Das filmische Melodram. Eine Arbeitsbibliographie.

Themenhefte

Wide Angle 4,2, 1980, pp. 4-51: Melodrama.
Five articles studying examples of the melodrama genre in the light of recent work in theory and feminism.

Movie, 29/30, 1982: Melodrama.

Journal of the University Film and Video Association 35,1, 1983: Melodrama.

Film Criticism 9,2, Winter1984-1985: Melodrama.

Screen 29,3, Summer 1988, pp. 2-115: Melodrama and transgression.
Dedicated to the portrayal of heroines in melodramas.


Bücher und Artikel


Aspinall, Sue / Murphy, Robert (eds.): Gainsborough Melodrama. London: British Film Institute 1983.


Examines concepts of gender in melodrama’s dealing with psychoanalysis, esp. with the link of madness and motherhood.


Cargnelli, Christian / Palm, Michael (Hg.): *Und immer wieder geht die Sonne auf: Texte zum melodramatischen im Film*. Wien 1994


ma of the Unknown Woman’ and ‘Max Ophuls in the Hollywood Studios’ represent the significance of Hollywood melodramas. The genre provides a means for criticism which is important to social formations. These books brings to focus that as long as attention is given to Hollywood films, the genre will remain.” [Expanded Academic Index]


Feuer, Jane: Melodrama, serial form and television today. In: Screen 25,1, 1984, pp. 4-16.

Fink, Janet / Holden, Katherine: Pictures from the Margins of Marriage: Representations of Spinsters and Single Mothers in the MidVictorian Novel, InterWar Hollywood Melodrama and British Film of


The public image of US stars, esp. female, is contrasted with the reality of their private life; focuses on the example of Lana Turner and her role in “Imitation of life”.


Fischer, Lucy: *Sirk and the Figure of the Actress: All I Desire*. In: *Film Criticism*, Winter-Spring 1999, pp. 136ff.

Douglas Sirk’s film “All I Desire” portrays the duality of the female character. Situated at the turn of the century, the film follows a woman’s desire to become an actress at the price of abandoning her husband and children. Although she is reunited with her family in the end, her absence has created intensified love or hatred in her children and meekness in her husband.


Psychoanalytic analysis of *Rebecca* and *Gaslight* as female Oedipal dramas


Consideration of film music as the feminine, examining film music as a process of signification in its own right, and analysing the function of music in classic Hollywood melodramas.


Discusses the use of melodrama to reach black audiences in the 1920’s, esp. in “The scar of shame”, and theorizes on the nature of the black audience (see also separate Oscar Micheaux bibliography)


Studies the similar fears of the newlywed brides in “Gaslight” and “Rebecca”.

Gallagher, Tag: Tag Gallagher Responds to Tania Modleski’s “Time and Desire in the Woman’s Films” (“Cinema Journal,” Spring 1984) and Linda Williams’s “‘Something Else besides a Mother’: ‘Stella Dallas’ and the Maternal Melodrama” (“Cinema
Filmmaker Douglas Sirk thought that movies should function for society, playing on the audience's emotions. Good and evil, lightness and darkness were accentuated with music. Motion and light were used to create the necessary melodramatic moments. Two major Sirk themes are characters who impose their will despite pain (white melodrama), and characters who are dominated by their will, giving in to lust (black melodrama).


Gledhill, Christine (ed.): Home is where the heart is: studies in melodrama and the woman's film. London: BFI Publishing 1987.


Explores similarities and differences between the genres, citing British/US examples past and present.


Examines the imprisonment and alienation of women in terms of race and gender in “Imitation of Life” with reference to the ‘camp’ sensibility evident in “Valley of the Dolls”.

Analyses the film in terms of the intersection of issues of race, class and gender.

Introduction to a series of articles on aspects of melodrama.

On women in the Hollywood film, incl. the representation of fantasy women in “The stepford wives”, the simultaneous celebration and reduction of wartime heroines such as “Rosie the riveter” and an analysis of melodrama.


Considers definitions of melodrama and tragedy in relation to the pressure or assertive nature of the heroine in literature and in women’s romantic Hollywood films of the 1930’s and 1940’s.


A postmodernist reading of US melodrama, tracing its shift from cinema, in the films of Douglas Sirk, to its current home, the tv soap opera.

Kaplan, E. Ann: Mothering, Feminism and Representation. The Maternal Melodrama and the Woman’s Film 1910-40. In: *Home is where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman’s Film*. Ed. by Christine Gledhill. London: British Film Institute 1987, pp. 113-137.


Approaching the genre of melodrama from the perspective of “trauma theory” highlights gaps in theorising about melodrama, previously articulated through Freudian psychoanalysis.


LaPlace, Maria: Producing and Consuming the Woman’s Film. Discursive Struggle in Now, Voyager. In: Home is where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman’s Film. Ed. by Christine Gledhill. London: British Film Institute 1987, pp. 138-166.

