

American marry the Crown Prince, they might as well break another and let the future Queen have a job too.

While the trajectory of this romantic comedy is straightforward and fits entirely within the 'boy meets girl' outline to which Shunway refers, this bare-bones account does not adequately reflect *my* feelings on watching it. Putting myself in the place of *Sleepless in Seattle's* Suzy for a second, I can relate that although the film did not make me cry, it did prompt emotions. As it seemed that Paige would give up her dream of being a doctor, I felt annoyed because, once again, the woman was making sacrifices for love. When she made what the film seemed to suggest was the 'right' choice, however, leaving Eddie and returning to university, I felt let down by the deviation from the norm. I wanted the two to end up together and I felt cheated that a romantic comedy could try to deny me the happy ending I expected from the genre, even though I wanted Paige to keep her career. When the actual ending, with the Prince's capitulation, unfolded, I felt it was unrealistic, implausibly tying up ends that would really have been left untidy in real life – but I was glad it was there.

This personal anecdote suggests that even when we know how a genre works, can tick off its expected components and predict in which order its events will occur, there can be something in the romantic comedy – whether it is escapism, comfort, wish-fulfilment or irony – which keeps audiences enjoying, and consuming, the films of this genre. This book sets out to interrogate what that something, or *some things*, might be.

1 ROMANTIC COMEDY AND GENRE

Genre is a French word meaning 'type' or 'kind'. Thinking about film genres, therefore, employs ideas about different types or kinds of films. Deciding a film fits within a well-defined genre can be a way for film critics to dismiss it, since genre films are often assumed to be made in Hollywood, to strict guidelines, as mass-oriented products. To a certain extent, 'genre film' has as its implicit opposite the notion of the 'art film'; furthermore, genre films carry connotations flavoured with 'American, low-brow, easy', while assumptions about art films include 'European or independent, high-brow, difficult'. While genre critics have worked to unsettle these assumptions, contesting the idea that *all* genre films are inevitably 'popcorn movies', even genre criticism itself has culturally authorised some types of film, like westerns and gangster films, more than others. Romantic comedy is, arguably, the lowest of the low. Even a book setting out to review 600 'Chick Flicks' ends up admitting its own lack of taste:

It's about time we confessed: we might love the great and the good, but we can also adore the cute and the ridiculously bad, as long as the leading man is handsome or the story – no matter how cheesy – makes us laugh, makes us cry, or makes us hot. (Berry & Errigo 2004: 1)

Romcoms are viewed as 'guilty pleasures' which should be below one's notice but, Jo Berry and Angie Errigo suggest, which satisfy because they provide easy, uncomplicated pleasures. I dispute this idea, however, and

think that the appeal to audiences of such films is more complex, especially if the viewer is inhabiting a position where conflicting pulls of realism and fantasy are operating, as in my own reactions to *The Prince and Me*.

It is not only romantic comedies that are assumed to provide simple options for enjoyment: all genre movies seem straightforward because of their adherence to a recognisable formula. However, actually considering the elements of a genre and the expectations audiences have of different genres *critically* requires work and detachment. Since the 1970s film theorists have studied genre to problematise it, to question both what makes a film fit a genre and what 'genre' itself constitutes. Steve Neale and Rick Altman, for example, both importantly point to the intrinsic hybridity of genre films. While such multiple address, appealing to more than one audience sector through specific generic traits, can be assumed to be a characteristic of recent films, Neale demonstrates that hybridity has a longer history (2000: 2) and Altman notes that film marketing has always attempted to maximise audience appeal by proliferating the number of genres to which a film can belong (1998). These writers also indicate that most movies of whatever genre have a love story as one of their component strands, which can be highlighted or played down in the film's marketing.

Despite – or perhaps because of – the large numbers of such films which reach us in cinemas and at home every year, what actually constitutes a romantic comedy is seldom debated. Geoff King suggests that the common occurrence of both romance and comedy within many other film genres generates difficulties in appreciating what precisely constitutes the romcom: 'Defining romantic comedy as a clear-cut genre is difficult, because of the prevalence of both its constituent terms in popular film.' (2002: 51). Because these films seem so transparent (they are all about love, boy meets girl, and so on), precise definitions of their characteristics are not often attempted, with the result that a whole slew of films with very different topics of focus are given the same label. For example, some theorists, such as Mark Rubinfeld (2001), treat Cameron Crowe's *Jerry Maguire* (1996) as a romantic comedy, although the romance and comedy elements in the narrative seem overwhelmed by the accent on personal growth, sentiment and the establishment of a familial unit, rather than a couple.

