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Preface

It is no longer possible to regard *film noir* as encompassed by black-and-white American films produced between 1940 and 1959. As discussed later in the introduction, these films are one element, albeit the most important one, in any attempt to provide an overview of the diverse cultural phenomenon that the term designates. Therefore, readers will find that dictionary entries include “classic” American film noir (1940–59), American neo-noir, and film noirs from other countries, including Australia, France, Great Britain, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, and Mexico. Entries also present noir in other forms: comics and graphic novels, posters, radio, television, and video games. In order to keep the dictionary within reasonable limits, noir fiction has not been included, but there are entries on important writers, including James M. Cain, Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, Jim Thompson, and Cornell Woolrich, whose work was extensively adapted for films noir. There are entries on major cultural and philosophical influences on film noir, including existentialism, expressionism, Freudianism, hard-boiled fiction, poetic realism, and universal horror films. There are also entries on films that anticipated film noir (precursors) and influential cultural practitioners in other forms, such as those of Edward Hopper and Weegee (Arthur H. Fellig). For reasons of space, entries on noir personnel (actors, cinematographers, composers, directors, producers, and screenwriters) are confined to those who have been closely associated with the development of film noir and who have been involved in at least half a dozen noirs. There are a few exceptions, such as Rita Hayworth and Fred MacMurray, whose roles were sufficiently iconic to merit inclusion.

Although inevitably, given the genre’s size and longevity, entries are mainly about personnel involved in American noir and neo-noir, there are also entries on émigré directors, composers, cinematographers, and set designers, and on non-American writers and directors such as Claude Chabrol, Graham Greene, Mike Hodges, Jean-Pierre Melville, Georges

Simenon, and François Truffaut, whose work is essential to understanding film noir. Other entries range more widely over distinctive aspects of film noir: gender, narrative, music, representation of the city, and visual style; subcycles (amnesiac, boxing, hit man, outlaw couple, and prison noirs); left-wing and right-wing cycles; the blacklist that had such a profound effect on noir personnel; and entries on retro-noirs, remakes, and hybrids that are important aspects of the “noir phenomenon.”

Also for reasons of space, only seminal films crucial to the development of film noir and neo-noir—e.g., *Double Indemnity* (1944), *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), *Point Blank* (1967), and *Body Heat* (1981)—have been included, and ones that have attracted a great deal of commentary, e.g., *The Third Man* (1949), *The Big Heat* (1953), *Rififi* (1955), *Touch of Evil* (1958), *Le Samourai* (1967), *Chinatown* (1974), and *L.A. Confidential* (1997).

The bibliography is divided into five general sections that include a selection of the most important contextual studies, but the sections that list the literature directly discussing film noir are as comprehensive as possible. The filmography, similarly, includes all films that could reasonably be regarded as noir (but not hybrids) and encompasses those countries where film noir has a significant presence (and therefore an entry in the dictionary).

Chronology

1794 Great Britain: Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is published, the distant origins of Gothic noir.

1915 United States: *Alias Jimmy Valentine* is released, the first significant American crime film, remade in 1920 and 1928. Publication of *Detective Story Magazine*, the first cheap magazine devoted to crime fiction.

1919 Germany: The release of Robert Weine's *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*) marks the beginning of expressionism in film.

1922 United States: Inception of *Black Mask* edited by Joseph T. Shaw, the most influential of popular crime magazines. **Germany:** Fritz Lang's first crime film, *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler: Ein Bild der Zeit* (*Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler*) released.

1923 United States: Dashiell Hammett's private detective Continental Op first appears in print. **Germany:** Karl Grune's *Die Strasse* (*The Street*) inaugurates the cycle of *Strassenfilm* (street film) in which respectable, middle class protagonists descend into a murky underworld.

1924 Germany: Expressionist cinema established with the release of Robert Weine's *Orlacs Hände* (*The Hands of Orlac*) and Paul Leni's *Das Wachsfigurenkabinett* (*Waxworks*).

1925 Germany: G. W. Pabst's *Die freudlose Gasse* (*The Joyless Street*) released, the most influential of the *Strassenfilm*.

1926 Germany: Release of Henrik Galeen's *Der Student von Prag* (*The Student of Prague*), the first expressionist treatment of this famous tale, and the birth of the cinematic *Doppelgänger*, the protagonist's dark self or double. **Great Britain:** Alfred Hitchcock's *The Lodger*, a dark, atmospheric thriller, anticipates film noir.

1927 United States: In *Underworld*, Josef von Sternberg's shadowy atmospheric direction and Ben Hecht's script focuses on the criminal milieu, which prefigures film noir.

1928 United States: Release of von Sternberg's *The Docks of New York*, another American precursor of film noir. **Germany:** Release of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, the origin of the sci-fi/noir hybrid.

1929 United States: Hammett's first novel, *The Red Harvest*, is published; release of von Sternberg's third noir precursor, *Thunderbolt*. **France:** First Maigret story by Georges Simenon. **Great Britain:** Hitchcock's crime thriller *Blackmail* is released.

1930 United States: Publication of Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*; Hammett's *The Red Harvest* adapted as *Roadhouse Nights*. **Germany:** Release of von Sternberg's *Strassenfilm, Der blaue Engel (The Blue Angel)* with Marlene Dietrich as the nightclub singer Lola Lola, the archetypal femme fatale. **Great Britain:** Publication of Edgar Wallace's *On the Spot: Violence and Murder in Chicago*.

1931 United States: *Little Caesar*, written by W. R. Burnett and starring Edward G. Robinson, and *The Public Enemy*, starring James Cagney, are the first modern gangster films; first adaptation of *The Maltese Falcon* directed by Roy Del Ruth and the release of further noir precursors *City Streets* and *Quick Millions*; publication of Hammett's novel *The Glass Key*. **France:** Jean Renoir's *La Chienne (The Bitch)* marks the beginnings of film noir. **Germany:** Lang's *M: Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder (M: A City Searches for a Murderer)* is the first urban crime thriller; Robert Siodmak's *Der Mann, der seinen Mörder sucht (The Man Who Searched for His Own Murderer)*, *Stürme der Leidenschaft (Storms of Passion)*, and *Voruntersuchung (Inquest)* are noir precursors.

1932 United States: Universal continues its cycle of horror films with the crime-horror hybrids, *Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Old Dark House*; release of *Scarface*, the third seminal gangster film and further noir precursors: *Beast of the City*, *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, *Night World*, *Payment Deferred*, and *Two Seconds*. **France:** Renoir's *La Nuit du carrefour (Night at the Crossroads)*, Julien Duvivier's *La Tête d'un homme (A Man's Neck)*, and Jean Tarride's *Le Chien jaune (The Yellow Dog)*, all based on Simenon novels, establish noir in France. **Great Britain:** Publication of Wallace's *When the Gangs Came to London*.

1933 United States: Publication of Raymond Chandler's first short story, "Blackmailers Don't Shoot." **Germany:** Adolf Hitler comes to power (January); many film personnel flee, including Fritz Lang and Robert Siodmak, usually to Paris then on to the United States.

1934 United States: Publication of James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* and the first Cornell Woolrich story, "Death Sits in the Dentist's Chair." Universal releases *The Black Cat*, directed by Edgar G. Ulmer; noir precursors *Crime without Passion* and *Manhattan Melodrama* released. **Mexico:** Release of the first noir—*La Mujer del puerto* (*The Woman of the Port*).

1935 United States: First adaptation of *The Glass Key*; Universal releases *The Bride of Frankenstein*.

1936 United States: Cain's *Double Indemnity* serialized in *Liberty* magazine; Lang's *Fury* is an important noir precursor. Weegee's photograph "Corpse with a Revolver" is published, as is *Detective Picture Stories*, the first crime fiction comic. **France:** Major phase of poetic realism begins with *Les Bas-fonds* (*The Lower Depths*) starring Jean Gabin. **Great Britain:** Graham Greene's *A Gun for Sale* establishes him as an important crime writer.

1937 United States: Lang's *You Only Live Once* is the first outlaw couple thriller; *Detective Comics* published. **France:** Release of *Pépé le Moko* starring Gabin as the charismatic criminal. **Great Britain:** First full noir, *The Green Cockatoo* (U.S. title: *Four Dark Hours*) completed, based on a Greene story.

1938 Finland: First noir—Nyrki Tapiovaara's *Varastettu kuolema* (*Stolen Death*). **France:** Marcel Carné's *Le Quai des brumes* (*Port of Shadows*), starring Gabin, is released. **Great Britain:** Arthur Wood's *They Drive by Night* released.

1939 United States: Publication of Chandler's *The Big Sleep* and David Goodis's first novel, *Retreat from Oblivion*; release of further noir precursors: *Blind Alley*, *Dust Be My Destiny*, *Each Dawn I Die*, and *They Made Me a Fugitive*. **France:** Marcel Carné's *Le Jour se lève* (*Daybreak*) starring Gabin is released, as is Robert Siodmak's *Pièges* (*Traps*) and Pierre Chenal's *Le Dernier tournant* (*The Last Turn*), the first adaptation of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. **Great Britain:** *On the Night of the Fire*,

directed by Brian Desmond Hurst, and the Edgar Wallace “shocker” *The Dark Eyes of London*, starring Bela Lugosi, are released.

1940 United States: *Stranger on the Third Floor*, directed by Boris Ingster, is the first “true” noir; Hitchcock’s *Rebecca* is the first Gothic noir. Chandler’s novel *Farewell, My Lovely* and his seminal essay, “The Simple Art of Murder,” are published, as is Cornell Woolrich’s *The Bride Wore Black*; Weegee’s photographs “On the Spot” and “One Way Ride” appear in print. **Great Britain:** Publication of Eric Ambler’s noir spy novel *Journey into Fear* and the release of Thorold Dickinson’s Gothic noir, *Gaslight*.

1941 United States: John Huston’s *The Maltese Falcon* with Humphrey Bogart as Sam Spade is the first noir to replicate the cynical tone and atmosphere of hard-boiled fiction; Bogart also stars in Huston’s *High Sierra* as a troubled gangster. Orson Welles’s *Citizen Kane* shows the potential of expressionist techniques. Other early noirs include: *Among the Living*, *I Wake Up Screaming*, *Ladies in Retirement*, and *Out of the Fog*, starring John Garfield; von Sternberg’s *The Shanghai Gesture*; and Hitchcock’s *Suspicion*. Publication of Weegee’s “Murder on the Roof” and “Rocco Finds His Pal Stabbed.” **Denmark:** Release of the first noir, *En Forbryder (A Criminal)*.

1942 United States: Release of *Street of Chance*, the first Cornell Woolrich adaptation and the second and darker adaptation of *The Glass Key*, starring Brian Donlevy, Veronica Lake, and Alan Ladd; Ladd also stars in the first hit man noir, *This Gun for Hire*, based on Greene’s novel. Val Lewton’s “B” Unit at RKO releases a cycle of psychological horror films beginning with *Cat People*. First publication of the *Crime Does Not Pay* comic that continues to 1955; first broadcast of *Suspense*, a radio noir that continues until 1962. Hopper’s painting *Nighthawks* first exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago. **Great Britain:** Release of *The Night Has Eyes* with James Mason as a troubled Spanish Civil War veteran. **Italy:** Luchino Visconti’s *Ossessione (Obsession)* is an unauthorized adaptation of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*.

