Players-Lasky. Later that year joined USArmy Air Corps as a flying instructor.

In the early 1920s, Hawks shared a Hollywood house with several young men on the threshold of movie distinction—Allan Dwan and Irving Thalberg among them. Thalberg recommended Hawks to Jesse Lasky, who in 1924 was looking for bright young man to run the story department of famous players. For two years Hawks supervised the development and writing of every script for the company that was to become Paramount, the most powerful studio in 1920s Hollywood. William Fox invited Hawks to join his company in 1926, offering him a chance to direct the scripts he

had developed. *The Road to Glory* was the first of eight films Hawks directed at Fox in the next three years, all of them silent except *The Air Circus* (1928) and *Trent's Last Case* (1929), part-talkies in the years of Hollywood's transition between silence and sound.

Of the Fox silents, only *Fig Leaves* (1926) and *A Girl in Every Port* (1928) survive. The former is a comedy of gender, tracing domestic warfare from Adam and Eve to their modern descendants. *A Girl in Every Port* is "a love story between two men," in Hawks' words—two brawling sailor buddies who fall for the woman. The motif of two friends who share the same love would recur in many Hawks sound films, particularly in the 1930s (*Tiger Shark*, *Today We Live*, *Barbary Coast*, *The Road to Glory*). The motif of two wandering pals, enjoying the sexual benefits of travel, returns with a gender reversal in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, with Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell playing the two traveling buddies. More than anything else, *A Girl in Every Port* declared male friendship one of Hawks' primary concerns. With the end of his Fox contract in 1929, Hawks would never again sign a long-

term contract with a single studio.

It was the coming of synchronized sound that allowed Hawks to become so independent a film stylist. *The Dawn Patrol* (1930) was a remarkable early sound film in many respects. Its pacifism mirrored the reaction against the First World War in a period that produced such antiwar films as *What Price Glory?*, *The Big Parade*, and *All Quiet on the Western Front*. The flying sequences in *The Dawn Patrol* were as photographically brilliant as they were aeronautically accurate. Flying and filming had never before been so beautifully mated, and Hawks' flavorful dialogue sounded as if it were uttered by human beings, not orating actors. The affected, stilted diction that marred so many early talkies was entirely absent. Dialogue in Hawks' films would always suggest the feel and flavor of spontaneous conversation rather than scripted lines—he in fact not only permitted his players to improvise but deliberately hired players who would and could.

Scarface (1930-1932) brought this spontaneous quality from the wartime skies to the urban streets. *Scarface* remains simultaneously one of the most brutal and most funny of gangster films—"as vehement, vitriolic, and passionate a work as has been made about Prohibition," in the opinion of Manny Farber. When Tony Camonte lets go with his new machine gun into a rack of pool cues, or the O'Hara gang shoots a restaurant to smithereens, they are murderous children having "fun," one of the most important words in Hawks' critical lexicon. Hawks' antihero Tony, a fanciful portrait of Al Capone sketched by Paul Muni, is not only a spiteful kid; he also nurses an unarticulated and repressed sexual attraction to his own sister and guns down their best friend (George Raft) who invades this Freudian turf. Hawks' recurrent piece of physical business for Raft—the obsessive flipping of a coin—has survived ever after as the quintessential gangster's tic. It introduced the familiar Hawks method of deflecting psychological revelation from explicit dialogue to the subtle handling of physical objects. As John Belton notes, "Hawks' characterization is rooted in the physical."

Scarface also introduced Hawks to two important professional associates: Howard Hughes, who produced the film and would weave through Hawks' entire career as either ally or enemy; and Ben Hecht, the hard-drinking, wise-cracking writer who, like Hawks, wanted to make films that were "fun." Hecht and Hawks were kindred cynics who would work together for twenty years. Hughes, however, had his own war to win. A lifetime foe of film industry censorship boards, Hughes resisted attempts to soften *Scarface*. He finally relented, not by toning down its brutal humor but by inserting a drab lecture on the social responsibility of voters. He also concluded the film with the fallen mobster's whining cowardice, to take the glamor out of his defiance. But Hughes was so enraged at being pressured into these emendations that he withdrew the film from circulation for four decades. Only his death returned it to American audiences.