Of course, film reviews and the works of theorists are not the only factors which delimit genre: production and marketing also provide sites where genre gets defined. Films come to audiences pre-packaged as

generic products through marketing material, advertising and, eventually, as DVDs and videos. Romcom film posters, which are frequently reproduced as DVD covers, employ very consistent tropes to market their products, involving emphasising the central couple. Movie taglines, one-liners teasing the viewer by summing up or forecasting the narrative, also help direct audience assumptions about films, implying what genre is being employed and thus what outcome we can expect from a particular movie. For example, the tagline for *Kate and Leopold* (2003), 'if they lived in the same century they'd be perfect for each other', embodies the whole film's trajectory in just thirteen words: the named pair will meet through time travel and fall in love.

What qualities justify a film's inclusion within the romantic comedy genre? We will examine two Kirsten Dunst vehicles to try to assess them. *Bring it On* (2000) has Dunst as a high school student involved in a cheerleading contest and trying to win the heart of her best friend's brother, Cliff (Jesse Bradford), while *Get Over It* (2001) presents the same actor as a high school student involved in a school musical and trying to win the heart of her brother's best friend, Burke (Ben Foster). In my opinion, however, only the second of these is a romantic comedy. *Bring it On*'s main goal is to expose the problems of incidental daily racism affecting the lives of a troupe of black cheerleaders, a project it makes no easier for itself by following the events from the point of view of this troupe's main *white* rivals. In this film Dunst's character, Torrance, wants to win the contest and she wants to win the boy, but the contest is more important and the love aspect secondary, although this is the one she succeeds in. *Get Over It*, by contrast, clearly reveals that all Dunst's actions as Kelly are motivated by her love for Burke: while she does win a part in the musical, her goal throughout is to help Burke get over his old girlfriend and fall in love with her.

While both of these films are enjoyable enough, the variation in the emphasis on the central couple's romance is, for me, what excludes *Bring it On* from romantic comedy status, but confers it on the other Dunst vehicle. *Get Over It*'s emphasis on the aspirational love story seems a crucial factor; which leads to the following master definition of films within this genre:

a romantic comedy is a film which has as its central narrative motor a quest for love, which portrays this quest in a light-hearted way and almost always to a successful conclusion.

Note that, unlike David Shumway's 'boy meets girl...' formula, I do not suggest that the romcom is inevitably heterosexual; as the chapter on the radical romantic comedy of the 1970s and its recent successors will explore, however, despite several independent films portraying gay or lesbian relationships – such as *Go Fish* (1994), *Saving Face* (2004), *Touch of Pink* (2004) and *Imagine Me and You* (2005) – enjoying some audience and/or box office success, mainstream films have yet to follow this example.

Observe also that the above definition does not insist that romcoms are necessarily funny, although this might seem implicit in the term 'comedy'. I have used the word 'light-hearted' in the definition to signal that, while films of the genre generally end well and may elicit laughs along the way, I am also aware of the importance of tears to the romantic comedy. I want to acknowledge the mixed emotions these films commonly both depict and elicit.

Crying frequently occupies an important space in the narratives of the romantic comedy: as an index of the pain a lover feels when apart from the beloved, when rejected or lonely. As noted, crying – about love, romance and other romantic films – is central to *Sleepless in Seattle*. This film certainly conforms to the definition offered above in that its central driving device is a quest for love: both Annie and Sam are seeking the perfect partner. Comic moments occur on the path to the successful conclusion, when the two are united. But tears also play a fundamental part in the narrative: Annie, engaged to the steady and dull Walter (Bill Pullman), is both moved hearing Sam testifying to his love for his dead wife on the radio, and envious of the strength of his devotion, which she realises is missing from her own relationship. Tears are the result of both of these feelings and guarantee that, since she can be moved to tears by Sam's love, Annie merits its inheritance.

Noting the importance of tears in the romcom is an act of the active analysis of components within the genre's toolkit. For various reasons, considered in detail below, the romantic comedy is often perceived to be so obvious in its construction that its components are *not* analysed.¹ Furthermore, if critical attention is turned on the genre, often what would be legitimated as a *trope* (a recurrent element) in a genre which has some credibility, is dismissed as a *cliché* in the romantic comedy – even by its theorists (see for example King 2002: 58). Thus although the romantic comedy is one of the most *generic* of genres, heavily reliant on stock

elements, personae and even dialogue ('I love you!'), the rudimentary machinery of the genre still needs investigation.

