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Altered States: Character and Emotional Response in the Cinema

by Murray Smith

> Female teenager: In *Hellraiser*, when you first see the Cenobytes, your initial re-
> action is, "Oh God, they're awful!" But as they're more on screen, you actually build
> up . . . a feeling for them —
> Male teenager: —a relationship with them —
> Female teenager: —you identify with them . . . yeah . . . you actually feel that Pin-
> head's quite a sad character; he's not a wicked evil man, there's something there
> that's made him like that.
> —Interviewees on *Fear in the Dark*, Channel 4 show on the horror movie,
> Halloween, 1991.

The notion of "identification" has long been at the heart of film theory and crit-
icism and indeed of the narrative arts more generally. It exists as both a term of
everyday "folk psychology" and as a term of art in several theories of film, the
senses of which diverge from the everyday notion to varying degrees. The in-
terest of contemporary film and cultural theory in questions of context and
reception—and the more sporadic calls for attention to the specifically emo-
tional responses of spectators—only serves to make the concept more central.
And yet, as a term of art, the concept remains ill-defined, more of a portman-
teau word referring to a range of phenomena rather than a singular notion. In
the following pages, then, I want to address the question, What are the various
senses of the term "identification," and how can they be developed into a sys-
tematic explanation of emotional response to fictional characters? My thesis is
that we need to break the notion down into a number of more precisely defined
concepts. These concepts are, however, systematically related, together consti-
tuting what I term the *structure of sympathy*. Moreover, these basic levels of
engagement must be supplemented by concepts accounting for "empathic"
phenomena if a comprehensive theory of "identification" is to be constructed.
Throughout this essay I place the various levels of engagement or "identification" in
the context of theories of narrative and narration: I have argued elsewhere that
characters are salient elements of narrative structure, but we should never lose
sight of the fact that characters are, nevertheless, parts of larger structures.[1]

The approach, then, will be a conceptual one, not a historical review of
what the term "identification" has meant for different theorists. If this seems an
arrogant approach, I can only beg the reader's patience. I am well aware of the

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mass of material on the subject of "identification," in particular those works influenced by psychoanalysis. I engage with various other theories at certain points in my own argument, and I do address the question of the relationship between the (broadly) cognitive model I advocate and the psychoanalytic models that have exerted so much influence in film studies. But unless we are to be sidetracked into a rather different debate on the metaphysical validity of various psychological and philosophical doctrines, I must insist on the right to set out my own wares before engaging in competition with my fellow streethawkers.

"Identification," Imagination, and Narration. Whatever else it is, engaging with fiction is a species of imaginative activity, not in the traditional and derogatory sense of the "flight of fancy" but rather in two more complex senses. First, in comprehending, interpreting, and otherwise appreciating fictional narratives, we make inferences, formulate hypotheses, categorize representations, and utilize many other cognitive skills and strategies which go well beyond a mere registration or mirroring of the narrative material.[2] Second, fictions prompt and enrich our "quasi-experience," that is, our efforts to grasp, through mental hypotheses, situations, persons, and values which are alien to us.[3] Our imaginative activity in the context of fiction, however, is both guided and constrained by the fiction's narration: the storytelling force that, in any given narrative film, presents causally linked events occurring in space across time.

I want to propose that fictional narrations elicit three levels of imaginative *engagement* with characters, distinct types of responses normally conflated under the term "identification." Together, these levels of engagement comprise a structure of sympathy. Most basically, spectators construct characters (a process I refer to as recognition). Spectators are also provided with visual and aural information more or less congruent with that available to characters and so are placed in a certain structure of alignment with characters. In addition, spectators evaluate characters on the basis of the values they embody and hence form more-or-less sympathetic or antipathetic allegiances with them. Thus, the larger question I began with can be broken down into the following questions: How does a narration generate the characters on which it depends? What is the nature of the "filtering" which seems to occur when a particular character becomes the conduit for narrative information? And how does our "attraction to" (or "repulsion from") a character affect our experience of the text?

As the ultimate "organizer" of the text, the narration is the force that generates recognition, alignment, and allegiance, the basic components of the structure of sympathy. From this perspective, recognition, alignment, and allegiance are intermediary abstractions—neither as concrete as the particular devices which materially comprise the film nor as abstract as the "reference" narration that describes the overarching, apersonal agency of control in the text.[4] The narration uses the various cinematic techniques in order to produce these subsystems, and different techniques become prominent with each of the three intermediary structures and different types of film. Recognition, for example,

is usually dependent on a legible and consistent representation of the human face and body, a fact that becomes clear in those films that refuse to follow this practice. These intermediary abstractions gain their critical raison d'être via their ability to explain those aspects of textual functioning that pertain to our responses to fictional characters.

Central and Acentral Imagining. Our experience of fiction is unlike imagination in other contexts (such as daydreaming) in that it is enabled and constrained by texts which determine, at the very least, some features of our imagining. Of course, every imaginative act is "constrained" in the sense that it depends on the resources provided for the subject by his or her experiences within a particular culture, but our experience of fiction is peculiar, in the context of imagination in general, in the degree to which, and the ways in which, it is guided. Having outlined the concept of narration, the force which guides and constrains the spectator, let us consider further "the beholder's share"—the imaginative activity of the viewer.

In *The Thread of Life*, Richard Wollheim makes a "fundamental distinction, corresponding to a big divide between two modes of imagination": central imagining and acentral imagining.[5] The distinction can be captured partly through linguistic clues. While central imagining is often expressed in the form "I imagine . . . ," acentral imagining is expressed in the form "I imagine that. . . ." If we say, "I imagine jumping from the top of the building," we imply that we represent this event to ourselves, as it were, from the "inside." I imagine, for example, the view I would have as I fall, the nauseating sensation I would experience as my body picks up speed, and so forth.[6] Or again, in imagining being revolted by the smell of rotten eggs, I recall the characteristic sulfurous stench. Central imagining is not, however, limited to such physical and spatiotemporal conjectures: it may also involve simulations of the internal states and values of the person or character functioning as the vehicle of the central imagining.[7] By contrast, in imagining *that* I am revolted by the smell, I need generate no such olfactory "image."[8] In imagining *that* I jump from the building, I do not represent the event to myself with any of the "indexical" marks of the imagined action such as transporting myself imaginatively into the appropriate position. I do not place myself "in" the scenario so much as entertain an idea, but not from the perspective of any character within the scenario.[9]

Insofar as our experience of fiction is comprised of acts of imagination prompted by fictional texts, we may use Wollheim's distinction in order to pinpoint a crucial dividing line among models of "identification" (defined broadly as attempts to deal with the question of how spectators relate to fictional characters). Everyday talk about identification tends to depend upon a singular and monolithic conception, in which we are said to vicariously experience the thoughts and feelings of the protagonist; in Wollheim's terms, unalloyed central imagining.[10] While no theory of cinematic identification is so simplistic, the stress on experiencing the narrative through an identification with (a) particular

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character(s) is carried over into many more elaborate theories. Robin Wood's early work, for example, argues that Hitchcock plays with our sympathies, asking us to imagine centrally the experiences of various characters. Wood's defense of Hitchcock is based upon a valorization of both the power and function of this aesthetic. Hitchcock's films draw us "in" so completely that we "become" the protagonist: "the characters of *Psycho* are one character, and that character, thanks to the identifications the film evokes, is us,"[11] and this identification has a "therapeutic" effect.

