

Notes on Spectator Emotion and Ideological Film Criticism

CARL PLANTINGA

Many of us occasionally practise ideological criticism, when we consider the ideological issues raised by viewing films. We often believe that films have moral and ideological significance and that they are not merely consumed, discarded, and forgotten but have psychological and cultural effects. Whether it be concern with screen violence, racism, Oliver Stone's revisionist histories, or the promotion of shallow emotional lives, ideological criticism appraises the moral and ideological import of experiences offered by films.

The purpose of this chapter is not primarily to chart a particular ethical position toward the emotions mainstream films are designed to elicit, but to suggest how emotions should be understood in ideological criticism. That being said, I do argue for one substantive ideological claim—that while we should certainly be aware of the rhetorical uses of spectator emotions, it makes little sense to condemn such emotions *tout court*. I begin by criticizing two tenets of ideological film criticism widely assumed in film studies. The first, deriving from Bertolt Brecht, argues that experiencing emotion in mainstream films is inherently mystifying and politically regressive, because emotion clouds a certain kind of critical judgement. The second tenet, a legacy of neo-Freudian film theory, assumes that the critic can make universal claims about the ideological effect of various formal strategies, irrespective of a film's propositional content.

The chapter goes on to characterize spectator emotion, with a view toward conceptual clarification. It argues that the *kind* of emotional experience a film offers, and not emotion *per se*, is a proper target of ideological investigation. It holds that a cognitive approach to emotion is useful in describing kinds of spectator emotions. In its second half, the essay examines two families of screen emotions—(1) sentiment and sentimentality, and (2) the emotions which accompany screen violence—to demonstrate how spectator emotion is related to ideological criticism.

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IDEOLOGICAL STOICISM

At least since Plato, critics have worried about the affective nature of art. The pleasurable affect and emotion elicited by films has also been a central concern of film criticism. Some critics presume a duality between an emotional response deemed naïve, self-indulgent, or even perverse, and an intellectual, vigilant, cognitive response based on reason and critical judgement. An emotional or pleasurable experience is often thought to be harmful or naïve of itself, while an alienated, distanced response becomes the mark of a knowing spectator.

Both the neo-Brechtian and neo-Freudian approaches in film theory distrust the affective pleasures offered by mainstream films. While Brecht and neo-Brechtians characterize emotion negatively, in 'common sense' terms, neo-Freudians refer to pleasures resulting from the arousal and fulfilment of unconscious desire. Such 'desire' is not for this or that narrative outcome, or for any explicit referential occurrence; rather it relates to 'the symbolic circulation of unconscious wishes through signs bound to our earliest forms of infantile satisfaction'.¹ I classify these views as forms of *ideological stoicism* because they call for a retreat from affective experience *tout court*—be it emotion or pleasure—on moral principle. For both Brecht and many neo-Freudian theorists, this retreat must occur through distancing and alienating techniques which short-circuit emotion, pleasure, and 'desire', and thus allow reason to work, unencumbered, in the landscape of our minds.

The facile duality between reason and emotion lies as the unspoken premiss behind many discussions of affect and the spectator, as though emotion must be 'bridled' or 'mastered' to allow reason to function adequately. This duality animates much of Bertolt Brecht's writing about the epic theatre, and since Brecht's ideological criticism has become a model for critical theory, the legacy of this dualism lives on. Brecht embraces a traditional Western perspective in his distrust of the 'soft' emotions; he expresses contempt for the 'scum who want to have the cockles of their hearts warmed' at the theatre.² At times Brecht seems to castigate both emotion and empathy as inherently problematic in theatre spectatorship. He writes, for example, that feelings 'are private and limited', and that reason is 'fairly comprehensive and to be relied on' (15). He promotes a distanced and alienated spectator response which encourages psychic distance and critical judgement rather than involved experience, as though involvement and judgement were mutually exclusive, and alienation were inherently superior to affective participation.³

Brecht's stoicism has limits, however. Elsewhere, Brecht clearly realizes that this simplistic emotion/reason duality will not hold and that the proper target of his criticism is not emotion *per se* but emotional experiences of

certain types. He says that the goal of the practitioner of epic theatre must not be to eliminate emotional experience but to encourage the spectator to 'adopt a critical approach to his emotions, just as [he] does to his ideas' (101). Brecht's followers have sometimes ignored the subtleties he recognized, in part because Brecht merely alludes to this critical approach rather than describing it in any detail. Brechtian concepts such as alienation or distancing, plus his frequently drawn, moralistic opposition between 'feeling' and 'reason' (e.g. 37), reinforce the simplistic duality that, in his better moments, he realized is superficial.

Brecht wished to encourage a kind of judgement whereby the spectator takes a critical perspective toward the play. Rather than empathizing with characters or experiencing the emotions the play intends to elicit, the spectator should consider and criticize the larger social and cultural forces the play presumes. Brecht's perspective can be criticized from many directions. Notice that Brecht values a kind of alienated, intellectualized response to the theatre, as though there were no legitimate place for compassion, sympathy, empathy, or any of the emotions which might warm the 'cockles' of one's heart. A feminist critique, expanded on below, could well take this as a masculinist response to discomfort with those emotions sometimes denigrated as feminine, or an assumption of the importance of the political and the triviality of the personal. If Brecht's claim is that we must encourage plays which raise social consciousness, we have no quarrel. If he means to eliminate a whole class of spectator responses, then we must question him.

Brechtian theory also neglects the extent to which critical judgement of the sort Brecht recommends is not only compatible with an emotional response congruent with the play's intentions, but is also often implicated in it. For the cognitivist, emotions have reasons, or objects. For example, the object of my fear could be a lion I imagine to threaten my life. The object of my shame might be the obnoxious behaviour of a friend or relative at a social gathering. *Spectator* emotions also have objects or reasons. Some spectator emotions seem especially designed to accompany a Brechtian sort of critical response. The amusement which emerges from satire, for example, contributes to the spectator's questioning of the object of the satire.⁴ In *Dr Strangelove or; How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964), the target of the satire is the American military-industrial complex. The brilliance of the concluding sequence stems in part from the mixed emotions it fosters. As the sympathetically portrayed pilots approach their target, the suspense and excitement build. The film encourages us to share that excitement, despite our simultaneous knowledge that the mission is misguided and its consequences, should it succeed, apocalyptic. Thus *Dr Strangelove* throws into question every war film which celebrates blind patriotism, heroism, and doing one's duty, and it asks, 'To what end?' Here

my amusement depends on my judgement of the film's social and political representations. Moreover, *Dr Strangelove* simultaneously displays the attractiveness and the folly of the actions it represents, eliciting mixed emotions which encourage reflection.

