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Our emotional responses to cinematic works have two kinds of objects. We may be awed by the beauty of a film, admire its editing, use of sound, or deployment of technology. This kind of emotions, which Carl Plantinga (2009) has dubbed "artifact emotions" (74), is directed at the film itself. A second kind of emotions—call them "representational emotions"—is directed at the story events or characters represented in the film. Story-directed emotions include feelings of suspense and curiosity; character-directed emotions include fearing for them, getting angry at them, admiring them, and so on. Both artifact and representational emotions are important in our experience of films.

There is considerable disagreement among film theorists and philosophers about the nature and explanation of character-directed emotions (i.e., about the sort of *emotional engagement* that we have with characters). Some, including Amy Coplan (2004, 2009), Torben Grodal (1997, chap. 4), Alex Neill (1996), Murray Smith (1995, 1997), and Berys Gaut (1999; 2010, chap. 6), maintain that film audiences can identify or empathize with characters and that this is an important aspect of their emotional engagement with characters. Others, such as Noël Carroll (1990, 88–96; 1998, chaps. 4 and 5; 2004; 2007; 2008, chap. 6) and Carl Plantinga (1999; 2009, 97–106), argue that identification with characters never or hardly ever occurs, and neither does empathy insofar as it closely related to the notion of identification. According to them the predominant attitude toward characters is one of sympathy or antipathy. Carroll (1998, 350; cf. 1990, 95–96), who holds a stronger version of the anti-identification view than does Plantinga, maintains, "We respond to fictional situations as outside observers, *assimilating* our conception of the

character's mental state into our overall response as a sort of onlooker with respect to the situation in which the character finds himself . . . ." So in a rough-and-ready way, which will need clarification, we can distinguish between the claim that film viewers frequently imaginatively project themselves into characters' minds and respond emotionally from that perspective and the claim that viewers do not do so but that they respond as external observers of characters' plight. Call these two views the *identification* and the *assimilation* views.

Building on my earlier work on this topic, I will defend the identification view from the criticisms made of it by Carroll and Plantinga. My defense will involve clarifying the view; distinguishing two versions of it; elaborating it, particularly in respect of the role of imagination; and showing how it can survive the criticisms made against it. It will emerge that the identification view can and should allow for the adoption of an external perspective on characters and that it thereby acknowledges the existence of multiple modes of character engagement. A pluralist version of identification and weaker versions of the assimilation view will turn out to be entirely compatible.

1. IDENTIFICATION, EMPATHY, AND SYMPATHY

I begin by summarizing my version of the identification view (Gaut 1999; 2010, chap. 6) and elaborating it in certain respects.

In saying that I identify with someone, a target T, what do I mean? As we sometimes say, we "put ourselves in someone else's shoes." Here one means that one *imagines* oneself in that person's situation. Call this *imaginative identification*. The notion of someone's situation should be construed broadly so as to include not only her external situation but also all of her properties, including her mental ones—we can talk of imagining believing what she believes, imagining feeling what she feels, and so on. Since there are many aspects of a person's situation, identification is *aspectual*: I can identify with a person in respect of her beliefs, her feelings, her perceptions, and so on. To identify with some person, T, epistemically is to imagine believing what she believes; to identify with her affectively is to imagine feeling what she feels; to identify with her perceptually is to imagine seeing what she sees. We can refine this notion. In the case of fictional characters, we need to construe "what she believes" as "what it is fictional that she believes," and so on. Further, we need to rule out coincidences. Suppose that I imagine that a virus, intended to wipe out cancer, has destroyed virtually all humans apart from myself, leaving crazed and vicious mutants intent on killing me; and I imagine feeling anguish at the destruction of human life and terror of the mutants. I thereby imagine feeling what fictionally Robert Neville (Will Smith) feels in *I Am Legend* (2007), but it does not follow that I am affectively identifying with him in these respects: Perhaps I have never seen or even heard of the film. It is a mere coincidence that I imagine feeling what fictionally Neville feels. So I identify affectively with T in respect of emotion E just in case I imagine feeling E *because* I am aware that T is (fictionally) feeling E. The "because" here is not purely causal but should be understood in terms of my imaginings being *guided* by my awareness of what is (fictionally) the case so as to rule out deviant causal chains. One identifies *with*

someone and therefore must have a conception of her and the state that she is in, and this conception must guide one's imaginings. (Guidance clauses, *mutatis mutandis*, are also required for full specification of the other sorts of imaginative identification.)

Distinct from affective identification is *empathic identification* or empathy. We can imagine feeling terror at the near-destruction of humanity, but it is also possible actually to feel terror at this merely imagined scenario: We can feel genuine emotions toward merely imagined or fictional situations (Gaut 2007, chap. 9). And in nonfictional situations we often want our friends to empathize with us by actually feeling an emotion that we are feeling, not merely to imagine feeling such an emotion. That is, we want our friends to *share* in the emotions we are feeling. An imagined emotion is not an actual emotion, any more than imagined money is actual money: So affective identification is distinct from empathy. However, plausibly empathy requires imaginative identification in at least some aspects. It is a translation from the German *Einfühlung*, literally "feeling-into" someone's situation.[1] And, though I might feel what someone else feels without imagining things from her perspective, this would not comport with how we standardly talk of empathy, as feeling something, rooted in imaginatively grasping that person's perspective on the world and thereby sharing a sort of emotional intimacy with her. So my empathizing with T in respect of some emotion E requires me *actually* to feel E because I imagine myself in T's (fictional) situation in which she feels E. The "because" is again understood in the guidance sense, and imagining myself in T's situation is analyzed in terms of aspectual imaginative identification, as described above.

Distinct from both affective identification and empathy is sympathy. To sympathize with someone is to care for him, since he is suffering or his well-being is otherwise under threat, where this care is for him, for his own sake—the latter notion is required to rule out a merely instrumental interest in his well-being (Darwall 1998, 261). Antipathy, the antonymous concept, is a state of desiring that things go badly for him (though it is not required that we desire this for its own sake).