The stance of semiotic and psychoanalytic film theorists toward the central/acentral division is somewhat more complex. Part of the difficulty in placing psychoanalytic theory in these terms is the degree of mismatch—if not incommensurability—between the two approaches. Metz, for example, makes identification with characters "secondary" to the "primary" experience of identification with the camera, which is ultimately a form of identification with the self. It is not clear how to situate this in terms of the central-acentral distinction. On the one hand, identification with characters is subordinated, which seems to bring forward an acentral notion; on the other hand, "secondary identification" is conceived of as an extension of identification with the self, which brings us back to central imagining.

I cannot be exhaustive in my remarks here, but I would suggest that, appearances to the contrary, in much of the work on identification following Metz, the emphasis remains on central imagining. For example, Laura Mulvey's influential work suggests that classical cinema produces a consistently masculine subject position for the spectator, and this occurs largely through identification with the male protagonist.[12] Taking up Metz's notion of identification across a range of characters or "subject positions" (hardly more than a note in *The Imaginary Signifier*),[13] other psychoanalytic theorists have advanced the idea of "multiple identification." Rather than conceiving of the spectator as identifying with a single character or subject position, the spectator's locus of identification shifts across various characters and noncharacter positions, each representing a distinctive role in a given fantasy. Elizabeth Cowie, for example, draws on Freud's essay "A Child Is Being Beaten" in order to suggest that in *The Reckless Moment* (Max Ophuls, 1949) the spectator shifts through identifications with "the diverse positions [of] father, mother, child, lover, wife, husband, each of which are never finally contained by any one character."[14] Most recently, Carol Clover has argued that, in the contemporary horror film, "we are both Red Riding Hood and the Wolf; the force of the experience, in horror, comes from 'knowing' both sides of the story."[15] Of course, in all these approaches, characters as such are epiphenomenal: figures of an illusory stability, effects of the underlying structures of fantasy. Although these models allow for far more subjective fluidity than does Mulvey's, and some of them explicitly allow for acentral positions, the focus nevertheless remains overwhelmingly on central processes. The fundamental experience for the spectator is the perception of narrative action through identification with subject positions instantiated by

characters, even if this involves shifts from character to character over the course of the film as a whole.

Reacting to this stress on central imagining in contemporary psychoanalytic theory, Noel Carroll has argued unequivocally that spectators never really adopt the viewpoint (in a general, rather than a purely optical, sense) of characters.[16] In Wollheim's terms, fiction furnishes us only with opportunities for acentral imagining. Carroll suggests that the very term "identification" is misleading because it implies that spectators centrally imagine the fictional events of a narrative as if they were the protagonist. In Carroll's words, "identification" implies a kind of "fusion" of or "mind-meld" between spectator and character. Carroll argues that the concept of assimilation more accurately describes the structure of interaction between spectators and fictional characters. When Charles, a typical spectator, watches a film in which a fictional character is faced by the Green Slime,[17] he does not experience an emotion identical to that of the character. Rather than experiencing fear of the Slime, Charles experiences anxiety for the character as s/he faces the Slime. Charles imagines that the character faces the Slime, rather than imagining himself facing the Slime (i.e., Charles does not adopt the character's position as a vehicle for an act of central imagining). Charles never loses sight of the oblique or acentral relation that he, as a spectator, maintains toward events and characters in the fictional world:

> In order to understand a situation internally, it is not necessary to identify with the protagonist. We need only *have a sense of* why the protagonist's response is appropriate or intelligible to the situation. With respect to horror, we do this readily when monsters appear since, insofar as we share the same culture as the protagonist, we can easily *catch-on to* why the character finds the monster unnatural. However, once we've assimilated the situation from the character's point of view, we respond not simply to the monster, as the character does, but to a situation in which someone, who is horrified, is under attack.[18]

By its very nature, Carroll seems to argue, our experience of fiction prompts acentral imagining (in contrast to fantasies, dreams, or hallucinations, which depend on central imagining).[19]

Carroll does not deny that spectators may share certain emotional states with characters: "we tend to be reviled by the monster in the same way that the character is."[20] Spectators may share both the evaluation and arousal characteristic of an emotion with a character. Indeed, Carroll challenges Kendall Walton's view that such states are merely "quasi-emotions." The issue at stake here is the *mechanism* by which this "parallel" emotion is generated. For Carroll the mechanism is acentral: there is no sense that we come to share a character's emotion through some sort of central imagining. Rather, we comprehend, evaluate, and respond to the character's situation and interests. I take this to be the meaning of the rather vague verbs ("have a sense of," "catch-on to") emphasized in the long quotation above. Sharing basic cultural concerns and symbolic systems with a character, we are likely to assess and react to horrific monsters in the same way as the character. But, precisely because we share these assumptions,

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we do not arrive at the "parallel emotion" through centrally imagining ourselves as the character in the situation. Rather, we comprehend the character and the situation and react emotionally (if we react at all) to the thought of *the character in that situation* (as opposed to the thought of *ourselves* as the character *in that situation*).

Carroll's notion of assimilation is explicitly presented as an alternative to the concept of identification; more generally, we may regard it as one answer to the questions posed above. In general I share Carroll's skepticism toward models of spectatorial response to character that place central imagining center stage. The structure of sympathy is premised on the notion of acentral imaginative experience. Unlike Carroll, I find a breadth in the term "identification" that is valuable; but I agree that it is loaded, in the sense that it describes only one possible relationship between character and spectator—the "folk" or everyday scenario, in which the spectator becomes wholly "absorbed in" the experiences of the character.

Yet Carroll misses an important dimension of filmic experience in insisting that all responses to characters can be characterized as forms of acentral imagining. While the structure of sympathy is as a whole an acentral structure, it draws on various phenomena which, I shall argue, are forms of central imagining, or what psychologists call *empathy*: emotional simulation, motor and affective mimicry, and autonomic reactions like the startle response. These phenomena function as "comprehension mechanisms" that feed into the structure of sympathy, working with other cognitive processes (perception, inference, schematic processing) in the construction of characters and narrative situations but may also function as a subsystem at odds with the structure of sympathy. One of the key mechanisms for arriving at the kind of acentral assessments Carroll posits may be a form of imaginative "simulation" of the mental states of characters, that is, a form of central imagining. While such simulation may not be necessary, it is not uncommon. A comprehensive theory of spectatorial response to character must, therefore, incorporate these phenomena in addition to the more familiar cognitive, acentral processes that Carroll believes exhaustively describe the nature of our responses to character. As my space is limited, I will restrict myself to examining just one of these empathic mechanisms, affective mimicry, in the context of the analysis of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1956) below.

