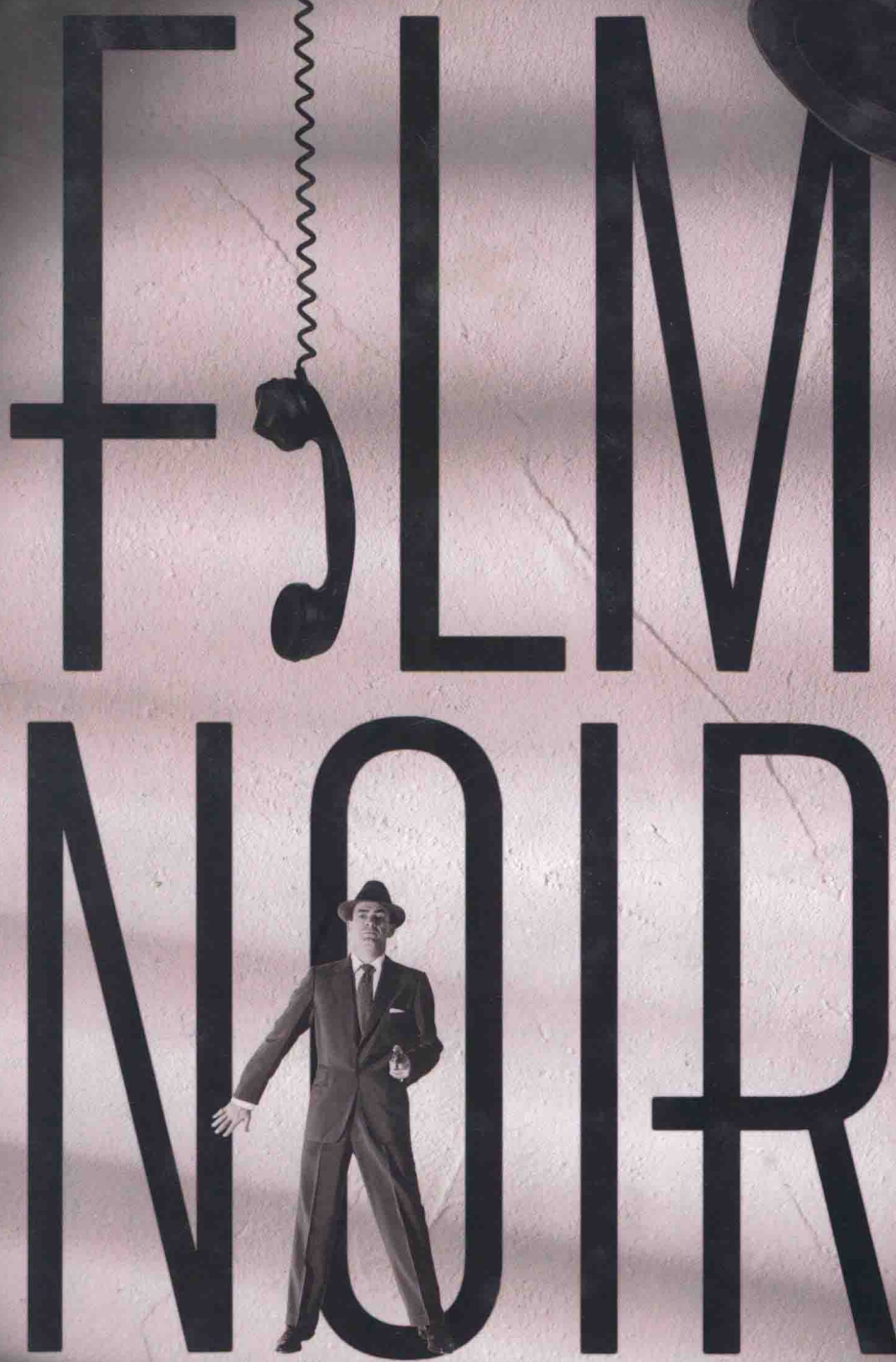


A COMPANION TO

# FILM NOIR

The title 'FILM NOIR' is rendered in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters. The word 'FILM' is on the top line and 'NOIR' is on the bottom line. A black telephone receiver is suspended from the top of the letter 'F' in 'FILM' by a coiled cord. A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, wearing a fedora, stands inside the large letter 'O' of 'NOIR'. He is holding a small object in his right hand and has his left hand on his hip. A black fedora hat is perched on the top of the letter 'M' in 'FILM'.