The distinction between identification and empathy, on the hand, and sympathy, on the other, is sometimes put in terms of imagining from the inside and imagining from the outside (Smith 1995, chap. 3; 1997). Smith's thought is that identification and empathy require imagining from the inside, whereas sympathy involves imagining from the outside. The concepts of identification and empathy as just characterized fit this distinction, provided we understand it aright. We need to contrast imagining feeling afraid and imagining that someone (perhaps yourself) feels afraid. Imagining feeling afraid is an example of *attributive imagining*, imagining some property's holding of oneself. Imagining that someone feels afraid is an example of *propositional imagining*, imagining that some proposition holds. The difference is not just one of logical form. If I imagine that something is the case,

1. "Empathy" was introduced in 1909 into English by Edward Titchener, who used it to translate Theodor Lipps's term "*Einfühlung*"; Lipps used it primarily in aesthetic contexts. See Stueber (2008).

there is always the possibility of misidentification: I may think I am imagining that Joe is wearing a hat but on reflection realize that I have mistaken him in my imaginings for John; for I may, when I reflect on my imagining, realize that the person I was imagining wearing the hat had John's properties, not Joe's. This is even possible in the case where I imagine that *I* am wearing a hat. On reflection I may realize that the person whom I was imagining was not me but someone else (this sort of thing can happen in dreams; or consider cases where I have a twin whom I have imagined instead of myself). But if I imagine wearing a hat there is no possibility of misidentifying whom I am imagining wearing the hat: It has to be me, since I am directly ascribing the hat-wearing property to myself. In short, attributive imagining exhibits immunity to error through misidentification, whereas propositional imagining does not.

My claim, then, is that identification and empathy *necessarily* involve imagining from the inside (or internal imagining as I'll also call it), where this is understood as attributive imagining. This is built into the concepts of both affective identification and empathy. Sympathy, in contrast, *may* involve imagining from the inside, for one can sympathize with someone whose perspective one imaginatively adopts; but it can instead involve imagining from the outside (or external imagining as I'll also call it). I can imagine that Joe is feeling sick and sympathize with him.

Richard Wollheim (1984, 72–76; 1987, 101–30) has provided an influential account that identifies "imagining from the inside" with what he terms "central imagining." Murray Smith (1995, chap. 3; 1997) and Peter Goldie (2000, 194–95) follow him in this. But the notions, at least as I am using the phrase "imagining from the inside," are slightly different. Wollheim (1984) requires that to imagine someone centrally one must be able to refer to that person and also form a "repertoire of substance" for him (74), that is, ascribe to him a set of dispositions to respond in various ways. But in imagining feeling afraid, imagining from the inside in my sense, I need have no conception of myself or of my repertoire: I could imagine being afraid even when completely amnesiac. Second, imagining from the inside in my sense is only a component of the notion of imaginative identification, which does require a conception of someone's situation; but centrally imagining someone *is* identifying with him, according to Wollheim (1987, 104, 129), who uses the term "identification" in this context when he talks of centrally imagining the internal spectator of a picture. And third, Wollheim (1984) denies that in centrally imagining I am imagining myself in someone's situation, for he objects that if that were so I could imagine meeting that person, and my imaginative project rules that out. For instance, if I am centrally imagining Sultan Mahomet II, this cannot be a matter of imagining myself in the Sultan's shoes, since then I could imagine meeting the Sultan, which is ruled out by my project (75–76). However, in imagining myself in someone's situation I imagine its salient features for my project; and, as I am construing it, a person's situation includes all of his properties, including modal properties such as being such that he necessarily cannot meet himself; so my imaginative project rules out the possibility of meeting the Sultan while imagining myself in his situation. Hence, though closely related, my sense of "imagining from the inside" is distinct from Wollheim's and captures, I suggest, the ordinary sense of the phrase better.

There is a second kind of imagining that is easy to confuse with internal imagining: This is phenomenal imagining, imagining that has a phenomenal quality. Examples include imagining what it is like to feel, hear, and see something. Besides imagining feelings, I can imagine beliefs and other purely cognitive states. But there need be nothing it is like to believe something. So imagining from the inside may be phenomenal, but it need not be. Imagining from the outside may also be either phenomenal or not. Imagining that the cat is on the mat need not be phenomenal, but if I visualize the cat on the mat, it is. Visual imagining (a type of propositional imagining) is not the same as imagining seeing (a type of attributive imagining). For I can imagine visually (my imaginings have a visual mode of presentation) without imagining seeing something and therefore imagining being part of the scene imagined. I can, for instance, visually imagine an unseen murder, which would require imagining a contradiction if visual imagination required imagining seeing (Currie 1995, 170–79). So the attributive/propositional imagining distinction is orthogonal to the phenomenal/nonphenomenal imagining distinction. Nevertheless, standardly cases of internal imagining in cinema have an important phenomenal aspect.

It is worth illustrating the logical independence of the notions of affective identification, empathy, and sympathy. Consider the *imaginative torturer*: He imagines being tortured in the way he is torturing his victim in order to make his tortures more effective, helping him to discover what will cause maximum distress to his victim. Perhaps he discovers that some apparent camaraderie with his victim and a temporary cessation of torture will make his renewed tortures all the more devastating. He is more effective than the *brutish torturer*, who does not imagine experiencing torture. The imaginative torturer affectively identifies with his victim but does not empathize with him (he feels no distress). Nor does he sympathize with him. So affective identification does not entail empathy or sympathy (indeed it may be motivated by antipathy toward its target).

Next consider the *empathic torturer*. Unlike the imaginative torturer he feels his victim's distress, but he responds by distracting himself from his victim's woes after each torture session rather than evincing any concern for him. Or consider empathizing with someone who feels self-disgust: Sharing in her emotion involves feeling antipathy, not sympathy, for her. So empathizing with someone does not entail sympathizing with her even though that is the normal psychological consequence of so doing.

Sympathy requires neither that we imagine feeling (affectively identify with) nor that we actually feel (empathize with) what our target is (fictionally) feeling. I can sympathize with someone who is in a coma and who therefore feels nothing. I can sympathize with the angry person who has just been assaulted, though I feel no anger, but merely feel concern for him. So sympathy does not require either imagining or actually feeling what the other is (fictionally) feeling. And as noted, one can affectively identify and empathize with someone without sympathizing with him. Also I can sympathize with a person without imagining anything about him: I may merely believe that he is suffering.

Given the logical independence of these notions, one can respond from multiple emotional and imaginative perspectives to a person. One can, for instance,

affectively identify with a character and also (without being required to) empathize with him, and also (without being required to) sympathize with him. And one can sympathize with a character without either empathizing or affectively identifying with him.

2. TERMINOLOGICAL VARIATIONS

Several other writers have defended a view of emotional engagement with characters broadly similar to that just adumbrated, though they often employ different terminology. Sometimes they reject or query the use of the term "identification" (Neill 1996, 192–93; Smith 1995, 93) but then employ a notion that is almost identical to the notion of imaginative identification developed above. Terminology can legitimately vary here.