The Structure of Sympathy. We now need to outline the three levels of engagement (recognition, alignment, and allegiance) that comprise the structure of sympathy and the interrelations among them before mobilizing them in an analysis of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Before I define in more detail the components of the structure of sympathy, however, a word of clarification on their status. Each concept, in one sense, describes a kind of narrative system that relates to character. I have endeavored, though, to frame the definitions in such a way as to emphasize the cooperative activity of the spectator that works

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with these narrative systems. In a fuller sense, then, the concepts of recognition, alignment, and allegiance are not just inert textual systems but responses, neither solely in the text nor solely in the spectator. This caveat is in part designed to distinguish my model of spectatorial engagement from "hypodermic" models, in which the spectator is conceptualized as the passive subject of the structuring power of the text. The narratological work presented here is an attempt to understand the ways in which texts produce or deny the conditions conducive to various levels of engagement, rather than the ways they enforce them.

Recognition describes the spectator's construction of character, the perception of a set of textual elements, in film typically cohering around the image of a body, as an individuated and continuous human agent. Recognition does not deny the possibility of development and change, since it is based on the concept of continuity, not unity or identity. Recognition requires the referential notion of the *mimetic hypothesis*; that is, the appeal we must make in engaging with a text to aspects of real-world experience, like assumptions concerning human agents (e.g., individual human agents typically have only one body)—assumptions which can of course be revised according to nonmimetic information (e.g., in this fictional world, individual agents have two bodies, not one). Recognition is not, therefore, simply a function of a self-enclosed text (in whatever medium). While understanding that characters are artifices and literally no more than collections of inert, textually described traits, we assume that these traits correspond to analogical ones we find in persons in the real world, until this is explicitly contradicted by a description in the text, forcing us to revise a particular mimetic hypothesis.[21] Characters, and fictional worlds in general, rely upon this process in order to be mentally represented at all. The mimetic hypothesis underpins more complex engagements built upon recognition; for example, we would not find ourselves attracted to (and so could not become allied with) an inert bundle of traits. We conceive of characters as integral, discrete textual constructs. Just as persons in the real world may be complex or entertain conflicting beliefs, so may characters; but as with persons, such internal contradictions are perceived against the ground of (at least) bodily discreteness and continuity.

Recognition has received less attention than any other level of engagement in studies concerned with character and/or "identification," probably because it is regarded as "obvious." Certainly, in most films, it is rapid and phenomenologically "automatic." The importance of the level becomes apparent in those films that undercut or retard recognition. Films as different as *Arsenal* (Alexander Dovzhenko, 1929), *The End* (Christopher Maclaine, 1953), *The Suspended Vocation* (Raul Ruiz, 1977), and *That Obscure Object of Desire* (Luis Buñuel, 1977) all problematize the process of recognition, but to ends rather more diverse than can be captured by a single, gross function such as "distanciation" or the "laying bare of the device." Even the poststructuralist might welcome an explanation of recognition. If characters are really such fragmentary

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bundles of traits, then some significant mental activity must give rise to our experience of them as continuous wholes.

Alignment describes the process by which spectators are placed in relation to characters in terms of access to their actions and to what they know and feel. The concept is akin to the literary notion of "focalization," Gérard Genette's term for the way in which narratives feed story information to the reader through the "lens" or "filter" of a particular character. I propose two interlocking functions, *spatial attachment* and *subjective access*, as the most precise means for analyzing alignment.[22] Spatial attachment concerns the capacity of the narration to restrict itself to the actions of a single character or to move more freely among the spatio-temporal paths of two or more characters. Subjective access pertains to the degree of access we have to the subjectivity of characters, a function that may vary from character to character within a narrative. Together these functions control the apportioning of knowledge among characters and the spectator; the systematic regulation of narrative knowledge results in a *structure of alignment*.

Perceptual alignment—optical POV and its aural equivalent—is regarded as simply one resource of the narration in controlling alignment. A common error in a great deal of criticism that focuses on "identification" is the privileging of POV, on the grounds that it provides us with uniformly greater access to characters' states than other devices. Such an assumption both overstates the importance of POV to "identification" and at the same time occludes the wide variety of other functions that POV may perform (for example, concealing the identity of the looker, a function it often performs in the horror film).[23] POV neither entails nor is essential to recognition, alignment, or allegiance. All three levels of structure can operate without POV, and the use of POV does not necessarily result in our recognizing a character, being aligned with a character, or being allied with a character.

Allegiance pertains to the moral and ideological evaluation of characters by the spectator. Here we are perhaps closest to what is meant by "identification" in everyday usage, where we talk of "identifying with" both persons and characters on the basis of a wide range of factors, including attitudes related to class, nation, age, ethnicity, and gender ("I could really identify with Virgil Tibbs, having experienced that kind of racial hostility myself"). Allegiance depends upon the spectator having what s/he takes to be reliable access to the character's state of mind, understanding the context of the character's actions, and having morally evaluated the character on the basis of this knowledge. Evaluation, in this sense, has both cognitive and affective dimensions. For example, being angry or outraged at an action involves categorizing it as undesirable or harmful to someone or something and being affected—affectively aroused—by this categorization. On the basis of such evaluations, spectators construct *moral structures*, in which characters are organized and ranked in a system of preference. Many factors contribute to the process of *moral orientation* (the narrational

process through which a moral structure is produced) and hence to allegiance: character action, iconography, and music are particularly salient.[24]

A word or two further should be said regarding the theory of emotion that the notion of allegiance depends upon. The theory argues that emotions proper have both a cognitive component and an affective component; fear, for example, is characterized as a judgment or "cognition" that something endangers the interests of the subject, held in an intentional relationship with a state of affective arousal in the subject. Different emotions are thus discriminable according to the specific cognitive component, or *identificatory evaluation*: "that student just insulted me," in the case of anger, as opposed to "I've hurt that student," in the case of remorse. It is important to see how this account "thickens" cognitive accounts of spectatorial response, which are often thought to be incapable of handling emotional responses. Moreover, this view of emotion overturns the Platonic antinomy between reason and the emotions, an antinomy which, it might naively be thought, cognitivism perpetuates.[25]

Neither recognition nor alignment nor allegiance entails that the spectator replicate the traits or experience the thoughts or emotions of a character. Recognition and alignment require only that the spectator understand that these traits and mental states make up the character. With allegiance we go beyond understanding by evaluating and responding emotionally to the traits and emotions of the character in the context of the narrative situation. Again, though, we respond emotionally without replicating the emotions of the character. For example, in watching a character perform certain actions and in seeing the character adopt a certain kind of posture and facial expression, we may infer that the character is in a certain kind of mental state or possesses certain traits—say, anger as the state, or brutality as the trait. These inferences contribute both to our recognition of the character and to the pattern of alignment, since we are dealing here partly with a question of subjective access, but such inferences in no way mandate that the spectator be moved to think or feel (let alone behave) in the same way. If we do go on to be moved by engaging with the character on the level of allegiance, our responses are at a tangent to those of the character: they are acentral, sympathetic rather than empathetic. In order to respond emotionally in this way, the perceiver must first understand the narrative situation, including the interests, traits, and states of the characters.[26] We will see how this contrasts with empathic emotional responses that do not require such an understanding.