EDITED BY ANDREW SPICER AND HELEN HANSON

WILEY Blackwell

# A Companion to Film Noir

Edited by

Andrew Spicer and Helen Hanson



WILEY Blackwell

This edition first published 2013  
© 2013 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

Blackwell Publishing was acquired by John Wiley & Sons in February 2007. Blackwell's publishing program has been merged with Wiley's global Scientific, Technical, and Medical business to form Wiley-Blackwell.

*Registered Office*

John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

*Editorial Offices*

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at [www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell](http://www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell).

The right of Andrew Spicer and Helen Hanson to be identified as the authors of the editorial material in this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

**Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty:** While the publisher and author(s) have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services and neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

A companion to film noir / edited by Andrew Spicer and Helen Hanson.

pages    cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4443-3627-6    1. Film noir—History and criticism.    I. Spicer, Andrew, 1953–

II. Hanson, Helen.

PN1995.9.F54C725 2013

791.43'655–dc23

2013006413

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image: Telephone © 12 Tribes / iStockphoto; Hat © DNY59 / iStockphoto; Scene from *Timetable* 1956, photo United Artists / Kobal Collection; Background © Adam Smigielski / iStockphoto  
Cover design by Simon Levy Design Associates

Set in 10.5/13pt Minion by SPi Publisher Services, Pondicherry, India  
Printed in Malaysia by Ho Printing (M) Sdn Bhd

# Notes on Contributors

**John Berra** is a lecturer in Film Studies at Nanjing University. Author of *Declarations of Independence: American Cinema and the Partiality of Independent Production* (2008), editor of the *Directory of World Cinema: American Independent* (2010/2012) and the *Directory of World Cinema: Japan* (2010/2012), and coeditor of *World Film Locations: Beijing* (2012), he has also contributed essays to *The End: An Electric Sheep Anthology* (2011), *World Film Locations: New York* (2011), and *World Film Locations: New Orleans* (2012) as well as articles to *Asian Cinema* and *Science Fiction Film and Television*. His research on American Independent Cinema has focused on the importance of cultural capital to filmmakers operating on the fringes of the industrial mainstream, with an emphasis on how this status is assimilated through film festivals, niche marketing strategies, and the development of new distribution platforms.

**Mark Bould** is Reader in Film and Literature at the University of the West of England and coeditor of the journal *Science Fiction Film and Television*. He is the author of *Film Noir: From Berlin to Sin City* (2005), *The Cinema of John Sayles: Lone Star* (2009), and *Science Fiction: The Routledge Film Guidebook* (2012), coauthor of *The Routledge Concise History of Science Fiction* (2011), and coeditor of *Parietal Games: Critical Writings By and On M. John Harrison* (2005), *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* (2009), *Fifty Key Figures in Science Fiction* (2009), *Red Planets: Marxism and Science Fiction* (2009), and *Neo-Noir* (2009). He is an advisory editor to *Extrapolation*, *Historical Materialism*, *Paradoxa*, and *Science Fiction Studies*.

**David Butler** is Senior Lecturer in Screen Studies at the University of Manchester. He is the author of *Jazz Noir: Listening to Music from "Phantom Lady" to "The Last Seduction"* (2002), *Fantasy Cinema: Impossible Worlds on Screen* (2009) and the editor of *Time And Relative Dissertations In Space: Critical Perspectives on Doctor Who* (2007). His research interests include the use of jazz in film, the relationship between music and image, and the portrayal of the fantastic on screen.

**Corey K. Creekmur** is an associate professor of English and Film Studies at the University of Iowa, where he also directs the Institute for Cinema and Culture. He recently coedited *Cinema, Law, and the State in Asia* and *The International Film Musical* and contributed an essay on Jacques Tourneur to *Film Noir: The Directors*. His teaching and research interests include American film genres, popular Hindi film, and comics.

**Wheeler Winston Dixon** is the James Ryan Professor of Film Studies, Coordinator of the Film Studies Program, Professor of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and Editor in Chief, with Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, of the *Quarterly Review and Film and Video*. His newest books are *Streaming: Movies, Media and Instant Access* (2013) and *Death of the Moguls: The End of Classical Hollywood* (2012), *21<sup>st</sup> Century Hollywood: Movies in the Era of Transformation* (with Gwendolyn Audrey Foster; 2011), and *A History of Horror* (2010). His website, *Frame by Frame*, can be found at [blog.unl.edu/dixon/](http://blog.unl.edu/dixon/), and a series of videos by Dixon on film history, theory, and criticism, also titled *Frame by Frame*, are available at <http://mediahub.unl.edu/channels/105>.