Hawks traveled to other studios and genres in the 1930s.

[prison movie, auto racing, sea]

Hawks returned to wartime professionals in *Today We Live* (1933) and *The Road to Glory* (1936). The former was adapted from "Turn About," a story by William Faulkner, and began Hawks' personal and professional association with the writer. Like Hawks, Faulkner loved flying and, like Hawks, had lost a brother in an air crash. Both men also liked drinking and storytelling. Hawks and Faulkner would drink, fly, and tell stories together over the next twenty years. *Today We Live*, made at MGM, began another Hawks pattern—walking off the set when studio bosses interfered with his filming.

Perhaps Hawks' most interesting genre films in the 1930s were screwball comedies. Hawks was a master of a genre that has come to represent one of the period's most revealing reflections of American aspirations. As the philosopher Stanley Cavell argued, the screwball comedy enacts the "myth of modern marriage," the basis of our culture's idea of happiness. While Hawks always added comic touches to serious stories—from *Scarface* in 1930 to *El Dorado* in 1967—the pure comedy provided much broader comic possibilities. Love and friendship had always been closely intertwined in his films, and since Hawks' friends fight as much as they talk, fight because they are friends, each convinced of his own rightness, it was a very short step from male friends to male-female lovers. The Hawks screwball comedy is distinctive in that the hero and heroine are as much friends as lovers and as much fighting opponents as spiritual kin; it is a comedy of ego in which two strong personalities fight because they love.

Hawks' first work in this genre *Twentieth Century* (1934), was adapted from a stage play by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Along with Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night*, made in the same year and at the same studio (Columbia), *Twentieth Century* was one of the films that defined the screwball genre. The two warring egos of *Twentieth Century* are the monomaniacal impresario Oscar Jaffe (played by the monomaniacal ham, John Barrymore) and his actress Galatea, Lily Garland (played by Hawks' own cousin, Carole Lombard, in her first major comic role). The film demonstrated several Hawks traits, including breakneck dialogue that refused to soften or sentimentalize the combat, and the revelation of internal psychological states through concrete external objects—the visible, photographic means of making clear inner feelings that his characters never verbally express.

The film also set the two essential Hawks patterns with movie stars: making a familiar star into a comic parody of his own persona (as Hawks would later do with Cary Grant, Humphrey Bogart, John Wayne and Marilyn Monroe); and inventing the persona of a total unknown (future Hawks Galateas included Frances Farmer, Rita Hayworth, Jane Russell, Lauren Bacall, Montgomery Clift, Joan Collins, and Angie Dickinson).

Bringing Up Baby (1938) at RKO, "the screwiest of screwball comedies" for Andrew Sarris, was also the first of Hawks' four screwball comedies with Cary Grant. In these films the smooth Grant not only becomes the alter ego of the icily smooth Howard Hawks behind the camera; he also becomes the butt of

jokes that the world longs to inflict on the icily smooth. “Whereas the dramas show the mastery of man over nature. . .,” according to Peter Wollen, “the comedies show his humiliation, his regression.” Hawks endlessly submits Grant to degrading attacks on his handsome masculinity, usually by removing his pants and putting him in a dress. In *Bringing Up Baby* Grant is a nearsighted zoologist who spends a summer nights eve with Katherine Hepburn, apparently chasing leopards and lost dinosaur bones. What he finds instead is his love and his eyesight—indeed his recognition that love is the secret of vision. In *His Girl Friday* (1940), adapted from *The Front Page*, another Hecht-MacArthur stage hit, Hawks changes the gender of the original newspaper reporter from male to female (Rosalind Russell), initiating a contest with her editor (Grant) that is both love and war. In the end, she too recovers her eyesight to discover love in their combative friendship.

Respected inside the industry as one of Hollywood’s sturdiest directors of top stars in taut stories, Hawks acquired little fame outside it until the rise of the *auteur* theory in France, England, and America between 1953 and 1962. To some extent, it was the *auteur* theory that made Hawks a household name and Hawks that made *auteur* theory a household idea. In their campaign against both European “art films” and solemn adaptations of literary classics, articulators of the *auteur* view—François Truffaut, Jacques Rivette, Peter Wollen, V.S. Perkins, Ian Cameron, Andrew Sarris, John Belton, William Paul—looked for studio directors of genre films whose work displayed both a consistent cinematic style and consistent narrative motifs.