Sometimes "empathy" is used, including in contexts outside film theory, to mean what I have termed "imaginative identification." Goldman (2006, 17) notes that simulation theory is often termed "empathy theory." Since simulation, according to some (e.g., Currie 1995, 144), is to be construed in terms of imagining being in someone's situation, the use of empathy as simulation is, given this construal, tantamount to what I have termed "imaginative identification." Peter Goldie (2000, 195–99) also understands empathy in terms of imagining from another person's perspective without requiring one actually to feel what the other person is imagined as feeling, though actual feelings may also occur. Alex Neill (1996, 191) similarly holds that empathy is a matter of imagining someone's situation from her point of view and denies that it is a requirement on empathy that one actually feel what he is feeling, though one may do so. This use of "empathy" has some basis in ordinary linguistic usage, but if one employs it in this sense, one needs a separate term for what I have termed "empathy," which requires one actually to feel what the other person is construed as feeling. Some psychologists mark the distinction in terms of *cognitive* empathy (imagining from another's perspective) as opposed to *affective* or *emotional* empathy (where one is required actually to feel the emotion) (Goldman 2006, 277–79; Stueber 2008). The terminology employed does not matter, provided that one marks the distinctions that need to be made.

Several writers defend identification views in film, though with some differences worth noting. Neill (1996), as just remarked, understands empathy in terms of imagining oneself in another's situation from her point of view, thus meaning by "empathy" something very similar to what I have called "imaginative identification"; and he contrasts empathy with sympathy as distinct states. Films, he notes, can get us both to empathize and sympathize with characters: We can have multiple forms of emotional engagement with them. However, he motivates his account by appeal to an intuitive contrast between empathy and sympathy as the difference between feeling *with* someone and feeling *for* her (175). That contrast has considerable plausibility. But his formal account of empathy analyzes it in terms of imagining feeling (along with other imagined states) and holds that the empathizer *may*, but need not, come actually to feel what she imagines the other as feeling (191). The account thereby loses the intuitive con-

nection that motivated it in the first place: for feeling with someone requires one to feel that emotion, not merely imagine feeling it. Neill's account thus is in danger of eliding the contrast between, as I term them, affective identification and empathy.

Murray Smith (1995, 1997) similarly contrasts empathic stances to fictional characters, characterized in terms of centrally imagining (imagining from the inside) their mental lives, including imagining feeling what they feel, with sympathetic (or antipathetic) stances to them, characterized in terms of acentrally imagining (imagining from the outside) their situation and responding with other-directed emotions. Empathy occurs within a framework of acentral imagining according to Smith (1995), and he is thus a pluralist about character engagement. However, he runs together, under the rubric of empathy, the issue of whether I am actually experiencing an emotion with merely imagining experiencing that emotion (102).

Amy Coplan (2004) also contrasts empathy with sympathy, though her use of the term "empathy" is more similar to mine: Empathy, she says, requires four conditions: "(1) the empathizer experiences psychological states that are either identical or very similar to those of the target, (2) perspective-taking—the empathizer imaginatively experiences the target's experiences from the target's point of view, (3) (1) is the case by virtue of (2), and (4) the empathizer maintains self–other differentiation" (144). Unlike Neill's formal account, this maintains the intuitive connection of empathy to feeling with someone by virtue of clause (1) but also keeps a connection to imagination by virtue of clause (2). Coplan (2004) notes that one's emotional engagement with characters is pluralistic (146), so one can, for instance, take both empathic and sympathetic stances to a character. However, she does not bring out the importance of cases where one merely imagines feeling something but actually feels something completely different; that is, she does not develop a distinct notion of imaginative identification, and thus the pluralism offered is not as rich as I have suggested is the case.

It might be thought that this terminological variation shows that there is something suspect about the notions of identification and empathy, whereas the concept of sympathy has one ordinary, precise meaning and so plays a more robust part in theory construction. But in fact "sympathy" has various uses, and in some it is close to the notion of empathy. Adam Smith (1759/1976), for instance, develops a theory of sympathy, by which he means "our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever" (10). And that usage is still current: The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* defines one of the senses of "sympathy" as "the quality or state of being affected by the condition of another with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of the other; the fact or capacity of entering into or sharing the feelings of another or others; fellow-feeling." In this usage "sympathy" is very close to the meaning of "empathy" understood in my sense. So in this usage Carroll's and Plantinga's defenses of the centrality of sympathy would turn out to be defenses of empathy. Hence all sides of the debate need to engage in a clarification of terms; acknowledge that the terms, in both ordinary and philosophical usage, vary; and state what use they intend to employ in their theories of emotional engagement.

3. THE IDENTIFICATION VIEW

Having clarified the notions of imaginative identification and empathy, we can now state the identification view more precisely:

(IV) 1. Viewers sometimes imaginatively identify and empathize with characters.
2. Reference to (1) is required as part of the explanation of viewers' emotional responses to characters.

Note that (IV) is consistent with other factors playing a role in explaining viewers' reactions to characters. Clause 1 holds that identification and empathy sometimes occur but allows that we can also imagine characters from the outside, and thus neither identify nor empathize with them, but instead experience emotions, including sympathy, grounded on propositional imagining. And clause 2 allows that even when we identify and empathize with characters, other factors can play a role in explaining our emotional responses to them. Thus (IV) can be given a pluralistic reading, according to which viewers engage with characters in multiple ways.

But (IV) is also consistent with a monistic reading. In clause (1), "sometimes" is consistent with "always." The monist reads clause (1) to say that viewers only identify and empathize with characters (or more plausibly only *try* to identify and empathize, since viewers sometimes try and fail to do this because the characters are so alien or obnoxious). And the monist reads clause (2) to say that *only* reference to clause (1) is required to explain viewers' reactions to characters.

Interpreted monistically, (IV) is false and indeed highly implausible. None of the supporters of the identification view discussed above are monists. The theorist who places most stress on identification and empathy is Grodal (1997), but even he allows for the existence of other points of view on the action of the film (85). But a problem with Grodal's defense of identification against Carroll's critique shows why engagement involves more than identification and empathy. One of Carroll's counterexamples to identification (empathy in our terms) is the first appearance of the shark in *Jaws* (1975): A girl swims contentedly, unaware that a shark is about to attack her; the viewers feel fear and suspense, but the girl feels pleasure. Since viewers often possess more information than characters, they often feel differently from characters, argues Carroll, so they cannot identify with them. Grodal (1997) agrees that "we possess more information than the girl, [but] we feel fear in simulation of how we think we would feel if we were in the girl's position and knew about the threat" (84). Grodal thus tries to avoid appeal to an external imagining and a response directed to that imagined content by holding that the viewer responds as he would if he were in the girl's position and knew that he was under threat. But in incorporating the knowledge not possessed by the character into the viewer's imaginings, an important ground of emotional terror is lost: What is terrifying about the scene is in part that one can be under imminent danger of gruesome attack and be *completely unaware* of it. The viewer's imagining of how he would react if he knew he were under threat necessarily cannot incorporate that ground of fear. So one must allow that

viewers can respond in ways differently from how characters respond; and that means that one should reject the monistic identification view. But it is fallacious to infer from this fact to the conclusion that viewers never respond as the character does or that they cannot both respond as the character does and additionally in another way. It is fallacious to conclude that since the monistic version of (IV) is false, the pluralistic version is false.

