

William C. Pamerleau

Narrative, Film, and Identity: How Cinema Impacts the Meaning of Life

Contents

Introduction

1 Meaning and Narrative

- 1 The Narrative Self
 - 1.1 Narrative Structure
 - 1.2 Narrative Identity
- 2 Meaning and Narrative
- 3 Narrative and Meaning in Life
 - 3.1 Subjectivists and Objectivists
 - 3.2 Meaning *of* Life
 - 3.3 Meaning *in* Life
- 4 Objections to Narrative Identity
 - 4.1 The self is not the same thing as the narrated life.
 - 4.2 Narrative inaccurately describes our life as we experience it.
 - 4.3 The narrative process distorts what is valuable about life.
- 5 Refining the Narrative Approach
- 6 Conclusion

2 Meaning and Film

- 1 Spectator Activity and Film Narrative
 - 1.1 Cognitivist Spectator Theories
 - 1.2 Spectator Activity and Emotions

- 2 Experiencing Films as Meaningful
 - 2.1 An Experience Unaccounted for by Film Scholars
 - 2.2 The Role of Life Narratives
- 3 Shaping Viewer Narratives
 - 3.1 Shaping Perceptions and Sustaining Stereotypes
 - 3.2 Making More Meaningful Narratives
- 4 Conclusion

3 Narrative Realism

- 1 Defining “Realism”
- 2 Narrative Realism
 - 2.1 A Multifaceted Approach
 - 2.2 Realism Depends on Interest
 - 2.3 Creating New Possibilities
- 3 Narrative Distortion
 - 3.1 Objections to Narrative Realism
 - 3.2 Defending Narrative Realism: Real Narratives and Truth
 - 3.3 Defending Narrative Realism: The Differences between Film Narratives and Life Narratives
- 4 Conclusion

4 Meaningful Films

- 1 Film Viewing as Meaningful Experience
 - 1.1 The Emotion of Meaningfulness
 - 1.2 Does the Personal Nature of Life Narratives Limit Theoretical Analysis?
- 2 An Analysis of Meaningful Films
 - 2.1 *Good Will Hunting*
 - 2.2 *American Beauty*
 - 2.3 *Winter Light*
- 3 Conclusion

5 Cinema’s Effect on Social Narratives

- 1 The Social Nature of Narratives
- 2 The Impact of Film on Social Narratives
- 3 A Narrative Approach to Prejudice and Discrimination in Film
 - 3.1 Schemas
 - 3.2 Selection
 - 3.3 Immersion
- 4 Conclusion

6 Expanding Narrative Possibilities

- 1 Making Meaningful Narratives: Clarifying the Scope of Moral Principles
 - 1.1 Engaging Existing Moral Perspectives
 - 1.2 Effects on Agency
- 2 Creating New Moral Perspectives
 - 2.1 Virtue and Moral Examples
 - 2.2 Moral Examples in Fictional Narratives
- 3 Expanding Resources for Constructing Meaningful Identities
- 4 Challenging Narratives
 - 4.1 Renewal Narratives
 - 4.2 Upsetting Narrative Forms
- 5 Conclusion

Conclusion

Bibliography

Index

