

# FILM THEORIES

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By Alex Green & Ally Smith

# WHAT IS IT?

- ▶ Genre studies is an academic subject which studies genre theory as a branch of general critical theory in several different fields, including the literary or artistic, linguistic, or rhetorical. Genre is best defined as a set of patterns/forms/styles/structures which transcend individual films and texts, and which supervise both their construction by the film-maker and their reading/viewing by an audience, therefore the genre of a film will have great importance to both film producers and their target audience. Most genres can be categorised in several ways, most commonly the setting of the film as well as the theme topic, mood or format. For example, when we speak of the western we know that within this collection of films we may expect to find gun fights etc.

# GENRE EXAMPLES

Comedy



Romance



Horror



Action



Adventure



Family



Crime



War



Western



# INSTITUTIONAL & AUDIENCE USE OF GENRE

## Institutional:

- ▶ Film producers use genre as a means of minimizing the economic risk in making films. Film distributors/exhibitors use genre as a means of advertising and promoting films. Both depend on audiences' foreknowledge and past experience.

## Audience:

- ▶ Audiences' use genre to create a hierarchical sense of pleasure and escapism when consuming/watching a film. They have certain expectations of film genres, a pre-disposition set of typical conventions which they are hoping the film follows. Audiences' expect genre films to involve innovation, inflection/subversion of the generic conventions.

# GENERIC CONVENTIONS

- ▶ A film genre is defined by its conventions. These conventions must be present to “give a film a genre” but should involve aspects of innovation, subversion and/or inflection (otherwise it becomes a formula film). Generic conventions will vary from genre to genre but will usually involve such areas of repetition as: Mise-en-scene, Setting, Visual style, Themes, Ideology, Characters (stereotypes - Vladimir Propp’s theory) Narratives (Todorov’s theory) Iconography, Cinematography, Special Effects, Sound, Ideological messages and meanings

# GENRE THEORY

- ▶ “Conventional definitions of genre are based on the idea that they share particular convention of content e.g. Themes or setting” - David Chandler
- ▶ “Genres are instances of repetition and difference; this is what pleasure for the audience is derived from” - Steve Neale
- ▶ “The same text can belong to different genres in different countries or times” - John Hartley “Genre attempts to structure some order into the wide range of texts and meanings that circulate in our culture for the conveniences of both producers and audiences” - John Fiske
- ▶ “Genre is a constant process of negotiation and change” - David Buckingham

# EXAMPLES OF GENRE STUDIES IN SOTD

## SOTD:

Shaun of the Dead as other genres. Amidst the film's ability to act as a zombie film and romantic comedy, it also contains elements of other beloved film genres. Shaun and Ed's relationship is a great example of the buddy comedy.