The Brechtian might reply that the amusement that satire elicits is a special case of what might be called an *estranged* emotion, one which encourages a critical view of the characters and events. Thus these are emotions *against* the characters and not what could be called *congruent* emotions, or those felt in sympathy with them. The neo-Brechtian might hold that we must not reject all spectator emotions, and certainly not estrangement emotions, but that congruent emotions are inherently mystifying and manipulative.

Congruent emotions, however, may also encourage self-examination and critical judgement about social and political factors in a film or play. My compassion is elicited while viewing *El Norte* (1983) because I appraise the situation of the protagonists, for whom I have sympathy. My appraisal includes recognition of the unjust social systems in which the characters find themselves. In part, my compassion *depends on* recognizing their plight and the reasons for it. My response may cause me to question or even change my former attitude toward the kinds of events depicted. (Or, conversely, I may conclude that the film is misleading; this would probably interfere with any compassionate response.) In any case, my compassion (or its lack) and my judgement are simultaneous and interdependent, and my critical judgement is compatible with my experiencing congruent emotions.

The neo-Brechtian could argue that films such as *Dr Strangelove* and *El Norte* are the exception, and that Hollywood products like *Pretty Woman*, which *do* mystify the social relations they embody, are the rule. We can grant that point. Many films use emotions in harmful and manipulative ways. Nonetheless, what films such as *Dr Strangelove* and *El Norte* show is that the ideological critic must not condemn spectator emotion *per se* but should examine the *kind* of emotional experience a film offers and the way spectator emotions function in the film's rhetorical project.

Much of contemporary film theory and criticism emerges from a Brechtian-Marxist perspective, but it is also one steeped in neo-Freudianism. Rather than talk of emotion, we hear of 'pleasure' and 'desire'. For Freud, the enjoyment of literature results from the release of tensions by allowing us to enjoy 'our day-dreams without reproach or shame'.⁵ Day-dreaming through reading literature or viewing art enables us to confront and symbolically overcome deep-seated conflicts, stemming not from our contemporary exterior world, but from the traumas of childhood development, repressed and relegated to the deep recesses of the unconscious.

An influential strain of neo-Freudianism in contemporary film theory holds that while avant-garde art may have therapeutic benefits, the

pleasures of mainstream film viewing are deleterious. These pleasures both arise from and encourage regressive or perverse psychic processes in the spectator. Depending on the theorist, the spectator is characterized as a sadistic voyeurist, fetishistic scopophiliac, regressive narcissist, transvestite, masochist, or a combination of the preceding.⁶ Jean-Louis Baudry, for example, argues that mainstream films foster a psychic regression to infantile stages of development, characterized by blissful illusions of homogeneity. Laura Mulvey, in her well-known 'Visual Pleasure and the Narrative Cinema', finds the visual pleasure films offer to be sadistic, scopophilic, and voyeuristic. The intention of her essay, she writes, is to 'destroy' that pleasure by analysing it. Gaylyn Studlar, on the other hand, finds masochism rather than sadism to be the foundational spectator pleasure.⁷ What Freud once reserved for the mentally troubled, this kind of theory uses to characterize normative activities, such as mainstream film viewing. While it would be foolish to reject these claims without some consideration (it is possible that our culture is at least in part 'mad'), the evidence for such positions is not strong.⁸

While Brecht tends to dismiss emotion as mystifying, neo-Freudian theory sometimes posits particular psychic phenomena as *essential* to film pleasure, such as masochism for Gaylyn Studlar and voyeurism and scopophilia for Laura Mulvey. I have argued elsewhere that there exists no single, essential pleasure in viewing mainstream films, but rather many varied pleasures.⁹ Surely the emotions, pleasures, and affect generated at the cinema are more complex than the above theories imply.

As a substantive ideological theory, ideological stoicism is suspect due to its conceptual shortcomings.¹⁰ Given the limitations of ideological stoicism, together with a contemporary understanding of the relationship between judgement and emotion, it is incumbent upon the stoicist to provide compelling arguments for taking the eliciting of all spectator emotion to be inherently unethical.

IDEOLOGICAL FORMALISM

Ideological formalism, the belief that specific film forms and styles have inherent, universal ideological effects, often accompanies ideological stoicism, though the two are logically separable. The ideological formalist may characterize various techniques as inherently *progressive* when they counter spectator effects claimed to be inherently *regressive*. Much of the weight of neo-Brechtian and neo-Freudian theory, as practised in film studies, is thrown toward advocating the short-circuiting of affective, pleasurable response thought to cause regressive effects. For example, if continuity editing, or its related concept 'suture', is thought to 'bind' the spectator into

an illusionistic discourse, then, all things being equal, any technique which creates discontinuity will be seen as inherently progressive. Similarly, when coherence, closure, and linear narratives are thought to position a bourgeois subject, then fractured, digressive, and open narratives will be seen as emancipatory in encouraging estrangement rather than absorption.¹¹

Mainstream cinema is often thought to involve illusionism, a kind of epistemic delusion in which the spectator forgets or fails to notice that a film is a constructed representation; hence alienation and reflexive techniques restore a critical perspective. In relation to the documentary, Bill Nichols writes that realist techniques are incapable of representing the 'magnitudes' and complexities of the world. As Nichols claims, 'Reflexivity and consciousness-raising go hand in hand because it is through an awareness of form and structure and its determining effects that new forms and structures can be brought into being [and the spectator realizes that what *is*] . . . need not be'.¹² Thus ideological formalism assumes that kinds of textual strategies have inherent ideological effects. In Nichols's case, reflexivity goes hand in hand with consciousness-raising, apparently independent of propositional content.