Why believe (IV)? First, viewers regularly say that they identify and empathize with characters, and since this is a self-report, it is good *prima facie* evidence that they do. These notions are coherent, so there is no ground for thinking that viewers are simply confused on this matter; and while, as we have seen, there are different uses of these terms in play, talk of "putting oneself in others' shoes" and of feeling what characters feel show that ordinary viewers often mean what we have taken to be the senses of "identification" and "empathy," or something close thereto. Moreover, people often talk about identification and empathy in real-life contexts, so why should they not also shape our reactions to film characters?

Second, there are several cinematic devices that regularly cue identification and empathy. The point-of-view shot is the most commonly cited; in such shots the viewer is cued to imagine seeing what the character sees, so that viewers perceptually identify with characters. This can also cue imagining feeling what the character is feeling, though it need not do so because of the aspectual nature of identification. Probably more important, though, is the expressive reaction shot, where we see a character's facial expressions, usually in close-up, and are induced to imagine what she is feeling, and very often also to empathize with her. The classical film theorist Béla Balázs (1970) stressed the importance of such shots and noted, "If we look at and understand each other's faces and gestures, we not only understand, we also learn to feel each other's emotions. The gesture is not only the outward projection of emotion, it is also its initiator" (44).[2] Consider the powerful sequence in *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* (2003) in which Dr. Stephen Maturin (Paul Bettany) has to operate on himself to remove a bullet. Though we can see some of the details of the bloody procedure in a mirror that is held up so that he can probe into his abdominal wound, the main emotional force of the scene is conveyed by a series of reaction shots showing the extreme pain on his face as he operates, together with the reactions of those around him. We are induced vividly to imagine the pain he is feeling as he operates on himself, and we may find ourselves wincing as we watch the operation; we are also likely to empathize with him, feeling some genuine distress at this procedure. We may also feel further emotions that he does not:

2. Carl Plantinga (1999) has also called attention to the fact that there are in several films what he calls "scenes of empathy," where the action slows down and we are invited to dwell on the feelings of a character by lingering on her facial expressions, such as the shots toward the end of *Stella Dallas* (1937) when Stella watches her daughter getting married without being able to participate in the ceremony. These scenes are in effect extended series of reaction shots. Plantinga is generally skeptical, as noted, about the existence of empathy in our sense, thinking of what is going on in these scenes more in terms of sympathy. But as we have seen, empathy is distinct from sympathy, and in such scenes, empathy is generally elicited, as well as sympathy.

sympathy for and admiration of him (he is not pitying himself in this scene, nor is he admiring himself: He is too focused on the operation to do that).

Third, we often empathize in the sense of wanting what characters want in part because they want it. Sometimes, as Carroll (2008) has convincingly argued, we have desires and emotions independently of what characters want and feel, since we share their evaluations of the situation: The characters do not want the world to end and fear that it may happen, and we also have these desires and fears, but not because the characters have them (166–67). However, sometimes we want things in part because the characters want them. Consider *Master and Commander* again: The film is structured around the successful pursuit by HMS Surprise in 1805 of the French naval vessel *Acheron*. We have no desire, antecedent to watching the movie, that this ship be caught by the British: We may not even be friendly to the British cause in the Napoleonic Wars. But through the film's tight focus on the activities of Captain Jack Aubrey (Russell Crowe) and his crew, and through experiencing Aubrey's evident charisma and the camaraderie of his shipmates, we identify (epistemically and affectively) with them. We thus come to want what they want and to feel some of the same emotions that they experience: We fear with them when they come under bombardment from the *Acheron*, feel disappointment and frustration when the ship slips from their grasp, and feel elated with them when they finally board and take it. There is nothing atypical about this kind of scenario: We commonly want certain things to happen in films partly because characters want them to happen, that is, our desires are empathic desires.

It should also be noted that the existence of identification and empathy is compatible with also experiencing emotions different from those the target feels. This is clearly the case for imaginative identification: The imaginative torturer imagines feeling his victim's distress but may respond with elation at the thought of that distress. In the case of empathy one must, by definition, feel what the character feels, but this is compatible with experiencing something different as well. This may either be because our attitudes are different from those of the character or because we possess information that the character does not. As an example of the former, recall Maturin's operation on himself: Not only do I empathize with him, feeling his distress, I can also sympathize with him and admire him, though he feels neither emotion. I do not have any more information than he possesses: It is simply that some of my attitudes are different from his. So having different feelings is compatible with imagining his situation from the inside: Sympathy does not require external imagining, as we noted earlier. As an illustration of the second kind of case, consider the *Jaws* example again: Carroll, as we saw, is correct that the fear we have for the character cannot be based only on imagining her situation from the inside, since it crucially depends on a piece of information that the character does not possess: the presence of the shark. So this emotion is grounded on a propositional imagining that incorporates information not available to the character. But compatibly with this we can also imagine the character's situation from the inside, imagining, for instance, the pleasure she takes in her swim, and we can also empathize with her in enjoying the tranquility of the scene. The fact that we can both imagine her situation from the inside and also externally is part of the

explanation of the power of the scene, based on the contrast between her perception of the situation and what is really happening.

I have argued, then, that we sometimes identify, including affectively identify, with characters; that we also sometimes empathize with them; and that this is also compatible with experiencing emotions different from theirs, even in the case of empathy: either because we have different attitudes to them (which is compatible with imagining their situation from the inside) or because we have different information from them (which requires external imagining of their situation). The existence of different emotions from the characters' shows that we should support a pluralist version of the identification view.

4. THE ASSIMILATION VIEW

The most developed challenge to the identification view is Carroll's assimilation view, which Carroll assumes is incompatible with it. However, I will argue that the assimilation view comes in different strengths, and only an implausibly strong version of it is incompatible with the pluralist identification view. I will also show that Carroll's arguments for the assimilation view are either flawed or that they are compatible with pluralist identification.