**Dan Flory** is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Montana State University, Bozeman and author of *Philosophy, Black Film, Film Noir* (2008). In 2007–2008 he was Visiting Associate Professor of Philosophy at the American University in Cairo. His publications include many essays on philosophy, film noir, and critical race theory, including “Black on White: *Film Noir* and the Epistemology of Race in Recent African-American Cinema,” “The Epistemology of Race and Black American *Film Noir*: Spike Lee’s *Summer of Sam* as Lynching Parable,” “Race, Empathy, and *Noir* in *Deep Cover*,” and “Spike Lee and the Sympathetic Racist.” He has served twice as guest editor for the journal *Film and Philosophy*, and he is currently working on a book about the emotions, race, and philosophical reflection. His most recent work is *Race, Philosophy, and Film*, coedited with Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo (2013).

**Christophe Gelly** is a professor at the Université Blaise Pascal, where he teaches English and American literature and film studies. He has published a book-length study on Chandler, *Raymond Chandler – Du roman noir au film noir* (2009), as well as several articles on Conan Doyle, Joseph Conrad, and film adaptations of nineteenth-century novelists. He currently specializes in film noir theory and adaptation studies.

**Lalitha Gopalan** is an associate professor in the Department of Radio-Television-Film and affiliate faculty in the Department of Asian Studies and South Asia Institute at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research and teaching interests are in the areas of Film Theory, Feminist Film Theory, Contemporary World Cinemas, Indian Cinema, Genre Films, and Experimental Film and Video. She is the author of *Cinema of Interruptions: Action Genres in Contemporary Indian Cinema* (2002) and *Bombay* (2005) and editor of *Cinema of India* (2010); she also sits on the editorial

boards of *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* and *Film Quarterly*. She has served on several film festival juries and she is a member of the advisory board of 3rd I Film Festival, San Francisco. She recently co-curated the film series “Cruel Cinema: New Directions in Tamil Film.”

**Henrik Gustafsson** is a film scholar and postdoctoral fellow with the research project “Border Culture” at the University of Tromsø. His book *Out of Site: Landscape and Cultural Reflexivity in New Hollywood Cinema, 1969-1974* (VDM 2008) is an interdisciplinary study on popular film, fine arts, and cultural memory. Together with Asbjørn Grønstad, he has edited the volumes *Ethics and Images of Pain* (Routledge 2012) and (forthcoming from Continuum) *Cinema and Agamben: Ethics, Biopolitics and the Moving Image*. Recent publications include “Foresight, Hindsight and State Secrecy in the American West: The Geopolitical Aesthetics of Trevor Paglen” in *Journal of Visual Culture* and chapters in various books, including *The Films of Claire Denis: Intimacy on the Border* (I.B. Tauris 2013), *Urban Images: Unruly Desires in Film and Architecture* (Sternberg Press 2011), *Imaging History: Photography After the Fact* (ASA Publishers 2011), and *The San Francisco of Alfred Hitchcock's Vertigo: Place, Pilgrimage, and Commemoration* (Scarecrow Press 2011).

**Helen Hanson** is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of Exeter and the Academic Director of the Bill Douglas Centre for the History of Cinema and Popular Culture. She is the author of *Hollywood Heroines: Women in Film Noir and the Female Gothic Film* (2007) and the forthcoming *Hollywood Soundscapes: Film Sound Style, Craft and Production 1931–1950* as well as being coeditor (with Catherine O’Rawe) of *The Femme Fatale: Images, Histories, Contexts* (2009) and (with Ian Gardiner and Jay Beck) of the journal *Music, Sound and the Moving Image*.

**Mary Beth Haralovich** is a professor in the School of Theatre, Film & Television at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she teaches film and television history. Her studies of Hollywood film promotion focus on the heterosexual imperative of film posters, the value of diverse female images to film promotion, and the implementation of film promotion in local US film markets. Her work-in-progress is *Marked Women: Local Promotion of 1930s “Scandalous Woman” Films*. Her publications include studies on *Marked Woman* (1937) and other 1930s’ proletarian women’s films, heterosexual flirtation in the promotion of *A Free Soul* (1931), the challenges for US promotion of Marlene Dietrich’s *Blonde Venus* (1932), and the promotion of *Mildred Pierce* (1946) as murder mystery. In addition, she has written on 1940s’ A and B Sherlock Holmes film series, films of 1950, color in Douglas Sirk melodrama, 1990s’ masculine star images of Tom Hanks and Tom Cruise, and the film social history method. In television studies, she has published on masculinity and war veterans in *Magnum, p.i.* (1980–1988) and geo-politics of civil rights in *I Spy* (1965–1968). Her essay on 1950s’ suburban family comedies has been reprinted many times. Haralovich serves on the editorial board of *Feminist Media*



Studies for University of Illinois Press, is coeditor of *Television, History, and American Culture: Feminist Critical Essays* (1999), and is a founder of the International Conference on Television, Video, New Media, Audio and Feminism: Console-ing Passions.