Generic elements

Three key components warrant consideration in assessing the internal attributes of film genres, descending from the surface deeper into the film: the visual characteristics, narrative patterns and wider ideology.

visual characteristics

We identify film genres by the kind of images found in them and, in turn, these images then become laden with a symbolism dependent on their genre: they become icons and their study within a genre dignified with the title of 'iconography'.

Colin McArthur, in a very useful article from his 1972 book-length study of the gangster film, provides a guide to looking at iconography within a genre which can assist the study of the romantic comedy. While subsequent work on the romcom has been alert to narrative shifts in tone and confidence (Henderson 1978; Neale 1992; Paul 2002), consideration of the *visual* aspects of the genre has not greatly advanced. McArthur suggests that iconography can include locations, props, costume and even stock characters (in the western these might be the barman, the saloon gal, the grizzly-bearded prospector). In the romantic comedy we will see such iconographic uses being made of settings (almost uniformly the contemporary romantic comedy now has an urban location), props (consider the repetition within the genre of articles associated with weddings, as well as flowers, chocolates, candlelight, beds), costume (the special outfit for the big date) and stock characters which most often include the unsuitable partner; here the characters who will be a couple by the film's end both start out with an unsuitable partner, illustrating the rightness of the central romance by being plainly wrong, as with Joe's (Tom Hanks) girlfriend Patricia (Parker Posey) and Kathleen's (Meg Ryan) boyfriend Frank (Greg Kinnear) in *You've Got Mail*.

narrative patterns

Films in the same genre share more than just key characters and props, however; they also utilise similar narrative patterns, both small and larger

ones. For example, at the very smallest level there are the tropes, occurrences which happen repeatedly within genres. As McArthur notes, when we see a car coming down a dark alleyway towards someone in a gangster film, we recognise that the driver is going to try to kill that someone; a moment of peace often precedes a bloodbath, as in the scenes of quiet restaurants before a drive-by shooting. On a larger scale, another common generic pattern of the gangster movie is the rookie gangster's rise through the ranks, as he takes on bigger and bolder crimes, inherits the flashy dress sense, bigger guns and even the girlfriend of the big boss. At the level of the largest pattern, we anticipate a narrative arc displaying the rise and eventual fall of the mobster, a man who uses unlawful means to achieve the American Dream of riches and success.

Looking at the narrative patterns in this way, from the micro to the overarching level, the genre's key themes emerge. In gangster films the immigrant working-class character wants success but tries to achieve it illegally, so is ultimately punished by death. By contrast, the theme of the musical is that hard work and determination committed to the enjoyment of *all* is the best way for the *individual* to be happy and successful. When advancing precepts in this way (do not rob banks, do work hard in your community) narrative patterns go beyond themes, to indicate the ideology of the society creating them (Grant 2007).

The romantic comedy can also be seen repeating the same narrative patterns, from the wider story arc to the smaller tropes. As Shumway notes, the basic plot of all mainstream romantic comedies is boy meets, loses, regains, girl. Within this master pattern smaller moments also recur with regularity. The 'meet cute' was often employed in romantic comedies of the classic period in Hollywood: in this trope the lovers-to-be first encounter each other in a way which forecasts their eventual union. Billy Wilder, first a scriptwriter, then a director, is one of the foremost proponents of the 'meet cute'; he is supposed to have kept a notebook of ideas for cute meetings where the eventual couple would meet in a humorous, unlikely or suggestive manner (see Sikov 1998: 121; Chandler 2002: 80).² One of the most twee 'meet cutes' comes in screwball comedy *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife* (1938), which Wilder scripted: the couple first cross paths in a department store where he wants to buy only the top half of a pair of pyjamas and she the bottoms. The form of the meeting here assures the audience that although the couple may at times seem to hate each other, they will eventually reunite

because they belong together as much as the top and bottom halves of pyjamas do.

Other frequently occurring tropes include the wedding derailed by one partner running away; the masquerade, in which one or both of the central characters pretends to be someone else; and the embarrassing gesture – this has one of the lovers submitting to public humiliation in order to prove that love is more important than dignity. Patterns which commonly occur in specific sub-genres are dealt with more fully in the chapters dedicated to them, while a further list of other suggested narrative tropes, with filmic examples, is given in Appendix B.

ideology

The ideology of a genre can both reflect and contest the anxieties, assumptions and desires of the specific time and specific agencies making the film. Gangster films generally tout the value of accumulating personal wealth, even while the genre tacitly acknowledges, through the lawless actions and ultimate fate of its gangster figure, the difficulties of achieving that goal. Thus these films underscore the American capitalist ideology of *legally* earning wealth, even while allowing audiences the vicarious pleasures of violating such legal strictures.