It is in view of these conditions that recognition, alignment, and allegiance comprise a structure of *sympathy*, where that term is distinguished from *empathy* precisely in virtue of its acentrality. In understanding "why the protagonist's response is appropriate or intelligible to the situation,"[27] it is only necessary that we have what we take to be, at that moment in the course of the narrative, reliable information about the traits and states of the character and about the situation in which the character is placed. In sympathizing with the protagonist I do not simulate or mimic his or her occurrent mental state. Rather, I under-

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stand the protagonist and his or her context, make a more-or-less sympathetic or antipathetic judgment of the character, and respond emotionally in a manner appropriate to both the evaluation and the particular context of the action.

The Man Who Knew Too Much. Much of the critical and theoretical comment on the work of Hitchcock has centered on the notion of "identification," as in the work of Robin Wood, for example. In particular, critics have observed that his films sometimes elicit a paradoxical identification with villainous, unsympathetic characters; Wood, for example, writes of Hitchcock "playing identification techniques *against* the natural gravitation of our sympathetic concern."[28] For these reasons, Hitchcock's films provide a particularly good test case for the theory of character engagement. *The Man Who Knew Too Much* will serve primarily to illustrate the distinctiveness of the structures of allegiance and alignment; for reasons of space, my remarks on recognition and empathic responses will be relatively brief.

The Man Who Knew Too Much may be divided into two broad movements. Jo and Ben McKenna, an American couple, are vacationing in Morocco with their son, Hank. In the course of their travels, they befriend a Frenchman, Louis Bernard, and a retired English couple, the Draytons. Bernard is murdered. With his last words he attempts to pass information regarding a plot to assassinate a French minister to Ben McKenna. The Draytons, it emerges, are in some way connected with the murder of Louis Bernard; they kidnap Hank in order to silence Ben McKenna. The Draytons hold Hank in captivity in England; the McKennas pursue them largely without the aid of the police. Hank is located in a London embassy and is recovered via a ruse in which Jo McKenna, a professional singer, entertains guests at the embassy with a (lengthy) rendition of "Que Sera, Sera." Recognizing the song, Hank whistles it, enabling his father to locate him.

In the first movement, which extends up to the beginning of the McKennas' hunt for Hank in Britain, we recognize the major characters, and we are aligned exclusively (with a few brief exceptions) with the McKennas. At the same time, this first movement establishes a moral structure that ensures our sympathies are directed toward the McKennas. In the second movement, the structure of alignment develops so as to disperse our attention across several characters, rather than exclusively attaching us to the McKennas. Moreover, while the McKennas remain the moral center of the film, the moral structure of the film fragments in other ways during the second movement. Let us consider these developments in more detail.

The first movement of the film both attaches us to the McKennas and provides us with access to their subjectivities. That is, the narration follows the spatiotemporal path of the McKennas, only occasionally breaking away to reveal action occurring in a distinct location; and the McKennas are subjectively *transparent*, revealing their inner states through actions, expressions, and language. By contrast, when the narration does break momentarily from the McKennas

(just prior to the stabbing of Louis Bernard, for example), the characters we witness are largely *opaque*: we see their actions but have no access to their subjectivities. (Indeed, the film persistently elicits curiosity by introducing secondary characters—Louis Bernard, the Draytons, the assassin, Ambrose Chappell, Jr.—in this obtuse fashion.) It is this combination of transparency and opacity, couched in a pattern of spatial attachment that emphasizes the McKennas, that creates the sense that narrative information is being "filtered" through the McKennas.[29]

Up until the murder of Louis Bernard, the McKennas have functioned as an "alignment unit"; that is, the narration has followed them as a couple with much of our access to their thoughts deriving from dialogue between them. The murder results in the splitting of this unit, aligning us more closely with Ben McKenna during the murder and in its immediate aftermath. The murder scene is one of the few occasions within this first movement when the narrative attaches us to action other than that involving the McKennas, and yet, at the same time, it ultimately functions to underscore our alignment with Ben McKenna. Since these are, on the face of it, contrary effects, a more detailed examination of the sequence is warranted.

The action takes place in a marketplace, where the McKennas are spending a leisurely morning with the Draytons. The narration first aligns us with the McKennas. The Draytons are looking after Hank, and this second group occasionally crosses the path of the McKennas. The narration then breaks with this restriction in order to follow a scuffle and chase that erupts in the market: Louis Bernard is being pursued. Bernard is stabbed, staggers toward the group formed by the McKennas and the Draytons, and falls on Ben McKenna. Through a sequence of tighter and tighter close-ups and the diminution of background noise, the narration attaches us to Ben McKenna's actions and experience ever more exclusively. The apex of this movement occurs in a two-shot in which the camera tracks in toward the characters as Bernard whispers into Ben's ear. Though the shot is not subjective in any obvious sense, it mimics for the spectator the way Ben has been drawn down by Bernard. Over these shots, Bernard communicates some fragmented information regarding the assassination plot. The spectator's alignment with Ben is cemented here, since only the spectator and Ben are party to these revelations. The more omniscient narration during the chase that precedes Bernard's death in fact functions to highlight this exclusive alignment of the spectator with Ben. In this sense, if we take the sequence as whole, the brief "decentering" of the McKennas only serves to place the subsequent narrational isolation of Ben McKenna in relief.

Following this incident, Ben is interviewed by the police and then receives a threatening phone call in which he is informed that Hank has been kidnapped. Back at the hotel, he tells Jo about the phone call and his realization that the Draytons must have been the agents of the kidnapping, thus reforming the earlier "alignment unit." This is crucial in reifying a moral structure in the film: from the beginning the McKennas have been presented as a sympathetic

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couple, but no definitively antipathetic character emerges until this moment. The narration sets up a Manichaean moral structure, a simple opposition of groups representing opposed values. The narration has provided us with our villains—for the moment, at least. The pattern of exclusive spatial attachment to the McKennas is important here, since we later discover that Mrs. Drayton is a most half-hearted and guilt-ridden kidnapper. But the Hitchcockian narration does not reveal this to us at this point, thus inviting the Manichaean response. In this way, the alignment structure affects the pattern of moral orientation. Distinguishing alignment from allegiance does not at all deny that the two systems interact; that is why they are defined as operating within a larger system— the structure of sympathy.

The first movement of the film climaxes with the argument between the McKennas in their hotel room in Marrakesh and their telephone call with Hank, which follows their arrival at Heathrow Airport in London. As with the stabbing scene, these scenes function to concentrate our attention more keenly on the characters with whom we are aligned; in this case, both the McKennas. Aside from a brief argument with Buchanan, a British police official, the McKennas are isolated in these scenes. The narration thus dovetails alignment and allegiance: we have been aligned with the McKennas from the beginning of the film, a pattern underlined by their isolation in these scenes, and during the same portion of the film the moral structure clarifies into a dualistic opposition, thus intensifying our sympathy for the McKennas. The text is so organized that at precisely the point where our allegiance is most strongly elicited, any "interference" from action involving other characters is excluded. The first movement of the film, then, leads to this convergence of alignment and allegiance, the optimal conditions for an intense and unqualified sympathetic engagement with the McKennas.