1943 United States: Release of Hitchcock’s *Shadow of a Doubt* starring Joseph Cotten as a plausible serial killer and Orson Welles’s first noir *Journey into Fear*, also starring and cowritten by Cotten, based on Ambler’s novel; three further Lewton horror-noirs—*I Walked with a Zombie*, *The Leopard Man* (both directed by Jacques Tourneur), and *The Seventh*

Victim—are released. **France:** Release of Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Le Corbeau (The Raven)*. **Mexico:** Emergence of a sustained production cycle of film noir with Fernando de Fuentes' *Doña Bárbara* and *La mujer sin alma (The Woman without a Soul)*.

1944 United States: Release of *Double Indemnity*, adapted by Chandler and Billy Wilder (who also directed) from Cain's novella; *Murder, My Sweet*, based on Chandler's *Farewell, My Lovely*, directed by Edward Dmytryk with Dick Powell as Philip Marlowe; and Otto Preminger's *Laura*, from Vera Caspary's novel, three hugely influential noirs; Lang's *Woman in the Window* and Siodmak's first noir, *Phantom Lady*, adapted from a Woolrich story, are also important releases. Several Gothic noirs released, including *Dark Waters*, *Experiment Perilous*, *Gaslight* (MGM's version) and *The Lodger* (John Brahm's remake of the Hitchcock original).

1945 United States: *The House on 92nd Street*, directed by Henry Hathaway and produced by Louis de Rochemont, is the first semidocumentary noir that shows the major impact of Italian neo-realism. Release of Lang's *Scarlet Street*, an adaptation of Renoir's *La Chienne*; Ulmer's *Detour*; *Mildred Pierce*, based on the Cain novel; Hitchcock's *Spellbound*, which deals with amnesia and psychological confusion; Edward Dmytryk's *Cornered*, starring Dick Powell as a troubled veteran; and *Leave Her to Heaven*, the first color noir, with Gene Tierney as a psychotic femme fatale. **France:** Publication of the first *Série Noire* titles by Gallimard.

1946 United States: Production of film noir is now well established; major releases include: Howard Hawks's *The Big Sleep*, based on Chandler's novel and starring Bogart as Marlowe; *The Blue Dahlia*, the only original Chandler screenplay addressing the topical issue of the troubled veteran, starring Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake; *Gilda*, starring Glenn Ford and Rita Hayworth; the first American adaptation of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, starring John Garfield and Lana Turner; Siodmak's *The Killers*, starring Burt Lancaster and Ava Gardner, and his Gothic noir *The Spiral Staircase*; three Woolrich adaptations: *Black Angel*, *The Chase*, and *Deadline at Dawn*. Howard Duff stars in *The Adventures of Sam Spade*, a radio serial that continues until 1951. **France:** First use of the term *film noir* by reviewers to describe the new type of American crime thriller; production of noirs well established, including *Les Portes de la nuit (The Gates of the Night)*. **(East) Germany:** *Die Mörder sind unter uns (The Murderers Are Among Us)* launches the brief cycle of *Trümmerfilme*

(rubble films). **Great Britain:** *Wanted for Murder* (1946), starring Eric Portman, is released. **Italy:** Release of Alberto Lattuada's *Il bandito* (*The Bandit*), which focuses on a troubled veteran.

1947 United States: Production of films noir continues to increase, including: Jacques Tourneur's *Out of the Past*, starring Robert Mitchum and Jane Greer; Robert Rossen's boxing noir, *Body and Soul*, starring John Garfield; *Crossfire*, *Dead Reckoning*, and *Ride the Pink Horse* focus on the troubled veteran; Henry Hathaway's *Kiss of Death*, a blending of the semidocumentary and the noir thriller; Robert Montgomery's Chandler adaptation *Lady in the Lake*, in which the camera becomes the eyes of Philip Marlowe; and three further low-budget Woolrich adaptations: *Fall Guy*, *Fear in the Night*, and *The Guilty*. Enterprise Productions is formed to nurture left-wing social noirs, but the investigations of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) result in the production of a blacklist (in force until 1962) that wrecks the careers of many left-inclined noir personnel. *I, the Jury*, the first Mickey Spillane story featuring Mike Hammer, is published. *The Adventures of Philip Marlowe* begins on radio (continuing until 1950) with Van Heflin, then Gerald Mohr, playing Chandler's gumshoe. **France:** Release of *Quai des orfèvres* (*Jenny Lamour*) and Duvivier's *Panique* (*Panic*). **Great Britain:** A large number of noirs are released, including: *Odd Man Out* directed by Carol Reed and starring James Mason; *Dear Murderer* starring Eric Portman; *They Made Me a Fugitive*; and *Temptation Harbour* (1947), adapted from a Georges Simenon novella. **Italy:** Release of several noirs including *Tombolo, paradiso nero* (*Tombolo, Black Paradise*), and *Tragic Pursuit* (*Caccia tragica*), directed by Giuseppe de Santis.

1948 United States: Large numbers of films noir continue to be produced. Dore Schary takes over as head of production at MGM and encourages the making of modestly budgeted noirs. Releases include: *T-Men*, a semidocumentary thriller, the first of five directed by Anthony Mann and photographed by John Alton that also included *Raw Deal*, with its rare sympathetic female protagonist (Claire Trevor); Orson Welles's *The Lady from Shanghai*; Jules Dassin's *The Naked City*, produced by Mark Hellinger, the definitive semidocumentary noir set in New York; Dassin also directed *Brute Force*, a gruelling prison noir; Nicholas Ray's *They Live by Night*, the quintessential outlaw couple noir; Abraham Polonsky's *Force of Evil*, starring John Garfield; Siodmak's *Cry of the City*; John Farrow's *The Big Clock*, starring Ray Milland and Charles Laughton;

Night Has a Thousand Eyes, adapted from a Woolrich story; *The Dark Past*, a remake of the noir precursor *Blind Alley*; and *Pitfall*, starring Dick Powell as the archetypal beleaguered suburbanite. **France:** Release of *Dédée d'Anvers (Woman of Antwerp)*, directed by Yves Allégret. **Great Britain:** A number of noirs are released, including: *Daybreak*, a bleak, Gallic tale starring Eric Portman; *Mine Own Executioner* and *Silent Dust*, which feature troubled veterans; and the adaptation of Greene's prewar novel *Brighton Rock*. **Italy:** Release of Lattuada's *Senza pietà (Without Pity)* and de Santis's *Riso amaro (Bitter Rice)*. **Japan:** Akira Kurosawa's *Drunken Angel* is the first postwar Japanese noir.

1949 United States: Production of film noir remains high. Notable titles include: Siodmak's *Criss Cross* and *The File on Thelma Jordan*; Mann's *Reign of Terror*, set in France during the revolution; Max Ophüls's *Caught*; Robert Wise's *The Set-Up*, a boxing noir starring Robert Ryan; Dassin's *Thieves Highway*; two troubled veteran noirs, *The Clay Pigeon* and *The Crooked Way*; and *White Heat* with James Cagney as a psychotic gangster. *Nothing More Than Murder*, Jim Thompson's first major crime novel, is published. **France:** Release of several bleak noirs, including Allégret's *Une si jolie petite plage (Riptide)* and *Manèges (The Cheat)*. **Great Britain:** Production of films noir continues apace, including: Ambler's story about amnesia, *The October Man*; *Obsession*, directed by the exiled Dmytryk; and Michael Powell's *The Small Back Room*, which all explore psychological disturbance, as well as Carol Reed's *The Third Man*, an Anglo-American coproduction set in Vienna. **Japan:** Kurosawa's *Stray Dog* explores postwar tensions. **Mexico:** Production of noir continues with a number of films featuring *la devoradora* (the devouring woman); the most famous and successful was *Aventurera (The Adventuress)* starring the Cuban singer-actress Ninón Sevilla. **Norway:** First true noir released: *Døden er et kjærtegn (Death Is a Caress)*.

1950 United States: The most prolific year for the release of noirs. Notable titles include: Huston's *The Asphalt Jungle*, the father of the caper/heist film; Rudolph Maté's *D.O.A.*, one of the great existential noirs, starring Edmond O'Brien as the ordinary Everyman caught in a malevolent world; Joseph H. Lewis's *Gun Crazy* (aka *Deadly Is the Female*), an unromantic outlaw couple film; Nicholas Ray's *In a Lonely Place* with Bogart as an unstable troubled veteran and disillusioned Hollywood writer; Preminger's *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, starring Dana Andrews, indicates that attention is now shifting to the corrupt cop; Wilder's *Sunset*

Boulevard, starring Gloria Swanson as a faded silent film star, is the definitive Hollywood noir. Publication of Patricia Highsmith's *Strangers on a Train*. **Great Britain:** *Night and the City* is an Anglo-American production filmed in London so that Dassin can continue directing despite being blacklisted. *Cage of Gold*, starring David Farrar, continues to explore the psychological and social legacy of the war. **Italy:** Michelangelo Antonioni directs *Cronaca di un amore (Chronicle of a Love)*, an intense story of doomed passion and guilt. **Mexico:** Release of Luis Buñuel's *Los olvidados (The Forgotten Ones)*, 1950).

1951 United States: The pace of releases of American noir slackens, but notable examples include: Wilder's *Ace in the Hole* (aka *The Big Carnival*), a coruscating account of an amoral journalist played by Kirk Douglas; Joseph Losey remakes *M*, and his *The Prowler* critiques America's obsession with ambition and money. **Argentina:** Film noir emerges with *El pendiente (The Earring)*, adapted from a Woolrich story. **Germany:** Release of *Der Verlorene (The Lost One)*, directed by and starring Peter Lorre. **Great Britain:** Release of *Pool of London*, "Britain's Naked City."

1952 United States: *Captive City* is the first of the cycle of city exposé noirs that take their cue from the 1950 Senate hearings on municipal corruption chaired by Estes Kefauver. Nicholas Ray's *On Dangerous Ground*, starring Robert Ryan and Ida Lupino, is an exploration of the troubled cop and a moving love story. Phil Karlson's first noir, *Scandal Sheet*, is based on Samuel Fuller's novel, *The Dark Page*. The first noir television series, *China Smith*, is broadcast, starring Dan Duryea as a faded American gumshoe working in Singapore. Publication of Thompson's *The Killer Inside Me*. **Argentina:** Two further Woolrich adaptations, both directed by Carlos Hugo Christensen: *No abras nunca esa puerta (Don't Ever Open That Door)*, and *Si muero antes de despertar (If I Should Die before I Wake)*.

1953 United States: Production of noir begins to decline noticeably and becomes predominantly second features. Release of Samuel Fuller's *Pickup on South Street*, his first noir as a director, starring Richard Widmark; Ida Lupino directs and stars in *The Bigamist* opposite Edmond O'Brien, and she also directs him in *The Hitch-Hiker*; Lang's *The Big Heat* shows, like the city exposé noirs, the shift from individual concerns to a focus on widespread corruption and criminal organizations. Release of the first Mike

Hammer film, *I, the Jury*. Vincente Minnelli's *The Band Wagon* contains a clever parody of the noir style in the "Girl Hunt Ballet" sequence.

1954 United States: Release of *Riot in Cell Block 11*, a violent and powerful prison noir directed by Don Siegel. **France:** *Touchez pas au Grisbi* (*Honor Among Thieves*), starring Jean Gabin, is the first of a series of French gangster noirs. **Great Britain:** Release of Cy Endfield's *Impulse* and *The Good Die Young*, with a mixed Anglo-American cast.

