|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Gravity (2013) |

# Introduction

**Gravity** is the resultant force on Earth's surface, of the attraction by the Earth's masses, and the centrifugal pseudo-force caused by the Earth's rotation. It is also called ***gravitation***, in mechanics, the universal force of attraction acting between all matter. It is by far the weakest known force in nature and thus plays no role in determining the internal properties of everyday matter. On the other hand, through its long reach and universal action, it controls the trajectories of bodies in the solar system and elsewhere in the universe and the structures and evolution of stars, galaxies, and the whole cosmos. On Earth all bodies have a weight, or downward force of gravity, proportional to their mass, which Earth’s mass exerts on them. Gravity is measured by the acceleration that it gives to freely falling objects. At Earth’s surface the acceleration of gravity is about 9.8 metres (32 feet) per second per second. Thus, for every second an object is in free fall, its speed increases by about 9.8 metres per second. At the surface of the Moon the acceleration of a freely falling body is about 1.6 metres per second per second.

***Gravity***; a science-fiction thriller film with a strong mythological influence is directed, co-edited, co-written and produced by Alfonso Cuaron. In it, two astronauts work together to survive after an accident which leaves them stranded in space. Topics like human evolution and adversity etc. are basically discussed in it.

# ****Report****

**Story Formation**

The story starts a lot like many other space movies. We hear an inarticulate speech and witness Earth in the background. The trivial nature of the talking juxtaposes against the apparent magnitude of seeing our home from a distance; the natter as well as our earth is inconsequential. A certain thing related to country music as a soundtrack impart to that constrained juxtaposition between peace and terror. When the sound ceases, its position is taken by SFX redolent of a cardiac rhythm, which is always a good manner of raising BP in the audience.

**Self-apocalypse, will, want**

In real, two astronauts would know rather a lot about each other working together. So the audience suspends its disbelief when the characters converse in elucidatory dialogues which are meant for the viewer to get to know the characters.

Ryan is an amateur space traveller. This is her earliest mission after a six-month training period. She needs to learn that she has the strength to outlive in space and debug on her own even when she’s feeling utterly deserted.

She is supposed to be tested before it becomes clear to her that she can withstand. Though, she knows that she is generally fine with a bit of solitude. Matt asks her at the very starting of calm what she likes about being up here. She replies that she likes the silence. “I could get used to this.”

**Ryan’s Backstory**

Dr Ryan Stone tells Matt on their slow journey back to the ISS that she had a daughter but she slipped and hit her head while at school and died. The nature of her daughter’s accident suggests that Ryan feels a dispiriting meaninglessness to life. Terrible things happen suddenly and for no reason. No point fighting fate.

The curse of gender is hinted at when Matt says that Ryan is a ridiculous name for a girl, who’d call their daughter ‘Ryan’? Ryan says that her father was hoping for a boy.

**Space stories**

Stories that are set in space and that on islands usually have a lot in common. Both of these are simultaneously highly abstract and natural. These both places are separated from humanity. Heroes that are placed in space and on islands often need to learn resilience and self-reliance.

**Weakness & Need (Problem)**

Ryan’s psychological problem is that she can become paralyzed by fear. Her mission includes doing her work in space and returning home alive at all costs. That’s the morality behind this story; suicide is not a noble thing. She needs to have a near-death experience so that she can fully appreciate being alive, in order to live a better life. As she’s going through the motions of life, she doesn’t feel fully alive, bereft and alone.

**Inciting Incident**

Ryan, Matt and another space engineer are on a space walk when they learn from Houston control that an explosion has just occurred at a Russian satellite. Now there is a storm of debris coming upon them at the STS. Soon they lose communication with the Mission Control in Houston. Debris strikes the Explorer, damaging it irreparably, leaving only Ryan and Matt alone in space. They no longer have incoming communication with Houston control.

This inciting incident will throw Ryan out of paralysis — passivity and reliance on Matt to buck up her spirits — and into action. She’ll need to save her own self.

**Want**

Ryan wants to do her work on the STS-157 mission then return safely to earth.

**Ally**

Matt is the older, more experienced, ridiculously calm co-worker who realizes that new recruits need an environment of tranquillity in order to function in space. He is calm to the point of actually being a bit negligent, joking around etc. But his demeanour is exactly what Ryan needs as a template as she contemplates death.

**Opponent**

Nature is the inhospitable opponent of space. Once their ship has blown up Ryan and Matt are alone in outer space.

**Changed desire and motive**

In start, Ryan wanted to do her work before returning to earth. Now she just wants to return to earth with both herself and Matt alive.

**Apocalypse**

As they approach the slightly damaged ISS, they see that its crew has already evacuated in one of the Soyuz modules and that the parachute of the other Soyuz, designated TMA-14M, has accidentally deployed, making it useless for return to Earth.

**Plan**

Matt says that the Soyuz can still be used to travel to Tiangong, the nearby Chinese space station, to retrieve another module that can take them to Earth.

