

Subverting the Conventional: Combining Genre in Kelly's Donnie Darko

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While planning an evening at the cinema, individuals do not discuss the specific guidelines of genre while deciding the film of choice. A reason for seeing a Western is never because the genre has evolved from primarily racist films involving cowboys and Indians to movies that vindicate Indians and work toward demythologizing the old West. Similarly, broad generalizations of genre are constantly used to categorize film. [Courtship](#)-Romance Musicals or Rock Operas are often shuffled into the generic class of Musical, while the 1930's films of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, examples of Courtship-Romance Musicals, are in contrast to such films as Tommy or Jesus Christ Superstar, models of Rock Operas. Genre is the most important tool in deciding taste in film, yet most people never get past discussing whether to watch a Comedy or Drama. Perhaps this tendency is due to mainstream films, which rarely challenge audiences to make decisions about complex genres, as formula films have become an accepted form of entertainment. Cinema must look to Independent film then to help create new forms, specifically in genre. Donnie Darko, an Independent film directed by Richard Kelly, successfully poses

questions about hybrid films and complex genres. Donnie Darko transcends the typical conventions of genre to redefine cinema and set a new precedence for independent filmmakers interested in [breaking](#) the rules of tradition.

Before exploring the [subversion](#) of genre in Donnie Darko, a look at genre theories is necessary. The regulations of genre have changed throughout the history of film and theorists constantly have differing ideas about the new contortions genre for...

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