1955 United States: Release of *Kiss Me Deadly*, Robert Aldrich's radical reworking of Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer thriller; *The Night of the Hunter*, starring Robert Mitchum as a Christian fundamentalist and serial killer; Lang's *While the City Sleeps*; Joseph H. Lewis's *The Big Combo*, a brooding *Doppelgänger* story; *New York Confidential* and Karlson's *The Phenix City Story*, brutal city exposés. Publication of Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. **France:** Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton's *Panorama du film noir américain (1941–1953)* is the first book-length study of noir. Dassin's *Du rififi chez les hommes* (*Rififi*) is the definitive heist noir. **Spain:** Juan Antonio Bardem's *Death of a Cyclist* is the first noir.

1956 United States: Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing* is another intelligent heist noir; *Slightly Scarlet*, photographed by John Alton, and Fuller's *House of Bamboo* are color noirs, the latter depicting a criminal gang of ex-soldiers. *Nightmare*, directed by Maxwell Shane, is a remake of his own 1947 film *Fear in the Night*, based on the Woolrich short story; Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man*, starring Henry Fonda, is one of the bleakest films noir; *The Harder They Fall* is Bogart's last noir; Lang's *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* is his final American noir; Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is a paranoid, sci-fi noir hybrid. **France:** *Bob le Flambeur* (*Bob the Gambler*), starring Roger Duchesne, is Jean-Pierre Melville's first noir. **Great Britain:** Roy Ward Baker's *Tiger in the Smoke* is a powerful troubled-veteran story.

1957 United States: Alexander Mackendrick's *Sweet Smell of Success*; Karlson's *The Brothers Rico*, based on the Simenon novel; Tourneur's *Nightfall*; and Paul Wendkos's *The Burglar*, also adapted from a Goodis novel, are distinctive noirs in a period when production is declining. Shift of noir from film production to television series includes *Richard Diamond*, starring David Janssen as a private eye, continues to 1960. **Germany:** Siodmak's *Nachts, wenn der Teufel kam* (*The Devil Strikes*

at *Night*) explores the Nazi past. **Great Britain:** Release of Endfield's *Hell Drivers*.

1958 United States: Two late noir masterpieces are released: Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, a study in obsession, and Orson Welles's expressionist *Touch of Evil*. Irving Lerner's *Murder by Contract* is an intelligent exploration of the hit man. **Great Britain:** Seth Holt's *Nowhere to Go* is a powerful, existential crime thriller.

1959 United States: Release of Robert Wise's *Odds Against Tomorrow*, a heist noir that foregrounds racial tensions, is often cited as the "last" classic film noir. Production of noir now shifting decisively to television series: *Johnny Staccato* starring John Cassavetes; *Peter Gunn* starring Craig Stevens; and *The Man with a Camera* starring Charles Bronson. **France:** Robert Bresson's influential *Pickpocket* is released. **Great Britain:** Release of Siodmak's last noir, *The Rough and the Smooth*, and Losey's *Blind Date*.

1960 United States: Release of *The 3rd Voice* starring Edmond O'Brien as a man hired to impersonate a businessman who has been murdered shows that noir production did not cease in 1959; it remains sporadic throughout the 1960s. Hitchcock's *Psycho* is a new type of horror-noir. First episodes of the sci-fi noir television series *Twilight Zone*, that continues until 1964. **France:** Jean-Luc Godard's *À bout de souffle* (*Breathless*), scripted by François Truffaut and dedicated to Monogram, shows the influence of American noir on the French New Wave directors, as does Truffaut's own *Tirez sur le pianiste* (*Shoot the Piano Player*), adapted from a David Goodis novel, the action shifted from Philadelphia to Paris. René Clément's *Plein Soleil* (*Purple Noon*) stars Alain Delon as Ripley, Highsmith's amoral protagonist. **Germany:** *Die tausend Augen des Dr Mabuse* (*The Thousand Eyes of Dr Mabuse*) is Lang's final film. **Great Britain:** Joseph Losey's *The Criminal* and Val Guest's *Hell Is a City*, both starring Stanley Baker, are harsh, brutal crime thrillers. **Japan:** Akira Kurosawa's *Warui yatsu hodo yoku nemuru* (*The Bad Sleep Well*) focuses on corporate corruption.

1961 United States: Release of the "late noirs," Samuel Fuller's *Underworld U.S.A.* and Robert Rossen's *The Hustler*, that has many similarities with his *Body and Soul* (1947). **Great Britain:** Release of *The Naked Edge* starring Gary Cooper and Eric Portman. **Italy:** Francesco Rosi's *Salvatore*

Giuliano, the story of a Sicilian bandit in the immediate postwar years, is his first *giallo politico*, “political thriller.”

1962 United States: Release of John Frankenheimer’s *The Manchurian Candidate*, from Richard Condon’s novel, a Cold War psychological thriller about the Communist threat. **Poland:** Roman Polanski’s first noir released, *Nóż w wodzie* (*Knife in the Water*).

1963 United States: Further late noirs: Fuller’s *Shock Corridor*, a disturbing tale of a journalist in a mental hospital investigating who committed a murder that has been hushed up; *The Girl Hunters*, an adaptation of a Spillane story, with Spillane himself as Mike Hammer. First broadcast of *The Fugitive* starring David Janssen, a long-running noir television series (through 1967) that is one continuous story. **France:** Melville’s *Le Doulos* (*The Finger Man*) is one of his most powerful and influential noirs; Claude Chabrol’s *L’Œil du matin* (*The Third Lover*), indebted to Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, is his first noir. **Great Britain:** Release of Michael Winner’s *West 11* starring Eric Portman and Alfred Lynch. **Japan:** Kurosawa’s *High and Low*, adapted from an Ed McBain “97th Precinct” novel, depicts a stark moral choice faced by a rich businessman after a kidnapping.

1964 United States: Release of Hitchcock’s *Marnie* starring Sean Connery and Tippi Hedren; Arthur Penn’s *Mickey One*, starring Warren Beatty, an art-house American noir indebted to the French New Wave; Siegel’s *The Killers*, a radical remake of Siodmak’s film; Fuller’s *The Naked Kiss*, a brutal but compelling noir about a reformed prostitute; Frankenheimer’s *Seven Days in May*, another Cold War political thriller. **Great Britain:** John Moxey’s *Face of a Stranger* is one of the best of over 40 updates of Edgar Wallace thrillers.

1965 United States: Release of the two sci-fi/noir hybrids: Dmytryk’s *Mirage* and William Conrad’s *Brainstorm*; release of *Who Killed Teddy Bear?* and *Angel’s Flight*, two late films noir. **Great Britain:** *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* is the first adaptation of John le Carré’s dark spy fiction that focuses on corruption and betrayal. **Spain:** Carlos Saura’s *La caza* (*The Hunt*) revisits Civil War conflicts.

1966 United States: Frankenheimer’s *Seconds*, starring Rock Hudson, is the third part of his “paranoia trilogy”; *Harper*, starring Paul Newman, is a late private eye film. **Great Britain:** Release of Polanski’s *Cul-de-sac*.

1967 United States: John Boorman's *Point Blank*, starring Lee Marvin as an implacable revenger, is the first neo-noir. Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* conflates 1930s criminals with counter-cultural rebels; Truman Capote's influential novel *In Cold Blood* is filmed, directed by Richard Brooks as a late semidocumentary noir. **Great Britain:** Polanski's *Repulsion*, a compelling psychological drama starring Catherine Deneuve, is released. **Japan:** Seijun Suzuki's *Branded to Kill* is an art-house existential thriller about a paranoid hit man.

1968 United States: Release of Mann's political thriller, *A Dandy in Aspic*, Siegel's *Madigan* starring Richard Widmark, and *The Detective* starring Frank Sinatra. **France:** Truffaut's *La Mariée était en noir* (*The Bride Wore Black*) is adapted from a Woolrich story; Chabrol's *La Femme infidèle* (*The Unfaithful Wife*) is the first of his "Hélène" cycle. **Great Britain:** *The Strange Affair*, starring Michael York, is the first British film to deal with police corruption.

1969 France: Release of Melville's *Le Samouraï* starring Alain Delon as an existential and tragic hit man; Truffaut's *La Sirène du Mississippi* (*Mississippi Mermaid*) from a Woolrich story; further Chabrol noirs: *Que la bête meure* (*This Man Must Die* aka *Killer!*) and *Le Boucher* (*The Butcher*); Constantin Costa-Gavras's political thriller, *Z*.

1970 United States: Huston's *The Kremlin Letter* is a dark political thriller about corruption and betrayal. **France:** release of Chabrol's *La Rupture* (*The Break*), and Melville's *Le Cercle rouge* (*The Red Circle*) starring Delon. **Great Britain:** *Performance*, portraying the clash of the underworld with the rock music counterculture, is finally released after a delay of two years. **Italy:** Release of two political thrillers: Bernardo Bertolucci's *Il conformista* (*The Conformist*), which revisits the fascist period, and Elio Petri's *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (*Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion*).

1971 United States: *Shaft* is the first "blaxploitation" film providing a space for the representation of aspects of the African American experience; Siegel's *Dirty Harry*, starring Clint Eastwood as Detective Harry Callahan, is an influential corrupt cop neo-noir; *The French Connection* also focuses on an unstable cop, "Popeye" Doyle (Gene Hackman); *Klute* is one of the few neo-noirs thus far to have a woman as the main protagonist. **France:** Chabrol's *Juste avant la nuit* (*Just Before Nightfall*)

completes his “Hélène” cycle. **Great Britain:** Mike Hodges’s *Get Carter* is as brutal and violent as American crime thrillers.

1972 United States: Publication of Paul Schrader’s seminal “Notes on *Film Noir*” to accompany a major retrospective of films in Los Angeles that identifies film noir as an important cultural phenomenon. Important releases: *Hickey and Boggs*, focusing on two world-weary private eyes in a rundown Los Angeles; *Across 110th Street*, a powerful African American neo-noir; *Cool Breeze*, a black remake of *The Asphalt Jungle*; and Sam Peckinpah’s *The Getaway*, an outlaw couple film. **France:** *Un flic* (*Dirty Money*) is the third and final Melville-Delon crime film. **Great Britain:** Sidney Lumet’s *The Offence* stars Sean Connery as a beleaguered policeman on the verge of breakdown; Hitchcock’s *Frenzy* is a brutal serial killer film. **Italy:** Rosi’s *Il caso Mattei* (*The Mattei Affair*) is a hard-hitting political thriller.

1973 United States: Robert Altman’s *The Long Goodbye* is a sustained critique of the Chandler myth of the private eye; *Coffy*, an African American noir with a feisty woman protagonist, played by Pam Grier, is the first of several such films; release of Martin Scorsese’s first noir, *Mean Streets*; Karlson’s *Walking Tall* is his most violent, and successful, noir; Sidney Lumet’s *Serpico* is a new take on police corruption. **Italy:** Release of Rosi’s gangster noir *Lucky Luciano*.

1974 United States: Roman Polanski’s *Chinatown*, set in 1930s Los Angeles with Jack Nicholson as a private eye out of his depth in the pervasive civic corruption, is a radical reworking of noir paradigms. Francis Ford Coppola’s superbly crafted *The Conversation*, starring Gene Hackman, and *The Parallax View*, starring Warren Beatty, expose the paranoia rampant in American society; Robert Altman’s *Thieves Like Us* (1974) remakes *They Live by Night* (1948), but, although in color and CinemaScope, presents a bleaker delineation of the Depression era. **France:** Claude Chabrol’s *Nada* (*The Nada Gang*) explores the morality of terrorism. **Japan:** Yoshitaro Nomura’s *Suna no utsuwa* (*The Castle of Sand*) is a moving and distinctive noir focusing on outcasts and moral responsibility.

