



Unlikely Couples: Movie Romance As Social Criticism (Thinking Through Cinema)

Thomas E. Wartenberg

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In *Unlikely Couples*, Thomas E. Wartenberg directly challenges the view that narrative cinema inherently supports the dominant social interests by examining the way popular films about “unlikely couples” (a mismatched romantic union viewed as inappropriate due to its class, racial, or gender composition) explore, expose, and criticize societal attitudes, boundaries, and prejudices. The films under consideration—including *King Kong*, *Pygmalion*, *It Happened One Night*, *Pretty Woman*, *White Palace*, *Some Like it Hot*, *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*, *Mississippi Masala*, *Jungle Fever*, *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, *Desert Hearts*, and *The Crying Game*—are examined both individually and as a whole to illustrate how the genre uses the figure of a transgressive couple to explore tensions in genre’s use of the figure of a transgressive couple to condemn social hierarchy as well as to raise a range of significant philosophical topics.

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