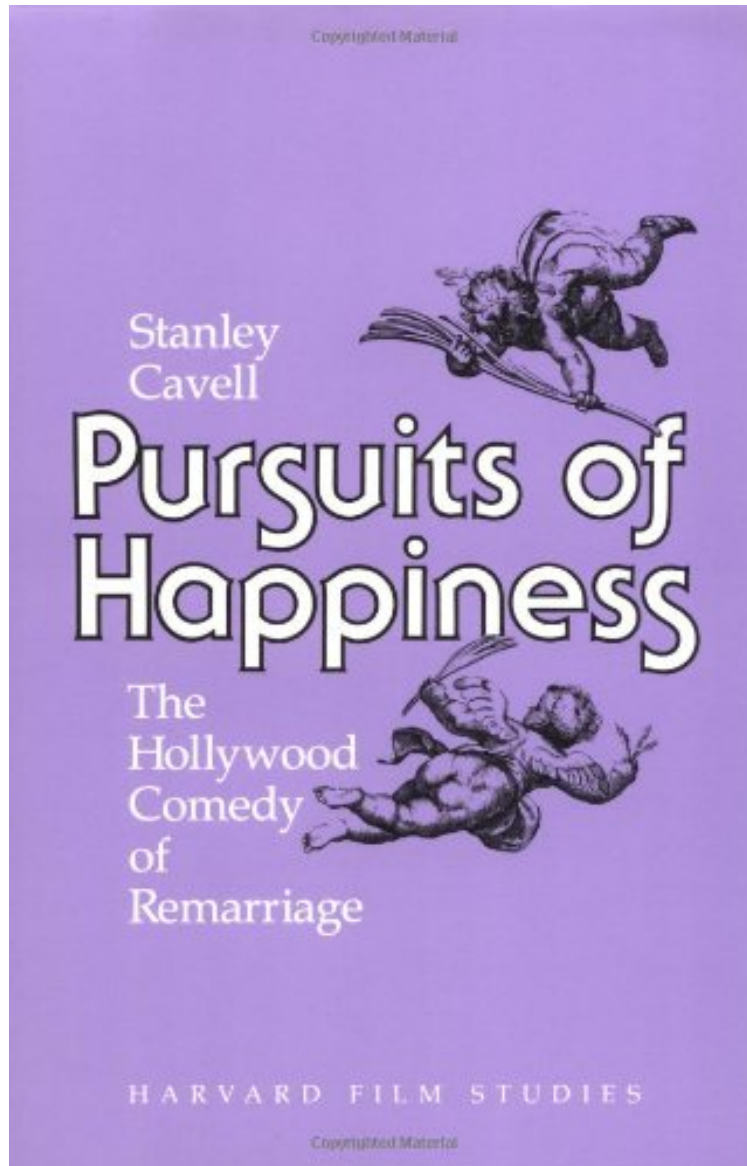


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## **Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage (Harvard Film Studies)**

*Stanley Cavell*

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#509188 in Books Harvard University Press 1984-01-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 .81 x 5.98 x 8.68l, .93 #File Name: 067473906X296 pages | File size: 42.Mb

**Stanley Cavell : Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage (Harvard Film Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage (Harvard Film Studies):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Serious look at Screwball....By Stephen You will need to have your

synapses securely bolted on for this one. A very serious thoughtful look at the 'comedy of re-marriage' as depicted in seven classic 1930's/40's Hollywood comedies: 'It Happened One Night,' 'The Awful Truth,' 'Bringing Up Baby,' 'The Philadelphia Story,' 'His Girl Friday,' 'The Lady Eve,' and 'Adam's Rib.' Professor Cavell spends a deal too much time (for this reader) justifying to himself that mere Hollywood comedies deserve such a deep philosophical treatment, (of course they do!) Each film is given a chapter, and some work better than others. 'Bringing Up Baby' and 'The Awful Truth' especially good. This book is thirty years old, and was written before the days of readily available dvds to go and refer to; but it stands up well as the best (and maybe only) such treatment of this genre. But you will need to concentrate!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars  
By Chris Kang  
It's a analysis book of several classic romantic comedies.  
9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A joyous, brilliant, unique work of film criticism  
By George H. Sullivan  
This is an extraordinary book, with an extraordinary personality. Its subject is the Hollywood screwball comedies of the 1930s and 1940s, and it is first and foremost a serious work of film criticism, full of literary insight and philosophical speculation (the author is a well-known Harvard philosophy professor, now retired). But it is also full of fun. Laughter lurks everywhere, bubbling continually beneath the surface of the discourse, and Cavell's love of the films (and, not incidentally, his love of Irene Dunne and Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy and Rosalind Russell and Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert) is all but palpable. The result is a marriage of the serious and the playful that is, in my opinion, unique -- I know of no other work of literary or film criticism that so joyously celebrates its subject. In the years since the book was originally published in 1981, Cavell's phrase "comedy of remarriage" -- signifying a romance in which a made-for-each-other couple becomes estranged and then finds their way back to a deeper understanding of both themselves and their relationship -- has become standard filmcrit terminology. That's as it should be, because Cavell makes a brilliant case for his thesis, all the time (in a phrase from Emerson that serves as the book's epigraph) carrying the holiday in his eye. Bravo.

During the '30s and '40s, Hollywood produced a genre of madcap comedies that emphasized reuniting the central couple after divorce or separation. And the female protagonists were strong, independent, and sophisticated. Here, Stanley Cavell examines seven of those classic movies for their cinematic techniques, and for such varied themes as feminism, liberty and interdependence. Included are Adam's Rib, Bringing Up Baby, and The Philadelphia Story.

No book about the art of Hollywood I have ever read can make its readers stop and think more effectively than this one. (S. S. Praver Times Literary Supplement)  
This is a voice like no other in philosophy, today or ever. (Arthur C. Danto October)  
The great achievement of Pursuits of Happiness is that it finally provides a solid framework for the serious discussion of the great dialogue comedies of the thirties and forties, perhaps the most revived and loved movies of Hollywood's golden period. (Al LaValley American Film)  
This just must be, in its close readings and its stunning associations, one of the most compelling accounts of its kind. The fact is, it just is its kind. (Geoffrey Hawthorn London of Books)  
Stanley Cavell's book succeeds brilliantly  
The individual 'readings' of the films and the general conceptual plan in which they are embedded are both so rich and rewarding that 'brilliant' seems an understatement. (Gerald Mast Journal of Aesthetic Education)  
From the Back Cover  
Each of the seven chapters that follow contains an account of my experience of a film made in Hollywood between 1934 and 1949.  
About the Author  
Stanley Cavell is Walter M. Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and the General Theory of Value, Emeritus, at Harvard University.