1975 United States: Release of two powerful neo-noirs starring Hackman—Frankenheimer’s *French Connection II* and Arthur Penn’s *Night Moves*; Robert Aldrich’s *Hustle* stars Burt Reynolds as a disillusioned police lieutenant. **Great Britain:** Dick Richards’s *Farewell, My Lovely*,

starring Robert Mitchum, is one of the first retro-noirs that attempts to recreate the style, mood, and atmosphere of the 1940s. **Italy:** Release of Dario Argento's *Profondo rosso* (*Deep Red*), starring David Hemmings, and Rosi's *Cadaveri eccellenti* (*Illustrious Corpses*). Antonioni's *Professione reporter* (*The Passenger*) starring Jack Nicholson as a disaffected journalist who tries to switch his identity, is an Italian-American coproduction.

1976 United States: Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, scripted by Schrader and starring Robert De Niro, updates the noir veteran; *The Killer Inside Me* is the first adaptation of a Jim Thompson novel; *All the President's Men* is another probing political noir.

1977 United States: *The Domino Principle* and *Twilight's Last Gleaming* continue the cycle of political noirs; *The Late Show* starring Art Carney is a further demolition of the private eye myth. **Germany:** Wim Wenders's *Der amerikanische Freund* (*The American Friend*), an adaptation of the Highsmith novel, *Ripley's Game*, is the first serious engagement by a German New Wave director with American noir.

1978 United States: Release of Walter Hill's *The Driver*, a bleakly existential neo-noir; *Capricorn One* continues the cycle of political thrillers.

1979 United States: Publication of Alain Silver and Elizabeth Ward's *Film Noir: An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style* that establishes a canon of noir films. **France:** Release of the bleak *Série noire*, adapted from Thompson's *A Hell of a Woman* (1954). **Germany:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Die Ehe der Maria Braun* (*The Marriage of Maria Braun*) is the first of a trilogy of neo-noirs that explores recent German history.

1980 United States: Release of *Raging Bull*, Scorsese's boxing noir with De Niro as Jake La Motta; and *Atlantic City*, starring Burt Lancaster and directed by Louis Malle. **Great Britain:** Release of John Mackenzie's *The Long Good Friday*, a brutal crime thriller starring Bob Hoskins as an East End gangster.

1981 United States: Lawrence Kasdan's *Body Heat*, a loose remake of *Double Indemnity*, inaugurates a new phase of neo-noir, the shift from radical revisionism to a more modulated development of noir's mood with a recognizable and reproducible style and tone. Bob Rafelson's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, starring Jack Nicholson and Jessica Lang, is one of the first neo-noir remakes of a 1940s "classic." **France:** Jean-Jacques

Beineix's *Diva* inaugurates a new phase of French neo-noir as an adjunct of the *cinéma du look*—stylish, sophisticated, and street-smart.

1982 United States: Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, an influential blending of sci-fi and noir, depicts a dystopian Los Angeles of 2019. **France:** Bob Swaim's *La Balance (The Nark)*, is another stylish thriller; *Vivement dimanche! (Confidentially Yours)*, an adaptation of Charles Williams's hard-boiled thriller *The Long Saturday Night*, is Truffaut's final film. **Germany:** Wenders's *Hammett* is a highly self-reflexive noir that blends fiction and reality on several levels.

1983 United States: Huston's *Prizzi's Honor* is a blackly comic neo-noir starring Jack Nicholson as a stolid hit man. Brian De Palma's *Scarface* is an ultraviolent remake of the 1932 film. **Australia:** *Goodbye Paradise*, indebted to Chandler, blends American and Australian sensibilities. **France:** Beineix's *La Lune dans le caniveau (The Moon in the Gutter)* is an art house French neo-noir based on the Goodis novel.

1984 United States: *Blood Simple*, the Coen brothers' first neo-noir, is a "country noir" set in Texas but rooted in hard-boiled fiction (Hammett and Cain). Release of *Against All Odds*, a remake of *Out of the Past*; De Palma's *Obsession*, a loose remake of *Vertigo*; and *Tightrope*, starring Clint Eastwood, a powerful *Doppelgänger* neo-noir. First broadcast of Michael Mann's *Miami Vice* (continues until 1989), whose pace, style, and high production values set new standards for television noir series. **Denmark:** Lars Von Trier's *Forbrydelsens element (The Element of Crime)* is a complex European art house noir.

1985 France: Luc Besson's *Subway*, his first noir, is a stylish thriller set in Paris.

1986 United States: David Lynch's first noir *Blue Velvet* exposes the corruption beneath small-town America. First broadcast of Mann's television series *Crime Story*, set in Chicago in the 1960s; Abel Ferrara directs the pilot episode. Publication of Frank Miller's graphic novel *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* makes the noir elements in this character explicit. **Hong Kong:** John Woo's *Ying xiong ben se (A Better Tomorrow)* establishes noir as a productive genre.

1987 United States: Release of Alan Parker's *Angel Heart*, starring Mickey Rourke and Robert De Niro, a supernatural noir. **Great Britain:** Neil Jordan's *Mona Lisa* is a powerful, hallucinogenic neo-noir. **Hong**

Kong: Ringo Lam's *Long hu feng yun (City on Fire)* becomes one of the first noirs to be influential internationally.

1988 United States: *The Dead Pool* is another outing for Eastwood's "Dirty" Harry Callahan; Constantin Costa-Gavras's *Betrayed* explores the terrorist threat on American soil.

1989 United States: John Dahl's debut neo-noir *Kill Me Again* is visually stylish. **France:** Remake of *Panique* as *Monsieur Hire*. **Hong Kong:** John Woo's *Die xue shuang xi (The Killer)* starring Chow Yun-Fat as a hit man, helps cement Hong Kong cinema's international reputation. **Japan:** *Violent Cop*, directed by and starring Takeshi Kitano, is both homage to *Dirty Harry* and the emergence of a distinctive sensibility.

1990 United States: Production of films noir increases, becoming more mainstream and commercial, including many erotic thrillers that go straight to cable release. Stephen Frears's *The Grifters* and James Foley's *After Dark, My Sweet* are intelligent adaptations of Thompson novels. Other notable releases: Dennis Hopper's *Hot Spot*, starring Don Johnson; *Internal Affairs*, starring Richard Gere and Andy Garcia; Kathryn Bigelow's *Blue Steel*, starring Jamie Lee Curtis as a woman cop; and Sidney Lumet's *Q & A*, where Nick Nolte plays a particularly loathsome corrupt cop. David Lynch's television series *Twin Peaks*, a surreal noir, become cult viewing. **South Korea:** Noir begins to emerge with Kwon-taek Im's *Janggunui adeul (Son of a General, 1990)* and its two sequels (1991 and 1992), an expansive and slow-moving gangster saga. **Spain:** Release of Vicente Aranda's celebrated political allegory *Amantes (Lovers)*.

1991 United States: Return of African American noir as an important element in American filmmaking, including Bill Duke's *A Rage in Harlem*. **Spain:** *Todo por la pasta (All for the Dough)* and *Beltenebros* help to establish an internationally recognized neo-noir.

1992 United States: *Reservoir Dogs* establishes Quentin Tarantino as an important new filmmaker; Peter Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct* makes a star of Sharon Stone, who reconfigures the femme fatale; Carl Franklin's *One False Move* is a powerful African American neo-noir exploring interracial tensions; Ferrara's *Bad Lieutenant*, starring Harvey Keitel, is an extreme exploration of the corrupt cop.

1993 United States: Notable releases include: Peter Medak's *Romeo Is Bleeding*, an extreme version of the unreliable, self-deluding narrator;

Tamra Davis's *Guncrazy* (1993) reworks the outlaw couple paradigm, through remaking *Gun Crazy* (1950); *Carlito's Way*, starring Pacino as a criminal who attempts to reform; and *Falling Down*, starring Michael Douglas as "D-Fens," an unemployed defense worker who wages a one-man psychotic war against the world. First broadcast of the sci-fi noir television series *The X-Files* that continues through to 2002. **Italy:** Revival of the *giallo politico*: *Il lungo silenzio* (*The Long Silence*), *La scorta* (*The Escort*), and *Il giudice ragazzino* (*The Young Judge*).

1994 United States: Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, with its episodic, non-chronological construction and profusion of allusions to an eclectic range of world cinema, cements his cult reputation; in Dahl's *The Last Seduction*, Linda Fiorentino plays a successful contemporary femme fatale—duplicitous, cruel, but unpunished.

1995 United States: Franklin's *Devil in a Blue Dress*, starring Denzel Washington, is a retro-noir that explores the postwar period through African American eyes; *Se7en* is a horror-noir hybrid, one of the most disturbing of the spate of serial killer films; Mann's *Heat* is an epic crime thriller with the first onscreen meeting of Pacino and De Niro; Steven Soderbergh's *Underneath*, starring Peter Gallagher, is an intelligent remake and updating of *Criss Cross*; Scorsese's *Casino* is an epic gangster-noir based on a true story, starring De Niro and Stone. **France:** Release of *La Haine* (*Hate*), representative of a return to social themes; Chabrol's *La Cérémonie* (*Judgement in Stone*) continues his excoriation of the bourgeoisie.

1996 Denmark: Nicolas Winding Refn's *Pusher* (1996) is the first internationally successful Danish noir with two sequels (in 2004 and 2005).

1997 United States: Release of the retro-noir *L.A. Confidential*, an adaptation of the third novel in James Ellroy's celebrated LA quartet, set in the 1950s; Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*, adapted from Elmore Leonard's novel and starring Pam Grier; Lynch's *The Lost Highway*, a surreal noir that remains ultimately mysterious; *This World, Then the Fireworks* also uses a surrealistic, Gothic style to render the strange, distorted, and self-destructive world of Thompson's novels. **Japan:** Kitano directs and stars in *Hana-Bi* (*Fireworks*) as a retired, psychologically damaged policeman. **Norway:** Release of Erik Skjoldbjerg's *Insomnia*, a powerful thriller set in northern Norway. **Spain:** Pedro Almodóvar's *Carne Trémula* (*Live Flesh*), based on a Ruth Rendell novel, employs a complex flashback structure, shifting between the 1970s and the present in order to examine Francoism.

1998 United States: Schrader's *Affliction* stars Nick Nolte as a small-town sheriff irreparably damaged by his father's abuse; *Dark City* is a powerfully dystopian sci-fi noir. **Germany:** Release of Tom Tykwer's highly successful *Lola Rennt (Run Lola Run)*. **Great Britain:** Mike Hodges's *Croupier*, scripted by Paul Mayersberg and starring Clive Owen, is a compelling story of greed and corruption.

1999 United States: The Wachowski brothers' *The Matrix* is the first in what became a trilogy (2002/2003) of existentialist future noirs starring Keanu Reeves as a warrior cyber-hacker. Polanski's *The Ninth Gate* is a supernatural noir hybrid.

2000 United States: Christopher Nolan's *Memento* is a radical take on the amnesiac noir with a reverse chronology. The first episodes of the highly successful and long-running television series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* are broadcast. **France:** Release of Chabrol's late masterpiece, *Merci pour la chocolat (Nightcap)*. **Great Britain:** *Sexy Beast* stars Ray Winstone as a criminal retired to Spain but drawn back into the London underworld.