**Peter Hutchings**, Professor of Film Studies at Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, is the author of *Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film* (1993), *Terence Fisher* (2002), *The British Film Guide to Dracula* (2003), *The Horror Film* (2004), and the *Historical Dictionary of Horror Cinema* (2008) as well as being coeditor – with Joanne Hollows and Mark Jancovich – of *The Film Studies Reader* (2000). He has also published numerous journal articles and book chapters on horror cinema, British film and television, science fiction cinema and television, and the thriller.

**Patrick Keating** is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at Trinity University in San Antonio, where he teaches courses in film and media studies. He is the author of *Hollywood Lighting from the Silent Era to Film Noir* (2010), which won the Best First Book Award from the Society of Cinema and Media Studies. He is editing a book of essays on the history of Hollywood cinematography and working on a manuscript about camera movement and the representation of modern space. The latter project has received a grant from the Academy Film Scholars program. Recent publications include essays on the film theorist Rudolf Arnheim, the Mexican cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa, and the structure of Hollywood narrative. He holds a PhD in Film Studies and an MFA in Film Production.

**Nikki J.Y. Lee** holds a PhD in Cultural Studies from Goldsmiths College, University of London. She is a lecturer in Asian Media at Nottingham Trent University. Her research interests cover transnational East Asian film genres, stars, and industries with a focus on South Korean cinema. She has published several articles on Korean films and directors, including “Localized Globalization and a Monster National: *The Host* (2006) and the South Korean Film Industry,” in *Cinema Journal*. She is coeditor of a forthcoming volume, *The Korean Cinema Book* (British Film Institute/Palgrave Macmillan).

**James Lyons** is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of Exeter. He is the author of *Selling Seattle* (2004) and *Miami Vice* (2010) and coeditor of *Quality Popular Television* (2003), *Multimedia Histories: From the Magic Lantern to the Internet* (2007), and *The Rise of the American Comics Artist: Creators and Contexts* (2010).

**William Marling** is Professor of English at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. In addition to many articles and chapters in collections, he is the author of *How “American” Is Globalization?* (2006), *The American Roman Noir* (1997), *Raymond Chandler* (1988), *Dashiell Hammett* (1985), and *William Carlos*

*Williams and the Painters* (1983). He has been a distinguished foreign Chair in Spain, France, Austria, Japan, and Lebanon.

**Geoff Mayer** is a reader and associate professor at La Trobe University, where he is Head of the School of Communication, Arts and Critical Enquiry. He teaches Film History and Film Genre. He is author of *Film as Text* (1991), *Media Studies: Narrative, Audience, Values and Process* (1991), the *Guide to British Cinema* (2003), *Roy Ward Baker* (2004), and the *Historical Dictionary of Crime Films* (2012), coauthor of *New Australian Cinema: Sources and Parallels in American and British Film* (1992) and *Encyclopedia of Film Noir* (2007), and he is coeditor of *The Oxford Companion to Australian Film* (1999) and *The Cinema of Australia and New Zealand* (2007). He also contributed a chapter on the American director Joseph H. Lewis to *Film Noir: The Directors* (2012), edited by Alain Silver and James Ursini. Geoff was a consultant and on-camera film historian on the 2011 documentary *Stunt Love*. This film traced the remarkable Hollywood career of Australian-born director, actor, writer, and producer J.P. McGowan and the films he made with his American wife, actor Helen Holmes. He is currently writing a critical and historical dictionary of the action film from 1912 to 2012 with particular emphasis on the film serial and serial form.

**Brian Neve** teaches politics and film at the University of Bath. He is author of *Elia Kazan: the Cinema of an American Outsider* (2009) and *Film and Politics in America: a Social Tradition* (2000), and he is a coeditor of *"Un-American Hollywood": politics and film in the Blacklist era* (2007). He is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of American Studies*. His book on the life and film work of Cy Endfield is forthcoming from Wisconsin University Press.

**R. Barton Palmer** is Calhoun Lemon Professor of Literature at Clemson University, where he also directs the Global Cultural Studies as well as the Cinema and Cultural Studies programs. Palmer is the author, editor, or general editor of more than forty volumes on various film and literary subjects. Among his numerous publications on film noir are: *Hollywood's Dark Cinema: The American Film Noir* (1994), *Perspectives on Film Noir* (1996), and *Joel and Ethan Cohen* (2004).

