2. Charles E. Rosenberg, "Foreword," in Erwin H. Ackerknecht, *A Short History of Medicine, Revised and Expanded Edition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), xii.
3. Charles Webster as quoted in Dorothy Porter, "The Mission of Social History of Medicine: An Historical View," *Social History of Medicine* 7, no. 3 (1995): 351–52 (emphasis original).
4. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1973). First published 1963.
5. Mary Wilson Carpenter, *Health, Medicine, and Society in Victorian England* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, ABC-CLIO, 2010), 6–7, 13–22, 45–51, 151, 157–59.
6. Joseph Lister as quoted in M. Anne Crowther and Marguerite W. Dupree, *Medical Lives in the Age of Surgical Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 152.
7. Ornella Moscucci, *The Science of Woman: Gynaecology and Gender in England 1800–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 206.
8. Carpenter, *Health*, 3–4.
9. Maria H. Frawley, *Invalidism and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004); Carpenter, *Health*, see especially chap. 4, 5, and 6.
10. Joanne Eysell, *A Medical Companion to Dickens's Fiction* (Frankfort am Main: Peter Lang, 2005).

Melodrama

NICHOLAS DALY

MELODRAMA 's critical fortunes took a turn for the better in the second half of the twentieth century. Disdained by Victorian critics, and regarded in the early twentieth century as a colorful but crude sideshow to the more significant products of Victorian culture, it was rehabilitated by theatre historians and by literary critics who realized popular theatre's centrality to nineteenth-century culture more generally. Among the first group were Michael R. Booth and Frank Rahill, who, building on the earlier work of Allardyce Nicoll, created a fuller picture

of the origins, range, and variety of the nineteenth-century melodramatic stage. Booth's *Hiss the Villain: Six English and American Melodramas (1964)* and *English Melodrama* (1965); and Rahill's *The World of Melodrama* (1967) helped to rescue the dominant form of Victorian theatre from the condescension of posterity. Among the second group the name that stands out is Peter Brooks, whose *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (1976) marked an epoch. Brooks historicized melodrama as a response to the historical trauma of the French Revolution, its polarized world of good and evil filling the moral vacuum left by the overthrow of church and monarchy; but he also presented melodrama as a transgeneric mode that rippled through the nineteenth-century novel. Both of these approaches to melodrama have continued to be fruitful. Our understanding of the popular nineteenth-century stage has been enriched by the work of, for instance, Jacqueline Bratton, Matthew S. Buckley, Jim Davis, Victor Emaljanow, David Mayer, Bruce McConachie, Jane Moody, and Katherine Newey, while a vision of melodrama as a mode that floats free of the stage has been developed by Elaine Hadley, Ben Singer, and Linda Williams, among others. In many respects there has never been a better time to study melodrama. Affect theory, for instance, offers us new tools for understanding the emotional power of melodrama. Perhaps even more importantly, the arrival of digital culture has been enormously helpful for anyone trying to work in this area. Not only is it possible now to find online versions of obscure Victorian plays and memoirs through, for instance, the Internet Archive, and to track reviews in national and regional newspapers, but we also enjoy open access to some dedicated textual and contextual resources, including Jacqueline Bratton's pilot project on the Lord Chamberlain's collection; Richard Pearson's Victorian Plays Project at NUI Galway; and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst's Adelphi Theatre Calendar. Matthew S. Buckley's Melodrama Research Consortium promises to bring together research on nineteenth-century theatre and work on melodrama's continuing significance within international popular culture.

And yet, I cannot help feeling that there is trouble up at t'mill. As Matthew S. Buckley has highlighted, nineteenth-century stage melodrama remains the neglected orphan of theatre history, and I would suggest that things are not much better in the field of Victorian studies.[1] Thus while there has been excellent work on melodrama as a transgeneric mode, and as an alternative public sphere, there are still considerable gaps in our knowledge of actual stage melodrama. The success of Brooks's approach has meant that we tend to assume that we already

know what melodrama is. As David Mayer, among others, has pointed out, nineteenth-century stage melodrama was "responsive to immediate social circumstances and concerns," and thus was never a static form, but one that evolved and changed to remain vital.[2] So while there are continuities across the century, for instance in terms of the form's emotional impact, there are also breaks. The melodramas of the early century are made of very different stuff to the sensation plays of mid-century, and they are different again to the plays of the 1880s and 1890s. In terms of characterization, ethos, and stagecraft there are yawning gaps between *Black Ey'd Susan*, Douglas Jerrold's popular nautical play of 1829; *The Octoroon*, Dion Boucicault's plantation and riverboat sensation drama of 1859; and *Haunted Lives*, J. Wilton Jones's Nihilist play of 1884. They are all melodramas, and they all, as it happens, feature ships, but they represent very different kinds of melodrama. There is still a great deal of work to be done on this variegated field: we now know quite a bit about the earlier phases of British melodrama, and sensation drama has attracted some attention, but our map of the mutations of popular theatre at the end of the century is still far from complete.

In terms of what we offer our students, I fear that stage melodrama is more gestured towards than taught, though hopefully there will be a flurry of irate emails to inform me that this is not the case. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Victorian survey courses are dominated by novels and, to a lesser extent, poetry and short, non-fiction prose excerpts. (For that matter my impression is that the Victorian survey itself is being edged out by surveys of the nineteenth-century novel.) If a play is taught it is likely to be Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which makes it into both the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, volume 2, and the *Broadview Anthology of British Literature*, volume 5, though the latter does also contain *The Octoroon*. While this neglect may derive from the division of intellectual labor that sometimes makes English and Drama departments distant kin, it may also have to do with the perception that melodrama does not lend itself to close textual analysis. Certainly this neglect is difficult to explain in terms of the availability of texts: as noted above, reliable editions of many Victorian plays are available free online.

Overall I think that there is still more reason to cheer than to hiss about melodrama's place in Victorian studies. But given that it was the dominant form on the nineteenth-century stage, and that it became a major source for, and component within, contemporary international

popular culture, our students might like to learn a little more about it, and I suspect that there is still plenty for us to learn too.

NOTES

1. Matthew S. Buckley, "Refugee Theatre: Melodrama and Modernity's Loss," *Theatre Journal* 61, no. 2 (2009): 175–90.
2. David Mayer, "Encountering Melodrama," in *Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. Kerry Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 145–63, 146.

Melodrama

CAROLYN WILLIAMS

I have been arguing recently that we need to pay more attention to melodramatic form. Currently no comprehensive account of it exists. I have suggested that we should focus on the way the dramatic action is interrupted by still pictures, the tableaux, and, correlatively, on the way the music starts and stops, segmenting the dramatic action into "passages." (Even when the music is nearly continuous, it swells and recedes in volume, calibrated so that the actors' declamations can be heard; and thus, even when fairly continuous, the music participates in the formal segmentation of the action.) This way of thinking hypothesizes an audio-visual field for analysis, constituted by dialectical relations between dramatic action and pictorial representation; movement and stillness; speech and music; sound and silence. The relative strength of this method will be tested through the readings it can generate and support.

I'm not the first to concentrate on the interruptive nature of melodrama's genre form. Juliet John has stipulated: "the emotional economy of melodrama is best figured as a series of waves."[1] Martin Meisel drew a formal analogy between melodrama, painting, and novels of the nineteenth century; he called their shared narrative form "serial discontinuity" and emphasized the pictorial dramaturgy of the nineteenth-century stage overall.[2] Recently, Ellen Lockhart has attended to melodrama's "stuttering" form,