

Audrey Price

Professor Bradley

ENC 2135

10-24-19

The Successful Conventions of a Teenage Romantic Comedy

To have a successful Teenage Romantic Comedy, 10 main conventions are essential to defining the subgenre. The main characters must have a somewhat romantic attraction towards each other. Usually consisting of an attractive male and female who are still in high school, both of the characters usually have different lives with different friends, that input a lot of comedic factors towards the work. There is commonly a dilemma present on why the couples should not get together, or possibly if one person is pursuing the relationship more than the other. These two characters meet in a quirky and memorable way for the audience. In these teenage Rom-Coms, there is normally a big event or turning point in the plot, consisting most likely of a school event. The couple is bound to have a large plot affecting fight, which leads to reasons that they should not end up together. Despite the obstacles, the two usually end up together, and although it is a comedy, the characters show romantic aspects throughout the plot and usually end up in the generic happily ever after. The 3 movie compositions that fit these subgenres very well are *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, and *The Kissing Booth*.

The movie *To All The Boys I've Loved Before*, is a visual mode and a digital media. This movie is a Netflix Original Movie and is available to stream with a subscription. The audience is younger teenage girls, mainly in high school, who can relate to the story. The style and design consists of Lara Jean telling the story from her point of view, giving the viewers a personal feel. The movie is set in a school, which makes the teenage part of teenage romantic comedy true. The

costumes consist of Lara Jean always dressing more professional, girly, and well-dressed, whereas Peter's costume usually has more of a typical teenage boy look, with generic baseball tees and casual shorts. Sometimes it is shown as him in his lacrosse uniform, showing he is an athletic guy. The dialogue of Lara Jean causes the style to become more distinctive than other works of film, where it makes the viewer feel like Lara Jean is talking to the audience and giving them a personal view. She speaks at an elevated level and is witty compared to some of the other characters in the movie.

The rhetorical appeals in *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* are ethos because it is coming directly from Lara Jean and she is a reliable and trustworthy speaker. Pathos is also involved because the viewers begin to feel bad for Lara Jean once they know all of her letters confessing her love for these boys got out, and that draws emotion from the viewers. Peter and Lara both incite emotion from the viewers when their relationship, if that, becomes rocky, even though it started out as a fake. The conventions of this movie are strong because there are two characters, and they met in a quirky way, with Lara Jean's letters getting out, Peter and Lara Jean are forced to sort of re-introduce themselves and start a conversation. They had no intentions to date in the beginning but slowly they start to develop feelings for each other once they both agree to create a mutually beneficial fake relationship and go on the school's sponsored ski trip together. The two characters end up together, which is usually the case in all Teenage Romantic Comedies.

The second movie that embodies a Teenage Romantic Comedy is *10 Things I Hate About You*. The movie has a visual mode, and the media is digital, an online movie that is available for rent or to purchase online. The audience once again is teenage girls, aging from 13 years to 18 years. The style and design of this movie are vital because they show how diverse all of the characters are in the movie. Since the movie was created in the '90s, if viewers are watching the

movie in this day and age, the costumes easily give away the age of the movie. All of the characters are dressed in 90's fashion. Bianca dresses more preppy and girly, with flowers and and clearly cares about her look and presentation. This shows the differences in the two sisters because Bianca is the one who is pushing to be able to have a date for prom, so she cares more about what she looks like, wanting the attention of boys. Whereas her sister, Kat, usually has more of a bland costume, with neutral colors, showing that she is not one that screams for attention. Patrick, Kat's wannabe love interest, dresses with more of a bad boy look in mind. Always carrying a cigarette, he wears tighter clothes and pulls off long shaggy brown hair. The movie has dim lighting to it, and the quality of the production is not as good, showing that it was produced in the '90s, when cameras and technology were not yet as advanced. The dialogue is a major style in the movie too. There is a lot of snarky teenage commentary, which mainly shows the attitudes of Kat, and how she perceives the people around her. She is expressed as much more serious and does not put up with as much as her sister.

The Rhetorical Appeals in this movie are pathos because throughout the story emotion is a big element between Kat and whether she wants to let herself fall for this boy. She has multiple changing emotions, from the beginning of not wanting anything to do with boys, and then slowly transitioning into caring more. She starts to show more emotions in the end, which lets the viewers know she is starting to care for Patrick.

In the movie *The Kissing Booth*, the conventions of a Teenage Romantic Comedy are put to the test. The mode of this movie is visual, with the media being digital. *The Kissing Booth* is a Netflix original, which requires a subscription service with Netflix, to watch. The audience is clearly for the female gender, with the age being mostly teenagers. The ages can range around

13-18, and while the movie is mainly for older teenagers, intriguing elements for younger girls are present.

The style and design of this movie are key aspects in order to make it a true Teenage Romantic Comedy. One of the scenes in the movie is a bright, bubbly montage of the main love interests, Noah and Elle, going on dates and enjoying their time together without anyone, like Noah's brother, seeing them. That montage in the middle of the movie is critical to show how well their relationship is going, and after that enjoyable moment for the viewers, the plot turns and there is some tension starting between the couple, which involves Noah's younger brother, who happens to be Elle's best friend, not approving their relationship. Whenever the movie consists of a happy or fun experience, the elements of the scene are altered. For example, there is a beach party scene where it has brighter lighting, like from the sunny day, and upbeat teenage music in the background. The costumes are also key in the style of the movie. All of the characters are required to wear uniforms to school, but the subtle differences in each uniform gives more information about the characters. Noah, the main jock, dressed as relaxed as possible, giving him more of a bad boy look. He wears his uniform with an unbuttoned collar and a loose tie. Elle usually perfects the look of a messy hairdo, and clothes not always fitting, which sort of shows her clumsy and awkward personality. Lee, the younger brother of Noah, has more of a nerdy costume always, with a sweater instead of a tie and looking a little more put together than Noah. The style and design are essential effects because they help set the tone for the movie, which shows the nerdy little brothers' friend and his more attractive older brother, and how it would be hard for them to get together.

Pathos is a rhetorical appeal because emotions are like a roller coaster throughout this movie. There is emotion when Elle and Noah's relationship first starts blossoming, and then an

overflow of emotion when Noah's brother finds out, and Noah and Lee get into a physical altercation over Elle. Pathos is the main driver in *The Kissing Booth*, whether it is the joyful emotions of Elle and Noah having a relationship or the scary and unpleasant emotions of Noah and Elle having problems.

Although in the normal conventions of a Teenage Romantic Comedy, the couple ends up together, in *The Kissing Booth*, this statement is challenged. Elle and Noah unfortunately, do not end up together. College, which is a real-life problem since Noah is a year older, separates them as he leaves for University.

In the Teenage Romantic Comedies subgenre, the subgenre can still grow and introduce new fresh concepts and comedic elements. Not only can the comedy part change, but the romance can change too. An author has many options if they're interested in spicing up a story. The introduction of homosexual love interests can give a Teenage Romantic Comedy a fresh and more modern style. Not many homosexual couples are portrayed in movies, and the addition of a couple like this could change the game for this subgenre. Not every story has to have the two heterosexual teenagers falling in love and ending up together, after all, it is still high school, where no one knows exactly who they are or who to be.