

Rhetorical strategies used in the film Gattaca

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Ethos

The rhetorical strategy of using ethos or the elevation of the character to get the audience to Vincent's side was very prominent in the film. This is especially obvious in scenes where Vincent beat his brother Anton, who has a superior genetic make than him, in the "Chicken" swimming contest because Vincent is more determined to win by not leaving anything to get back. In the street also where Vincent had to cross without the contact lenses revealed Vincent's determination to realize his goal as it was shown in the film that he cannot almost see anything yet he still crossed it.

This was Vincent's main selling point in the film that would contrast him from Gattaca's over-reliance on predetermined genetic make-up. In highlighting his qualities such as his persistence, determination, will, and discipline, Vincent showed character which is not determined by genetics but is a more important determinant in making an individual successful.

Pathos

Early in the film, Vincent's experience of being discriminated against that emboldened him to persist in realizing his dream is the film's usage of pathos or emotional appeal for the audience to side with Vincent. Andrew Niccol knows that is our nature to be sympathetic to the underdogs and the oppressed and being such, this was thoroughly exploited in the film Gattaca for the audience to connect with the main protagonist, the invalid who beat valid Vincent.