The basic ideology the romantic comedy genre supports is the primary importance of the couple. While this is usually the heterosexual, white couple, certain films from the 1990s onwards have attempted to widen the perspective to include gay and black couples. None, however, has tried to suggest monogamous coupledness itself is an outmoded concept; even *Annie Hall*, possibly the most radical film in choosing to deny the audience an ending with the couple's union, does not suggest the goal of finding one's true love is no longer desirable, merely impossible.

At the heart of every romantic comedy is the implication of sex, and settled, secure, within-a-relationship sex at that. Shumway's 'Exhibit A' of plots, with boy meeting girl, thus exists to dress up the naked fact that Western, capitalist society has traditionally relied on monogamy for its stability, as well as on procreation for its continuance. Shumway suggests that romance and marriage have opposing goals, which explains both real-life endemic dissatisfaction with the married state and the need for romantic comedies to end before the couple embarks on married life (2003: 21). The ideology of 'one man for one woman' can thus be seen to underlie these

films in order to assure stability in Western, capitalist society; but films do not just reflect reality, they help to create it, too. In giving the audience a high degree of closure with the happy ending in films of this genre, are romantic comedies benign, supplying an on-screen fantasy of perpetual bliss usually lacking in real life? Or do they negatively promote daydreams, making audiences long for a perfection which can, realistically, never be accomplished, leaving people dissatisfied with themselves and the relationships they do have? Perhaps both; a closer look at what the underlying ideology of the romantic comedy wants to foster in its audiences indicates why film studios go on and on providing fairytales for adults.

Although the current romantic comedy, with its awareness of divorce, biological clocks, myths about the shortages of single men and other simultaneous impulses towards and reasons against coupling, seems to have acknowledged the difficulties of finding true love, it nevertheless continues to endorse the old fantasies. This illustrates the strength of the ideological mandate towards coupling and the industries which depend on romance to make money. It may seem cynical to view romantic love as an ideal which supports capitalist consumerism, but the self-dissatisfaction such films breed can create a vulnerable space which advertisers have been only too quick to target. This fact is self-reflexively considered in *Kate and Leopold*. In a scene where the viewer can almost hear the iconography and generic tropes being ticked off the list (candlelight, romantic music, star-lit cityscape, slow dance) the couple (Meg Ryan and Hugh Jackman) enjoy a romantic dinner for two and she admits having never had much luck with men. When Leopold suggests perhaps she has not yet met the right one, Kate seems to step out of the film for an instant to comment on the whole romantic comedy genre and the industries it nourishes:

Maybe ... Or maybe that whole love thing is just a grown-up version of Santa Claus, just a myth we've been fed since childhood so we keep buying magazines and joining clubs and doing therapy and watching movies with hip-hop songs played over love montages, all in this pathetic attempt to explain why our Love Santa keeps getting caught in the chimney.

Kate here testifies to her own consumption of items which both reinforce the ideas of romantic love (movies and magazines) and which she hopes will

help to make her eligible for romantic love herself (health club membership and therapy, for a better outside and inside). The possibility of gaining romantic love just seems to be the bait that companies dangle before consumers in order to ensure we continue buying their products.

While most romantic comedies do not want to hint that the whole edifice of true romance might be as mythical as Santa, we as audience members, consumers and film scholars need to remember that big business relies on our urge to make ourselves loveable through the consumption of goods (make-up, shoes, underwear, grooming products, mood music, seductive dinners – and films). Hollywood is just one of these big businesses, and if we can accept that product placement in a film operates to sell more Coca-Cola and Nike products, why not also view the fantasy of romantic love as a product being no more subtly endorsed?

Exposing the tools used by a particular romcom can help examination of the underlying ideology the film reflects. While there are of course very sensitive micro-analyses of specific films,³ there seems to be a prejudice against subjecting such fluffy trifles to intense critical scrutiny. Even people who make (and make money from) such films seem to acknowledge that the genre is less worthy than others, as a comment from Garry Marshall, director of *Pretty Woman* (1990) intimates: 'I like to do very romantic, sentimental type of work ... It's a dirty job but somebody has to do it (cited in Krämer 1999b: 106). While Marshall's comment can be dismissed as ironic, sarcastic or perverse, it still taps into an awareness of a prejudice against the 'romcom', an assumption of cultural lowliness, which needs to be considered and perhaps contested; this contestation is assisted by investigating the elements involved in the genre. Marshall's comment could equally apply to the work of analysing romantic comedies and their constituent elements, which simply has not been achieved in numbers comparable to works on other genres.⁴ Let us consider some of the reasons which may account for their low status.