The second movement of the film disperses and fragments this convergence, all the time maintaining our sympathetic engagement with the McKennas. Within the structure of alignment, this dispersal occurs as the narration becomes increasingly omniscient. In our terms, the narration attaches us to multiple characters and, again in contrast to the first movement of the film, gives us access to the subjectivities of characters other than the McKennas. The onceexclusive pattern of attachment splinters in two ways: Ben and Jo search for Hank separately, effecting a sustained (rather than temporary, as in the first movement of the film) spatial division of the sympathetic characters. Second, and more important, the narration now periodically aligns us with the Draytons, beginning with the sequence in which the assassin is instructed by Mr. Drayton. Up to this point in the film, the narration has only momentarily strayed from aligning us with either Ben or Ben and Jo together.

This increasing omniscience does not only manifest itself in the attachment to a greater number of characters than in the first movement of the film. This shift is mirrored by a change in the *texture* of the narration (that is, the quality of the narration on a shot-by-shot, "micro" level, as opposed to its global qualities

established across entire segments), which self-consciously interrupts the flow of character action and reaction by foregrounding inanimate elements of the diegesis of which the characters are unaware. The most striking case involves the stuffed animals that intrude upon our attention when Ben visits the taxidermists in search of Hank, commenting ironically on the misperception—shared by Ben and, by virtue of the structure of alignment, the spectator—of the Chappells as a gang of menacing criminals.

Parallel with these shifts in the structure of alignment, the narration also complicates the moral structure of the film. In aligning the spectator with the Draytons in the scene in which the assassin receives his instructions, the narration posits a new moral opposition among the kidnappers, between Mrs. Drayton, kind and protective toward Hank, on the one hand, and Mr. Drayton, the assassin and Hank's guard, on the other. The opposition mirrors the larger one that crystallizes at the end of the first movement between the McKennas and the Draytons. The film thus effects a series of reversals with respect to Mrs. Drayton, switching from antipathy to sympathy twice (the other instance occurs earlier in the film). The split between the Draytons performs an even more complex function in the way that it parallels and overshadows a more subtle division that opens up between Ben and Jo McKenna.[30] After the kidnapping, the domineering, controlling traits of Ben McKenna take on a much more troubling and unsympathetic aspect. Up to this point, the difficulties caused in the marriage by Ben's "benign" patriarchal dominance have been revealed in dialogue—most obviously in references to Jo's unwillingly abandoned singing career—but largely anesthetized by the ludic tone of the family scenes. After the kidnapping, however, Ben's control over Jo is cast in a more sinister light, particularly in the scene in which he cajoles her into taking tranquilizers. A major thematic concern of the second movement of the film is the (relative) re-empowerment of Jo McKenna within the marriage—she is proven to be at least as capable and insightful in the "masculine" business of the hunt for the kidnappers—and the consequent renewal of the marriage. However, in moral terms, this division is very minor compared with that between the McKennas and the Draytons and the new split between Mr. and Mrs. Drayton. The latter plays out in more extreme form and yet diminishes by comparison the conflict between the McKennas. None of these intricacies undermine our sympathy for the McKennas as a couple, and it is in this sense that they remain the moral center of the film. The narration manages to introduce moral complexity with respect to the protagonists without undermining the strong "melodramatic" opposition set up in the first movement.

Some of the consequences of these complications in the patterns of alignment and allegiance are manifested in the climactic scene in the embassy. Mr. Drayton leaves the basement of the embassy to fetch Hank from the room upstairs in which he is being held by Mrs. Drayton. He is planning to strangle Hank. In the next shot, Ben heads up the stairs of the embassy from the ground floor, following the sound of his son whistling "Que Sera." The narration then

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cuts to Mrs. Drayton in the room with Hank. She is desperately trying to save him. Someone starts to pound on the door. Is it Ben or Mr. Drayton? Our hesitation is integral to the effect of suspense, but what I am interested in here are the factors that bear on our hypotheses. Inference based on narrative context should lead us to the conclusion that it is Ben at the door: Ben surely has less ground to cover, since he begins from the ground floor rather than the basement. Against this, however, two factors point to Mr. Drayton. The moral opposition between the Draytons is important because, generically, we expect a confrontation between a sympathetic and an antipathetic character.[31] On these grounds, then, it is likely to be Mr. Drayton, who has become the moral opponent of Mrs. Drayton, rather than Ben.

The second factor likely to weight our hypotheses in favor of Mr. Drayton involves a form of central imagining, or empathy, in contrast to the acentral phenomena on which this analysis has concentrated. "Affective mimicry" describes our capacity to gauge the affective states of others through facial and bodily cues, rapidly and with little or no knowledge of context. The process is central because the gauging involves a partial replication of the observed person's facial expression and bodily gesture, which in turn, through "feedback," results in a mimicking of the target subject's affective state, not merely a recognition of it.[32] Affective mimicry functions in practical existence as a kind of "sixth sense," an almost "perceptual" registering and reflexive mimicry of the emotion of another person via facial and bodily cues, a physiological mechanism by which we constantly probe the meaning of our environment. It is quite distinct from the cognitive, acentral assessments of a character's affective state—of the type that form the basis of the structure of sympathy—in that it does not rely upon narrative context. Nevertheless, the information provided by affective mimicry must be integrated with the spectator's existing knowledge of the narrative context. In this case, we may mimic the fear clearly expressed by Mrs. Drayton's facial and bodily gestures, the fear reinforcing the expectation, based on conventional patterns of allegiance, that it is Mr. Drayton at the door. It is my experience that for most spectators, the combined effects of allegiance and mimicry override the purely cognitive assessment of narrative space. Thus, the information provided by the mechanism of central imagining in this case meshes with the structure of sympathy.[33]

The second movement of the film thus complicates the pattern of moral orientation, without displacing the McKennas as the moral center of the film, and replaces an exclusive alignment with the McKennas with a structure of alignment in which we are alternately aligned with Jo McKenna, Ben McKenna, and the kidnappers. These shifts occur for the sake of generating suspense. The first movement, however, is important to the creation of this suspense in a different way. The exclusive alignment with the McKennas, combined with the Manichaean moral structure, create the optimal conditions for an intense, sympathetic engagement with them. This emotional bond carries through the second movement of the film in spite of the self-conscious,

mocking interventions of the narration, ensuring that when the narration does disperse our attention by developing an alternating alignment pattern, we still care enough about the characters to want a good outcome for them. To borrow a phrase from detective fiction writer P. D. James, suspense depends on both devices and desires.