Those who promote reflexivity often recognize the limits of ideological formalism, even while embracing it implicitly. Realism is often opposed to reflexivity as a retrograde style. However, Nichols recognizes that reflexivity is not always progressive, and others have identified both 'progressive realism' and 'conservative' and 'postmodern' reflexivity.¹³ The unspoken premiss of much left ideological formalism is that reflexive and defamiliarizing strategies must be accompanied by left content and function to count as progressive. Nonetheless, reflexivity has accrued the aura of inherent progressivism, however much its presence in *The Letterman Show* and *Beavis and Butthead* would undermine such an assumption. In the same way, a realist documentary such as Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County, USA* (1976) has more progressive ideological significance than the reflexive programming we see on mainstream television. We must be sceptical of ideological formalism, of the claim that any formal strategy, considered independently of propositional content and rhetorical purpose, has an inherent ideological significance. While ideological stoicism fails to account for the complexity and diversity of spectator emotion, ideological formalism mistakes the issue as one of film form rather than film function. Various forms may have ideological tendencies, but form in itself never fully determines spectator emotion or ideological effect.

THINKING ABOUT SPECTATOR EMOTION

V. F. Perkins notes that because when we view films 'our satisfaction is so directly involved, our experience is the more likely to contradict the film-

maker's statement wherever the meaning which he offers is less attractive than the one which we can take'. He gives the example of *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), in which screenwriter Carl Foreman's dialogue repeatedly argues the futility of war and the hollowness of victory, while the film's emotional dynamics invite us 'to share in the excitements, tensions and triumphs offered by the action.'¹⁴ The film establishes a contradiction between what is said to be futile and felt to be magnificent.

We need a language and a method to enable us to understand better the spectator's involvement in movies. I suggest the utility of a broadly cognitive approach, simply because it ties spectator emotion not only to private feelings and/or physiological responses, but to cognition—inferences, appraisals, judgements, hypotheses, etc. This approach to emotion was not born with cognitive theory, narrowly considered. While the cognitive science movement rose during the 1970s, the cognitive approach to emotion dates back at least to the ancients. Aristotle defines emotions as kinds of feeling caused by kinds of thinking. He defines fear, for example, as 'a sort of pain or agitation derived from the imagination of a future destructive or painful evil'.¹⁵ A cognitive approach, broadly considered, allows for differences in methodology and assumptions in the tradition of piecemeal theorizing advocated by Noël Carroll and others.¹⁶ The cognitivist assumptions here, for example, differ from mainstream cognitive science of the early 1980s, which bracketed emotions in relation to cognition and modelled the human mind after the electronic computer.¹⁷

A cognitive approach will be useful, in the first instance, because it transcends reductive characterizations of emotion. Much recent philosophy and psychology of the emotions has rejected the traditional assumption that emotion is the enemy of reason and critical judgement. It was once commonly thought that emotions were coextensive with feelings. Currently, many philosophers and psychologists would agree that no particular felt physical state represents either a necessary or sufficient condition for a specific emotional state. A cognitive approach holds that an emotional state is one in which some physical state of felt agitation is caused by an individual's construal and evaluation of his situation.¹⁸ In other words, my galvanic skin response and heart palpitations cannot define my emotions; what *particular* emotion I experience depends on my cognitions about my situation.¹⁹

Not only does thinking accompany and in many cases determine emotion, but emotions can themselves be rational or irrational. In the realm of practical reason, emotional response in some cases *just is* a rational (or appropriate) response to an event or circumstance, while lack of emotion may in some situations be irrational. Ronald de Sousa claims that emotion can be rational because it has the ability to guide reason, to make salient what needs attending to in a specific situation, and to initiate a response.²⁰

If we accept this, then we must grant that some emotions may be beneficial to the self and society. The relevant ideological issue then becomes not emotions *per se*, but distinguishing those which are benign or beneficial from those which are manipulative or harmful. While we should be suspicious of the manipulative nature of emotions, as Brecht is, a contemporary understanding of emotion leaves little ground for condemning emotion *tout court* as the enemy of reason.

Moreover, rather than positing universal ideological effects for film forms and styles, we should more usefully relate film form to narrative representations and to the kinds of cognitions and emotions such forms encourage. The fundamental tenet of a cognitive approach is that the spectator's affective experience is dependent on cognition, on mental activity cued not only by film form but also by story content. In viewing films, cognition would include inferences, hypotheses, and evaluative judgements. It is no great innovation to claim that spectator affective experience relates to theme, narrative information, story structure, character—all film elements which the spectator must perceive, think about, and evaluate. It is curious, then, that film theory has tended to neglect 'content' in its descriptions of spectator response, and has failed to theorize the place of cognition in spectator emotion.

To develop such an approach, we must first describe the film viewing situation. Emotion in film viewing can be understood only in light of the context in which it occurs—consisting of the situation of the spectator in the theatre or before a monitor, the spectator's understanding of that situation, and various physiological, cognitive, and emotional responses to the images and sounds and what they represent. Psychoanalytic film theory has typically explained the impression of reality and the affective intensity of movies by an appeal to epistemic illusion. We mistake the image for what it represents, or mistake an absence for a presence. However, we do not require the concept of illusion to account for spectator experience, and in fact, as others have argued, a description of our engagement with fictions as epistemically illusory would seem to require that spectators behave differently from the way they do.²¹ Contrary to most theories of illusion, the spectator must have a consistent awareness that what he views is artificial and that he is outside the fictional world. As Perkins writes, we 'enter the film situation but it remains separate from ourselves as our own dreams and experiences do not'.²²

When we view a fiction film we participate in a ritual designed by the institutions that bring us movies.²³ When we assent to the narrative of a film and become 'absorbed' or 'immersed', we accept an emotional role. We entertain the fiction in our imagination, and it moves us, yet we have a consistent background awareness of its artificiality. This concurrent and dual awareness might be compared to that of an actor who may experience

emotions similar to those of the character he plays, but who cannot relinquish his sense of a self separate from the role. This dual and concurrent awareness enables the actor to *act* the role, since a loss of awareness of the acting situation would also entail loss of the ability to act the role.²⁴ Similarly, a spectator who loses awareness of his ritual situation would have a harder time sitting still when pursued by the Tyrannosaurus Rex in *Jurassic Park*, or abiding any narrative event which, in absence of an awareness of its artificiality, would cause unbearable emotional stress.

If our response to film events cannot be characterized as one of epistemic illusion, then how do we account for the affective power of movies? In other words, why am I moved by Charles Foster Kane's predicament, if I understand that he does not exist? 'Pretend theory' and 'thought theory' are the two main explanations of emotional responses to fiction offered by contemporary philosophy. The 'pretend theory' derives from Kendall Walton and Gregory Currie, who argue that our responses to fiction involve 'make-believe' or a kind of pretending.²⁵ The 'thought theory', on the other hand, simply proposes that we can have real affective responses not only to actual events but also to those we imagine.²⁶ For example, I may wince when I imagine someone's big toe being smashed by a hammer or feel sadness when I imagine the death of a loved one. I cannot parcel out the differences between these views here. They both offer plausible explanations of how our responses to fiction might be characterized in the absence of epistemic illusion.