One aspect mitigating against these films is their seeming transparency, with films like *You've Got Mail*, *Sleepless in Seattle* and *Failure to Launch* (2006) appearing so naked in their project to get their men and women together by the last reel that it seems pointless to look for further motive or intent. The genre's simplicity thus deflects proper interrogation. Geoff King proposes this very transparency makes such films 'particularly effective vehicles for ideology. Their implicit "don't take it too seriously"

helps, potentially, to inoculate them against close interrogation' (2002: 56).

Another criticism frequently levelled, particularly against contemporary romcoms, is that they repeatedly go over old ground without adding anything original to the mixture of traditional soundtrack songs, picturesque urban views and initially antagonistic, ultimately blissful male and female protagonists (Hampton 2004). Reviews regularly note the adherence to generic blueprints seeming stale now: American film-trade weekly *Variety*, for instance, found *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* (2003) conforming to 'trite formula' (Koehler 2003: 68); the reviewer for British critical magazine *Sight and Sound* agreed, feeling that the film's romance was 'underdeveloped' and its ending 'disappointingly cloying' (Wood 2003: 50). Repeatedly these two publications dismiss the narratives of romcoms as demonstrating a clichéd emptiness: condemning them for 'rote vacuity' (Matheou 2003: 48), for being 'slick but slight' (Felperin 2005: 26).

One further reason for the habitual critical contempt of romantic comedies may be its association with a female audience: 'romcoms' are popularly supposed to be 'chick flicks': the subtitle to Berry and Errigo's book of that title is 'Movies women love'. To emphasise the point, they include ten films they view as, by contrast, being more male-oriented, male-centred films.⁵ Not only do romcoms usually present their stories from the perspective of their female lead character, detailing her feelings and thus privileging her within the film as the site of audience identification, but they are marketed to women, as the special summer 2006 Football World Cup tie-in advertising for *Imagine Me and You* made clear.⁶ They are thus also assumed to appeal largely to women audience members, in the same way as were the 'Women's Films' of the 1940s (see Krämer 1999a and 1999b). These films – intense stories with strong, well-defined central female roles, about women suffering and sacrificing for love and family – were also critically downgraded until subject to a revisionist rescue mission by feminist film scholars in the 1980s (Modleski 1984; Mulvey 1986; Doane 1987); perhaps the current wave of critical investigation will do the same for the romantic comedy.

By assuming a largely female consumption of romantic comedies, scholars and critics alike disparage them, unconsciously or not; even now in the twenty-first century, women are still supposed to be more interested in gossip, relationships and clothes than important topics. Like fashion,

which has long been held in low critical esteem and whose scholars have to work hard to justify their interest, romantic comedies may suffer from their association with female consumers despite the fact that, as the section on ideology indicates, these films do not actually speak solely to female interests and desires but are aimed more inclusively at both genders. The myth of perfect love appeals to both sexes, and the narratives of romantic comedy films themselves demonstrate that *both* women and men have to change and adapt to deserve love: if, annoyingly, in the masquerade plot which occurs as such a regular trope in this genre it is usually the man who is conning the woman, such films as *Pillow Talk*, *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* and *Lover Come Back* (1961) do demonstrate that, once the woman has discovered his deceit, the man has to change his ways in order to deserve her love again. In illustrating, too, that the romcom male has a nice apartment, designer clothes, an expensive music system and an enviable physique, the romantic comedy possibly encourages the men in the audience to remake themselves as fitter, more glamorous and possessing more and better consumer durables. Thus, regardless of the association of women audiences with the genre, the ideology which underpins it seeks to sell love, and products, to everyone.