2001 United States: Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* is driven by the surreal logic of dreams where identities shift and transfer; the Coen Brothers' *The Man Who Wasn't There* is a black-and-white retro noir set in 1949; *Training Day* stars Denzel Washington as a highly decorated but corrupt black cop. *Max Payne*, the first successful noir video game, is released. Beginning of the noir television series *24*, starring Kiefer Sutherland as a Los Angeles counterterrorist agent.

2002 United States: Nolan's *Insomnia*, starring Al Pacino, is a remake of the 1997 Norwegian film; Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report*, starring Tom Cruise, is an intelligent future-noir; *The Bourne Identity* in the first of a trilogy of films in which Matt Damon plays an amnesiac Central Intelligence Agency assassin. **Argentina:** Release of the highly successful *Nueve reinas (Nine Queens)*, directed by Fabián Bielinsky. **Brazil:** *Cidade de Deus (City of God)*, based on a true story set in the *favela* (slums) of Rio de Janeiro, is nominated for four Academy Awards. **Hong Kong:** *Wu jian dao (Infernal Affairs)* depicted the blurred boundaries between police and criminal. **Italy:** Liliana Cavani's *Il gioco di Ripley (Ripley's Game)*—an Anglo-Italian co-production—is another Highsmith adaptation.

2003 United States: Clint Eastwood's *Mystic River* is a powerful study of three damaged men set in Boston; release of the video game sequel *Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne*. **Great Britain:** Mike Hodges's *I'll Sleep When I'm Dead* is a bleakly existential noir starring Clive Owen. **South Korea:** *Oldboy*, the second part of Chan-wook Park's violent "revenge" trilogy, wins the Grand Prix award at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival and becomes South Korea's best-known noir.

2004 United States: Release of Mann's *Collateral* with Cruise as a hit man, the latest in a line of self-destructive antiheroes; remake of *The Manchurian Candidate* starring Denzel Washington as a troubled Desert Storm war veteran. **Italy:** Release of Paolo Sorrentino's stylish *Le conseguenze dell'amore* (*The Consequences of Love*).

2005 United States: Robert Rodriguez's *Sin City*, an adaptation of Frank Miller's graphic stories, attempts to be faithful to the look and style of the original as the primary text; Nolan's *Batman Begins*, also based Miller's stories, depicts an existential Batman (Christian Bale) in a nightmare Gotham City; David Cronenberg's *A History of Violence* is a very different adaptation of a graphic novel. The highly rated *Brick* is a hard-boiled thriller set in a California high school. **Argentina:** Bielinsky's *El aura* (*The Aura*), in which a down-at-the-heel taxidermist gets involved in a robbery that goes wrong, is another internationally successful neo-noir. **France:** Jacques Audiard's *De battre mon coeur s'est arrêté* (*The Beat My Heart Skipped*) reworks the 1978 American neo-noir *Fingers*; Michael Haneke's *Caché* (*Hidden*), taps into contemporary anxieties about surveillance, celebrity, and the price of affluence.

2006 United States: Release of Scorsese's *The Departed*, a remake of *Infernal Affairs* but transferred to Boston; Mann's *Miami Vice* movie, based on his earlier television series; and De Palma's retro-noir *The Black Dahlia*. **Finland:** Release of *Laitakaupungin valot* (*Lights in the Dusk*), the third film in Aki Kaurismäki's loose trilogy of noirs.

2007 United States: The Coen Brothers' *No Country for Old Men*, a classic noir tale of greed, corruption, and betrayal, wins several Oscars; Ridley Scott's *American Gangster* stars Denzel Washington as Frank Lucas, the Harlem drug kingpin who smuggled heroin into the United States on U.S. service planes returning from the Vietnam War.

2008 United States: The new releases are dominated by noirs derived from graphic novels: Nolan's *The Dark Knight*, a further installment of the Batman franchise, and Frank Miller's *The Spirit*, based on Will Eisner's stories (1940–52), in which another near-invulnerable masked hero confronts a gloomy noir world; *Max Payne* is based on the successful video games.

2009 United States: Release of Tony Gilroy's *Duplicity* about corporate corruption and greed, starring Julia Roberts and Clive Owen; Kevin Macdonald's *State of Play* (with a screenplay by Gilroy) stars Russell Crowe as an investigative reporter on the trail of a corporate cover-up; Johnny Depp plays John Dillinger in Michael Mann's period gangster-noir *Public Enemies*. **Great Britain:** The television/film trilogy *Red Riding*, based on David Peace's novels, is a bleak and compelling drama of corruption and betrayal.

Introduction

What Is Film Noir?

Most people recognize the term *film noir*, but what does it mean? Which films are included in this category, and which are excluded?

A few films often spring to mind—*Double Indemnity*, *The Big Sleep*, *The Third Man*—but how many others are there, and what are the boundaries? Does a film noir have to be in black and white? Must it have been produced in the 1940s or 1950s? Defining film noir has always been problematic because it is a retrospective category, not applied to the films when they were being made, and it seems to refer to films whose characteristics are not as obvious or clear cut as comedies or Westerns, or even crime thrillers, with which film noir is sometimes conflated.

These problems have persisted not only because commentators cannot agree on what constitutes the corpus of films noir—each new study and website has its own filmography—but also because film noir has itself developed and mutated over time. There is now another body of films, neo-noirs, which constitute a second disputed and ill-defined group. When did neo-noir begin? What is the relationship between film noir and neo-noir? Is *Blade Runner*, with its strange blending of the past and the future, a neo-noir? If so, is this a category that has any usefulness or explanatory power?

A further complication has arisen because film noir was often defined and written about as if it was a filmmaking practice exclusively confined to the United States. Recent studies, albeit working with the same ill-defined terms, have demonstrated that this was simply not the case, that other cinemas—in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and also in Australasia—have developed comparable bodies of films, at least in terms of style and subject matter if not in quantity. These “other” film noirs developed at slightly different times in somewhat different ways and have their own national variations and

specificities. However, sufficient shared characteristics for film noir are now understood as a transnational phenomenon.

This introduction will attempt to explore briefly these issues and, if not to settle the disputes, at least to explain why they have arisen and for what reasons, beginning with the problem of the term itself. Film noir—literally “black cinema”—is the label customarily given to a group of black-and-white American films, mostly crime thrillers, made between 1940 and 1959. The term was first used in France by the film critic Nino Frank in his review of four crime thrillers—*The Maltese Falcon* (1941), *Double Indemnity* (1944), *Murder, My Sweet* (1944), and *Laura* (1944)—released in Paris in August 1946. Frank was struck, particularly because of the five-year absence of Hollywood films during the German Occupation, by what he perceived as a new mode of crime film with a dark, brooding visual style, complex narration with voice-overs and flashbacks, and a marked interest in the characters’ “uncertain psychology.”¹ He used the term *film noir* to describe this new development through its analogy with *Série Noire*, the name given in autumn 1945 by publisher Gaston Gallimard to a series of French translations of American hard-boiled fiction from which these films had been adapted. The term was taken up and developed by critics and future filmmakers (including Claude Chabrol and François Truffaut) writing for the film journals *Cahiers du cinéma* and *Positif* in the 1950s to identify what was perceived as an important aspect of American popular cinema. This interest culminated in the first book-length study published in 1955 by Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton, *Panorama du film noir américain (1941–1953)*, which memorably characterized film noir as “oneiric, strange, erotic, ambivalent, and cruel.”²

By contrast, film noir was not a term that was understood or acknowledged in Anglo-American film criticism until the late 1960s and was not widely known before the appearance of Paul Schrader’s 1972 essay “Notes on *Film Noir*,” originally issued to accompany a major retrospective at the Los Angeles Museum.³ Building on the French critics, Schrader provided a definition, chronology, and list of important films, identifying film noir as an important period of American film history. He argued that film noir spoke to a new generation of Americans disillusioned by Vietnam and should become part of the vocabulary and thinking of young American filmmakers in order to critique the corruption and inequalities of American society. Alain Silver and Elizabeth Ward’s *Film Noir: An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style*, first published in 1979, gave detailed commentaries on over 250 films noir, thereby establishing an influential

canon of films, along with tabulations of studio output, significant creative personnel, and a yearly breakdown of releases that extended until 1959.⁴

Subsequent editions of Silver and Ward were enlarged to include discussion of “neo-noir”: films noir produced after the ending of the “classic” period (1940–59). The 1980s witnessed the inscription of film noir in popular consciousness, becoming a widely used and accepted category in habitual use by filmmakers, critics, reviewers, and the film industry itself as a marketing label. It is therefore now impossible—in any meaningful sense—to discuss film noir as a solely time-bound phenomenon, a period of American filmmaking that finished with *Odds Against Tomorrow* in 1959. Neo-noir has become an object of study in its own right, and most recent commentators discuss both film noir and neo-noir.

However, this habitual use of the term should not be taken to imply a uniform consensus about what film noir actually is, and there is considerable dispute about what are the shared features that mark a noir film, and therefore which films should be included in this category. These problems are partly caused because film noir is a retrospective label that was not used (in the 1940s or 1950s) by the film industry itself as a production category and therefore its existence and features cannot be established through reference to trade documents. Because filmmakers at this time were unaware of the term and working, largely separately, for various studios, they did not form a cultural or intellectual movement, even a loose or informal one. Indeed, some commentators have questioned the validity of the category altogether, regarding film noir as a particular development within the broader generic history of the crime/gangster film. However, although the majority of noirs are crime thrillers, most critics, from Borde and Chaumeton onward, see film noir operating transgenerically, across a diverse group of films that span—in addition to crime thrillers and gangster films—Gothic melodramas, horror, science fiction, semidocumentaries, social-problem films, spy thrillers, and Westerns.

Lacking a generic framework, critics have frequently defined film noir in terms of a particular look or visual style that habitually employs high-contrast (chiaroscuro) lighting, where deep, enveloping shadows are fractured by shafts of light from a single source, and where asymmetrical or off-center compositions, unconventional camera angles and movements, and distorting wide-angle lenses render an alienating and threatening sense of space. However, these stylistic conventions are clearly used in other types of film, and many films that are frequently referred to as films noir do not exhibit these features. Similar problems occur if noir is defined

through its particular, and unusually complex, narrative devices including voice-overs, multiple narrators, flashbacks, and ellipses that break with the Hollywood convention of straightforward causality and lead to ambiguous or inconclusive endings. Such devices characterize many noirs but are by no means the majority. Most noirs take place in dark, nighttime cities, their streets damp with rain that reflects the flashing neon signs where the alienated, often psychologically disturbed, male antihero encounters a deceitful femme fatale leading to his doom. However, there are too many exceptions to make these features conclusive criteria. Some commentators have sought to unify film noir through its prevailing mood or tone—its characteristically dark, malign, morally ambivalent, and unstable universe, where existence is understood to be meaninglessness and absurd. This description fits some examples (the darkest) but also fails to encompass the full range of films noir, many of which have upbeat endings in which the forces of law and order or romantic love are triumphant. Overall, attempting to define film noir as a set of “essential” formal components—stylistic, narratological, or thematic—tends to be reductive or even misleading.

These considerations led James Naremore in *More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts* to classify film noir not as a body of films with “definitive traits” but as an evolving discursive construction, an imprecise but necessary critical category whose use has become an indispensable part of cultural history, one that helps to make sense of diverse but important phenomena that encompasses not only fiction and film but also other media such as radio, television, graphic novels, and video games.⁵ Naremore suggests that film noir designates both a body of American films from a particular period (“classic noir,” 1940–59) and a determining discourse that constantly redefines the meaning of those films through its use in academic criticism and within the media.