Murray Smith argues that the cinema blends on the one hand, complex narrative scenarios with which we engage imaginatively and, on the other, a striking sensual and perceptual experience not found in literature.²⁷ Moreover, the photographic and sonic qualities of this experience, although representing fictional and sometimes fantastical events, can have a remarkable quality of perceptual realism.²⁸ Faced with moving photographs of a toe being smashed (coupled with the appropriate crunching noise), the perceptual realism of the representation makes my wincing almost involuntary.

We 'enter' the fictional world in part through developing a bond of allegiance with one or more characters. This orients us toward the narrative events and is essential in eliciting the desired emotional response. Whether we laugh or cry or feel suspense during a scene often depends on our estimation of its significance for characters.²⁹ Smith describes what he calls a structure of sympathy, consisting of three aspects: (1) the viewer's recognition of character traits and emotions, (2) alignment with characters through perceptual and epistemic means (point-of-view structures or voice-over narration, for example), and (3) an allegiance toward characters that is based on a moral evaluation.³⁰

Critics sometimes assume that character identification is an either/or phenomenon, such that either we identify with a character, in which case we unproblematically lend him our complete allegiance, or we do *not* identify and take an attitude ranging from antipathy to indifference. Some notions of identification attribute a kind of identity of thought and emotion between spectator and character, during which the spectator loses a sense of separate selfhood. Smith's analysis of the structures of sympathy shows that our response to characters is typically exterior, from the standpoint of an evaluating self outside the fictional world, that our perceptual or epistemic alignment with characters does not necessarily imply allegiance toward them, and that, as a key component in determining emotional response to a scene, our allegiance with a character (or antipathy toward him or her) may be complex, ambiguous, and may change over the course of the narrative. If our engagement with a character is conflicted, then our emotions and judgements will be so as well.

In mainstream films, allegiances with and antipathy toward characters orient us. What we are oriented *toward*, and respond to, are characters in narrative situations. Emotional response both inside and outside the theatre depends in part on our evaluation of a situation or scenario. For example, two persons stand in a dark alley. A figure approaches from the shadows. Person A recognizes him as a friend and responds with relief, while Person B thinks him a sinister-looking stranger and becomes fearful. Clearly, these different emotional responses depend on contrary evaluations of the situation. Richard Lazarus argues that emotions can be differentiated according to various relational themes or ways a situation relates to an individual. Anger occurs when I recognize a demeaning offence against me or mine. Guilt arises when I believe I have transgressed a moral imperative. Jealousy comes from resenting a third party for the loss of, or threat to, another's affection or favour. Sadness occurs when we experience an irrevocable loss.³¹

A film also presents a continuously evolving narrative situation, a script or scenario, for the appraisal of the audience. We experience diverse emotions based on these paradigmatic scenarios. One may be curious during a mystery, feel suspense during a thriller, be sad during an unhappy ending, be fearful when the jeep is chased by the Tyrannosaurus Rex in *Jurassic Park*, be shocked during the murder sequence of *Psycho*, be compassionate and angry during *El Norte*, or be sentimental when Rock Hudson restores Jane Wyman's sight and the lovers look forward to a promising 'tomorrow' in *Magnificent Obsession*.³² It is unlikely that a narrative scenario will elicit a single emotion; more often our response is mixed and complex. In *Rear Window*, for example, an audience may experience a mixture of interest, curiosity, and guilt about Jeff (James Stewart) spying on his neighbours. Thus emotional response depends not only on film form and style but also

on narrative 'content'—our evaluation of character, narrative situation, theme, etc.

One issue still to be addressed is spectator difference. Many film scholars have rejected the model of the spectator as passive and defenceless against a film which 'positions them'. Among some, more or less empirical investigations of the spectator or of contexts for spectatorship have replaced straight theoretical explanations. The relevant issues then become not how films determine spectator response but what spectators bring to a film that influences their response, and how contextual factors delimit spectator responses and interpretations.³³ Emotion research not only in philosophy, but in psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, and other disciplines, offers significant potential to expand on such studies, by showing how cultural factors influence emotional response.³⁴

However, when we justifiably reject the claim that films *determine* spectator response, we should not characterize films as 'blank pages' or 'empty receptacles' and spectator response as wholly determined by contextual and individual factors. When viewing a film, spectators may have a wide variety of responses. Yet any examination of spectator psychology must assume that one important kind of response will be congruent with the implicit intentions of the film, even while recognizing the possibility of incongruent and even oppositional responses. It should not be a matter of determining whether text or context is most important, as though one should reign supreme. Audience response lies at the intersections of individual and general spectator characteristics, specific context, and textual cues.

SPECTATOR EMOTIONS AND IDEOLOGY

Contemporary film critics have written as though viewers were 'positioned' by films. Such claims are rooted in Lacanian and Althusserian theories of the individual as the intersection of exterior social forces. The theory of 'subject positioning' implies that human choice has no place in film viewing, and that the passive viewing subject is wholly determined—subjected and positioned—by textual operations. Part of this idea seems plausible. It is true that when the viewer becomes absorbed in a film, and allows himself to experience congruent emotions, he takes on what could be called an 'emotional role' or position.

We rarely view films indiscriminately, but decide what films to view in part for the kind of experience they offer. This sometimes has little to do with aesthetics; while I may admire Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull* as a work of art, I may nonetheless limit my viewings because its brutality and graphic violence disturb me. Alternatively, the sentimental pleasures of films such as *Mr Holland's Opus* could offer the kind of experience I seek, even if I do not

expect a first-rate film. The emotional roles movies afford are not only something to which we are subjected; we choose to subject ourselves to them.

