



Linda Williams

Professor Emerita at the University of California, Berkeley and one of the leading scholars in Film & Media Studies, Williams wrote the field's pioneering work on pornography *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* (1989). Her subsequent books cover race and melodrama (*Playing the Race Card*, 2001), the history of sex in cinema (*Screening Sex*, 2008) and the acclaimed television series *The Wire* (*On the Wire*, 2014).

The Elephant of Melodrama

Melodrama has seemed a contradictory term, as in the story of the blind man and the elephant: what you perceive depends on where you first touch it. Melodrama is often viewed as having failed aspirations to be tragedy or possessing an "excess" that keeps it outside of entertainment norms. But as Williams argues in this talk it is in fact a major mode of popular theater, film and television that needs to be normalized as such.



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Graham Hall, Hillyer

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