**Donna Peberdy** is a senior lecturer in Film and Television Studies at Southampton Solent University. Donna's research interests include acting and performance, masculinity and sexuality in American cinema. She is the author of *Masculinity and Film Performance: Male Angst in Contemporary American Cinema* (2011) and coeditor of *Tainted Love: Screening Sexual Perversities* (2013). Subjects of recent articles and chapters in contributed volumes include acting in Wes Anderson's films (*New Review of Film and Television Studies*), Tom Cruise and the performance of bipolar masculinity (*Men & Masculinities*), Michael Douglas's "ordinary" masculinity (*Pretty People: Movie Stars of the 1990s*), Sean Penn and the performance of homosexuality (*Millennial Masculinity: Men in Contemporary American Cinema*), celebrity



autoerotic asphyxiation and playing with the self (*Celebrity Studies*), speech affectations (*Film Dialogue*), and film acting in the 1980s and 1990s (*Behind the Silver Screen: Acting*).

**Alastair Phillips** is Reader in Film Studies in the Department of Film and Television Studies, University of Warwick. His research interests lie in the fields of international film history, culture, and aesthetics with special emphasis on French and Japanese filmmaking; histories of exile and emigration within Europe and between Europe and Hollywood; and the representation of place and landscape in historical and contemporary world cinemas. His books include *Rififi: A French Film Guide* (2009), and (with Jim Hillier) *100 Film Noirs* (2007). He has recently coedited (with Ginette Vincendeau) *A Companion to Jean Renoir* (2013).

**Murray Pomerance** is a professor in the Department of Sociology and Director of the Media Studies Working Group, at Ryerson University. He is the author of *Michelangelo Red Antonioni Blue: Eight Reflections on Cinema* (2011), *The Horse Who Drank the Sky: Film Experience Beyond Narrative and Theory* (2008), *Johnny Depp Starts Here* (2005), *An Eye for Hitchcock* (2004), and *Ludwig Bemelmans: A Bibliography* (1993). Forthcoming are *Hitchcock's America* (Polity Press) and *The Eyes Have It: Cinema and the Reality Effect* (Rutgers), as well as an edited volume, *The Last Laugh: Strange Humors of Cinema and the coedited Hollywood's Chosen People: The Jewish Experience in American Cinema* (both Wayne State). He has edited and coedited numerous books including *A Family Affair: Cinema Calls Home* (2008), *City That Never Sleeps: New York and the Filmic Imagination* (2007), *Cinema and Modernity* (2006), *American Cinema of the 1950s: Themes and Variations* (2005), *A Little Solitaire: John Frankenheimer and American Film* (2011), *From Hobbits to Hollywood: Essays on Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings* (2006), *Where the Boys Are: Cinemas of Masculinity and Youth* (2005), and *Sugar, Spice, and Everything Nice: Cinemas of Girlhood* (2002).

**Robert Porfirio** received a MA in Film from UCLA and completed his doctorate at Yale University with his seminal dissertation, *The Dark Age of American Film*, in 1979. He is a coeditor of *Film Noir: The Encyclopedia* (2010) and *Film Noir Reader 3* (2002) and has contributed to the other three volumes in the *Film Noir Reader* series. He also contributed to *The Noir Style* (1999) and wrote the foreword to *The Philosophy of Film Noir* (2007). He was formerly assistant professor of American Studies at California State University, Fullerton, where he taught the first accredited course in film noir beginning in 1973. Porfirio recently returned to Southern California after three years in southern France.

**Tom Ryall** is Emeritus Professor of Film History at Sheffield Hallam University. His books include *Anthony Asquith* (2005), *Britain and the American Cinema* (2001), and *Alfred Hitchcock and the British Cinema* (1996). He has contributed various articles on British and American cinema to collections such as *Film Noir: The Directors*

(2012), *A Companion to Hitchcock Studies* (2011), *The British Cinema Book* (2009), *The Cinema of Britain and Ireland* (2005), *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies* (1998), and he has written for journals such as *Screen*, *Sight and Sound* and the *Journal of Popular British Cinema*.

**Steven Sanders** is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Bridgewater State University. He has written numerous articles on film noir including “Sunshine Noir: Postmodernism and *Miami Vice*,” in Mark T. Conard (ed.), *The Philosophy of Neo-Noir* (2007) and “Something More Than Noir,” in Steven Rybin and Will Scheibel (eds), *Going Home: Essays on Nicholas Ray in Cinema Culture* (SUNY Press, forthcoming). He has edited three volumes in The Philosophy of Popular Culture series published by the University Press of Kentucky, including *The Philosophy of Science Fiction Film* (2008), and he coedited *The Philosophy of TV Noir* (2008) (with Aeon J. Skoble) and *The Philosophy of Steven Soderbergh* (2011) (with R. Barton Palmer). He is the author of the chapter on Orson Welles in *Film Noir: the Directors* (2012) and four entries in *Film Noir: the Encyclopedia* (2010). He has published a monograph on *Miami Vice* (2010) and is coeditor, with Aeon J. Skoble and R. Barton Palmer, of *Michael Mann and Philosophy* (forthcoming). He is currently coediting, with R. Barton Palmer, a selection of interviews with filmmaker Michael Mann and completing what he calls “a memoirist’s novel.”

