



Melodrama in Contemporary Film and Television

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Melodrama remains central to global media cultures, playing a key role in our understandings and experiences of modernity. As a historically mixed form, it is remarkably enduring and adaptive. The influence of melodramatic theatre, literature and classic film is evident in contemporary film and television. These media, however, are significantly changed in their post-classical forms of narrative and realism, and melodrama takes these new articulations in specific directions. In examining films and television programs produced in nine countries, this collection is interested in the ways in which melodrama expresses and gives meaning to: trauma and pathos; memory and historical re-visioning; home and borders; gendered and queer relations; the family and psychic identities; the national and emerging public cultures; bodies, faces, restraint and excess; morality and ethics. In so doing, the essays suggest that, while melodrama frequently remains a backward-looking form, it is ideally placed nonetheless to negotiate many of the key changes, anxieties and desires that characterize contemporary cultures.

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