

**FIL 1001, SPRING 2003 TERM**  
Introduction to Understanding Film  
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Roxanne  
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The movie, *Roxanne*, is the perfect example of a romantic comedy:

- The characters meet and there's an attraction of some sort, whether conscious or unconscious.
- The viewers like the protagonists, think that they're meant for each other, and expect them to get together in the end.
- There are obstacles that prevent the protagonists from realizing that they're meant for each other or from being with the person they love.
- In the end love triumphs, to the delight of the viewers.

*Roxanne* is romantic comedy, and, as a whole, could be considered a "cultural safety valve," because it demonstrates to the viewers that looks don't matter as long as you have a great personality. Unfortunately, it takes a while for Roxanne to realize that. Although she appreciates C.D. as a good friend, she doesn't see him as her partner in life because of his looks. In the end, she responds to his feelings, realizing that love based on looks cannot last a life-time.

However, the assignment requests to "describe how the comic treatment of characters and action in one sequence could be considered a 'cultural safety valve.'"

The first scene that comes to mind is the one where someone offends C.D. and calls him “big nose.” In reply, C.D. humiliates him by replying in an intelligent manner and by involving the people in the bar in a little game. He engages this obnoxious person in a game. C.D. agrees to find better ways of insulting himself without using the words “big nose.” The number will be determined by how many dart points he accumulates. The obnoxious person hits 20. The audience laughs with C.D. when he comes up with lines like, “It must be wonderful to wake up in the morning and smell the coffee...in Brazil.” The audience is obviously entertained by C.D.’s smart remarks, and the other person tries to settle his victory with a punch. Unfortunately for this person, C.D. is also a great fighter, even though he is much smaller in size and knocks him unconscious with a few punches, to the delight of the audience.

Why do I think that this sequence can be considered as a “cultural safety valve”? The answer is easy: because it accomplishes what ordinary people couldn’t accomplish if they were in C.D.’s situation. It makes it possible for all the people who can’t respond to violence with violence, to be avenged if not in real life, at least on the screen. In movies, ordinary people can fight not only intelligently but also physically if necessary, and the villains get what they deserve.

This scene reveals that ordinary people can be extraordinary if you get to know them. In the long run, they are reliable and great partners in life. Roxanne also realizes this in the end, and the viewers watch as their wishes come true: ordinary people can be extraordinary when you get to know them, and in the end love conquers all.