Hollywood has concocted various means for advertising the kind of emotional role each film offers—through genres which repeat similar experiences, sequels, the typecasting of stars, previews, and advertising. Whether a movie will offer a story of hatred and revenge, 'dangerous' sex, family melodrama, the pleasures of curiosity associated with mystery, or the ironic distance combined with graphic violence of a Quentin Tarantino film, we often have a general sense of the kind of experience it may offer, before we view the film.³⁵ Some of my female students report having difficulty getting their male friends to see what are derogatorily called 'chick flicks'; these films offer experiences these young men think inappropriate or uninteresting for males. In fact, one could characterize Hollywood genres in part according to the basic emotional responses they afford. The melodrama offers sentiment, the horror film elicits what Noël Carroll calls 'art horror',³⁶ certain westerns satisfy vengeance, comedies amuse, mysteries encourage curiosity and suspense, adventures excitement, etc.

However circumscribed by social convention, we nonetheless choose from a diverse palette of emotions at the cinema, ranging from compassion and pity to vengefulness and contempt. Amidst this diversity, I should like to examine two kinds of experiences with a view toward initiating a discussion of their ideological import. They are, first, sentiment and sentimentality and, second, the emotions which accompany screen violence. My purpose is not primarily to take a particular ideological stance toward these. Rather, I wish to show how we might think of emotion in relation to ideology without resorting to ethical formalism and stoicism. Emotion, as these examples show, depends on *and* informs belief.

SENTIMENTALITY

It is sentimentality, rather than vengeance, contempt, or hatred, that has sparked the most interest among aestheticians, and suffered the heaping scorn of critics. While sentimentality (*false* or *unearned* sentiment) is often the object of condemnation, even sentiment more broadly considered (any tender, romantic, or nostalgic response) is also held under suspicion. Sentiment is most often associated with the family melodrama and especially the 'woman's film'. Perhaps the most influential strain of film melodrama criticism, established by Thomas Elsaesser, holds that 'sophisticated family melodramas' such as those of Douglas Sirk (e.g. *Magnificent Obsession*, *All That Heaven Allows*, *Written on the Wind*, *Imitation of Life*) are self-consciously Brechtian and distance their audience mainly through the irony

of exaggerated *mise en scène* and extravagant endings.³⁷ However accurate Elsaesser's claims are in relation to Sirk's intentions, this line is unpromising for us because it implicitly assumes, in Brechtian fashion, that the congruent emotions of melodramas are illicit, and that social criticism or critical judgement must come through distancing and alienation. While it is a contingent fact that many melodramas are socially conservative (in which case congruent emotions would parallel the text's ideology) I see nothing inherent in the form or in the emotions melodramas elicit to determine that they will necessarily embody any particular ideological position.

Critics such as Molly Haskell argue that the denigration of sentiment is related to a devaluation of the kinds of narrative concerns which elicit sentiment, such as love, romance, loss of virginity, etc., and discomfort with the kinds of pleasures such films offer. From this perspective come references to 'the weepies', 'wet, wasted afternoons', wish fulfilment, and glorious martyrdom. As Haskell writes, contempt for the women's film is a general cultural attitude, 'conveyed in the snickering response of the supermale, himself a more sophisticated version of the little boy who holds his nose and groans during the hugging and kissing scenes'.³⁸

Psychoanalytic attempts to explain the appeal of melodrama resort to broad dichotomies between feminine and masculine desire, and, unpromisingly, tend to ally femininity (and 'feminine' emotions) with hysteria, early stages of childhood development, etc. Robert Lang, for example, puts the 'feminine' on the side of Lacan's Imaginary and Freud's pre-Oedipal stage, and the 'masculine' on the side of the Symbolic and thus language. Melodrama is a 'feminine' form because it is 'allied' with the Imaginary: 'It is towards bliss, the shattering of boundaries, the subversion of the Symbolic, in music, all moments of excess, nonsense, perhaps all emotion itself.' Underlying this dichotomy is the traditional reason/emotion split, associating masculinity with reason, and femininity with emotion and the irrational. In this case, however, the latter is valued against the former. As Lang writes, the 'melodrama is a crusade against the Symbolic function's *inhibiting imperatives*'.³⁹ Mary Ann Doane locates the pleasure of melodrama in a desire for the condition of desiring itself and points as evidence to its representation of love as a barely controlled hysteria. Thus the melodrama raises from the unconscious that ineffable condition of unconstrained desire.⁴⁰

One trouble with these accounts is that they draw sharp dichotomies between the masculine and the feminine. Although they emerge from a feminist perspective, they ally the feminine with irrationality and the ineffable and thus work to preserve harmful stereotypes. These accounts also trivialize what melodramas are about—the issues Haskell claims are defined as women's issues—by downplaying them. We need not appeal first to unconscious processes to understand the spectator emotions elicited by

melodrama. Stories of love and relationships have an affective basis in the kinds of characters and narrative situations they represent, in the spectator's appraisal of those elements, and in relation to the film's manner of representation.

Claims and prejudices against sentimentality are by no means universally accepted, and the debate underscores the complexity of appraising the ideological nature of any spectator emotion. Philosopher Robert C. Solomon argues that 'there is nothing wrong with sentimentality', and that the prejudice against sentimentality and soft emotions 'is an extension of that all-too-familiar contempt for the passions in Western literature and philosophy. Our disdain for sentimentality is the rationalist's discomfort with any display of emotion.'⁴¹ In *Mr Holland's Opus*, one scene finds Holland (Richard Dreyfuss) before a large audience, singing (or rather, intoning) John Lennon's 'Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)' to his deaf son. A *New Yorker* film critic calls the scene a 'slow-torture concert sequence', illustrating Solomon's contention that sentimentality causes discomfort in some of us.⁴² Yet Solomon's argument tends to collapse sentiment and sentimentality, as though sentiment were coextensive with the maudlin and mawkish; those who find immorality in sentimentality do not necessarily condemn all sentiment.

Recognizing the sexism which devalues 'feminine' concerns and emotions goes some way toward combating masculinist prohibitions against warming one's heart cockles. But it does not help us to distinguish appropriate sentiment from sentimentality or, more bluntly, good sentiment from bad. If we agree that sentimentality is 'unearned' emotion, then, in principle at least, there must be the earned sort as well. How does one tell the difference?

