



Passionate Views: Film, Cognition, and Emotion

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The movie theater has always been a place where people come together to share powerful emotional experiences, from the fear generated by horror films and the anxiety induced by thrillers to the laughter elicited by screwball comedies and the tears precipitated by melodramas. Indeed, the dependability of movies to provide such experiences lies at the center of the medium's appeal and power. Yet cinema's ability to influence, even manipulate, the emotions of the spectator is one of the least-explored topics in film theory today.

In *Passionate Views*, thirteen internationally recognized scholars of film studies, philosophy, and psychology explore the emotional appeal of the cinema. Employing a novel cognitive perspective, the volume investigates the relationship between genre and emotion; explores how film narrative, music, and cinematic techniques such as the close-up are used to elicit emotion; and examines the spectator's identification with and response to film characters.

An impressive range of films and topics is brought together by Carl Plantinga and Greg M. Smith, including: the success of *Stella Dallas* and *An Affair to Remember* as tearjerkers; the power of *Night of the Living Dead* to inspire fear and disgust; the sublime evoked in *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*, and *The Children of Paradise*; the emotional basis of film comedy as seen in *When Harry Met Sally*; the use of cinematic cues in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Local Hero* to arouse emotions; the relationship between narrative flow and emotion in *Once Upon a Time in the West* and *E.T.*; the emotive use of music in *The Elephant Man* and *A Clockwork Orange*; *Stranger than Paradise's* sense of timing; desire and resolution in *Casablanca*; audience identification with the main characters in *Groundhog Day* and *The Crying Game*; portrayal of perversity in *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Flaming Creatures*, and *Shivers*; and empathy elicited through closeups of actors' faces in *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *Blade Runner*.

Passionate Views offers a new approach to our understanding of film and will be of interest to anyone fascinated by the emotional power of motion pictures and their relationship to the central concerns of our lives, as well as by the techniques filmmakers use to move an audience.

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