THE ORIGINS OF FILM NOIR

Like any cultural phenomenon, film noir evolved gradually from a variety of different influences. The most obvious and fundamental was indigenous hard-boiled fiction. The works of influential writers such as Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, James M. Cain, and Cornell Woolrich provided the source for many films noir. Nearly 20 percent of noir crime thrillers produced between 1941 and 1948 were direct adaptations of hard-boiled novels or short stories, and far more were imitations or reworkings; Hol-

lywood studios hired several hard-boiled authors as screenwriters with varying degrees of success. The hard-boiled authors decisively shifted the locale of crime from the country house drawing rooms of the “English school” onto the “mean streets” of the fast-growing American city, providing film noir with its characteristic image of the city as a dark, corrupt, threatening, and confusing labyrinth, populated by criminals, tough private eyes, and duplicitous femme fatales. The new style—a terse, understated vernacular idiom peppered with laconic wisecracks—provided noir with its distinctive dialogue. The influence of hard-boiled writing was delayed because films were subject to close censorship, which prose fiction escaped. It was John Huston’s prescient *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), adapted from Hammett’s novel, that first reproduced the cynical, corrosive tone and attitude of the hard-boiled tradition.

The other American vernacular tradition that directly influenced film noir was the gangster film, also concerned with money, crime, and violence and set in the modern American city. Although the dominant 1930s cycle beginning with *Little Caesar* and *The Public Enemy*, both released in 1931, was preoccupied with the rise and fall of the dynamic self-made criminal, many others, including Josef von Sternberg’s *Underworld* (1927) or Rouben Mamoulian’s *City Streets* (1931), adapted from a Hammett story, depicted a shadowy criminal milieu and explored themes of alienation, paranoia, betrayal, and revenge that directly presaged film noir. Like hard-boiled fiction, the gangster film constituted a dissident tradition in which the desires and frustrations of lower class or ethnically marginalized Americans could find a voice during the Depression. This oppositional aesthetic informs film noir.

There were equally important European influences on film noir, notably expressionism, whose origins went back to late 18th century Gothic novels such as Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In Germany, expressionist films—including the most famous and influential, Robert Wiene’s *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 1919)—formed part of an international artistic movement that attempted to express the alienation and “irrationality” of modern life through the presentation of protagonists who are tormented or unbalanced. The narratively complex expressionist films created an overall *stimmung* (mood) and distinct visual style by using high-contrast, chiaroscuro lighting where shafts of intense light contrast starkly with deep, black shadows and where space is fractured into an assortment of unstable lines and surfaces, often fragmented or twisted into odd angles. In addition, the Weimar

Strassenfilm (street film), a cycle of movies beginning with Karl Grune's *Die Strasse* (*The Street*, 1923), also presented a dark and unstable world, as the respectable middle-class protagonist descends into the irresistible but dangerous nighttime city, a proto-noir milieu of deep shadows, flashing lights, criminals, and femmes fatales. Fritz Lang's *M: Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder* (*M: A City Searches for a Murderer*, 1931) emerged from this cycle as the first urban crime thriller, depicting the city as a dark labyrinth in which the paedophile Hans Beckert (Peter Lorre) is a tortured outsider caught between the rival forces of police and organized crime. Lorre was one of many émigrés who fled from Nazi Germany to Hollywood that included Lang and fellow directors Otto Preminger, Robert Siodmak, Edgar G. Ulmer, and Billy Wilder together with cinematographers John Alton, Karl Freund, and Rudolph Maté, and various set designers, scriptwriters, and composers. Carrying with them knowledge and understanding of expressionist cinema, these émigré personnel decisively influenced the development of film noir.

Of almost equal importance, though less well-known, was the influence of poetic realism (*Réalisme Poétique*), a cycle of dark films that flourished in France during the 1930s. Poetic realism drew on an indigenous tradition of crime fiction, chiefly Georges Simenon, but also adapted from hard-boiled American crime writers: Pierre Chenal's *Le Dernier Tournant* (*The Last Turn*, 1939) was the first version of Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Poetic realism was indebted to expressionism, but the lighting was less extreme and more atmospheric, its depiction of an urban milieu more realistic and specific. In the two most celebrated examples, Marcel Carné's *Le Quai des brumes* (*Port of Shadows*, 1938) and *Le Jour se lève* (*Daybreak*, 1939), Jean Gabin starred as the romantic but doomed hero, his character prefiguring the angst-ridden males of film noir. Because poetic realism was not only successful in France but also widely admired internationally, including in America, and because several Austro-German émigrés worked in Paris before going on to Hollywood, it acted as bridge, culturally and historically, between expressionism and film noir.

The influence of expressionism was evident in the cycle of horror films produced by Universal Studios in the early 1930s. Several, including Robert Florey's *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932), were overtly expressionist, displaying strong echoes of *Caligari* in the twisted streets, oddly contorted houses that lean over the glistening cobblestones, and gloomy shadows, all of which directly anticipate film noir. Various émigrés worked on these horror films, including Ulmer, who directed *The Black*

Cat (1934). Universal's second horror cycle, beginning in 1939, was less aesthetically distinguished, but both cycles were a major influence on the studio's early experimentation with film noir, beginning with Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) and Siodmak's *Phantom Lady* (1944) that, in turn, influenced the development of the whole noir cycle.

The other studio most associated with the inception of film noir was RKO, mainly through the work of Val Lewton and Orson Welles. The Russian-born Lewton started at RKO in 1942, running his own second-feature unit to produce horror films that would compete with Universal's. However, Lewton's horror films, including *Leopard Man* adapted from Woolrich's *Black Alibi* and *The Seventh Victim*, both released in 1943, were highly distinctive, featuring ordinary men and women in atmospherically lit, mostly contemporary settings and emphasizing psychological disturbance. Lewton's films acted as a training ground for cinematographer Nicholas Musuraca, already known as a specialist in "mood lighting," and for directors, Mark Robson, Jacques Tourneur, and Robert Wise, all of whom went on to make distinguished films noirs.

Orson Welles's innovative *Citizen Kane* (1941) was a major influence on film noir. Its expressionist set design, Gregg Toland's deep focus photography, atmospheric lighting, and its creative use of wide-angle lenses and low-angle compositions, its use of mirrors, superimpositions, and distorted perspectives as well as its subjective narration and multiple flashbacks all prefigured noir techniques. Bernard Herrmann's unconventional score, which used unorthodox combinations of instruments, was the first of many he would contribute to film noir. As the most celebrated example of American expressionism, *Citizen Kane* acted as another bridge between European modernism and film noir.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FILM NOIR AND NEO-NOIR

The coming together of these various influences led to film noir, usually dated from the appearance of Russian émigré Boris Ingster's *Stranger on the Third Floor* (1940), in which Lorre played the mysterious outsider. An RKO second feature marketed as a horror film, *Stranger* had a highly expressionist dream sequence with clear echoes of *Caligari*. *Stranger* began noir's early "experimental" period (1940–43), with wide variety of styles and modes including hard-boiled adaptations—*The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and *Street of Chance* (1942) from a Woolrich story—and numerous

Gothic melodramas including Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* and *Among the Living*, photographed by émigré cameraman Theodor Sparkuhl. As war-time restrictions on costs began to take a bite, almost all the major studios encouraged the development of modestly budgeted crime thrillers whose restricted sets could be disguised by "atmospheric" lighting and the use of unusual camera angles. One influential example, Paramount's *This Gun for Hire* (1942) based on Graham Greene's thriller, featured a new type of antihero, a psychologically disturbed hit man (Alan Ladd). Early noirs also included several spy thrillers, notably Welles's *Journey into Fear* (1943), adapted from one of Eric Ambler's existentialist novels.

The release of *Double Indemnity*, *Laura*, and *Murder, My Sweet* in 1944 inaugurated the second phase of noir's development, a major burst of energy and sustained production that stretched through to 1952. In contrast to the earlier phase in which most films noir were second features, the majority were now intermediate productions that fell somewhere between first and second features. They commanded reasonable budgets but had far less market hype on their launch than a full "A" production. Visually, this period may be divided between a studio-bound "expressionist" period, 1944–1947, that focused on individual pathologies, and a "location" period, 1947–1952, dominated by semidocumentaries and social-problem films. The latter showed the influence of Italian neo-realism, the most important European cinematic movement to have emerged during the war, which emphasized the importance of taking the camera out onto the streets and depicting the lives of ordinary people. Thematically, films noir during this phase were preoccupied with the transition from war to peace, depicting numerous troubled veterans experiencing the traumatic difficulties of readjustment to civilian life after the profound disruption of active service. Politically, film noir displayed both left- and right-wing orientations, but the development of a left-leaning critique of American capitalism was truncated by the anti-Communist campaign led by Republican senator Joseph McCarthy, conducted through the hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). This led, in October 1947, to the imprisonment of the "Hollywood Ten" (that included three important noir personnel: director Edward Dmytryk, writer-producer Adrian Scott, and scriptwriter Albert Maltz) and the implementation of a blacklist of unemployable artists that numbered over 200 and went unchallenged until 1960. The blacklist had a profound effect on film noir, ending or inhibiting many careers or pushing some (Jules Dassin, Cy Endfield, and Joseph Losey) into exile.

After 1952, film noir went into a longer period of fragmentation, which ended in 1959. The expressionism of the earlier periods had disappeared, and this period was dominated by more brutal and violent crime films preoccupied with the threat of underworld “corporations” taking over American life, as in the cycle of city exposé films—beginning with *The Captive City* (1952)—that depicted the supposedly ubiquitous threat of organized crime syndicates. These thrillers were mainly second features, conventionally lit and shot, made either by small companies or the more cost-conscious majors: Columbia, RKO, Universal, and United Artists acting as a distribution agency. There were significant exceptions: Robert Aldrich’s terrifying *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), with its threat of nuclear destruction; Welles’s *Touch of Evil* (1958), a baroque expressionist masterpiece; and Hitchcock’s *Vertigo* (1958), a rare color noir that was a probing study of guilt and obsession.

Although *Odds Against Tomorrow*, released in 1959, is the conventional watershed that marks the end of film noir’s “classic” phase, the date is an arbitrary and convenient fiction. As the chronology shows, films noir were produced, sporadically, throughout the 1960s. *The 3rd Voice* (1960), *Angel’s Flight* (1965), or *In Cold Blood* (1967) are unmistakably noir, as is the work of Samuel Fuller: *Underworld U.S.A.* (1961), *Shock Corridor* (1963), and *The Naked Kiss* (1964). These films formed part of an “underground” culture, including roman noir authors Patricia Highsmith, Chester Himes, Jim Thompson, and Charles Willeford, who retained noir as a critical mode even if their authors were isolated figures, lacking a cultural climate that could make their work influential. The major energies of noir screen production went into the making of television series, including *Johnny Staccato* (1959–60), *Peter Gunn* (1959–61), and *The Fugitive* (1963–67), which drew heavily on the existentialist sensibility of hard-boiled writer David Goodis.