What is completely lacking in film studies discussions of melodrama is any sustained consideration of the nature and consequences of sentiment and sentimentality as spectator emotions. Here philosophy can clearly be of use. False or unearned sentiment has been maligned as not only distasteful but immoral. 'Being sentimental', Mary Midgeley writes, 'is misrepresenting the world in order to indulge our feelings.' It is a 'howling self-deception', she goes on, and a 'distortion of the world'.⁴³ Mark Jefferson adds that sentimentality is grounded in a fiction of innocence, emphasizing the 'sweetness, dearness, littleness, blamelessness, and vulnerability of the emotion's objects'.⁴⁴ And as Anthony Savile writes, sentimentality not only requires the idealization of the object but also contributes to self-righteousness or self-deception in encouraging a 'gratifying image of the self as compassionate, righteous, or just'.⁴⁵

If we grant that sentimentality idealizes its object, we still must know why that makes it immoral and ideologically dangerous. Jefferson claims that sentimentality impairs one's moral vision, especially when the objects of

sentimentality are persons or countries. As an emotional response, it is based in an often wilful determination to disguise and idealize the actual nature of the object, to ensure the narcissistic and pleasurable emotional response that sentimentality brings. Moreover, as both Midgeley and Jefferson claim, sentimentality is implicated in a brutality stemming from vilification rather than idealization. As Jefferson writes, the 'unlikely creature and moral caricature that is someone unambiguously worthy of sympathetic response has its natural counterpart in a moral caricature of something unambiguously worthy of hatred'.⁴⁶ Thus sentimentality may contribute to an emotional culture that also produces animosity toward a vilified other.⁴⁷

It is one thing, however, to say what sentimentality *is* and another to determine whether a particular scene or film is sentimental. Since it involves charges of misrepresentation, distortion, and self-deception, sentimentality is a matter of interpretation. In *City Lights*, Chaplin's character falls in love with a blind flower vendor, who thinks him a benevolent millionaire. Through many trials and tribulations, he raises the money needed for an operation to restore her sight. After a stint in jail, he is set free and discovers that she can now see. Now running a flower shop, the cured woman offers the ragged tramp a coin. After touching his hands and face, she realizes who he is. Her look of disappointment is followed by Chaplin's poignant smile, and the film ends.

If her response had been one of unambiguous joy in rediscovering her benefactor, and the film had implied the usual romance 'happily ever after', then it would clearly be sentimental, a self-deceptive denial that economic class, power, and appearances do compromise romantic love. However, the film implies that although the tramp's love is sincere and selfless, his social standing will probably interfere with any future relationship. On this interpretation, *City Lights* escapes sentimentality. Yet matters are not so simple, and the cynic might reply that the scene is nonetheless sentimental in its representation of the tramp's love as blameless, sweet, vulnerable, and pure. Through our allegiance with the tramp and our experience of congruent emotions, we celebrate a gratifying image of ourselves as compassionate, righteous, and just—because we recognize his selfless love in a cruel world and respond to it emotionally. My point is not to come to a final determination about whether *City Lights* is or is not sentimental. Rather it is to suggest that this type of discussion is useful because it relates emotion to belief and value.

Emotion is a process. The ideological criticism of spectator emotion must consider not simply individual occurrences of spectator emotion, but the trajectory of responses a film elicits. Any spectator emotion, whether 'good' or 'bad' in itself, can be used for unfortunate rhetorical ends. That is, if we grant that sentiment is in itself ideologically neutral or

even beneficial, sentiment can play a part in a questionable ideological project. The above discussion of sentimentality and sentiment implies that some emotions are by definition ideologically problematic. Yet a film may elicit sentimentality (or envy, jealousy, etc.) for the purpose of criticizing it. Ideological criticism may begin with considerations of individual spectator emotions, but must then appraise those emotions in narrative context.

VIOLENCE

The consistent attention in the popular press to screen violence tends to cast the problem as one of the sheer numbers of violent acts represented. Thus researchers and journalists often count the murders and assaults a teenager is likely to view over a span of time. Certainly this is one important aspect of screen violence and it relates to the issue of 'desensitization'. More telling, however, are considerations of how the spectator's involvement and affective experience are played into narratives of violence. What kind of affective experience do we have, for example, when absorbed in a narrative of revenge and killing? If we have allegiance with a protagonist who has been horribly wronged and becomes vengeful, do we become vengeful toward the wrongdoers?

In the *Death Wish* series (1974-87), for example, the narratives are designed to offer the pleasures of vengeance. In the first film, the wife of Paul Kersey (Charles Bronson) is killed and his daughter assaulted by street thugs. In this and the next three films (*Death Wish II, III, and IV*), Kersey exacts revenge on the thugs and then, seeking new targets for further vengeance, attacks any wrongdoer who falls across his path. Kersey's vengeance is represented as 'just', and the criminals so unproblematically evil and unattractive that the spectator is cued to experience emotions such as hatred, disgust, contempt, and vengefulness. Yet these are *spectator* emotions in that they are tempered by a knowledge of the ritual viewing situation and by an implicit awareness that events are guided by a narration.⁴⁸

Nonetheless, although our vengeance at the movies is *spectator* vengeance, it is cued by scenarios that have a counterpart in actual events and may encourage a kind of thinking similar in some respects to that of the protagonist's extreme violence, the viewer must deny both the banality and the complexity of evil. To encourage our unmitigated hatred, the wrongdoing must be excessively obvious and the wrongdoers beneath contempt. Accordingly, both vengefulness and contempt may be rooted in epistemic distortions related to those that allow for sentimentality.

Richard Slotkin, in *Gunfighter Nation*, has claimed that all traditional westerns embody a myth of regenerative and purgative violence.⁴⁹ In the western, the means of cleansing the self and society of the Other is through ritual violence, typically reaching its climax in the final confrontation at the film's end. What I would add is that this climactic violent scene, so common in the western, is regenerative not only thematically but also through its function in the spectator's affective trajectory. In *High Noon*, for example, Sheriff Kane (Gary Cooper) is not only shown to be good and just while his opponents are shown to be evil and unlawful. The film also builds up intense suspense through an emphasis on clocks, deadlines, the danger to Kane's life, and conflicts with his wife. The shoot-out not only resolves a moral tension but also becomes a purgative release from the tensions the film cultivates. Thus violence plays into the spectator's release and satisfaction, a satisfaction that depends on both cognitive *and* affective factors. This is in part how westerns make violence seem attractive.

In the western, violence can become a spectacle, pleasurable for its own sake. But this requires conventional treatment. In this regard, the treatment of violence in *Unforgiven* warrants special attention. *Unforgiven* treats violence differently from most westerns, at least until the obligatory shoot-out at its end. In the film, William Munny (Clint Eastwood) and two sidekicks have come to Big Whiskey to kill two cowboys for assaulting a woman. The motive of Munny and company is bounty money, but they have been exaggerating stories about the assault to rationalize their intentions. Several scenes in *Unforgiven* complicate our response to violence through ambiguous allegiances and confusing event-scenarios. Most notable is the scene where Munny and his two assistants ambush and kill 'Davey Boy', as Davey and his friends rope cattle in a canyon.

