

Film Emotional Resonance

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Abstract

This study examines the emotional responses of film audiences, focusing on how diverse theoretical perspectives illuminate the mechanisms of cinematic engagement. The research centers on four distinct and complementary theories of emotional engagement: cognitive theories, appraisal theories, affective theories, and aesthetic theories. Cognitive theories explore how viewers process information, form expectations, and construct meaning, influencing their emotional reactions. Appraisal theories, building on cognitive foundations, focus on how individuals evaluate cinematic stimuli based on their personal relevance, leading to a spectrum of emotions. Affective theories emphasize the direct, cognitive impact of filmic elements such as narrative composition on the viewer. Aesthetic theories consider the role of artistic form and style in eliciting emotional responses. Key elements of film studies are explored to understand the connection between the movie and the spectator, including cinematography, character arcs, mise-en-scene; video editing; and film sound. Through a selection of case studies, incorporating qualitative research and contextual analyses, this paper aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how audiences emotionally connect with films, offering insights for academic film studies and the practice of filmmaking.

Keywords

Film, Narrative, Storytelling, Emotional Engagement, Audience, Theory

Short Biography

Cedric van Eenoo is an award winning artist, musician, filmmaker and scholar. He is a member of Brooklyn Arts Council, New York Art Center, Manhattan Graphics Center, and affiliated with Temple University.