

A Rhetorical Analysis of the Titanic Film Essay

Introduction

The *Titanic* was released in 1997 under the direction of James Cameron. The historical romantic drama starred Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio as Rose and Jack, respectively. They were depicted as two passengers on the RMS *Titanic*'s ill-fated voyage in 1912. The movie was a huge commercial success, and it grossed over \$2 billion at the box office and won eleven Academy Awards, with the inclusion of the Best Picture Award (Scott 75).

The *Titanic* tells the story of Jack's and Rose's love story as well as the tragic sinking of the "unsinkable" *Titanic*. The film's message reveals the dangers of hubris and human arrogance and the significance of sacrifice and love. The essay will explore four or five scenes and explain how they effectively convince viewers of the story. The *Titanic* attempts to influence its audience to believe the intended message through auditory elements, visual elements, logos, pathos, and ethos.

The Start of Jack and Rose's Relationship

The beginning of Rose and Jack's relationship is a scene that convincingly makes viewers believe in the story. The scene starts when Rose and Jack meet, and they are immediately attracted to each other. Jack is drawn to Rose's spirit and beauty, whereas Rose is almost entrenched by Jack's adventurous and free-spirited nature.

Rose expresses her desire for freedom and unhappiness present in her life, which makes the pair connect on a deeper level by sharing their vulnerabilities, dreams, and hopes with each other. As the scene progresses, Jack and Rose's interaction becomes more romantic and intimate since they dance together and kiss, emphasizing their strong connection (Cameron). Their chemistry is palpable, and their interactions help convey the film's message, which highlights the power of love.

The scene utilizes close-up shots, background music, and ethos to form a connection with the audience. The close-up shots used in the scene add to the emotional effect of the scene and create a sense of intimacy between the audience and characters, making the intended viewers experience the scene as if they are a part of it. In addition, the background music in the scene is romantic and soft, which further emphasizes Jack and Rose's love story.

The scene also utilizes ethos because the audience sees Jack as a poor and hardworking young man and Rose as a wealthy and unhappy girl (Cameron). As a result, a sense of contrast and the message that love can transcend economic and social boundaries make the audience feel invested in Jack and Rose's journey.

The Ship's Launch

The ship's launch is a scene that uses visual elements, pathos, logos, and ethos to effectively make viewers believe the story. The visual elements in the scene of the ship's launch are utilized to convey the event's opulence and grandeur as well as the time's economic and social distinctions. The wide-angle lens is a visual element used to evoke a sense of spectacle and grandeur, emphasizing the ship's and event's scale and size.

Panning shots are another visual element utilized in the scene and move over the crowd to show people from every walk of life. As a result, the scene succeeds in highlighting the economic and social distinctions at the time as well as emphasizing the contrast between the working class and the wealthy (Cameron). The use of color and lighting in the scene creates a sense of spectacle and excitement since the crowd and ship are lit brightly, whereas the sky and water are shown in deep blue color, which further emphasizes the event's grandeur.

The scene also utilizes logos, pathos, and ethos to convince the audience to believe in the story. Pathos is used to create feelings of awe and excitement in the viewers as they witness the launch of the ship. Background music used in the scene is majestic and grand, which adds to the sense of wonder and awe. The sound effects of the crowd cheering and the ship's horn contribute to excitement in the viewers.

Furthermore, logos are used by the director as he provides the ship information, such as its "unsinkable nature", creating trust and confidence that the ship is secure and safe. In addition, the scene utilizes ethos to appeal to the audience as they see the powerful and wealthy persons on the ship, such as Rose's mother, Ruth, and her fiancé, Cal (Cameron). By showing poor and wealthy people in the same scene, the audience is convinced of the time's economic and social differences.

The Ship's Sinking

The scene of the ship sinking the *Titanic* utilizes several rhetorical techniques and devices to convey the film's message and emotions. The scene uses logos by appealing to the voice of reason in the audience's minds. It provides information regarding the ship's situation, such as the reality that there are no lifeboats while the boat is sinking, creating a sense of despair and hopelessness among the viewers (Cameron). As a result, the scene convinces the intended audience of the situation's tragic reality as well as the dire repercussions of human error.

The factual information from the audience's dialogue regarding the disaster makes viewers understand the grave reality of the situation. Additionally, the film utilizes logos by showing the viewers the ship's structural and technical failures, such as the insufficient number of lifeboats and damaged compartments, emphasizing the disaster's tragic reality.

Pathos, ethos, and visual elements are utilized to convey the scene's messages and emotions. Pathos is used to create feelings of despair, panic, and fear when the audience sees the ship sinking. Background music used in the scene is frantic and fast-paced, which adds to the sense of danger and urgency. Additionally, the sound effects of the passengers' screams and ship breaking

contribute to a sense of panic and fear in the audience. The different reactions from the wealthy and poor highlight how power influences a person's thinking, actions, and behavior.

Furthermore, visual elements such as camera angles contribute to showing the message to the audience. The camera captures the breaking apart of the ship and the frantic attempts of the passengers to survive, evoking a sense of destruction and chaos. In addition, the lighting changes to dark from bright, radiating feelings of despair and hopelessness (Cameron). Overall, the rhetorical techniques used in the scene of *Titanic's* sinking convey the intended message to viewers and emphasize the loss of life and tragedy.

The scene of Jack's Death in the *Titanic* uses various rhetorical techniques to show the scene's message and emotions. It utilizes pathos to create feelings of sadness and grief in the viewers as they see Jack's death. The background music used in the scene is emotional and slow, which adds to the sense of sorrow and loss. Additionally, the sound effects of the water's sound and Jack's breathing create a sense of inevitability and finality to Jack's death.

Logos is also utilized in the scene as the director provides information regarding the characters' situation and actions, which creates a sense of clarity and understanding of Jack's death. The logos appeal is used to depict that Jack's death is caused by tragic events and no resources to survive. Camera angles switch from long shots and close-ups to create a sense of connection, intimacy, sadness, and finality in the whole scene (Cameron). Overall, the scene makes viewers emotional by enabling them to experience the raw emotions of death and lost love.

Jack's Death Scene

Jack's death scene utilizes different camera techniques to deliver the message. For example, the thirds of the screen on the floating door moment. The shot is divided into three portions, with Jack occupying the right third of the screen and Rose in the screen's left third. The vast ocean expanse occupies the middle to create an emotional distance between Jack and Rose. As the camera flips back and forth, both Jack and Rose occupy the same space to highlight their shared experience of the disaster.

The large debris that Rose and Jack cling to is shot from a wide angle, making it significantly bigger than the characters and dwarfing them. Thus, the director shows the characters' vulnerability and smallness compared to the vastness of the sinking ship and ocean. When the ship is sinking, camera shots speed up to match the chaos and the characters' frantic pace, while as Jack approaches death, camera shots slow down to emphasize the sadness and finality (Cameron). Close-up shots are used as Jack is seen in pain and resignation, whereas Rose appears heartbroken.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the *Titanic* influences its audience through auditory elements, visual elements, ethos, pathos, and logos. Four scenes make the audience experience the sadness and grave reality of the sinking of the *Titanic*. They include the start of Rose and Jack's relationship, the ship's launch, the ship's sinking, and Jack's death. The scene that makes viewers more emotional is Jack's death because it brings raw emotions to the audience's lives.

Works Cited

Cameron, James. *Titanic*. Paramount Pictures, 1997.

Scott, Griffin. "Determinants of Box Office Performance: Return of the Regressions." *Major Themes in Economics*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2019, pp. 71-83.