**Screwball Comedy**

Ca. 1934 – early 1940s

Escapist: seems to react against early 1930s – no satire, social commentary

Deals with the rich, who are depicted as zany, incompetent, and perhaps lovable rather than exploitative; often takes place in Connecticut

Romantic comedies, in which woman of high social status challenges and pursues the man, and of course lands him

Style – anarchy; “fierce conflict of words and wit” (influence of Shakespeare’s comedies)

 Slapstick, farce, absurdity; e.g., cross-dressing

 Fast repartee (a Howard Hawks specialty)

Howard Hawks, ‘Bring Up Baby’ 1938 (RKO)

Cary Grant as clueless, nervous, although mild-mannered paleontologist who needs one more bone for his dinosaur skeleton; Katherine Hepburn as scatter-brained socialite; Charlie Ruggles as big-game hunter

Fast repartee.

Chaos in Connecticut – a leopard roaming around – he sings, “I can’t give you anything but love, Baby”; a dog too – George the troublesome terrier that buries the key bone.

Grant’s exasperation and confusion when confronted by Hepburn

Conclusion: Surrounded by chaos, Grant awakens “to the attractions of irresponsible insanity” (what will happen to his career?)