**Jesse Schlotterbeck** is an assistant professor of Cinema at Denison University. His work on film noir also appears in *M/C – A Journal of Media and Culture*, the *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance*, and *Film Noir: The Directors* (2012).

**Andrew Spicer** is Reader in Cultural History in the Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education at the University of the West of England where he is Director of Research. He has published widely on British cinema and on film noir; he is author of works including *Film Noir* (2002), *Typical Men: The Representation of Masculinity in Popular British Cinema* (2003), *Sydney Box* (2006), the *Historical Dictionary of Film Noir* (2010), and editor of *European Film Noir* (2007). He is coauthor of *The Man Who Got Carter: Michael Klinger, Independent Production and the British Film Industry, 1960–1980* (2013) and coeditor of *Beyond the Bottom Line: The Producer in Screen Studies* (Continuum, forthcoming), and he is preparing a monograph on Sean Connery for “The Film Stars” series (BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).

**Julian Stringer** is Associate Professor in Film and Television Studies at the University of Nottingham. He has published widely on East Asian cinema and is coeditor, with Chi-Yun Shin, of *New Korean Cinema* (2005) and, with Alastair Phillips, *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts* (2007). He recently organized a conference on Moving Images and the Digital Eco-City at ZED pavilion, Shanghai Expo (October 2010), and acted as joint organizer of a conference (with Tsinghua University) on film and television in the 3D age at the China National Film Museum, Beijing (January 2011).

He is currently working (with Nikki J.Y. Lee) on *The Korean Cinema Book* for the British Film Institute/Palgrave Macmillan.

**Gaylyn Studlar** is David May Distinguished Professor in the Humanities and Director of the Program in Film & Media Studies at Washington University in St Louis. She has also taught at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and Emory University. She is the author of *Precocious Charms: Stars Performing Girlhood in Classical Hollywood Cinema* (2013), *This Mad Masquerade: Stardom and Masculinity in the Jazz Age* (1996), and *In the Realm of Pleasure: Von Sternberg, Dietrich, and the Masochistic Aesthetic* (1992) as well as being the coeditor of four volumes and author of over three dozen articles. Her numerous essays on Hollywood film include “Double Indemnity: Hardboiled Film Noir,” in *Film Analysis* (2005) and “A Gungel is Being Beaten: Gangster Masculinity and the Homoerotics of the Crime Film, 1941–1942,” in *Mob Culture: Hidden Histories of the American Gangster Film* (2005).

**Yvonne Tasker** is Professor of Film Studies and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of East Anglia. Her publications include *Soldiers’ Stories: Military Women in Cinema and Television since WWII* (2011), *Working Girls: Gender and Sexuality in Popular Culture* (1998), and *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema* (1993). Her edited collections include: *Fifty Contemporary Film Directors* (2001), *Action and Adventure Cinema* (2004), and, with Diane Negra, *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture* (2007). Her anthology (coedited with Diane Negra) entitled *Gendering the Recession* is forthcoming with Duke University Press.

**David Wilt** is a professorial lecturer in Film Studies at The George Washington University and a Systems Librarian at The University of Maryland Libraries. He is the author of *Hard Boiled in Hollywood: Five “Black Mask” Writers and the Movies* (1991) and *The Mexican Filmography, 1916–2001* (2004) and the coauthor of *Doing Their Bit: Wartime American Animated Films, 1939–1945* (1987, revised edition 2004) and *Hollywood War Films 1937–1945* (1996). He has also contributed chapters to *Mondo Macabro* (1997), *The Columbia Companion to American History on Film* (2004), *Film and Comics* (2007), and *Latsploitation, Latin America, and Exploitation Cinema* (2009). His primary research interests include the sociopolitical context of popular culture, Mexican cinema, film history, and paracinema.

# Acknowledgments

Helen Hanson would like to thank the College of Humanities at the University of Exeter for funding a research leave that enabled work on the *Companion*. She would also like to thank her colleagues (past and present) in English and Film Studies for their intellectual support and encouragement, in particular Jo Gill, Fiona Handyside, Will Higbee, Joe Kember, Song Lim, James Lyons, Steve Neale, Dan North, and Mark Whalan. Personal thanks are due to Shirley and George Wickham; to Jude, Dave, Isabelle, and Daniel Hill; to Don, Liz, Ed, and Sue Hanson, to Eddie and Dan Sangha, and most especially to Phil Wickham.