Hawks was the model of such a director. He spent fifteen years in interviews denying any serious artistic aspiration, claiming that all he wanted to do was tell a story. But a Hawks story had an unmistakable look, feel, and focus. His style, though never obtrusive, had always been built on certain basic elements: a careful attention to the basic qualities of light (the lamps that always hang in a Hawks frame); the counter-point of on-frame action and off-frame sound; the improvisationally casual sound of Hawks’ conversation; the reluctance of characters to articulate their inner feelings, and the transference of emotional material from dialogue to physical objects; symmetrically balanced frames that produce a dialectic between opposite halves of the frame. So too, Hawks’ films, no matter what the genre, handled consistent plot motifs: a small band of professionals committed to doing their jobs as well as they could; pairs of friends who were also lovers and opponents; reversal of conventional gender expectations about manly men and womanly women. Dressed as routine Hollywood genre pictures, Hawks’ films were psychological studies of people in action, simultaneously trying to be true to themselves and faithful to the group. In his classic conflict of love and honor, Hawks was the American movie descendant of Corneille.

He died at the age of eighty-one in Palm Springs, California, from complications arising from a broken hip when he

tripped over one of his dogs. Even as he grew older he continued to ride his motorcycle and raise his martini.

[He married 3 times, and had 4 children—two of whom work in the film business]

Who the Devil Made It Conversations with Legendary Film Directors. Peter Bogdanovich. Ballantine Books NY 1997

. . . I liked almost anybody that made you realize who in the devil was making the picture. . . Because the director’s the storyteller and should have his own method of telling it. Howard Hawks

Among American directors, Orson Welles referred to Hawks as “certainly the most *talented*.” French critic Henri Agel wrote: “Hawks is one of the rare patricians of the screen and his ethic is of human nobility.” Offbeat critic Manny Farber said: “Howard Hawks is the key figure in the male action film because he shows a maximum speed, inner life, and view, with the least amount of flat feet. His best films have the swallowed-up intricacy of a good softshoe dance.” But French director Jacques Rivette nailed it: “If Hawks incarnates the classic American cinema, if he has brought nobility to every genre, then it is because, in each case, he has found that particular genre’s essential quality and grandeur, and blended his personal themes with those the American tradition had already enriched and made profound.” The great variety of Hawks’ pictures—there really isn’t any *kind* of movie he didn’t make—speaks for a restless desire to challenge oneself, perhaps almost as a kind of renewal. His characters do that—it is a part of their professionalism as well as of their bravery. Hawks put it simply: “For me the best drama is the one that deals with a man in danger.”

[Bogdanovich of Hawks] He said to me once—and I remembered it quite often on every picture I’ve made: “Always cut on movement, and the audience won’t notice the cut.”

Comedy and drama were often interchangeable with Hawks: he said that when he read a story, he first tried to see if a comedy could be made of it and if not, he made a drama.

So many things Howard said to me echo in my head, and did on every film I made. In 1965, on the set of *El Dorado*, he told me: “An audience doesn’t know the geography of a place unless you show it to them. If you don’t show them, it can be anything you want it to be.” In other words: a movie is the world you make it. And Hawks made his worlds his way, was an amazingly modern picture maker—his work stays in tune with changing times far more than most. He also had a sharp eye for human archetypes, a nearly flawless sense of human nature’s contradictions in mythic form. He also had an almost infallible nose for movie mistakes: terrific advice I didn’t always heed and regretted when I didn’t.

How did Bringing Up Baby [1938] come about?

I was working at RKO and I read a marvelous story written by Hager Wilde. She knew nothing about writing for pictures, so Dudley Nichols came in to work with her on the script.

What was the basis of the story?

Just a story about a girl who got a leopard. We trimmed it up and added stuff—like putting together the brontosaurus that fell down at the end. Dudley Nichols was a very fine writer.

Isn't the picture basically about a guy whose life is pretty antiseptic until this wacky girl comes in and destroys everything?