The scene withholds many of the psychological props that normally justify the hero's killing in westerns and make it satisfying and pleasurable. Although Davey played an ambiguous role in the brutal assault on Delilah, he has attempted to make amends by offering the victim his finest pony; our sympathies are with him on some level, complicating appeals to 'just deserts'. Munny and company ambush the cowboy, shooting him with a rifle from some rocks above; gone are all notions of the fair fight to which most westerns appeal. Killing is often made fun through the talent of the hero, whose skilful gunplay becomes a kind of fetish which distracts our attention from the import of his actions; Munny's killing here is almost inept, since he is a bad shot and requires all his ammunition to finish off the cowboy. Unlike scenes of killing in most westerns, here we concentrate on the suffering of the victim, as Davey, realizing he is dying, pleads for water. Munny's response is itself conflicted, as is that of his cohorts. If Munny himself is unsure about what he has done, then how can we be satisfied with it?

In this scene *Unforgiven* problematizes our reaction to violence on a thematic and affective level, by presenting a narrative event which withholds the typical justifications of violence, and the pleasures violence affords the spectator. Unfortunately, the climactic shoot-out at the end of the film participates in the same myth of regeneration through violence that the typical western promotes and which the film had criticized up to that point.

Screen violence is prevalent in part because it is a sure method to generate affect, and the pleasurable affect films typically use to promote screen violence in turn ensures that the practice will continue. Violence has become such a prevalent subject in mainstream film that many of us consider it a 'natural' subject for the movies. We must reclaim our sense that we may legitimately demand more humane popular art, less dependent on spectator emotions such as simplistic contempt and vengefulness.

THE RHETORIC OF SPECTATOR EMOTION

A 'weak' social constructionist approach to emotion would argue that although some emotions may be 'natural' or universal, our emotional lives are learned and culture-bound. Cognitive approaches to affect are useful in charting the paradigm scenarios, or emotion schemata, into which a culture 'educates' its members.⁵⁰ The cognitive approach also suggests how films might figure into that process, by creating, altering, and/or promoting scenarios for behaviour and emotional response. Narrative schemata such as the revenge plot of the *Death Wish* series can become stereotypes just as character types can, presenting a 'script' for vengefulness. Noël Carroll suggests that paradigm scenarios in film may also affect male emotional responses to women. For example, what Carroll calls the '*Fatal Attraction* scenario', tends to 'demote the ex-lover to the status of an irrational creature and to regard her claims as a form of persecution'.⁵¹

Through repetition and promotion (making the scenario seem natural, morally correct, or in accordance with 'advanced' tastes and attitudes), narrative paradigm scenarios influence our emotional lives. Our emotional experience at the movies may affect our ways of thinking and thus reinforce or alter the emotion schemata we apply to actual situations. Our responses to films depend on our culture's moral order and can function to prescribe and proscribe thought, feeling, behaviour, and values.

In this chapter I have argued for a cognitive approach to the rhetoric of spectator emotion. My discussion of sentimentality and screen violence is meant to suggest how such an approach would begin a discussion of the ideological import of spectator emotions. Spectator emotions have a powerful rhetorical force because they involve thinking, belief, and evaluation. In

fact, one cannot have spectator emotions without the kinds of evaluations that relate narratives to our ideological concerns.

NOTES

1. Robert Stam, Robert Burgoyne, and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics* (London: Routledge, 1992), 124.
2. *Brecht on Theater*, ed. and trans. John Willet (New York: Hill & Wang, 1964), 14. References to Willet's translation are made parenthetically within the text.
3. See also Murray Smith, 'The Logic and Legacy of Brechtianism', in David Bordwell and Noël Carroll (eds.), *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 130-48.
4. Here I am bracketing the question of whether amusement is, strictly speaking, an emotion. It is at least an affective state, and thus has the same rhetorical potential as screen emotions proper. For those interested in this debate, see Robert Sharpe, 'Seven Reasons Why Humor is an Emotion', and John Morreall, 'Humor and Emotion', both in John Morreall (ed.), *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 208-24.
5. Sigmund Freud, 'The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming', in *Creativity and the Unconscious* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), 44-54.
6. See Berys Gaut, 'On Cinema and Perversion', *Film and Philosophy*, 1 (1994), 3-17.
7. See Jean-Louis Baudry, 'The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in the Cinema', Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and the Narrative Cinema', and Gaylyn Studlar, 'Masochism and the Perverse Pleasures of the Cinema', all in Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen, and Leo Braudy (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism*, 4th edn. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 690-707; 748; 773-90.
8. The most thorough critique of contemporary 'apparatus' theory is found in Noël Carroll's *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
9. I propose an account of the pleasures of the cinema in 'Movie Pleasures and the Spectator's Experience: Toward a Cognitive Approach', *Philosophy and Film*, 2 (1995), 3-19.
10. While philosophy cannot presume that an appeal to conceptual clarification will resolve a debate about ethical stoicism, this says little against either philosophy or conceptual clarification. It does reveal much about the intransigence of our ethical beliefs.
11. For a useful commentary on these issues, see Dana Polan, 'A Brechtian Cinema? Towards a Self-Reflexive Film', in Bill Nichols (ed.), *Movies and Methods*, vol. ii (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 661-72.
12. *Representing Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 67.
13. Stam et al., *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*, 202. For a more extensive discussion of reflexivity in non-fiction film, see ch. 10 of my *Rhetoric and Representation in Non-fiction Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
14. *Film as Film: Understanding and Judging Movies* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972), 149.
15. *On Rhetoric*, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 139.
16. 'Prospects for Film Theory: A Personal Assessment', in *Post-Theory*, 37-68.
17. For an account of the assumptions of mainstream cognitive science of the last decade,