As a final note, it should be emphasised that these various sub- and dominant genres are neither *all-inclusive* – that is, there were always romantic comedies being made at the same time as, for example, the screwball, which did not fit with the style of that sub-genre – nor mutually *exclusive*, in that it is possible to read *Pillow Talk* both as a sex comedy and as a romantic comedy. It should be recognised that screwball comedy was therefore not the *only* kind of romantic comedy in the 1930s, although it now seems to have been the most dominant; similarly, the sex comedy and the 1970s radical romance were not the only types of romantic comedies being made, but the cycles they belong to have emerged, over time, as the most influential to the genre's development. By contrast, the recent Neo-Traditionalist romantic comedy seems to be more numerous than influential; perhaps at this point in film history, when the romantic comedy seems forced to side either with the conservative narratives, like *Kate and Leopold*, or the more explicit gross-out films, such as *The 40 Year Old Virgin* (2005), the genre itself is waiting for a new impetus which will renew its energies and lead it in more interesting directions.

SHORT CUTS

each other. Sales at Kathleen's bookstore begin to suffer dramatically as her customers and authors desert her for the glamorous superstore. She enlists Frank to help mount a campaign to save the store, and ends up insulting Joe again, this time on television, much to his fury. At the same time, NY152 and Shopgirl have decided to meet at a coffee shop. When he gets there, Joe sees Kathleen and works out the truth, but decides not to tell her. The pair again talk and Kathleen insults him, but largely from misery at having been stood up.

NY152 apologises for not showing up and the pair go back to emailing regularly. Kathleen realises she will have to close the shop. Having done so, she succumbs to a cold and takes to her bed. Both Joe and Patricia and Frank and Kathleen break up. Joe feels bad about the shop's closure and goes to see Kathleen at her flat, asking if they can be friends. They begin to meet for coffee and walks around the city, and Kathleen tells him about her email admirer. He teases her relentlessly about him, urging her to meet NY152. When Kathleen realises the truth, she cries, and the couple kiss.

Appendix B: commonly employed romantic comedy tropes, with filmic examples

<i>Trope</i>	<i>Films</i>
Falling over, slapstick	<i>It Happened One Night</i> ; 20 th Century; <i>My Man Godfrey</i> ; <i>Nothing Sacred</i> ; <i>Bringing Up Baby</i> ; <i>That Touch of Mink</i> ; <i>Sleepless in Seattle</i> ; <i>You've Got Mail</i> ; <i>Two Weeks' Notice</i> ; <i>Kate and Leopold</i> ; <i>Hitch</i>
Adversarial relationship turning to love	<i>It Happened One Night</i> ; 20 th Century; <i>Bringing Up Baby</i> ; <i>Pillow Talk</i> ; <i>Lover Come Back</i> ; <i>You've Got Mail</i> ; <i>10 Things I Hate About You</i> ; <i>Animal Attraction</i> ; <i>Two Weeks' Notice</i>
Break-up and makeup	<i>It Happened One Night</i> ; <i>Pillow Talk</i> ; <i>Lover Come Back</i> ; <i>How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days</i> ; <i>Something's Gotta Give</i> ; <i>Hitch</i>
Her friend's advice vs. his friend's advice	<i>When Harry Met Sally</i> ; <i>How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days</i> ; <i>Hitch</i> ; <i>A Lot Like Love</i>
Idiotic public gesture	<i>My Best Friend's Wedding</i> ; <i>10 Things I Hate About You</i> ; <i>A Lot Like Love</i> ; <i>Hitch</i>
Love montage	<i>Pillow Talk</i> ; <i>Lover Come Back</i> ; <i>How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days</i> ; <i>Something's Gotta Give</i>
Masquerade	<i>My Man Godfrey</i> ; <i>Pillow Talk</i> ; <i>Lover Come Back</i> ; <i>Only You</i> ; <i>While You Were Sleeping</i> ; <i>The Truth About Cats and Dogs</i> ; <i>You've Got Mail</i> ; <i>Three to Tango</i>

ROMANTIC COMEDY

<i>Trope</i>	<i>Films</i>
Meet cute	<i>Bluebeard's Eight Wife</i> ; <i>Bringing Up Baby</i> ; <i>That Touch of Mink</i> ; <i>Sleepless in Seattle</i> ; <i>Serendipity</i> ; <i>Maid in Manhattan</i> ; <i>50 First Dates</i>
Rules of romance	<i>Swingers</i> ; <i>The Tao of Steve</i> ; <i>Animal Attraction</i> ; <i>The Sweetest Thing</i> ; <i>40 Days and 40 Nights</i> ; <i>How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days</i> ; <i>Hitch</i>
Wedding that goes wrong but it's just as well	<i>It Happened One Night</i> ; <i>The Bride Came C.O.D.</i> ; <i>While You Were Sleeping</i> ; <i>Runaway Bride</i> ; <i>Sweet Home Alabama</i> ; <i>Wedding Crashers</i>