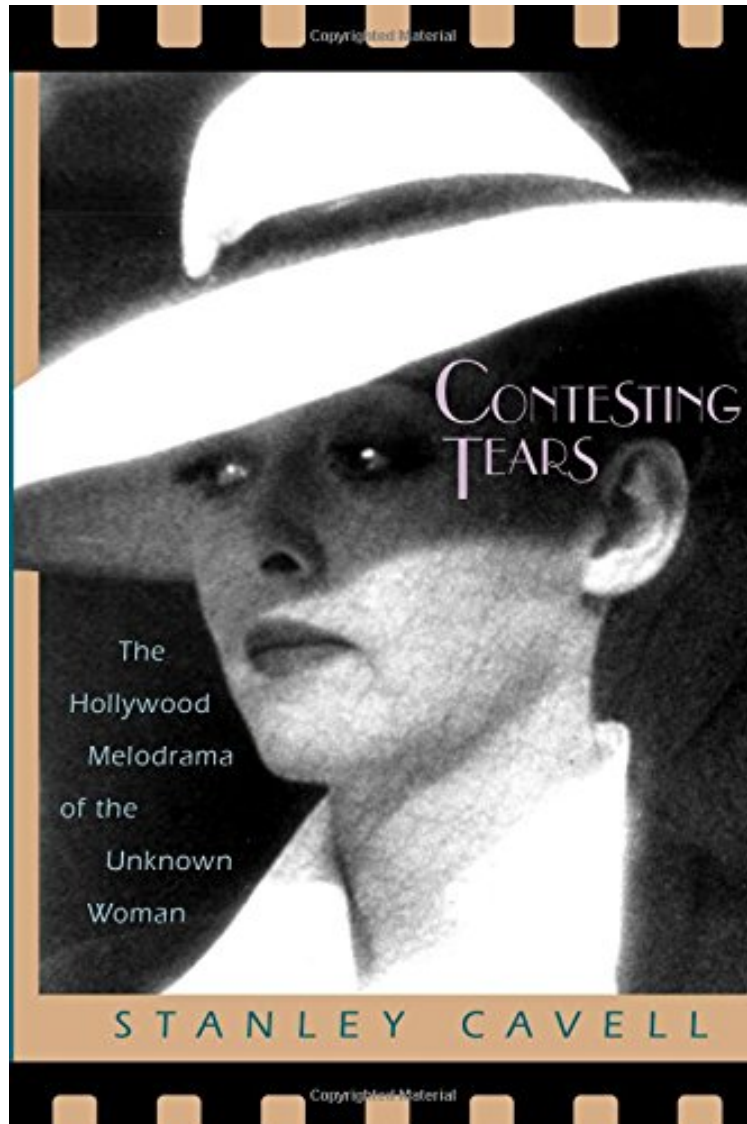


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## Contesting Tears: The Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman

*Stanley Cavell*

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#239866 in Books Stanley Cavell 1997-02-01 1997-02-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .90 x 6.00l, .78 #File Name: 0226098168272 pages Contesting Tears The Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman | File size: 64.Mb

**Stanley Cavell : Contesting Tears: The Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Contesting Tears: The Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Melodrama as liberation By Daniel C. Shaw offers a whole new take

on Now Voyager and some of the old "weepies" 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. What??????By Beach Atlantic This a great book. Probing , complex, the next step beyond the Hollywood comedy of remarriage. This is one of Cavell's best books and these reviews miss the boat by a country mile!!!! 4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Not bad, certainly, but not the best. By A Customer To say that Cavell's prose is challenging is charitable, at best. True, his ideas are solid and any good, insightful work requires effort to understand, but Cavell seems to circle around himself in a rhetorical spiral of namedropping and navel-gazing with an irksome regularity. He frequently explores ill-transitioned targets with no warning or reason apparent, and the overall read becomes fractured and one is left wondering why. This said, when one can extract the ore of Cavell's reason, it is pure gold. Truly, a mixed bag.

What is marriage? Can a relationship dedicated to equality, friendship, and mutual education flower in an atmosphere of romance? What are the paths between loving another and knowing another? Stanley Cavell identified a genre of classic American films that engaged these questions in his study of comedies of remarriage, *Pursuits of Happiness*. With *Contesting Tears*, Cavell demonstrates that a contrasting genre, which he calls "the melodrama of the unknown woman," shares a surprising number and weave of concerns with those comedies. Cavell provides close readings of four melodramas he finds definitive of the genre: *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, *Gaslight*, *Now Voyager*, and *Stella Dallas*. The women in these melodramas, like the women in the comedies, demand equality, shared education, and transfiguration, exemplifying for Cavell a moral perfectionism he identifies as Emersonian. But unlike the comedies, which portray a quest for a shared existence of expressiveness and joy, the melodramas trace instead the woman's recognition that in this quest she is isolated. Part of the melodrama concerns the various ways the men in the films (and the audiences of the films) interpret and desire to force the woman's consequent inaccessibility. "Film is an interest of mine," Stanley Cavell has written, "or say a love, not separate from my interest in, or love of, philosophy." In *Contesting Tears* Cavell once again brilliantly unites his two loves, using detailed and perceptive musings on melodrama to reflect on philosophical problems of skepticism, psychoanalysis, and perfectionism. As he shows, the fascination and intelligence of such great stars as Ingrid Bergman, Bette Davis, and Barbara Stanwyck illuminate, as they are illuminated by, the topics and events of these beloved and enduring films.

.com What do the movie masterpieces *Gaslight*, *Stella Dallas*, *Now, Voyager*, and *Letter from an Unknown Woman* have in common? Stanley Cavell, Harvard professor and film lover, believes they make up a small genre: the Hollywood melodrama of the unknown woman. In this sequel to his book *Pursuits of Happiness*, Cavell argues that these darkly beautiful films respond to issues raised in such comedies of remarriage as *The Philadelphia Story*, *Adam's Rib*, and *The Awful Truth*. The author's prose is sometimes challenging, but he remains one of the most interesting critics of film genre and classic Hollywood. One would be hard-pressed to find an author who writes about individual films with his kind of rigor, or who connects the various issues they raise to so many different philosophies of mind and art. The section in which Cavell refutes the academic commonplace that the camera offers viewers only the male gaze is particularly well done. In it, Cavell lists sequence after sequence in classic Hollywood films in which audiences are invited to look through the eyes--and the desires--of women. --Raphael Shargel From the Back Cover The author provides close readings of four melodramas he finds definitive of the genre: *Letter From An Unknown Woman*; *Gaslight*; *Now, Voyager*; and *Stella Dallas*. The women in these melodramas, like the women in the comedies, demand equality, shared education, and transfiguration, exemplifying for the author a moral perfectionism he identifies as Emersonian. About the Author