- see Howard Gardner's *The Mind's New Science: A History of the Cognitive Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 5-7.
18. A discussion of what he calls the cognitive/evaluative approach to emotion is found in Noël Carroll's *The Philosophy of Horror* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 24-7.
 19. Philosophical discussions of the cognitive theory of emotion can be found, for example, in W. Lyons, *Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); and Robert M. Gordon, *The Structure of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
 20. *The Rationality of the Emotions* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987). Of course, emotion can also lead us astray. The claim is that emotion and reason are not necessarily opposed, not that they are never opposed.
 21. For critical discussions of the notion of illusion, see Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, 63-8; and Murray Smith, 'Film Spectatorship and the Institution of Fiction', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 53: 2 (Spring 1995), 113-27. Richard Allen argues that we should preserve a form of the notion of illusion in his *Projecting Illusion: Film Spectatorship and the Impression of Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
 22. *Film as Film*, 140.
 23. Smith, 'Film Spectatorship and the Institution of Fiction'.
 24. I have heard anecdotes about stage actors who 'forget' they are acting, momentarily 'become' their character, and cease to follow the script or play to the audience. Such incidents are rare, however, and an actor prone to such behaviour would soon be unemployed.
 25. See Gregory Currie, *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).
 26. See Peter Lamarque, 'How Can We Fear and Pity Fictions?', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 21: 4 (Autumn 1981); id., 'Fiction and Reality', in Peter Lamarque (ed.), *Philosophy and Fiction* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1983); id., 'Bits and Pieces of Fiction', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 24: 1 (Winter 1984). Also see Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, 79-88.
 27. 'Film Spectatorship and the Institution of Fiction', 118-20.
 28. On the homologies between perceiving photographic images and natural perception, see Stephen Prince, 'The Discourse of Pictures: Iconicity and Film Studies', *Film Quarterly*, 47: 1 (Fall 1993), 12-24, and Paul Messaris, *Visual Literacy: Image, Mind, and Reality* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994). Point-of-view editing and moving photographs of facial expressions, both specific to film and television, also play a central role in the expression and evocation of emotion.
 29. Alfred Hitchcock points out that emotional response does not require allegiance with a character, but is aided by such allegiance; 'A curious person goes into somebody else's room and begins to search through the drawers. Now, you show the person who lives in that room coming up the stairs. Then you go back to the person who is searching, and the public feels like warning him, "Be careful, watch out. Someone's coming up the stairs." Therefore, even if the snooper is not a likable character, the audience will still feel anxiety for him. Of course, when the character is attractive, as for instance Grace Kelly in *Rear Window*, the public's emotion is greatly intensified.' François Truffaut, *Hitchcock* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), 73.
 30. *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). Smith's division of the structure of sympathy neatly separates significant and distinct aspects of character identification. My only quibble is with the term 'recognition'. Smith holds that the spectator constructs the character through a series of inferences. My inclination would be to term the phenomenon 'disclosure', since the film reveals emotional information about a character through facial expression, gesture, voice, music, lighting, and a host of other devices. In other words, while

- allegiance is something the spectator lends the character, alignment and disclosure (or what Smith calls recognition) are more or less functions of the film more than activities of the spectator. Alex Neill argues that spectators *empathize* with characters, and, furthermore, that such empathy may have beneficial effects, in 'Empathy and (Film) Fiction', in Bordwell and Carroll, *Post-Theory*, 175-94.
31. *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
 32. See my 'Affect, Cognition, and the Power of Movies', *Post Script*, 13: 1 (Fall 93), 10-29.
 33. See, for example, Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (London: Routledge, 1994); Charles J. Maland, *Chaplin and American Culture: The Evolution of a Star Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of the American Cinema* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Eric Smoodin, "'Compulsory" Viewing for Every Citizen: Mr. Smith and the Rhetoric of Reception', *Cinema Journal*, 35: 2 (Winter 1996), 3-23; Jacqueline Bobo, 'Reading through the Text: The Black Woman as Audience', in Manthia Diawara (ed.), *Black American Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 272-87.
 34. For a broad survey of such research, see Michael Lewis and Jeannette M. Haviland, *Handbook of Emotions* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993), esp. Peter N. Stearns, 'History of Emotions: The Issue of Change', 17-28; Geoffrey M. White, 'Emotions Inside Out: The Anthropology of Affect', 29-40; Keith Oatley, 'Social Construction in Emotions', 341-52; Richard Sweder, 'The Cultural Psychology of Emotions', 417-34; Carolyn Saarni, 'Socialization of Emotion', 435; Leslie R. Brody and Judith A. Hall, 'Gender and Emotion', 447-60.
 35. A former student told me that she had viewed *Steel Magnolias* at least twenty times, and that during each viewing she had a similar emotional experience. Certainly for her, the experience offered her a sought-after pleasure, or perhaps a cathartic or palliative effect.
 36. *The Philosophy of Horror*.
 37. 'Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama', *Monogram*, 4 (1972), 2-15; repr. in Christine Gledhill (ed.), *Home is Where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Women's Film* (London: BFI, 1987), 43-69; and Marcia Landy (ed.), *Imitations of Life: Film and Television Melodrama* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 68-91.
 38. *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*, 2nd edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 13, 154.
 39. *American Film Melodrama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 27, 228.
 40. *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).
 41. 'In Defense of Sentimentality', *Philosophy and Literature*, 14 (1990), 305.
 42. James Wolcott, 'The Love Bug', *New Yorker* (29 Jan. 1996), 93.
 43. 'Brutality and Sentimentality', *Philosophy*, 54 (1979), 385.
 44. 'What is Wrong with Sentimentality?', *Mind*, 92 (1983), 524.
 45. Quoted from Savile's *The Test of Time* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) in Marcia Muelder Eaton, 'Laughing at the Death of Little Nell: Sentimental Art and Sentimental People', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 26: 4 (Oct. 1989), 273.
 46. Jefferson, 'What is Wrong with Sentimentality?', 527.
 47. Sentimentality may be the flipside of racism as well as brutality. Consider the combination of racism and sentimentality in the films of D. W. Griffith, for example. His sentimental portrayal of women in *Broken Blossoms* and *The Birth of a Nation* does seem implicated in his racist portrayals of African-Americans and Asians. Both require misrepresenting the nature of kinds of human beings.
 48. Noël Carroll writes of this type of second order response in *The Philosophy of Horror*, as does Murray Smith in 'Film Spectatorship and the Institution of Fiction'.

49. *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), 1-28.
50. See, for example, Hazel Markus and Shinobu Kitayama, *Emotion and Culture* (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1994).
51. 'The Image of Women in Film: A Defense of a Paradigm', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 48: 4 (Fall 1990), 357.