Andrew Spicer would like to thank the Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education at the University of the West of England (Bristol) for funding a period of research leave to edit the *Companion*. He would like to thank his partner, Joyce Woolridge, for helping with the final compilation and proofing of the *Companion*, for completing the index, and for her unstinting support throughout. Sean was extremely patient during the whole process of putting this book together and, together with his companion Chocolate, helped in the final preparation of the manuscript. A big thanks from Daddy!

Both editors wish to thank Jayne Fagnoli, Executive Editor of Arts at Wiley-Blackwell, for her enthusiasm throughout the completion of this project and to thank Allison Kostka and Felicity Marsh for their assistance in production.

# Foreword

Film noir is the most amorphous yet fascinating category in cinema. I call it a “category” because cycles and movements are more short-lived, and genres, though much less stable than historians make them seem, are somewhat easier to delineate. We usually associate noir with certain black-and-white, Hollywood pictures of the 1940s and 1950s – movies about private eyes seduced by femme fatales, domestic women threatened by killers, criminal gangs planning robberies, and outlaw couples on the run. Famous titles include *Double Indemnity* (1944), *Murder, My Sweet* (1944), *The Killers* (1946), *Gun Crazy* (1950), and *The Killing* (1956). These are core examples; a couple of them were in fact among the first American movies dubbed “noir” by the French, who had invented the term in the 1930s to describe “poetic realist” pictures such as *Le Jour se lève* (*Daybreak*, 1939). But what about *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1947, the story of three ragged prospectors searching for gold), *Reign of Terror* (1949, a costume adventure set during the French revolution), *Cronaca di un amore* (*Story of a Love Affair*, 1950, an Italian art film with a detective protagonist), *Dr. No* (1962, the first James Bond movie), and *2001* (US 1968)? Each of these has also been described as noir by at least one respected writer on the subject. (The writers in question are Raymond Borde, Etienne Chaumeton, Raymond Durnat, Jim Hiller, and Alastair Phillips.) They may seem like far-fetched instances, but the idea of noir – born of criticism, subject to different uses, and capable of change or evolution over time – is rich and flexible enough that anyone who has seen enough films can think of unusual suspects that might, at least arguably, be listed under the noir rubric. My own picks would be *A Cottage on Dartmoor* (1930, as skillful and troubling a murder story as anything by Hitchcock); *Wanda* (1971, the rawest and most truthful criminal-couple-on-the-road movie ever made), and *Variety* (1983, a sort of female, avant-garde *Vertigo*).

One way of trying to contain film noir is to define it, as Paul Schrader did in 1972, as a Hollywood movement occurring between 1941 and 1958 which was influenced by American pulp fiction and émigré directors from Germany. This approach has the advantage of confining the topic to a historical period with its own nexus of

fashions and systems of production; we can then invent another term, “neo-noir,” to account for the considerable number of later pictures that have close connections or affinities with the original group. But as several writers in this book show, neat boundaries and distinctions are difficult to maintain. Film noir has never been exclusively American; we can find excellent examples not only from France but also from other countries in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. By the same token, film noir can’t be easily limited to a historical period. Some have tried to claim that the 1941 version *The Maltese Falcon* was the first film noir; but while *Falcon* certainly influenced subsequent films, it was influenced by earlier ones, several of which are now regularly called noir. It should also be emphasized, as it is in this collection of essays, that noir has never been exclusive to film. Most of the famous early examples were adapted from novels, and during the 1940s and 1950s we can find noir radio drama, noir jazz (known to Hollywood as “crime jazz”), and noir comic books.

None of this means that film noir is a figment of the critical imagination. It’s safe to say that before 1941 noir was an emergent, little-known cultural category accurately describing certain French films and French popular literature; between roughly 1945 and 1950, when the French began writing about American film noir, it was a dominant category, its characteristic moods and themes affecting many different kinds of movies and other media; after 1958 it became a residual category, with films of the type appearing sometimes more, sometimes less frequently. But by 1970 the term “film noir” was known to filmmakers and cinephiles everywhere – critical writing about it proliferated, and it soon became available to the industry as something close to a genre or brand name.