Although, as discussed earlier, these films are often lumped under the general label of neo-noir, films noir released in this period (1960–67) may best be termed “late noirs”—ones that could have been made before 1959—in order to differentiate them from neo-noirs that may be dated from the release of *Point Blank* in 1967. Neo-noirs are ones that self-consciously allude to classic noir, either implicitly or explicitly, building on what is now recognized and accepted as a distinct body of films. In *Point Blank*, director John Boorman, drawing on the French New Wave, explicitly and self-consciously revised the noir tradition in a contemporary idiom, adapting Donald E. Westlake’s hard-boiled novel as the basis for

a brutal revenge drama shot in 40 mm color Panavision that uses repetitions, doublings, and elliptical editing to create a story that hesitates between dream and reality in order to explore the ambiguities of desire, memory, and identity. Boorman's film was the beginning of what may be termed the neo-modernist phase of film noir (1967–80) that formed part of the "Hollywood Renaissance," in which a new generation of filmmakers, profoundly influenced by recent developments in European cinema, attempted to transform American cinema. Robert Altman's *The Long Goodbye* (1973), an acerbic updating of Chandler; Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974); Arthur Penn's *Night Moves* (1975); and Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) all engaged in a critique not only of American society but also of noir myths such as the honorable, resourceful private eye. The characteristic protagonist of the neo-modernist noirs is alienated and dysfunctional, adrift in a world where he has lost his bearings. In a separate development, the work of black hard-boiled author Chester Himes finally reached the screen in *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1968) and *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (1970). *Shaft* (1971) launched a cycle of "blaxploitation" films that also used the noir crime thriller to open up a space in which the black experience, suppressed in the overwhelmingly white orientation of classical noir, could find an expressive voice and explore the deep-seated racism in American society.

The release of Lawrence Kasdan's *Body Heat* in 1981 marked a new phase of neo-noir in which noir conventions were embraced rather than critiqued. Kasdan's film, a loose remake of *Double Indemnity*, evoked the mood and atmosphere of classical noir through its use of chiaroscuro lighting, a jazz score, and the archetypal story of the victim-hero seduced by a femme fatale, who, unlike her predecessors, is successful. *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, released in the same year, was the first of a fairly constant line of remakes of noir classics. Released a year later, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* was a highly influential "future noir," a complex melding of the conventions of science fiction and film noir, and was the forerunner of the hybridization that is so characteristic of many neo-noirs.

Gradually, neo-noir has established itself as an important contemporary genre within a restabilized, expanding Hollywood cinema. Neo-noirs are now a staple of cinema exhibition, cable television programming, and video/DVD rental. Their production is no longer characterized, as it was in the neo-modernist period, by sporadic releases, but by a continuous stream of new films. The noir "look" has become part of a knowing postmodern culture, with modern cineliterate audiences attuned to the multiple allu-

sions of neo-noirs such as Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994) or Curtis Hanson's *L.A. Confidential* (1997), an example of a "retro-noir" set during the classic period. Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000), with its reverse chronology and amnesiac self-deluding narrator, is an example of the extreme use of narratological devices that characterizes many neo-noirs. Many neo-noirs are also stylistically extreme, using hypermobile camerawork, rapid zooms, shock cuts, and ultrafast montage sequences to create an intense, disruptive, often overwhelming sensory experience that makes them very different from classic noir. A more recent development is the frequent adaptation of graphic novels. *Sin City* (2005) exemplifies this trend, with director Robert Rodriguez striving for a strict fidelity to the particular noir look of Frank Miller's original comic book creations.

Three other developments characterize the postmodern phase of film noir. The first is an extension of the focus on the city to embrace "country noir" set amidst the wide-open spaces of redneck America. Country noirs, such as the Coen Brothers' *Blood Simple* (1984), Peter Medak's *Romeo Is Bleeding* (1993), or John Dahl's *Red Rock West* (1996), are antipastoral, the countryside a site of corruption, betrayal, and murderous hatreds. The panoramic shots, often startlingly beautiful, serve only as an ironic backdrop to the sordid dramas that unfold. The second was a renewed and more wide-ranging development of African American noir that revealed the complexity and heterogeneity of the black experience, beginning with Bill Duke's *A Rage in Harlem* (1991) and *Deep Cover* (1992) and including Carl Franklin's *One False Move* (1992) and *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1995) and Spike Lee's *Clockers* (1995). Kathryn Bigelow's *Blue Steel* (1990) and Tamra Davis's *Gun Crazy* (1992), a radical remake of the famous Joseph H. Lewis noir *Gun Crazy* (aka *Deadly Is the Female*, 1950), exemplify the third development as important feminist interventions into the overwhelmingly masculine world of film noir.

GLOBAL NOIR

One of the most striking aspects of recent work on film noir has been its recognition as an international category—applied to European, Asian, and Latin American cinemas—rather than a solely American phenomenon. This recognition has been slow in arriving because earlier studies argued emphatically that film noir was a strictly American form. In their 1955 *Panorama*, Borde and Chaumeton described noir as a specifically

American series that was “inimitable” and dismissed the possibility of a French equivalent.⁶ Schrader argued that film noir was essentially the inevitable development of the American gangster film that had been delayed by the war, and Silver and Ward declared emphatically that noir was “an indigenous American form . . . a unique example of a wholly American film style.”⁷

Subsequently, sporadic essays challenged this entrenched view, and gradually cycles of noir have been identified in a range of other cinemas. Critics have located significant film noirs (and neo-noirs) in Europe, especially in France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Spain,⁸ but also in Denmark, Finland, and Norway. These European film noirs were often fugitive forms, usually reviled by critics and reviewers and made only sporadically with little continuity of production. Each has different chronologies and displays distinctive national characteristics that reflect a particular nation’s history, its political organization, its cultural traditions, the state of its film industry, and the strength of its cinematic culture, leading to marked variations in visual style, characterization, and in the representation of gender. Above all, although they often developed initially in the 1930s, each was profoundly affected by American noir in a complex, two-way dialogue displaying a reciprocal appropriation and reappropriation at a number of different levels, including remakes and coproductions. Christopher Nolan’s *Insomnia* (2002), for instance, is a remake of a Norwegian film released in 1997.

Similar developments can be located in Latin America—in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico—and here too these noirs display particular national characteristics, different trajectories, and intermittent cycles of production.⁹ The case with Asian noir is somewhat different. Although the film industry in Japan was well established and film noir developed immediately after World War II, cinema in Hong Kong and in South Korea is a more recent development. Hong Kong noir did not achieve international recognition until the mid-1980s through the work of John Woo; recognition of South Korean noir came a decade later. However, there is again a mutual and reciprocal relationship between these noirs and American neo-noir: John Woo made *Face/Off* for Paramount in 1997; Siu Fai Mak’s *Infernal Affairs* (2002) was remade as *The Departed* by Martin Scorsese; and there are plans to remake the 2003 South Korean film *Oldboy*. Australia has produced a significant body of films noir, drawing extensively on American noir; but, as in the case of the Chandleresque *Goodbye Paradise*

(1983), they have produced a rich mixture of noir themes and indigenous “exactitude” to mount a scathing critique of Australian society.

Although film noir, as discussion of its origins has shown, was international from its inception, the breadth of noir’s global reach suggests that it is best regarded as a transnational phenomenon, one that operates (commercially and conceptually) as part of various specific national cinemas and of a wider cultural formation.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FILM NOIR

The global extent of film noir and its pervasive presence in a range of interpenetrating media has made it an important part of the restlessly circulating fabric of images that form contemporary postmodern culture. Films noir straddle the entire range of contemporary filmmaking, from ultra low-budget independent productions such as Christopher Nolan’s *Following* (1998) through to his *The Dark Knight* (2008), whose budget has been estimated at \$185,000,000.¹⁰ However, noir’s significance rests not so much on its extent as on its continued capacity to startle and provoke audiences, to deal with difficult issues including psychological trauma, dysfunctional relationships, existential dread, the lure of money, and the power and indifference of huge corporations and governments.

From the start, the French espousal of film noir expressed a delight not only in the discovery of popular cinema elevated to art but also as a popular art that was oppositional, exploring the dark underside of the American dream. Because that dream forms the core mythology of global capitalism, film noir, handled intelligently, is not merely a commodified style, but an important and continuously evolving cultural phenomenon that, even if it cannot be defined precisely, remains a crucial vehicle through which that mythology can be critiqued and challenged.

NOTES

1. Nino Frank, “Un Nouveau Genre ‘Policier’: l’Aventure Criminelle,” *L’Ecran Français* (28 August 1946). Translated as “A New Kind of Police Drama: The Criminal Adventure,” by Alain Silver in *Film Noir Reader 2*, edited by Alain Silver and James Ursini. New York: Limelight, 1999, p. 16.

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2. Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton, *Panorama du film noir américain (1941–1953)* (1955), translated by Paul Hammond as *A Panorama of American Film Noir 1941–1953*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2002, p. 2.

3. Paul Schrader, “Notes on *Film Noir*,” *Film Comment* 8, no. 1; reprinted in *Film Noir Reader*, edited by Alain Silver and James Ursini. New York: Limelight, 1996, pp. 53–63.

4. Alain Silver and Elizabeth Ward (eds.), *Film Noir: An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style*. Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1979.

5. James Naremore, *More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts*, 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008 (1998).

6. Borde and Chaumeton, *Panorama*, p. 1.

7. Schrader, “Notes on *Film Noir*,” pp. 58–59; Silver and Ward, *Film Noir*, p. 1.

8. See Andrew Spicer (ed.), *European Film Noir*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.

9. For a useful overview see David Desser, “Global Noir: Genre Film in the Age of Transnationalism,” in *Film Genre Reader III*, edited by Barry Keith Grant. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003, pp. 516–36.

10. Figure given by Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0468569/business> (accessed 19 July 2009).

BEZZERIDES, A. I. (1908–2007). A Californian of Greek descent, Albert Isaac “Buzz” Bezzerides was a **hard-boiled** novelist turned screenwriter. A member of the left-wing Writers Guild, Bezzerides never joined the Communist Party but was nevertheless temporarily placed on the **blacklist** that hindered his career. His novels *The Long Haul* (1938) and *Thieves’ Market* (1949) were both distinctive, based on firsthand knowledge about independent truck drivers, their tough lives and their exploitation by wholesalers. The first was adapted (by Richard Macaulay and Jerry Wald) as *They Drive by Night* (1940), directed by Raoul Walsh and starring **George Raft** and **Humphrey Bogart**, a typical Warner Brothers action film that was a noir **precursor**. Bezzerides’s own adaptation of *Thieves’ Market* as *Thieves’ Highway* (1949), directed by **Jules Dassin**, had stronger noir elements in its depiction of the **troubled veteran (Richard Conte)** determined to avenge his father’s crippling by the racketeer Figlia (**Lee J. Cobb**) who dominates San Francisco’s wholesale fruit market. Bezzerides wrote the screenplay, adapting Gerald Butler’s novel *Mad with Much Heart*, for *On Dangerous Ground* (1952), but he was very disappointed when producer John Houseman and director **Nicholas Ray** replaced his downbeat ending in favor of what Bezzerides felt was a sentimentalized coupling of policeman and blind woman. He worked more harmoniously with **Robert Aldrich** on *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), the director encouraging him to rework comprehensively **Mickey Spillane**’s novel. Although French critics and the

New Wave directors admired its modernity, terrifying savagery, and satire of the private eye, all of which anticipated **neo-noir** themes, *Kiss Me Deadly* also retained Bezzierides's lifelong commitment to a left-liberal critique of American values. He also wrote the screenplays for two other films noir: *Desert Fury* (1947) and *A Bullet for Joey* (1955).