A number of points regarding the structure of sympathy in general emerge from this analysis of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. First, in contrast to the everyday model of identification, engagement within the structure of sympathy is conceived as a plural phenomenon. According to the casual scenario of character identification, we watch a film and find ourselves becoming attached to a particular character on the basis of qualities roughly congruent with those we possess, or wish to possess, and experience vicariously the emotional states of this character: we identify with him or her. It should now be clear that this scenario conflates many different kinds of response to character, some purely cognitive, some both cognitive and affective, and implies that this articulation of the various kinds of response is the only significant one. Our examination of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* illustrates the way in which spectators may recognize, align, and ally themselves with characters in complex patterns that may preclude or transcend a single, strong engagement ("identification") with a single character. One of the advantages of positing a number of different levels of engagement is that we can see how our relationship with a central character is inflected by adjacent engagements at the same or different levels that may compete or cooperate with a dominant engagement. Broadly speaking, plural engagement can work in two ways. We may respond differently to the same character at different points in the film, as, strikingly, in the case of Mrs. Drayton, and we may engage simultaneously with different characters in different ways within a given part of the film. Plural "identification"—the ramification of character engagement through the variables of level of engagement, number of characters, and time—lies at the heart of the complexity of experience that narrative fiction can offer us.

In spite of this, the great bulk of theoretical speculation on the question of "identification" has been concerned with sympathetic reactions to characters reflecting the values already held (consciously or unconsciously) by the spectator (which should hardly surprise us, since this is the relationship built in to the word "identification"). And this is another good reason to drop the term in favor of another, more neutral term, like engagement. For engaging with characters may result in—if I may risk a hideous neologism—"alterification" at least as much as "identification"; narratives (including popular ones) are not only about reconfirming and restaging the familiar, the same old story. The interest and fascination of narratives may well derive equally from the representation of the unfamiliar, the spectator's "quasi-experience" of the new. *The Man Who Knew Too Much* draws upon stereotypical types and narrative patterns and yet, unquestionably, it engages our interest by eliciting sympathetic (and antipathetic) responses toward characters undergoing experiences of traumatic loss, viola-

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tion, and self-questioning that few of us will have direct experience of, and none in the precise configuration put forward by the narrative. Fiction enables, in Stephen Greenblatt's words, a kind of imaginative *mobility* that has been almost entirely obscured by the stress on "subjection" (ideological determination) in contemporary theory. I must stress that I am not appealing to a notion of imagination or aesthetic experience that takes us beyond or outside the social, but rather one that fosters new perspectives on the social, one that facilitates imaginative mobility within social "space."[34]

A further feature of the structure of sympathy that emerges from the analysis of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* is that the three basic levels of engagement may interact in various ways. Traditional aesthetic concepts, such as "empathy" (in the Brechtian sense) and catharsis, may be explained with more precision in terms of such complex patterns of engagement. But it is important here to recognize that the three basic levels, though they always interact in actual films, are distinct phenomena which should not be conflated. *Maniac* (William Lustig, 1982), for example, develops an alignment pattern in which the narration attaches us to a subjectively transparent protagonist whose actions (a series of horrible rapes, murders, and scalpings) are morally repugnant, denying most viewers the necessary conditions for a sympathetic allegiance with the character. We are, as it were, made to "identify" informationally with a character from whom we are simultaneously emotionally alienated. The distinction between alignment and allegiance attempts to capture this split. This is not to deny that structures of alignment may have an impact on structures of allegiance, as we saw with respect to our changing evaluations of Mrs. Drayton. But this is quite different from collapsing the various concepts that comprise the model of character engagement back into a single, homogeneous phenomenon, just as there is a difference between, on the one hand, mistaking the wood for the trees and, on the other hand, acknowledging that there are both a wood and several varieties of trees.

A Concluding Conundrum. An exhaustive treatment of psychoanalytic approaches to "identification" and the relationship of such approaches to a cognitive model of the type proposed here is beyond the scope of this essay, but I want to conclude with a few remarks on this subject. At a very general level, there are connections between certain psychoanalytic theories and the model of engagement. Most obviously, there is a broad kinship between my approach and those psychoanalytic models that stress "multiple identificatory positions" where that process is understood to involve a mixture of central and acentral imagining—as, for example, in the works of Janet Bergstrom, Elizabeth Cowie, Carol Clover, and Richard Allen.[35] And it might seem that by breaking down "identification" into its constituent senses my work could usefully complement the broad focus of psychoanalysis on questions of gender and fantasy with a formalist concern for precise textual description. But this may be too sanguine, and it is certainly too simple. Let me approach the problems of such a shotgun

marriage between psychoanalysis and character engagement by considering (optical) POV, a subject that looms large in most accounts of "identification."

I have already suggested that the functions of POV are far more diverse than criticism often allows. What is key here, however, is that a POV shot might function solely to give us access to the thoughts of a character; that is, it might produce alignment without allegiance. For many psychoanalytic film theorists, however, POV is inseparable from allegiance. Laura Mulvey treats the POV shot as central to the masculine address of classical cinema, articulating scopophilia more clearly than any other device. Rather than being conceived as a tool that is used for a variety of human needs and purposes, looking is inextricably bound up with the development of sexual difference and the inequities of power under patriarchy. POV, as the pre-eminent cinematic device for the representation of looking, is thus intrinsically value-laden; indeed, Mulvey talks of the spectator of *Vertigo* being caught in the "moral ambiguity" of looking.[36] Similarly, for Jacqueline Rose, intrinsic to the shot/reverse-shot structure is an aggressivity characteristic of the mirror-phase, which the filmic structure echoes and restages.[37] In common with Baudry and Metz, Rose assumes here that the cinematic apparatus itself is to be explained in psychoanalytic terms, as a replaying of the mirror-phase (though for Rose the apparatus produces a specifically gendered subject). The result, I would argue, is that certain devices are essentialized; that is, they perform fixed psychic functions regardless of (or, at best, in addition to) the particular material of the narrative or the cultural context of their use.

Like these psychoanalytic theories, the model of character engagement advanced here attempts to construct a general theory of a particular aspect of cinema. It attempts to lay out a set of levels and distinctions that will be pertinent to the characterological structures of fiction films of all societies, though it acknowledges that for each concrete case these general structures require "filling-out" with the particular representational concerns and conventions of the society in question. Within this framework, ideology is understood as emerging from the concrete uses of devices and structures in particular contexts, by particular agents, and directed toward specific ends.[38] It is with respect to this issue that the crucial difference between character engagement and psychoanalytic approaches becomes clear. For many psychoanalytic film theorists, the cinematic apparatus as such—or, indeed, narrative form as such—is "always already" ideological (whether that ideology is conceived as bourgeois or patriarchal). In Rose's words, a certain ideology is "latent" in the system of "cinematic specularity" itself.[39] The cinematic apparatus is not a technology that only becomes ideological when it is used for certain goals, representing particular subject matter in specific ways.