The whole thing is a complete exaggeration. It wasn't played on a straight line ever. You saw this thing developing in Cary. You knew right away from her viewpoint that she was after him.

At one point the psychiatrist says, "The love impulse often reveals itself in terms of conflict," which is pretty funny since that happens in almost all your pictures.

I know it.

Were you expressing any comment on scientists and academicians?

No, if you're doing a picture like that, the fun of it is to do a characterization that is very close to caricature. Now the moment you caricature something, you're accused of disliking it. But you're really just picking up things that make a good caricature—the attitude of newspapermen, the attitude of scientists—and it's bound to make people think you're poking fun at them. That's why a scientist or inventor or man who's in a situation that's special is fun to do.

By the end of the film, would you say that Grant has abandoned his scientific life?

Well, let's say he's mixed it. He had an awfully good time and if anyone had to choose between the two girls, they'd certainly choose Hepburn. We start off, as I said, with a complete caricature of the man and then reduce it to give him a feeling of normality because he certainly wouldn't have any fun going through life the other way, would he? You've got a rather happy ending. You have to almost overdo it a little in the beginning and then he becomes more normal as the picture goes along, just by his association with the girl. Grant said, "I'm kind of dropping my characterization." I said, "No, she's having some influence on you. You're getting a little normal."

Then in your view Hepburn is the normal one.

I think the picture had a great fault and I learned a lot from that. There were *no* normal people in it. Everybody you met was a screwball and since that time I have learned my lesson and I don't intend ever again to make everybody crazy. If the gardener had been normal, if the sheriff had been just a perplexed man from the country—but as it was they were all way off center. It was a mistake I realized after I'd made it and I haven't made it since. I

think it would have done better at the box office if there had been a few sane folks in it—everybody was nuts. Harold Lloyd told me, though, that he thought it was the best constructed comedy he had ever seen.

It was much darker in the lighting than most comedies.

You'll find that the backgrounds are darker, but the light on the faces is just about the same. That's just a method of lighting.

There's a very dark, though very funny, quality to the night scenes when Grant and Hepburn are looking for the lost bone.

Well, it was a complete tragedy to Cary, wasn't it? You see, there's a certain dignity about a scientist. So if he gets down on all fours and scrambles about. He becomes ridiculous. And that's the thing Chaplin was always so good at. The more dignified people are, the easier it is to laugh at them. The scene with Katie Hepburn losing the back of her dress is funny because she was all dressed up and superior to the whole situation.

That's one of the best sequences in the film.

It had the greatest line, and nobody ever heard it. He stepped on her dress—ripped the whole back of it, and she had these cute little underpants on—and he ran after, and took her hat and held it over her behind. She said, "What on earth are you doing?" "Oh," he said, "I feel a perfect ass." The audience was always laughing so much that the censors never heard it. Then they put it on TV and that's the first time anybody ever heard it.

At one point Grant says, "This is probably the silliest thing that's ever happened to me," but his character was treated very seriously, and not played for comedy.

Oh, *he* was perfectly serious. He would fall down someplace with her and end up with a fishnet over his face. She'd start to laugh and he'd just say "Please,..." And he'd never do anything about the net. "It seems that every time I'm with you something happens to me," he'd say, which is just the way a guy would think, you know? And he didn't have to have funny lines—the situations made him funny.

You told me once that at the start Hepburn didn't really know how to play the scenes and you got Walter Catlett to help you.

Catlett, being an old comedian, was able to give her the idea of how to do this kind of stuff, and she caught on in just a flash and apologized. She said, "I've never played this kind of comedy before and the whole idea seemed to try to be funny. I've just found out that you don't try to be funny, but the more serious, the more honest you are, the funnier it becomes."

If you don't think that was a hard one to make! Oh, that goddam leopard—and then the dog, running around with the bone. Katie and Cary had a scene in which he said, "What happened to the bone?" And she said, "It's in the box," or something like that. Well they started to laugh—it was ten o'clock in the morning—and at four o'clock in the afternoon we were still trying to make this scene and I didn't think we were ever going to

get it. I tried changing the line. It didn't do any good—they'd still laugh at the thing. They were just putting dirty connotations on it and then they'd go off into peals of laughter.

