

# Classic hollywood in comedy films assignment

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During Hollywood's classical period, the seamless style was particularly favored, it championed narrative economy. In other words, films were constructed so that the viewer was not aware of the construction. This practice of effacing a film's construction actually depends on a complex system of visual codes. Hollywood films, as opposed to art films or some types of foreign films, embrace a narrative that is highly efficient and that is determined by cause and effect. For example, The opening of a film typically plunges us into an immediate understanding of an individual character.

While natural causes, like floods and earthquakes, or societal causes, such as wars or strikes, might prod the character in a certain direction or serve as a backdrop, the narrative inevitably centers on the individual's choices. This swift movement toward resolution of the conflict has been made efficiently in what is often referred to as the three-act structure. As celebrated screenwriter Ernest Lehman put it more clearly, " In the first act, it's who are the people and what is the situation of this whole story.

The second act is the progression of that situation to a high point of conflict. And the third act is how the conflicts and problems are resolved. " Though modern films frequently depart from the continuity style, this style remains a baseline standard of effective visual storytelling. During the classical Hollywood era, each studio was known for a certain genre of film or a particular roster of stars. Spencer Tracy, Bing Crosby, Charlie Chaplin were some of the well-known performers that emerged during this period.

Comic films began to appear in significant numbers during the era of silent films in roughly 1895 to 1930. The visual humor of these silent films relied on

slapstick. A very early comedy short was *Watering the Gardener* (1895) by the Lumiere brothers. In American film, the most prominent comic actors of the silent era were Charlie Chaplin. A popular trend during the 1920s and afterward was comedy in the form of animated cartoons with stars such as Betty Boop appearing. Toward the end of the 1920s, the introduction of sound into movies made possible dramatic new film styles and the use of verbal humor.

Many film scholars will argue, film was never entirely " silent. " Most movies were accompanied by some kind of music and even, at times, live narration. During the 1930s the silent film comedy was replaced by dialogue from film comedians such as the W. C. Fields and the Marx Brothers. The comedian Charlie Chaplin was one of the last silent film hold-outs. 1930 and 1948 are generally considered bookends to Hollywood's Golden Age, the period when these eight companies secured 95 percent of all film rentals and close to 70 percent of all box-office receipts.

In the United Kingdom, film adaptations of stage farces were popular in the early 1930s, while the music hall tradition strongly influenced film comedy into the 1940s. With the entry of the United States into World War II, Hollywood became focused on themes related to the conflict. Comedies portrayed military themes such as service, civil defense, boot-camp. The war-time restrictions on travel made this a boom time for Hollywood, and nearly a quarter of the money spent on attending movies.

As TV became filled with family-oriented comedies, the 1950s saw a trend toward more adult social situations. Only the Walt Disney studios continued

to steadily release family comedies. The release of comedy films also went into a decline during this decade. Toward the end of the 1950s, darker humor and more serious themes had begun to emerge, including satire and social commentary. *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) was a satirical comedy about Cold War paranoia. Among the leading lights in comedy films of the next decade were Woody Allen and Mel Brooks. Both wrote, directed and appeared in their movies.

Brooks' style was generally slapstick and zany in nature, often parodying film styles and genres, including Universal horror films (*Young Frankenstein*), westerns (*Blazing Saddles*) and Hitchcock films (*High Anxiety*). Most British comedy films of the early 70s were spin-offs of television series, including *Dad's Army* and *On the Buses*. The greatest successes, however, came with the films of the Monty Python team, including *And Now For Something Completely Different* (1971). One of the major developments of the 1990s was the re-emergence of the romantic comedy film, encouraged by the success of *When Harry Met Sally...* in 1989. Another development was the increasing use of "gross-out humor" usually aimed at a younger audience, in films like *There's Something About Mary*, *American Pie*) and its sequels. In mid 2000s the trend of "gross-out" movies is continuing, with adult-oriented comedies picking up the box office. The screwball comedy is a subgenre of the comedy film genre. It has proven to be one of the most popular and enduring film genres. First gained prominence in 1934 with *It Happened One Night* and, although many film scholars would agree that its classic period ended sometime in the early 1940s, elements of the genre have persisted, or have been paid homage to, in contemporary film. Modern

screwball comedies include: Burn After Reading (2008), d. Joel and Ethan Coen Pineapple Express) (2008) d. David Gordon Green The Hangover) (2009) d. Todd Phillips Many elements of the screwball genre can be traced back to such stage plays such as ' \_\_As You Like\_ It\_'and and Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest.

Like farce, screwball comedies often involve mistaken identities or other circumstances in which a character or characters try to keep some important fact a secret. Sometimes screwball comedies feature male characters cross-dressing, further contributing to the misunderstandings (Bringing Up Baby, I Was a Male War Bride, Some Like It Hot). They also involve a central romantic story, usually in which the couple seem mismatched and even hostile to each other at first, and " meet cute" in some way. Another common element is fast-talking, witty repartee (You Can't Take It With You), His Girl Friday).

This stylistic device did not originate in the screwballs (although it may be argued to have reached its zenith there): it can also be found in many of the old Hollywood cycles including the gangster film, romantic comedies, and others. The philosopher Stanley Cavell has noted that many classic screwball comedies turn on an interlude in the state of Connecticut (Bringing Up Baby, The Lady Eve, The Awful Truth Some notable directors of screwball comedies include: Frank Capra George Cukor Howard Hawks