LaPlace, Maria: Producing and Consuming the Woman’s Film. Discursive Struggle in Now, Voyager. In: Home is where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman’s Film. Ed. by Christine Gledhill. London: British Film Institute 1987, pp. 138-166.


Lawrence, Amy: Trapped in a Tomb of Their Own Making: Max Ophuls’s The Reckless Moment and Douglas Sirk’s There’s Always Tomorrow. In: Film Criticism, WinterSpring 1999, pp. 150ff.

Filmmakers Max Ophuls and Douglas Sirk depict the gradual decay of the family unit in their films. Both focus on the rise of youth culture during the 1950s, coupled with the open floor plans of that era. Boundaries are therefore transgressed physically, mentally and emotionally, leading family members to seek means of escape and make irrational decisions.


Lehman, Peter: Crying over the Melodramatic Penis: Melodrama and Male Nudity in Films of the ’90s. In: Masculinity: bodies, movies, culture. Edited by Peter Lehman. New York: Routledge 2001 (AFI film readers.).


Metz, Walter C.: Pomp(ous) Sirkumstance: intertextuality, adaptation, and all that heaven allows. In:
An intertextual analysis of Douglas Sirk’s 1955 film ‘All That Heaven Allows,’ an adaptation of Edna and Harry Lee’s ‘woman’s novel,’ helps understand the influence of auteurism on melodrama studies. Sirk’s portrayal of American culture of the 1950s reflects his ability as a modernist creator of social critique. The archaeology of film studies criticism is significant to the understanding of film text interpretation.


Using “Letter from an unknown woman” as its chief example, reviews the scholarship on melodrama and speculates on the reasons for the appeal of this genre to women.


Modleski, Tania: Time and Desire in the Woman’s Film. In: Home is where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman’s Film. Ed. by Christine Gledhill. London: British Film Institute 1987, pp. 326-338.


The article compares Sirk’s Imitation of Life (1959) to David O. Selznick and William Wellman’s A Star is Born (1937) to explore a characteristically Sirkian narrative strategy: the latter film does not amuse itself at its predecessor’s expense so much as it inverts the message. A Star is Born conveys to its audience the idea that envying the glamorous life of the Hollywood star is inappropriate, inasmuch as the glamour has been fully paid for in suffering; arguably, what is lost is more valuable than the beauty, wealthy, fame, and indeed audience envy that is won. Imitation of Life, in contrast, suggests that envying the glamorous life of the Broadway star is inappropriate. Sirk’s protagonist cannot trade suffering for glamour because she is not sufficiently real to suffer; literally, then, there is nothing to envy. Like other domestic melodramas of the day, Imitation of Life explores the possibilities of female rebellion and escape, variously offering its audience validation, socialization, and emotional release through tears but it accomplishes this task in a way that criticizes female aspirations and audience gullibility considerably less that it criticizes theatricality in general.


Discussion of the themes and style of the melodramas of Stahl.

Morse, D.: Aspects of Melodrama In: Monogram, 4, 1972, pp. 16-17.


Repr. in: Home is where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman’s Film. Ed. by Christine Gledhill. London: British Film Institute 1987, pp. 75-79.


Reappraisal of the genre in terms of a series of relationships or tensions, exploring the genre as a processing of spectatorial pleasure, and explaining why we cry when we watch melodramas.

On the use of the term ‘melodrama’ to describe Hollywood films of the period 1938-60. Concludes that contrary to popular belief the term was not derogatory, and was used more frequently to describe male-oriented action films than for films aimed at women.


“Studio producers, directors, composers and sound technicians evolved the basic practices of film music in the late 1920s and early 1930s when cinema changed from silent movies to talkies. Max Steiner, Alfred Newman and Herbert Stothart were the pioneers in this field. Steiner drew from Wagner and Viennese melodrama while underscoring dialogue in a terse synchronised manner. The main contribution of the 1930s was the integration of the melodramatic with the operatic style. This is one of the preferred techniques even in the 1990s.” [Expanded Academic Index]


Repr. in: *Home is where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman’s Film*. Ed. by Christine Gledhill. London: British Film Institute 1987, pp. 70-74.


Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s 1973 film “Ali: Fear Eats the Soul” was influenced by Douglas Sirk’s 1955 film “All That Heaven Allows” but was not a remake of the earlier film. “Ali: Fear Eats the Soul” represents Fassbinder’s response to Sirk’s work, paired with personal experiences that he was having around the time he made the film. “All That Heaven Allows” positioned the main characters as failing to fit into New England society. Fassbinder replaced them with economically and politically marginalized figures in Germany.


Repr. in: *Home is where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman’s Film*. Ed. by Christine Gledhill. London: British Film Institute 1987, pp. 268280.


Singer, Ben: Melodrama and modernity: early sensational cinema and its contexts. New York: Columbia University Press 2001 (Film and Culture.).
of the same title, contains cinematic elements such as black feminism that create pleasure in African American women viewers. This unique interplay of feminist film theory and black female spectatorship is effectively exploited in the strained relationship between the film’s black mother and her lightskinned daughter.


Williams, Linda: Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O.J.


