

As you know, the 3-hour-14-minute film "Titanic" is no mere disaster movie. It's an epic love story about a 17-year-old American aristocrat who is betrothed to a rich and hateful suitor but falls in love with a free-spirited artist, who won his third-class passage in a card game. It's "Romeo and Juliet" on a sinking ship and has become an international sensation.

"Titanic" is also a movie about money and its evils. With fine irony, Cameron has spent more dollars than any other filmmaker to make a film that denounces the rich.



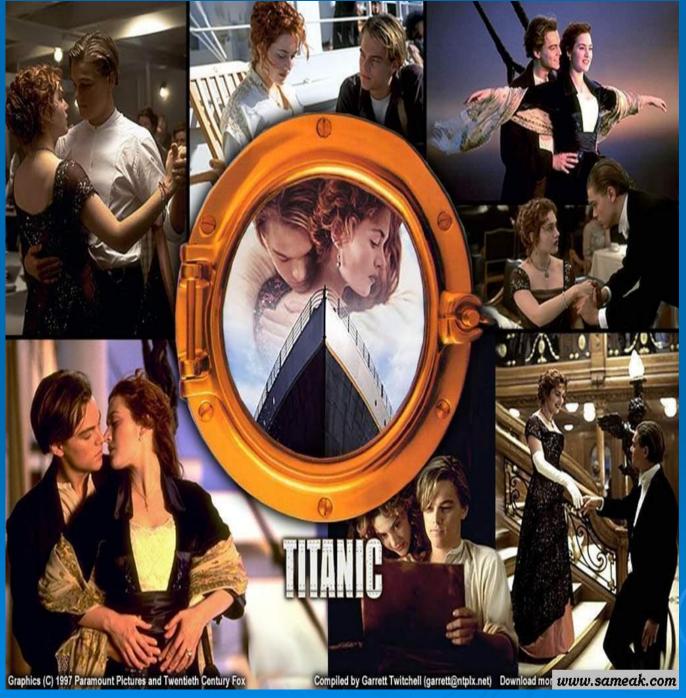




The special effects are in the service of the story. In the 80-minute sinking of the ship, you don't wonder what's real and what's computer-generated. What you feel is the horror of the experience, the depths of the folly that left this 3" ship so vulnerable to disaster: While the women and children are loaded into lifeboats (there were only enough for half the 2,200 passengers), the third-class passengers are locked.

Cameron makes terrifying poetry out of chaos with images of the ship breaking in half, the deck rising perpendicular to the water as passengers bounce off the ships' giant propellers into





Cameron's strength is in painting canvases with broad strokes, and for 194 minutes he holds you in his grip. This is one grand entertainment old-fashioned filmmaking brought up to date with the most spectacular technology available.

Cameron says today that if he had known what it would take to bring his vision to the screen, he would have stopped before he started. But "regret" is not in the guy's vocabulary.