I would not dispute that the cinema, as a technology, emerges from a bourgeois and patriarchal society, but I would argue that the potential uses and effects of a technology may outstrip its origins, and that this is certainly the case with the ideological effects of cinema. Mulvey's argument can only be integrated with such a view of cinematic technology by construing it as a historical

and cultural claim which addresses the way in which certain devices (like POV shots) have been used in the service of certain ideological purposes (the function of the POV shot to represent scopophilia as an aspect of Western patriarchy, for example). This allows us to recognize the massive variety of other functions performed by POV: the representation of the focused hatred of a peasant toward a factory owner in *The End of St. Petersburg* (V. I. Pudovkin, 1927), for example, or, to take an example from classical cinema, the representation of a character's longing for drinking water in *Lifeboat* (Hitchcock, 1944). If the various psychoanalytic theories of cinema are to represent themselves as more general theories, then they must show how scopophilia or voyeurism illuminates such instances of POV.[40]

    This approach allows for the concepts of psychoanalysis at the historical and cultural level—treating, as I have already suggested, the particular function of POV in representing scopophilia as a cultural phenomenon under the rubric of allegiance. Rather than being seen as an explanation of patriarchy, psychoanalysis is viewed as an expression of it, an extension of themes and imagery concerning sexual difference already present in the culture. Mulvey herself is very explicit about the limited validity of psychoanalysis as a tool of polemic against patriarchy on precisely these grounds. Psychoanalysis, Mulvey might be understood to be saying, is valuable in an analysis of patriarchal cinema in that it presents us with an elaboration of the very ideology—the system of beliefs and values that shores up the power structure—out of which classical cinema arises. This does not deprive it of all explanatory value, but it does constrain it to the cultural level. There is no "refusal of difference" in this position; my analysis of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* did address, and would certainly be compatible with an analysis stressing, the place of patriarchy in the film. It is simply a question of situating questions of difference (sexual and otherwise) at a different (cultural rather than universal) level than much of psychoanalytic film theory has done.

    If psychoanalysis is so placed, then claims based on it must be regarded as a part of the larger phenomenon of character engagement, rather than subsuming it. And this, it seems to me, is the crux of the difficulty, because most theorists who appeal to psychoanalysis regard it as a general theory of human identity, not simply a cluster of cultural beliefs. My approach would at best suspend judgment on whether such concepts as repression and the unconscious have scientific validity (that is, whether they are true beliefs, rather than simply beliefs). But most psychoanalytic film theorists would be unhappy with such a neutered beast and would wish to ascribe far more explanatory power to it than at a "merely" cultural and historical level. Moreover, if my skepticism about the universal validity of psychoanalysis turns out to be wrong, then the prospects for a fusion of the model set out here with psychoanalysis are still poor. If looking is intrinsically value-laden in the way that psychoanalytic film theory suggests, then my efforts to separate alignment from allegiance and to treat the representation of scopophilia as merely one function of POV—albeit an important one in

our culture—may be ill-conceived. What I am proposing as a solution to this impasse, then, is that the cognitive model advanced here incorporate psycho-analytic notions as a set of contingent historical beliefs, which are then treated as functioning in a cognitive fashion. While I doubt that this will be universally accepted, it is, at least, one way of finding an interface between the two para-digms. Obviously, I don't pretend to have a final answer to this question, but the difficulties of yoking the two approaches in other ways should not be under-estimated. One thing is clear: nothing is to be gained from either simple stipu-lations of the absolute truth of one theory or another or mere gestures of pluralistic goodwill.

Notes

Thanks to my two anonymous readers for their comments and suggestions.

1. "Character, Agency, and Mimesis," paper delivered at the Society for Cinema Stud-ies Conference, New Orleans, February 1993; a fuller version will appear in *Engag-ing Characters: Fiction and Emotional Response in the Cinema* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, forthcoming).
2. Two works are particularly important in advancing a view of imagination that see it as central to human rationality and productivity: George Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and, from a more purely philosophical perspective, David No-vitz, *Knowledge, Fiction and the Imagination* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).
3. The notion of "quasi-observation" is posited by Jean-Paul Sartre in *The Psychology of the Imagination* (London: Methuen, 1972), trans. unknown, and developed by Paul Taylor, who writes of "quasi-experience" in "Imagination and Information," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 42 (1981): 211–14.
4. Edward Branigan, *Point of View in the Cinema: A Theory of Narration and Subjec-tivity in the Classic Film* (New York: Mouton, 1984), 40.
5. Richard Wollheim, *The Thread of Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 74.
6. The linguistic distinction is made in Richard Wollheim, *On Art and the Mind* (Cam-bridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 59, *not* in *The Thread of Life*. The distinction should not be confused with the one made by Wollheim in the latter work, in which similar linguistic cues are used to suggest a broader distinction be-tween iconic and noniconic mental states.

   Furthermore, Wollheim does not contend that there is a lawlike relation be-tween the two forms of linguistic expression and the two types of imagination (cen-tral and acentral); the linguistic distinction functions merely as a heuristic.

   Wollheim makes a further subdivision *within* central imagining, between cen-tral (where the position occupied is that of a central figure in the imagined scenario) and peripheral imagining (where the position occupied is that of a minor figure within the imagined scenario). For example, in imagining a wedding, we could cen-trally imagine it from the position of the bride (central) or from the position of a member of the congregation (peripheral). The major divide lies between these two forms of imagining and acentral imagining.
7. Ibid., 75.
8. I add this second example in order to make it clear that central imagining is not a synonym for mental visualizing, though the latter can be an example of central imag-

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ining. This is a problem because of the visual bias embedded in the "imagination" word group and because many authors, Wollheim included, choose to discuss these broader concepts with examples which involve visualization.

9. The distinction is not dissimilar to that between sympathy and empathy, as those terms are often defined. I regard acentral imagining as cognate with sympathy, while central imagining is a type of empathy. However, because of the great variety of senses attaching to "empathy" and "sympathy" in the vernacular, I shall refrain from using them until I have clarified my position with less encumbered terminology.

10. See, for example, the quotations collected in Leo Handel, *Hollywood Looks at Its Audience* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950), 147–49.

11. Robin Wood, *Hitchcock's Films* (London: Tantivy Press, 1966), 129.

12. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16: 3 (Autumn 1975): 12.

13. Christian Metz, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*, trans. Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster, and Alfred Guzzetti (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), 55–56.

14. Elizabeth Cowie, "Fantasia," *m/f* 9 (1984): 101. For a similar argument, see Janet Bergstrom, "Enunciation and Sexual Difference," *Camera Obscura* 3–4 (Summer 1979): 57–58. Linda Williams also stresses divided and multiple "identifications" in "Something Else Besides a Mother: *Stella Dallas* and the Maternal Melodrama," *Cinema Journal* 24: 1 (1984): 2–27.

15. Carol Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (London: BFI, 1992), 12.

16. Carroll is also reacting against "illusion" theories of cinematic spectatorship, that is, theories, like psychoanalysis, that argue that we are deceived into taking a representation for its referents in classical cinema, or cinema more generally. For Carroll, "identification" implies not only central imagining but a loss of awareness that one is imagining at all, displaced by a "hallucination" of actually being the character. But there are two issues here, and it is important not to confuse them. First, there is the question of whether a spectator mistakes a representation for an actual referent. Second, we can ask whether the spectator, in engaging with fiction, imagines the events centrally (a claim usually indicated by a term like "empathy" or "identification") or acentrally (as in Carroll's "assimilation"). In answer to the first question, I assume that spectators are not subject to an illusion of this sort. But this is not the issue under scrutiny, and our answer to the first question does not determine our answer to the second question. Often the "illusion" theory of fiction is yoked with a notion of identification: not only do we mistake the representation for its referent(s), but we mistake ourselves for (or "lose ourselves in") the protagonist (or some other character). But there is no necessary connection here. It is quite possible to conceive of a spectator centrally imagining while never mistaking representation for referent, just as it is possible for us to imagine what another person must feel like in their situation, without for a moment confusing ourselves with that other person.