Stated in the broadest terms, the assimilation view holds:

(AV) 1. Viewers do not imaginatively identify or empathize with characters.
2. Viewers respond to characters' situations propositionally imagined, including to characters' understanding of their own situations.

Carroll has consistently argued against viewers' identification with characters, though he generally means by "identification" what I mean by empathy. However, he also attacks simulation theory and talks of viewers responding in the role of outside observers rather than centrally imagining characters' situations (Carroll 1998, 349–50), so he is also opposed to identification in my sense. One's imagining of characters' situation is therefore propositional. He also notes that one "assimilates" characters' understanding of their situation (hence the name I have given his view); so there is a sense in which one's response to a character's situation has an internal as well as an external dimension. But if this claim is to remain consistent with clause 1, this 'internal' understanding has to eschew any imagining of the character's situation from the inside. And that seems to be how he construes it: He says, "We need only have a sense of why the protagonist's response is appropriate or intelligible to his situation" (Carroll 1990, 95); and this does not require internally imagining the character's situation.

That is the most general statement of the view. Consider the following options for the strength of clause 1 (equivalently different strengths should be ascribed to clause 2 as well):

1A. Viewers never identify or empathize with characters.
1B. Viewers only very rarely identify or empathize with characters.

1C. Viewers do not typically identify or empathize with characters.
1D. Viewers do not always identify or empathize with characters.

Carroll has given different statements about the strength of his view at various points, and one can find textual support for all of 1A–1D. For instance,

1A: "it very well may be the case that character-identification never supplies an account of the audience's relation to the protagonist" (1990, 91); here he understands identification as duplication of the character's emotional states;
1B: simulation "is very rare" (1998, 355); Carroll says simulation is a matter of central imagining and does not require exact identity of emotions, but only a "rough similarity" (349);
1C: "we are typically in the position of outside observers" in responding to characters (350);
1D: the identification view (empathy specifically) "looks like it must be abandoned as a comprehensive picture of our emotive relations to movie protagonists" (2008, 166).

The last formulation is strikingly weaker than the earlier ones, but setting it aside, probably the most charitable way to read these different utterances is holding that simulation (internal imagining) of a character is very rare, and empathy (in my sense) never happens. But my concern is not how best to interpret Carroll, but rather to distinguish these different versions of the assimilation view.

Only version 1A of (AV) is incompatible with the pluralist version of (IV). So one can believe *both* in weaker versions of the assimilation view and in the pluralist identification view. Moreover, version 1D of (AV) is actually what the pluralist version of (IV) asserts: for the pluralist version maintains that character engagement involves more than identification and empathy; so pluralist identification actually *requires* adherence to the noncomprehensive version of (AV). So, absent adherence to the strongest version of (AV), the dispute between identification theorists and assimilation theorists is a mistake. And that means that both theories can learn from the points made by the other, as we have already seen in endorsing Carroll's arguments against monistic identification.

Moreover, the question of whether version 1C is correct should not be taken to decide the issue between the identification and assimilation views. This is because some identification theorists maintain that imagining from the inside (including empathy) generally proceeds within a framework provided by external imagining (Smith 1995, 102–06; 1997, 424–26). And this claim is plausible. Very often we have information different from that possessed by a character, so merely internally imagining his situation would not capture all that we know is relevant to determining how correctly to respond to his situation.

Admittedly, were version 1B of (AV) correct, the identification view would be of limited interest. But if the arguments of the last section are correct, we are entitled to say at least this: that if identification and empathy occur at all, they are not very rare, since the terminology of identification and empathy, the various

cinematic devices discussed, and the partial dependence of viewers' desires and feelings on those of characters are common features of cinematic experience. So the key question to discuss in assessing Carroll's arguments is whether or not they support the strongest version of (AV). I turn now to examining that question.

5. ARGUMENTS AGAINST IDENTIFICATION

Carroll has produced a large number of arguments, in different variations over a lengthy period, for (AV). I will examine only the more important ones. They have been targeted at different times on supporting differing versions of (AV); but, for reasons just mentioned, my concern will be whether they support the strongest version of (AV).

5.1 Asymmetry

Carroll's central argument (echoed by Plantinga 2009, 104) is that there is an asymmetry of emotional responses between spectators and characters; that is, viewers experience emotions different from the ones that characters (fictionally) experience; so viewers do not identify with characters. Spectators' and characters' emotions differ in at least five respects (Carroll [2007], 94–95):

(i) We often feel different emotions from the character: For example, we feel admiration and pity for Stella Dallas, she feels neither for herself; Oedipus feels guilt for what he has done; we do not feel guilt, but only pity (also Carroll 1990, 91).
(ii) Our emotions, even when similar, generally have different objects from the character's. If a mother loses a son, she feels grief, and the object of her emotion is her son; if we feel sorrow, the object of our emotion is not her son (he may be nothing to us) but rather the grief-stricken mother (cf. Carroll 2008, 165).
(iii) Our emotions take as their objects merely imagined states of affairs; characters' emotions are directed toward things that they believe to be the case.
(iv) Our emotions are less intense, other things equal, than the characters'.
(v) Our emotions are disengaged from action; the characters' are not.

This argument maintains that the emotions felt by the spectator are different from those felt by the character. Even if true, this is consistent with the existence of imaginative and specifically affective identification with characters; for in these cases we imagine feeling what the character feels, and imagining feeling an emotion is possible while actually feeling a different emotion or no emotion at all. Hence the arguments only threaten the empathy aspect of the identification view, not imaginative identification. So let us now restrict our discussion to the empathy part of the view.

Only (iii) and (v), if true, as exceptionless claims, would support an argument for the strongest version of (AV). Since viewers, if not deluded, only *imagine* the

occurrence of events that the characters believe occur, and if the difference in cognitive state suffices for difference in emotional states, then viewers are *never* in the same emotional state as characters and therefore cannot empathize with them. Moreover, since viewers cannot act in the fictional world (at least in noninteractive fictions) but characters can, viewers cannot have the same emotions as characters.

Both of these arguments, however, are unsound. One may feel genuine emotions toward merely imagined scenarios (Gaut 2007, chap. 9). Oddly Carroll (1990) himself has argued for this claim: His Thought Theory maintains that genuine emotions can be felt toward merely imagined states of affairs (60–88). If this is so, then two token emotions directed toward the same state of affairs, where the state of affairs is believed to obtain in one case and only imagined to obtain in the other, could token the same emotion type. So ground (iii) provides no reason to conclude that characters' emotions and ours must differ in kind. Nor does ground (v), for two token emotions may token the same emotion type, though one can be acted on and the other cannot. I may pity a group of people being terrorized by oppressors today and can act to stop the oppression; I may pity a different group who were terrorized a century ago, but I cannot do anything about their oppression. Only in some contexts can we act on emotions; but when we cannot, it does not follow that we do not have the same emotions as we have when we can.