I remember another time we were making a scene and Katie was talking so much she didn't hear me. We called "Quiet!" She didn't hear that. Called "Quiet!" again, and she didn't hear it, so I just stopped everybody, and all of a sudden, in the middle of talking she stopped and said, "What's the matter?" I said, "I just wondered how long you were going to keep up this imitation of a parrot." She said, "I'd like to talk to you," and she led me around to the back. She said, "You mustn't say things like that to me. Somebody'll drop a lamp on you. These are my friends around here." I looked up at the man on the lamp. When I was a prop man, this fellow had been an electrician—I'd known him for God knows how many years. I said, "Pete, if you had your choice of dropping a lamp on Miss Hepburn or me, who would you drop it on?" He said, "Get out of the way, will you, Mr. Hawks?" And Katie looked up at him and looked at me and said, "I guess I was wrong." And I said, "Katie, *he* doesn't make it wrong, but you are. And I can tell you one thing, I'm going to come up and kick you right in the behind if it happens again." She said, "You won't have to kick me." And from that time on, she was just marvelous.

She's so *full* of something, you know, that she can't put up with the waits that happen around a picture set. But Hepburn made the character charming. She was forceful, but she never became obnoxious. It could be so damned obnoxious, forcing herself on someone like that, but she just *did* it.

Someone said that the picture shows the descent of man down to the primitive animal: there's been an awful lot read into that picture.

I know. I had thirty people in Paris asking me questions: "Well, what did you think of when you were making it?" "Nothing," I said, "I just thought it was funny."

. . . You realize the greatest stars in the picture business were made during an era when they didn't have one single thing to say about what they did. At MG, for instance, they were never thrown into something as a convenience; they were only put into a part that fit them. If the picture didn't turn out right, they made added scenes until it was passable, and they developed the greatest bunch of stars that have ever been in the picture business. But stars have spoiled themselves by choosing parts. Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert didn't at all want to do *It Happened One Night* [1934; Frank Capra] and they got Academy Awards for it. Cary Grant wasn't going to do *Bringing Up Baby*. John Wayne hasn't thought one story I've made with him was any good.

If you had to pick your own favorites, which would you say they were?

I think *Scarface* is the favorite, because we got no help from anybody—we were outlawed....Also, I like *Red River*. And *Rio Bravo* was fun. And *Bringing Up Baby*. I like the comedies—I like it when you go and hear people laugh and you know they like it.

Pursuits of Happiness The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage.
Stanley Cavell. Harvard U Press, Cambridge MA/ London
1981

"Leopards in Connecticut" *Bringing Up Baby*

At some point it becomes obvious that the surface of the dialogue and action of *Bringing Up Baby*, their mode of construction, is a species of more or less blatant and continuous double entendre. The formal signal of its presence in the dialogue is the habitual *repetition* of lines or words, sometimes upon the puzzlement of the character to whom the line is addressed, as though he or she cannot have heard it correctly, sometimes as a kind of verbal tic, as though a character has not heard, or meant, his own words properly.

Why are the vaunted pleasures of sexuality so ludicrous and threatening? In the middle of their chase through the woods, they come upon Baby and George growling and rolling in one another's arms on a clear moonlight patch of ground. Thus seeing themselves, the female is relieved ("Oh look. They like one another"—but she had earlier said that she doesn't know whether, having been told that Baby likes dogs, that means that he is fond of them or eats them); the male is not happy ("In another minute my intercostal clavicle will be gone forever"). I think it would be reasonable, along such lines, to regard the cause of this comedy as the need, and the achievement, of laughter at the physical requirements of wedded love, or, at the romance of marriage; laughter at the realization that after more than two millennia of masterpieces on the subject, we still are not clear why, or to what extent, marriage is thought to justify sexual satisfaction. . . .

The film, in short poses a question concerning the validation of marriage, the reality of its bonding, as that question is posed in the genre of remarriage comedy. Its answer participates in, or contributes its particular temperament to, the answer of that structure—that the validity of marriage takes a willingness for repetition, the willingness for remarriage.