**Opponent’s counterattack**

Matt realizes that his momentum will carry them both away, and over Stone’s protests, he decouples his end of the tether so that Stone can survive. The tension in the lines pulls her back towards the ISS.

**Changed plan**

As Matt floats away, he radios her with additional instructions about how to get to the Chinese space station, encouraging her to continue her survival mission.

Ryan wants to get herself home alive at least. But her drive isn’t obsessive yet. We see her almost curl up into the foetal position upon entering the Russian station. Even the tubes in the background look like an umbilical cord.

**Opponent’s counterattack**

Ryan begins to get familiarized with the ISS when an alarm suddenly alerts her to a fire which has broken out due to the earlier damage.

**Drive**

Ryan is determined to put out the fire. She manages this by staying calm, reading from the manual and ejecting the part of the station that is in flames. She makes her way to the module where the fire is and attempts to put it out, but she is momentarily stunned when the force of the extinguisher thrusts her backward into the bulkhead. She recovers and knocks the flames down again and pushes through them towards the Soyuz. With the fire closing in, she closes the hatch, pulling in the fire extinguisher at the last moment when it blocks the hatch.

**Gate, gauntlet, visit to death**

Everything that can go wrong does go wrong: Ryan separates from the ISS only to find that the Soyuz’s parachute lines are entangled in the station’s rigging. She dons a Soviet spacesuit and exits the spacecraft to release the cables when the debris field completes its orbit. Clinging to the Soyuz, the ISS is destroyed around her. Free of the ISS and the parachute lines, Ryan renters the spacecraft and aligns it with Tiangong. She fires the thrusters but the fuel gauge is wrong: the tanks are empty.

**Apparent defeat/Attack by ally/Audience revelation**

Though these are all separate steps in a story’s structure, this film is limited when it comes to varied backdrops, and both steps happen in the one scene.

Ryan realizes she is stranded and believes she’ll die. After listening to an Inuit fisherman on the ground speak to her, she slows the oxygen flow which will cause her to fall into unconsciousness from lack of oxygen before she dies. We realise she’s losing her mind when she starts howling like the dog in the background.

Alone in the cockpit of the Russian station, Ryan is at the point of giving up when Matt’s apparition appears suddenly.  The imaginary Matt tells her that that curling up and dying in space is the easier option, because nothing worse can happen to you than losing your four year old daughter.

She reaches some random guy on earth and can hear a dog in the background. When she starts howling like a dog herself and talking about how she’s going to die “We’re all going to die, but I’m going to die today,” we know she’s given up.

The audience is fooled (or outraged at the lunacy?) at first, encouraged to believe that Matt has really made it to Ryan alive and in good spirits. But we quickly learn that he’s simply a hallucination.

**Obsessive drive, changed drive, and motive**

Ryan discovers the technique of constantly talking to herself, channelling Matt’s calm optimism, to assuage the loneliness of her situation and get herself home. The last real words we hear are a repeat of ‘arc words’ which we first heard in Matt’s dialogue with Houston from the first act: “I have a bad feeling about this mission…” Realising that Matt is dead for real. Ryan wants to go to the Chinese station (Tiangong), which has been abandoned. But there’s no fuel in the Russian station so she can’t get there. However, ‘Matt’ has given her a hint: She’ll have to figure out how to get rid of most of the ship. At this point we see a definite change in the way Bullock is acting — she seems resolved and sturdy whereas before there was a lot of screaming and a bit of swearing, all the while looking bewildered.

Ryan ejects herself from the Soyuz via explosive decompression. She uses the remaining pressure in the fire extinguisher as a makeshift thruster to push herself the 100 miles towards Tiangong

She enters the Tiangong space station and makes her way through its interior to the Shenzhou capsule. The Tiangong station’s orbit has deteriorated due to hits by the debris field and it begins to break up on the upper edge of the atmosphere. Ryan is unable to 9separate the capsule from the space station.

**Battle**

Which scene is ‘the battle scene’, when Ryan has been battling all along? I believe it must be the one right before the self-revelation, where she’s strapped herself into her capsule and is hurtling towards earth.

**Self-apocalypse**

Ryan seems to have some sort of spiritual epiphany and, whatever she believed before, now she believes in an afterlife.

**Moral decision**

Ryan has resigned herself to her fate, whatever it may be; she’d be landing on earth, but she didn’t know if she’d survive the impact.

**New equilibrium**

In the final scene we see her standing on the edge of some unidentified lake, although the team in Houston has been tracking her and know to come and rescue her. She’s back to earth alive, but this film truncates the new equilibrium scenes. We will learn nothing more about this character than we already know – we don’t get to see her driving to work at the hospital, for instance, looking up into space and remembering her adventure.

A visual motif for evolution and (re)birth. There’s no doubt Ryan will live as a different person now that she has made it back home.

Scientifically accurate or not, **Gravity** convincingly succeeds at awing its viewers with its breath-taking shots of space and Earth; and with the incredible use of 3-D visual effects, it definitely makes you feel the dread of being lost in the endless expanse of space!