That our emotions are generally less intense than the characters' is correct, but that does not show that they are not type-identical, of course, since two tokens of the same type can differ in intensity. More specifically it would obviously be incorrect to maintain that A is not empathizing with B in her distress because A feels the distress less strongly than B. So (iv) fails too.

Consideration (i) is correct, but as we have seen, it is compatible with the pluralistic version of identification, since it maintains there can be more to emotional engagement than identification and empathy. The difference in emotions is compatible with our also identifying and empathizing with characters. I may admire Stella's self-sacrifice so much in part because I imagine being in her situation and empathize with her distress, thus enhancing my sense of how much she is giving up.

Carroll (2008, 177–84; cf. 2007, 101–06) stresses in particular the importance of sympathy in our engagement with protagonists, together with the dependent antipathy toward their antagonists that he terms "solidarity." Sympathy he defines very broadly as "a non-passing pro-attitude toward another person" (Carroll 2008, 177), and he says that it is "the major emotive cement" between audiences and pertinent characters (178). Since sympathy is directed toward others, characters cannot sympathize with themselves; so there is at least one major emotional tie that we experience with characters that is not one that they feel for themselves. The point is, of course, entirely compatible with the pluralistic identification view. As noted earlier, one can sympathize with someone with whom one imaginatively identifies (or not sympathize with her in the case of the imaginative torturer), and sympathize with someone with whom one empathizes (or not sympathize in the case of the empathic torturer). Moreover, one may often sympathize *because* one identifies and/or empathizes with someone, as is the case of Stella Dallas. Sometimes, as in the case of the coma victim, sympathy

cannot rest on identification or empathy, but excluding cases where a victim lacks a mental life, it is usual for sympathy to depend on these states. So pointing to the widespread occurrence of sympathy does nothing to undermine the presence of identification and empathy.

Moreover, Carroll (2008) overplays the importance of sympathy as an emotional response to characters. He claims, "Sympathy for the protagonist is the most pervasive emotion from the beginning to the end of the movie" (178). Sympathy as an emotion is, as earlier noted, a concern for another person for her own sake because of a threat to her well-being. But in Carroll's sense it is an attitude, not an emotion; and one can talk in his sense about sympathizing with someone's happiness. But that state has a different hedonic tone (pleasure, not displeasure) and a different constitutive evaluative thought (that someone is flourishing, not suffering) so should count as a different emotion than sympathy. In fact, the state is more naturally characterized as *empathizing* with someone's happiness if it is based on imagining oneself in her situation. (Empathy is other-directed, like sympathy: It makes no more sense to talk of empathizing with oneself than sympathizing with oneself.) So Carroll's monolithic appeal to sympathy and antipathy occludes the variety of emotional responses that we can have to characters and even captures in its net some emotions that are empathic.

Finally, ground (ii) holds that the emotions like grief felt by the character and the viewer must be different since they have different objects. However, this is clearly not true of all emotions and their objects: If character A pities character B and I also pity B, A's emotion and mine have the same object. So (ii) is compatible with pluralistic identification. Moreover, it assumes that in the grief/sorrow scenario that, in addition to feeling sympathy for her, I cannot also be empathizing with the mother. Yet in real life we clearly can empathize with someone with whom we are also sympathizing. The possibility of this becomes evident when we distinguish between the target and the object of empathy. When I empathize *with* Lisa, a mother, *for* the loss of her son, Stefan, the target of my empathy is the mother, and its object is the son. Both the mother and I experience grief for the loss of the son, Stefan; so both her emotion and mine share the same object, *pace* Carroll. And, given the possibility of feeling real emotions toward merely imagined situations, I can feel grief for a merely imagined loss. The difference between Lisa's mental state and mine is that mine has a target, Lisa, and an object, Stefan, whereas hers has only an object. (She, after all, is not empathizing with herself: That notion makes no sense.) One might object that this shows that Lisa's emotion is different from mine. But it is a mistake to assume that a difference in respect of the existence of a target entails a difference in the emotion. Empathic emotions are not a distinct kind of emotion; rather, they are standard emotions guided by the thought that someone else is experiencing them. The target enters into the thought that guides the empathizer's emotion but does not determine a difference in the emotion itself. Recall that we characterized empathy as actually feeling some emotion E because I imagine myself in T's (fictional) situation in which she feels E. Emotion E has an object, and the thought of T enters into the formation of my own emotion E toward that same object. The emotion is guided by the thought of the target's experiencing it, but the emotion is the same.

In sum, either the arguments for the asymmetry claim are unsound, or if they are sound, they show only that monistic identification is false. Carroll's main argument does not undermine the pluralistic identification view.

5.2 Antisimulation

Carroll (1998, 342–56; 2007, 96–101; 2008, 170–77) has frequently criticized simulation theory and its application to fiction. Since simulation is a kind of imagining from the inside, as he notes (Carroll 1998, 349), his criticism of simulation theory could be taken as a critique of imaginative identification in our sense. So we need to ask whether his criticisms support the strongest version of the assimilation view, which is incompatible with (IV).

Carroll argues that whereas simulation may be at least part of the story about how we understand others ("mindread") in real life, it has very little role in understanding fictional characters, since particularly in popular fictions characters are designed to be easily understood. Moreover, they frequently declare what they are feeling, so we do not need to simulate their situation to understand them. In reply, we can agree that fictional characters in popular films are generally designed to be easily understood; but that of course raises the question of how our understanding operates, and if simulation theory is an accurate theory of mind reading, then this is just to say that fictional characters are designed so that audiences can easily simulate them. Carroll has doubts about the correctness of simulation theory in general, though those doubts are in fact compatible with the most plausible versions of the theory, which are hybrid in allowing that more than simulation is going on in mind reading.[3] Further, if characters tell us how they feel, this does not close off all need to imagine internally their situation. They may be lying or glossing over important aspects of how things are, and thus one may need to imagine their situation to work out whether they are giving an accurate picture of it. Carroll (2008) notes that art cinema features characters who do not tell us how they are feeling, but claims that such characters are too opaque to simulate (176). But that ignores the fact that there is a wide range of characters who do not wear their hearts on their sleeves, but where there is some prospect of understanding their motives, for instance, William Munny (Clint Eastwood) in *Unforgiven* (1992). For these noncommunicative but cognitively graspable characters, internally imagining their situation is a vital tool in our cognitive armory.