I should note here that my categorization of Carroll within Wollheim's scheme is of my own doing. Carroll makes no reference to the work of Wollheim. See *The Philosophy of Horror; or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 63–68.

17. I am using and developing a scenario initially used by Kendall Walton ("Fearing Fictions," *Journal of Philosophy* 75: 1 [January 1978]: 5–27) that has since become a touchstone in the debate on emotional response to fiction. Carroll develops his own argument partly in reference to the case of Charles and the Green Slime.

18. Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, 95–96, emphasis added.

19. The only occasion when Carroll develops an example that clearly would count as an instance of central imagining can be found in ibid., 80. Here he introduces his "thought theory" of emotional response to fiction. One of his initial examples is that of walking near a cliff and imagining slipping and falling down the cliff face. Intuitively, we know that such imagined events can frighten us and do not depend at all on likelihood: one need not believe that one is in any real danger of slipping in order to frighten oneself with the thought.

   Now this is clearly central imagining, outside a fictional context. When Carroll moves on to discuss fiction, however, the paradigm becomes acentral imagining. At no point does Carroll suggest, for example, that Charles might frighten himself by imagining himself as a character faced by the Green Slime. Rather, sharing the pertinent cultural assumptions and categories with the character, Charles too is disgusted by the interstitial monster. Hence, his emotional evaluations and arousals are "parallel" (Noel Carroll, *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1988], 247) but are not generated by a process of central imagining.

   One clarification is important regarding Carroll's use of the phrase "point of view" in this passage. Carroll is not suggesting that we first centrally imagine the event and then acentrally imagine it. Understanding the situation from the character's "point of view," in Carroll's sense, entails only an understanding of the interests and judgments of the character. This is clear when Carroll writes that assimilation requires that spectators have "a sense of the character's internal understanding of the situation" but that spectators "*need* not replicate the mental state of the protagonist, but only know reliably how she assesses it [the situation]" (Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, 95). Thus, in *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979), we understand the situation from the "point of view" of Sigourney Weaver insofar as we understand that the fear she experiences arises because she judges that the alien is revolting and dangerous and because she sees it as being in her interest to preserve her life. We do not need to experience the occurrent emotion of fear in order to understand the situation "internally." The phrase "point of view," in other words, has a very different meaning for Wollheim and Carroll, respectively, and I do not take it to mean anything akin to "central imagining" for Carroll.
20. Carroll, *Mystifying Movies*, 247.
21. Christopher Butler, *Interpretation, Deconstruction and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 7; see also David Bordwell, *Making Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 134–35, 171.
22. George Wilson, *Narration in Light* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) uses the phrase "epistemic alignment" in a similar way, although he does not develop the concept systematically, in the way I attempt to in this study. I adopt the notion of "spatial attachment" from Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*, trans. Valentina Zavarin and Susan Wittig, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 58.
23. Elena Dagrada discusses a parodic instance of this convention in *The Nutty Professor* (Jerry Lewis, 1962), in "The Diegetic Look: Pragmatics of the Point-of-View Shot," *Iris* 4: 2 (1986): 120.
24. The term "allegiance," and the idea of moral structure are posited by Noel Carroll in "Toward a Theory of Film Suspense," *Persistence of Vision* 1 (Summer 1984): 65–89. I choose to follow Carroll in using the word "moral" rather than "ideological" to describe this level of engagement for two reasons. First, the overall ideology of a text may involve many factors other than those pertaining to the characterological structure of the text; and second, with respect to characters, ideological judgments are typically expressed as moral evaluations.

25. This "cognitive" or "judgmentalist" view of emotions derives ultimately from Aristotle, although it has many modern exponents, from psychologists like Schacter and Singer and George Mandler to philosophers such as O. H. Green. Patricia Greenspan's *Emotions and Reasons* (New York: Routledge, 1988) has been particularly influential on my work.

26. I do not mean to imply that the spectator's understanding and evaluation of the traits of a character must be either complete or immutable in order for allegiance to occur, but merely that at a given moment in the text the spectator must believe that s/he has some basis for evaluation in the form of beliefs about what traits, etc., comprise the character in question.

27. Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, 96.

28. Wood, *Hitchcock's Films*, 23; see also Raymond Durgnat, *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock* (London: Faber, 1974), and Carroll, "Toward a Theory of Film Suspense."

29. Except in the case of POV shots and diegetic voice-overs, film cannot filter narrative information through a character in the direct fashion of a literary narrative written in the voice of a homodiegetic narrator. In film, the "filtering" effect is the product of the particular organization of alignment discussed here.

30. On the parallels between the McKennas and the Draytons, see Dave Kehr, "Hitch's Riddle," *Film Comment* 20: 5 (May–June 1984): 15.

31. Carroll, "Toward a Theory of Film Suspense," 71–73.

32. The facial feedback thesis holds that in adopting a facial expression apposite to a particular emotion, our subjective experience of the emotion is intensified. See Paul Ekman, ed., *Emotion in the Human Face* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); R. B. Zajonc, "Emotion and Facial Efference: A Theory Reclaimed," *Science*, April 5, 1985, 15–21; Robert Gordon, *The Structure of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Douglas Chismar, "Empathy and Sympathy: The Important Difference," *Journal of Value Inquiry* 22 (1988): 257–66.

33. Though there are instances where the effects of affective mimicry and the structure of sympathy cut against one another; see the analysis of *Saboteur* (Hitchcock, 1941) in my forthcoming *Engaging Characters*.

34. See Stephen Greenblatt, "Culture," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 232.

35. Bergstrom, "Enunciation and Sexual Difference"; Cowie, "Fantasia"; Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws*; and Richard Allen, "Representation, Illusion and the Cinema," *Cinema Journal* 32: 2 (Winter 1993).

36. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 16.

37. Jacqueline Rose, "Paranoia and the Film System," *Screen* 17: 4 (Winter 1976–77).

38. A similar position is taken by Noel Carroll; see his comments on the cinematic image, narrative, and narrational form in *Mystifying Movies*, 106, 146, and 158, respectively.

39. Rose writes: "paranoia [of which aggressivity is a feature] could be said to be latent to the structure of cinematic specularity in itself" ("Paranoia and the Film System," 89).

40. It might be argued that the most sophisticated exemplars of psychoanalytic film theory do just what I am arguing. Mulvey qualifies the authority of psychoanalysis by pointing to the fact that it is a part of patriarchy, not outside it ("Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 7), while Mary Ann Doane is insistent that "we might privilege Freudian psychoanalysis because it makes the cultural construction of femininity more legible . . . psychoanalysis is not used in the traditional sense in which one might activate it as a pure or neutral metalanguage" (*The Desire to Desire* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987], 20–21). On the other hand, neither

take the position that psychoanalysis is wholly historical and ideological. So the crunch question is: what bits of the theory are historical and ideological, what bits are more incorrigible—universal features of human development? And how are we to disentangle the one from the other?