Film noir has particularly strong hold on contemporary culture. No other type of popular cinema, with the possible exception of noir’s close cousins horror and dystopian science fiction, is more often taught in classrooms or written about by scholars. The western and the musical comedy, which were the most commercially successful and arguably the most distinctively American films produced in Hollywood’s classic studio era, have now almost disappeared from movie screens. We live in an intensely urban or suburban society that makes the western seem remote, and we’ve lost the studio infrastructure that made the best singing and dancing movies possible. Although noir has never been the biggest box office attraction in movies (except, perhaps, in the case of Christopher Nolan’s Batman trilogy of 2005–2012, which is influenced by the “Dark Night” graphic novels), it continues to manifest itself across all the media: a couple of twenty-first century examples are Sara Gran’s pitch-black novel *Dope* (2005) and Nicholas Winding Refn’s violent film *Drive* (2011). Where critical discourse is concerned, noir continues to be of interest because of its anti-utopian qualities (the best film noirs tend to be told from the point of view of criminals or deeply flawed characters); its disorienting narratives; its mesmerizing play of style; and its complex treatment of gender, sexuality, and race. You will find all these matters discussed in Andrew Spicer and Helen Hanson’s excellent anthology. This discussion, like the fascination of film noir itself, is likely to continue for years to come.



# Contents

List of Illustrations	viii
Notes on Contributors	x
Acknowledgments	xviii
Foreword	xix
<i>James Naremore</i>	
 Introduction: The Problem of Film Noir	 1
<i>Andrew Spicer</i>	
 <b>Part I    Conceptualizing Film Noir</b>	 <b>15</b>
1    The Strange Case of Film Noir	17
<i>Robert Porfirio</i>	
2    Genre, Hybridity, Heterogeneity: or, the Noir-SF-Vampire-Zombie-Splatter-Romance-Comedy-Action-Thriller Problem	33
<i>Mark Bould</i>	
3    A Wet Emptiness: The Phenomenology of Film Noir	50
<i>Henrik Gustafsson</i>	
4    Cinephilia and Film Noir	67
<i>Corey K. Creekmur</i>	
 <b>Part II    Hidden, Hybrid, and Transmedia           Histories and Influences</b>	 <b>77</b>
5    Precursors to Film Noir	79
<i>Wheeler Winston Dixon</i>	
6    Crisscrossed? Film Noir and the Politics of Mobility and Exchange	94
<i>Alastair Phillips</i>	

7	Film Noir and Horror <i>Peter Hutchings</i>	111
8	Borderings: The Film Noir Semi-Documentary <i>R. Barton Palmer</i>	125
9	Crime Fiction and Film Noir <i>William Marling</i>	142
10	Film Noir, American Painting and Photography: Questions of Influence <i>Tom Ryall</i>	158
<b>Part III Social, Industrial, and Commercial Contexts</b>		<b>175</b>
11	The Politics of Film Noir <i>Brian Neve</i>	177
12	The Black Typewriter: Who Wrote Film Noir? <i>David Wilt</i>	193
13	Film Noir and Studio Production Practices <i>Geoff Mayer</i>	211
14	Film Noir and Post-Studio Production Practices <i>John Berra</i>	229
15	Selling Noir: Stars, Gender, and Genre in Film Noir Posters and Publicity <i>Mary Beth Haralovich</i>	245
<b>Part IV The Fabric of Film Noir: Style and Performance</b>		<b>265</b>
16	Out of the Shadows: Noir Lighting and Hollywood Cinematography <i>Patrick Keating</i>	267
17	The Ambience of Film Noir: Soundscapes, Design, and Mood <i>Helen Hanson</i>	284
18	In a Lonely Tone: Music in Film Noir <i>David Butler</i>	302
19	Acting and Performance in Film Noir <i>Donna Peberdy</i>	318
<b>Part V Identities and Film Noir</b>		<b>335</b>
20	Film Noir and Subjectivity <i>Christophe Gelly</i>	337

21	Women in Film Noir <i>Yvonne Tasker</i>	353
22	“The Corpse on Reprieve”: Film Noir’s Cautionary Tales of “Tough Guy” Masculinity <i>Gaylyn Studlar</i>	369
23	Ethnicity and Race in American Film Noir <i>Dan Flory</i>	387
24	The Climb and the Chase: Film Noir and the Urban Scene – Representations of the City in Three Classic Noirs <i>Murray Pomerance</i>	405
<b>Part VI    Noir in Other Forms</b>		<b>421</b>
25	Radio Noir in the USA <i>Jesse Schlotterbeck</i>	423
26	Television Noir <i>Steven Sanders</i>	440
27	“It Rhymes with Lust”: The Twisted History of Noir Comics <i>James Lyons</i>	458
<b>Part VII    New Geographies of Film Noir</b>		<b>477</b>
28	Film Noir in Asia: Historicizing South Korean Crime Thrillers <i>Nikki J.Y. Lee and Julian Stringer</i>	479
29	Bombay Noir <i>Lalitha Gopalan</i>	496
Index		512