Second, Carroll (1998) maintains that though simulation theory does not require an exact identity of emotions, it requires a "rough similarity" (349) between our emotions and those of the characters; and even this rough similarity is ruled out by the asymmetry problem. However, the asymmetry argument fails to rule out viewers' feeling the same emotions as characters, so it cannot rule out their feeling similar emotions. But in any case, Carroll's asymmetry objection fails against imaginative identification, since this holds, in the case of affective identification,

3. For a hybrid simulation theory, see Goldman (2006). I criticize pure simulation theory in Gaut (2007, chap. 7), but the positive theory developed there is compatible with a hybrid simulation theory.

that we *imagine* feeling what the character (fictionally) feels. Since an imagined feeling is not an actual feeling, there is a radical asymmetry in this respect with what the character is feeling.

Third, Carroll (2008) holds that fictional characters often act differently from the way we would in the same situation, so simulation would mislead us as to what they will do: Rambo may be up for a heroic fight, but we would shrink away (173). However, a character's situation on my account of identification is specified by all of her properties, not just her environment, and includes all her mental states. So in identifying with Rambo as part of the project of working out what he will do, we must imagine believing what he believes (epistemic identification) and wanting what he wants (motivational identification). Given these imagined beliefs and desires, very different from our actual beliefs and desires, we should be unsurprised by Rambo's behavior.[4]

5.3 Explanatory Parsimony

Carroll (2007, 93–95; 2008, 166–69) has also argued that the identification view should be rejected on grounds of explanatory parsimony. We can explain audiences' fear of a monster in a horror film by the fact that the monster is terrifying, without appealing to identification with a threatened protagonist; and if an innocent character is murdered, we can explain why we are outraged by our sense of justice being violated without assuming that we are identifying with someone who cares for him in the film. So appeal to identification adds an unnecessary explanation to our theory and should be rejected on grounds of theoretical parsimony.

Carroll is correct that some of our emotional reactions to characters and situations depend on our independent appraisal of the situation rather than on identification with them. But we also noted in section 3 that some of our reactions are dependent on those of the characters: We have no independent desire that the *Acheron* be captured or perhaps even that the British triumph. Sometimes one can even be brought to feel things contrary to what one would feel of one's own accord. In *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948) it is essential to the effective working of the film that one comes to empathize with Lisa, and this involves feeling admiration for her love, Stefan, whereas for one's own part one might correctly appraise him as an unworthy object of such an attitude. The two points of view, the one based on identification and empathy, the other on independent appraisal, structure the audiences' responses and contribute to the complexity and power of the film. So understanding some of our emotional responses requires appeal to the identification view, since they are ones that we would not independently possess.

Second, even when one would respond independently as the character does, as in the case of confrontation with a monster, this does not entail that part of one's emotional response is not also dependent on the character's response. Consider the

4. Note too that simulation has other functions besides mind reading. It makes sense to say of a character that one understands him but cannot identify with him: Perhaps his mentality is too distasteful to imagine from the inside. So simulation might still be involved with identification, even if it were not required for mindreading.

scene near the end of *Alien* (1979) where Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) is trapped in the escape pod with the monster. Certainly the monster is terrifying, but part of our fear is empathic: We have gradually come to identify, epistemically (our knowledge of what is happening is restricted largely to what Ripley knows), affectively, and in this scene perceptually with Ripley; and these ground our empathic fear. We do not just fear for her, we also fear with her; and this is grounded largely on point-of-view and expressive reaction shots. Watching Ripley's wide, glistening eyes, sweaty face, and drawn expression, her terror modulated by barely maintained self-control, we come to feel her fear, and our fear is controlled in its intensity and rhythm in part by her reactions. Carroll's (2008) alternative explanation of the role of point-of-view shots is unconvincing: He maintains that they are there to tell the audience the general kind of affect they should feel (169). But no one needs a terrified look from Ripley to tell one that the alien is terrifying.

Finally, and most simply, a theory of identification and empathy is required in order to make sense of viewers' talk of identifying and empathizing with characters. So it cannot be that appeal to these phenomena is explanatorily unnecessary. The alternative is denial of the existence of identification and empathy; but this leaves one with the extra explanatory burden of an error theory. So even if one thinks that this explanatory burden can be discharged (which I have denied), it is still the case that the strong version of (AV) is not parsimonious: It takes on the extra burden of finding a theory of error that (IV) does not require.

5.4 Rivalry with Characters

Carroll (2007) also claims that the identification view "courts paradox" (96), since if viewers really identified with characters they would in many situations have to react to the character with whom they identify as if that character were a rival, and they do not. If we identified with Tony Soprano, and if Tony wants revenge or to take over a business, we too should want revenge or to take over that business. But then we should regard Tony as a rival: We should want him to fail in his business endeavors, and we should resent it when he, rather than we, exact revenge (Carroll 2004, 128). And if a character with whom we identify is in love with someone else, then we should be jealous of that character, since he is courting our loved one (Carroll 2007, 96).

This objection fails against the claim that we imaginatively identify with characters; for one can imagine feeling or wanting something without actually feeling or wanting that thing; and one need not regard a character as a rival in love if one does not actually love another character but merely imagines loving her.

It also fails against the empathy part of the identification view. Recall that we characterized empathy with a character in terms of my actually feeling some emotion because I imagine myself in the character's situation; the objection draws on the first clause, holding that one actually feels something, but ignores the second clause. If I empathize with Tony, I imagine myself in his situation; and his situation consists of all his properties, mental and physical, relevant to the imagining. This includes that he loves the other person. But his properties also include modal ones;

one of these is that he necessarily cannot be a rival to himself, Tony. So in imagining myself in Tony's situation, imagining possessing his properties, it makes no sense for me to imagine being a rival to Tony. (This has the same form as the reply in section 1 to Wollheim's objection that one could imagine meeting the Sultan.) So imagining a character's situation from the inside rules out imagining him to be a rival to myself.

5.5 Mirror Feelings

Some powerful evidence in favor of the identification view has come from the study of mirror behavior: We tend when we observe others to mimic their facial expressions, gestures, and thereby feelings. Hume (1739/1978, 316–20) noticed this fact and remarked, "the minds of men are mirrors to one another" (365). Adam Smith (1759/1976, 9–13) built on Hume's insight, stressing the centrality of imagination to mirroring. There is neuroscientific evidence that our mirroring tendency is rooted in mirror neuron systems in the brain. If we see someone undergoing some emotion or doing something, the same brain circuitry is activated as is involved in actually experiencing that emotion or doing that thing, but with inhibition of the normal outputs, so we do not act as we normally would (Goldman 2006, chap. 6). All this accords with common experience in cinema, where we may wince as if in pain and feel distress when a favored character is hurt. Mirroring behavior and feelings provide strong evidence for the existence of imaginative identification and empathy with characters.