About halfway through *Bringing Up Baby*, Grant/David provides himself with an explicit, if provisional, answer to the question how he got and why he stays in his relation with the woman, declaring to her that he will accept no more of her "suggestions" unless she holds a bright object in front of his eyes and twirls it. He is projecting upon her, blaming her for his sense of entrancement. The conclusion of the film—Howard Hawk's twirling bright object—provides its hero with no better answer, but rather with a position from which to let the question go: in moving toward the closing embrace, he mumbles something like, "Oh my; oh dear; oh well," in other words, I am here, the relation is mine, what I make of it is now part of what I make of my life, I embrace it. But the conclusion of Hawks's object provides me, its spectator and subject, with a little something more, and less: with a declaration that if I am hypnotized by (his) film, rather than awakened, then I am the fool of an unfunny world, which is, and is not, a laughing and fascinating matter; and that the responsibility, either way, is mine.—I embrace it.

COMING UP IN THE BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS:

- Sept 27 Victor Fleming **GONE WITH THE WIND** (DVD)
Oct 4 Akira Kurosawa **STRAY DOG/NORA INU** 1949 (35mm)
Oct 11 Vittorio de Sica **UMBERTO D** 1952 (35mm)
Oct 18 Robert Bresson **A MAN ESCAPED/UN CONDAMNÉ À MORT S'EST ÉCHAPPÉ OU LE VENT SOUFFLE OÙ IL VEUT** 1956 (35mm)
Oct 25 Luis Buñuel **DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID/LE JOURNAL D'UNE FEMME DE CHAMBRE** 1964 (35mm)
Nov 1 Andrei Tarkovsky **ANDREI RUBLEV/ANDREY RUBLYOV** 1966 (DVD)
Nov 8 Peter Yates **BULLITT** 1968 (35mm)
Nov 15 Woody Allen **ANNIE HALL** 1977 (35mm)
Nov 22 Rainer Werner Fassbinder **MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN/DIE EHE DER MARIA BRAUN** 1979 (35mm)
Nov 29 Terry Gilliam **BRAZIL** 1985 (35mm)
Nov Dec 6 Luchino Visconti **THE LEOPARD/IL GATTOPADRO** 1963 (35mm)

SPECIAL GUSTO FILM PRESENTATION AT THE ALBRIGHT-KNOX ART GALLERY SEPTEMBER 23

Free admission

Two silent film classics, introduced by Bruce Jackson & Diane Christian and accompanied by Philip Carli
Buster Keaton's **THE GENERAL** (5 p.m.) And F.W. Murnau **SUNRISE** (8 p.m.)

MARGARET MEAD TRAVELING FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL

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All screenings begin at 6:30 p.m. on the following Thursdays:

September 22 (Introduction by Bruce Jackson): **Marry Me**. Uli Gaulke & Jeannette Eggert. 2003. 105 min. (Germany/Cuba)

September 29 (Introduction by Sarah Elder): **Afghanistan Unveiled**. Brigitte Brault & Aina Women Filming Group. 2003. 52 min. Video. (Afghanistan); **Madam Ti Zo (Mrs. Littlebones)** David Belle. 2004. 60 min. (Haiti)

October 6 (Introduction by Bruce Jackson): **A Panther in Africa**, Aaron Matthews. 2004. 71 min. (Tanzania); **a/k/a Mrs. George Gilbert**. Coco Fusco. 2004. 31 min. (U.S.)

October 27 (Introduction by Sarah Elder): **Margaret Mead: A Portrait by a Friend**. Jean Rouch. 1978. 30 min. (U.S.); **Jaguar**. Jean Rouch. 1957. 92 mins. (Niger/Ghana)

November 3 (Introduction by Diane Christian): **How to Fix the World**. Jacqueline Goss. 2004. 28 min. (U.S./Uzbekistan); **Oscar**. Sergio Morkin. 2004. 61 min. Video. (Argentina)

November 10 (Introduction by Diane Christian): **The Future of Food**. Deborah Koons Garcia. 2003. 88 min. Video. (U.S./Canada/Mexico)

THE BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS ARE PRESENTED BY THE MARKET ARCADE FILM & ARTS CENTER &



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