Though Carroll (2008, 185–90; cf. 2007, 106–08) admits that mirror phenomena seem to favor the identification view, he denies that this is really so. Mirroring for him is a matter of having certain reflexes, which provide information about how others are feeling: We mimic their facial expressions, for instance, and thereby obtain a clue as to their emotional state. Having these reflexes contributes to the affect-laden nature of cinema by getting us to feel excitement, distress, and so on. But what we feel in mirroring is, he maintains, merely affective and does not constitute a fully fledged emotion, since it has no object and does not incorporate an appraisal, both of which are necessary for fully fledged emotions. We may incorporate the information and feelings into our own distinct, sympathetic response to the character's plight, but we do not duplicate her feelings. So we do not identify with her (empathize, in our terms). Nor do we simulate her mental state (imaginatively identify with her, in our terms), since mirror phenomena, being reflexes, do not involve beliefs, imaginings, or desires.

Consider again Ripley trapped in the escape pod with the alien. Watching her face with its expression of agonized fear under trembling control we are certainly moved affectively. That affect has an object, for we are shown by point-of-view shots the monster, the object of Ripley's fear. Moreover, we make an appraisal of the situation: The monster is deadly. Possessing both an object and an evaluation, there is no reason to deny that we feel fear with Ripley: We experience empathic fear. So what we feel has the right structure for fear. Moreover, we can imagine feeling fear too, affectively identifying with Ripley. So Carroll's claims about lack of object, evaluation, and imagining are all false of a clear case of mirroring in cinema.

In response, Carroll might appeal to his asymmetry argument; but we have already rejected that as a ground for claiming that identification never occurs. He could also insist that what we have in such cases is a reflex, and reflexes bypass cognition; hence there is no place for cognition of an object, appraisal, or imagining. This is true of reflexes properly so called: Firmly tapping my knee with a hammer causes my knee to jerk upward, bypassing any cognitive process. But the mirror reactions in the cinematic case require cognition: In the *Alien* example, we only react as we do if we understand that we are looking at a human face and that this face expresses fear. So if a reflex necessarily bypasses cognition, mirror reactions in cinema are not reflexes. Carroll might instead appeal to the automatic nature of the mirror reaction as the ground for holding that it does not involve beliefs, desires, or imaginings. However, automatic processes can involve beliefs—perception is largely automatic but involves perceptual beliefs; and many fear reactions, such as fear of snakes, appear to be automatic but involve desires. One might suppose, though, that an automatic process cannot involve imagination, since imagining something is voluntary and automatic processes by definition are not. But while it is true that imaginings are generally voluntary it is not true that they must be so. Dreams can involve imaginings, but dreams are usually not voluntary; and watching a film involves perceptual imagination, but we involuntarily perceptually imagine what the film image shows. So not all token imaginings are voluntary. Hence there is no reason to deny that mirror reactions can constitute fully fledged, empathic emotions.

5.6 Criterial Prefocusing

Finally, Carroll develops an account of character engagement in terms of criterial prefocusing, which he presents as an alternative to the identification view and which is supposed to do a better job of explaining our reactions.

Movies, Carroll (2008) claims, are criterially prefocused—that is, "the salient features of the fictional situation have been carefully designed to satisfy the criteria for drawing forth the emotional state intended by the production team" (158). The claim is that emotions are partly constituted by evaluative appraisals or criteria, and in feeling an emotion we focus on those aspects of a situation that are pertinent to the appraisal. For instance, the evaluative criterion for fear is harmfulness, and in real life we focus on those aspects of the situation that are harmful when we feel fear. But movies differ from real life in being designed to elicit emotions by making salient those features that satisfy the criterion for the emotion. These design devices include camera positioning, editing, lighting, and music, which can be employed to focus viewers' attention on the harmful aspects of the scene and thus elicit fear. There is thus no need to appeal to identification to explain our emotional reactions (156–60; cf.1998, 261–69).

Carroll's observation is a good one; however, criterial prefocusing is entirely compatible with the identification view. For one way that films may be designed to elicit emotion is by getting viewers to identify and/or empathize with particular characters. Point-of-view shots, expressive reaction shots, restricting

our knowledge of what is happening largely to that of a particular character, designing that character to be appealing and casting an attractive actor in the role, and so on, are devices that can be employed so as to foster identification and empathy. *Alien* employs all those devices and more to get us to identify and empathize with Ripley, and the emotional power of the film is partly dependent on our increasingly strong identification with her over the course of the film.

6. CONCLUSION: CINEMATIC POINTS OF VIEW

So Carroll's arguments against the identification view misfire: Either they are unsound or they are compatible with the pluralist version of the theory. Since no one within the recent debate, as far as I am aware, has defended a monistic version of identification, many of Carroll's criticisms target a straw man. More positively, Carroll has produced good arguments that show that some aspects of our engagement with characters do not rest on identification or empathy, particularly in pointing out the importance of information that characters do not possess and we do. The pluralist account of identification and the weaker versions of the assimilation view are compatible: One can believe in both and ought to do so. Carroll's sustained critique of the identification view threatens to occlude this important fact, even though his formulations of weaker versions of the assimilation view actually require the truth of pluralistic identification. We can and should regard characters from both internal and external points of view; and both perspectives ground emotional reactions to them. Often emotions grounded in these distinct perspectives fit smoothly together, as when we identify, empathize, and sympathize with a character. But sometimes they are in tension, as when our empathy with a character grounds attitudes that we are led to conclude, in the light of a fuller, external understanding of her situation, are shallow or incorrect, as has been argued, for instance, of our attitudes toward Lisa in *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (Wilson 1986, chap. 6).

A pluralist version of the identification view and a weaker version of the assimilation view need to take their place in a broader theory of cinematic points of view in cinema. Cinema is a sophisticated art form, and our emotional relationships with characters can in the best films be more complex than our relationships with real people. We need more distinctions, not fewer, in constructing an adequate theory of cinematic engagement, and in particular we should avoid thinking that we never or rarely identify or empathize with characters just because we often adopt stances toward them in which we do neither. The development of an adequate theory of cinematic engagement requires us to be able to account for emotions grounded on plural points of view, both internal and external to characters.[5]

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