CHABROL, CLAUDE (1930–). Profoundly indebted to **Alfred Hitchcock**, writer-director Chabrol has created another large body of films that exist alongside rather than fully within the ambit of film noir. He has worked with a small team of technicians throughout his career and has tended to use the same actors, giving his films the sense of a tight,

enclosed world that is instantly recognizable. Each has a sympathetic predator, the victim of circumstances that make their actions at least understandable. Chabrol's great theme is the tensions and dark secrets lying behind the facade of the respectable French bourgeoisie, beginning with *L'Œil du matin* (*The Third Lover*, 1963) indebted to *Vertigo* (1958). It was the "Hélène" cycle—*La Femme infidèle* (*The Unfaithful Wife*, 1968), *Que la bête meure* (*This Man Must Die*, aka *Killer!*, 1969), *Le Boucher* (*The Butcher*, 1969), *La Rupture* (*The Break*, 1970), and *Juste avant la nuit* (*Just Before Nightfall*; U.S. title *The Vice*, 1971)—that established his reputation.

Each film starred his then wife Stéphane Audran as an inscrutable protagonist and explored the instability of identity, the transference of guilt and class tensions that derived from Hitchcock. They also demonstrated the influence of **Fritz Lang** in their poised and economical focus on essentials and the use of *mise-en-scène* in an analytical and objective way. *Le Boucher*, set in a remote and enclosed village plagued by a serial killer, remains Chabrol's most celebrated film. It explores the struggle between the culture, refinement, and repression of the schoolteacher Mademoiselle Hélène (Audran) and the barbarian violence and sensuality of the butcher (Jean Yanne). Chabrol refuses easy moral judgements and creates a genuinely shocking ending.

After a fallow period, notable only for the political thriller *Nada* (*The Nada Gang*, 1974), Chabrol successfully relaunched his career with *Violette Nozière* (1978), his first film with Isabelle Huppert, based on a real-life crime in which a young woman murders her parents. *Poulet au vinaigre* (*Cop au vin*, 1985) and its sequel *Inspecteur Lavardin* (1986), starring Jean Poiret, were highly successful, more so than the **Patricia Highsmith** adaptation *Le Cri du hibou* (*The Cry of the Owl*, 1987), that was overly complex. However, *La Cérémonie* (*Judgement in Stone*, 1995), based on a Ruth Rendell novel and starring Huppert and Sandrine Bonnaire, was a masterful study of the murderous class tensions existing between a bourgeois family and its servants.

Chabrol's other noirs are *Les Noces rouges* (*Blood Wedding*, 1973), *Les Innocents aux mains sales* (*Innocents with Dirty Hands*, 1975), *Les Liens du sang* (*Blood Relatives*, 1978), *Au coeur du mensonge* (*The Color of Lies*, 1999), *Merci pour le chocolat* (*Nightcap*, 2000), *La Fleur du mal* (*The Flower of Evil*, 2003), *La Demoiselle d'Honneur* (*The Bridesmaid*, 2004), and *La Fille coupée en deux* (*The Girl Cut in Two*, 2009). See also FRENCH FILM NOIR.

(**Dick Powell**) is redeemable. In *The Dark Past* (1948), Cobb had a more substantial role as a police psychiatrist who, in flashback, tells the story of his ultimate success in curing and rehabilitating a disturbed young man (William Holden) of his psychopathic tendencies. He was a blustering Chicago newspaper editor in *Call Northside 777* (1948) who, initially interested only in boosting circulation, ultimately supports the crusade of his reporter (James Stewart) for justice. By contrast, Cobb's cynical and ruthless wholesaler in *Thieves' Highway* (1949) will stop at nothing in his exploitation of workers. Starring rather than supporting roles came in *The Man Who Cheated Himself* (1951), where he played a long-serving policeman who compromises his integrity in helping his mistress, a married woman, cover up a murder, and *The Garment Jungle* (1957), as a ruthless, self-made entrepreneur who refuses to allow unions into his clothing factory but who has, in the process, compromised himself by using hoodlum muscle. Cobb returned to supporting roles in *Party Girl* (1958) and *The Trap* (1959).

Cobb's career was blighted by the **blacklist**. Although he initially denied his Communist affiliations, he admitted to them in the second round of trials in 1953 following intense pressure.

COCHRAN, STEVE (1917–1965). Steve Cochran, dark and powerfully built, gave a genuinely menacing performance as the psychotic **gangster** Eddie Roman in his first noir *The Chase* (1946), adapted from a **Cornell Woolrich** story. He played similar roles in *The Damned Don't Cry* (1950), starring **Joan Crawford**, and in *Highway 301* (1950) as the leader of a vicious gang of armed robbers on the run. In the underrated *Tomorrow Is Another Day* (1951), he had a more complex role that showed his range as an actor, playing a man who has served 18 years for a crime he did not commit and who struggles to adjust after his release. He becomes involved with a cheap dance-hall girl (Ruth Roman), and when her protector is accidentally killed, they flee together as an ill-sorted **outlaw couple**. Cochran is superb as an emotionally adolescent man trapped in a prizefighter's body, groping toward an understanding of the world and his own responsibilities.

His later roles played on this ambivalence. His **corrupt cop** in **Don Siegel's** *Private Hell 36* (1954) was an emotionally remote loner who illicitly pockets the proceeds of a robbery because he thinks it will make him more attractive to nightclub singer Lilli Marlowe (**Ida Lupino**). In Roger Corman's *I, Mobster* (1958), told mainly in flashback, he plays

another gangster, intelligent and shrewd, but again emotionally underdeveloped, torn between the secure world of his loving Italian-American parents and a life of crime. He gave another accomplished performance in *The Beat Generation* (1959) as a troubled, alienated man, a policeman who cannot accept his wife after she has been raped by a serial killer with whom he shares a similarly unstable misogyny.

Cochran went into television in the 1960s, appearing in *The Twilight Zone* (1959) and *Naked City* (1960), but he died in 1965 aged only 48. His other noirs are *White Heat* (1949), *The Weapon* (GB 1957), and *The Big Operator* (1959).

DANISH FILM NOIR. The German Occupation of Denmark (1940–45) encouraged increased indigenous film production to compensate for an import ban. This resulted in a wider generic mix of Danish movies, including the development of film noir. The central influences were **poetic realism, expressionism**, and also **Alfred Hitchcock's** British thrillers. The focus of early Danish noir was on ordinary people whose crimes are seen as part of the fabric of everyday life. The first identifiable Danish noir is *En Forbryder* (*A Criminal*, 1941), inspired by Marcel

Carné's films, a fatalistic tale employing flashbacks, a voice-over, and low-key lighting to create a dark and gloomy central Copenhagen where two ordinary people, a clerk and a shop assistant, murder to escape the clutches of a loan shark. *Afsporet* (*Derailed*, 1942) was a psychological drama, a doomed love affair in which a wealthy married woman suffering from amnesia becomes embroiled in an intense affair with a petty criminal from the notorious Nyhavn quarter of central Copenhagen. It was directed by the famous actress Bodil Ipsen, who also made two further noirs: *Besættelse* (*Obsession*, 1944), another erotic thriller, the affair this time was between an older wealthy man and a femme fatale who meet by chance, and *Mordets Melodi* (*Melody of Murder*, 1944) about a sexually ambiguous serial killer.

After the war the Hollywood influence became more prominent. *Kristinus Bergman* (1948), set in a shadowy, rain-swept provincial town, showed the continuing influence of poetic realism but also American **semidocumentary** police procedurals. Although the visual style is international, this story of four boys whose ill treatment at an orphanage led them into a life of crime had a pronounced social critique that was specifically national. *John og Irene* (1949), an international coproduction with Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian actors, set in Stockholm and America, was also based on an indigenous novel and focused on everyday life as a businessman and his wife try to escape poverty. There were occasional noirs in the 1950s, including *Blændværk* (*Delusion*, 1955), which also had ordinary people as protagonists.

Noir was revived in an extreme form by Lars Von Trier's *Forbrydelsens element* (*The Element of Crime*, 1984), a complex and densely allusive art film, made in English. It has several extraordinary sets created by production designer Peter Høimark and was shot by Tom Elling in sodium lighting (usually used on European autostrada) that gives it a bilious black and yellow color. Michael Elphick stars as Inspector Fisher, recalled from a 13-year exile in Cairo to investigate a series of hideous murders in which young girls have been mutilated. In his nightmare journey across a postapocalyptic northern Europe, Fisher gradually takes on the character of the chief suspect, Harry Grey, his *Doppelgänger*, and relives a sadistic relationship with Grey's mistress Kim (Me Me Lai).

Later **neo-noirs** were more commercial, notably the trilogy directed by Nicolas Winding Refn—*Pusher* (1996), *Pusher II: With Blood on My Hands* (2004), and *Pusher III: I Am the Angel of Death* (2005).

These are fast-paced, violent, and visceral films (with much handheld camerawork) about drug-dealing in the Copenhagen underworld. *Nordkraft* (*Angels in Fast Motion*, 2005) also dealt with drugs, but *Kærlighed på film* (*Just Another Love Story*, 2007) and *Kandidaten* (2008) marked a return to the concentration on ordinary people, the latter a classic noir tale in which the protagonist's attempt to prove his innocence opens up difficult issues from his past. *See also* FINNISH FILM NOIR; NORWEGIAN FILM NOIR.

ÉMIGRÉ PERSONNEL. The American film industry has been international almost from its inception, but from the 1920s a deliberate policy of hiring European creative personnel emerged as several studios tried to elevate their own cultural standing, improve the artistic quality of their films, and weaken the opposition by poaching its best talent. Although many of the early émigrés took great pains to immerse themselves thoroughly in the American way of life and had a respect for American democracy, they remained at least partial outsiders, able to maintain a critical detachment from the host culture that was often sharply critical. The Austrian Josef von Sternberg, who achieved international prominence with the German *Strassenfilm* *Der Blaue Engel* (*The Blue Angel*, 1931) starring Marlene Dietrich, had already worked in the United States, making the influential noir **precursors** *Underworld* (1927) and *Thunderbolt* (1929) that made use of expressionist lighting. Von Sternberg went on to direct other precursors—*Shanghai Express* (1932) and *The Devil Is a Woman* with Dietrich—and the films noir *The Shanghai Gesture* (1941) and *Macao* (1952), though the latter was largely reshot by **Nicholas Ray**. The Hungarian Michael Curtiz (Mihály Kertész), who directed in Germany before coming to Hollywood in 1926, pursued a long and successful career with Warner Brothers, making three of its films noir: *Mildred Pierce* (1945), *The Unsuspected* (1947), and *The Breaking Point* (1950). The German composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold was another European émigré who arrived in the 1920s

and had a lengthy career. William Dieterle, who came to Hollywood from Germany in 1930, directed the second version of *The Maltese Falcon*—*Satan Met a Lady* (1935), but as a comedy-romance—and went on to direct four noirs: *The Accused* (1949), *Dark City* (1950), *Paid in Full* (1950), and *The Turning Point* (1952), all of which display his expressionist heritage with low-key lighting, mobile camera movements, and bizarre angles.

The influx of German personnel intensified when Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, creating a major exodus of actors, cinematographers, composers, directors, scriptwriters, and set designers as well as other creative artists, initially to Paris and then, usually, to Hollywood. The reputation of Weimar cinema and the technical expertise of its creative personnel made them a highly desirable commodity for Hollywood studios. Austro-German émigrés include: directors **John Brahm**, **Fritz Lang**, Max Ophüls, **Otto Preminger**, Douglas Sirk (Detlef Sierck), **Robert Siodmak**, **Edgar G. Ulmer**, and **Billy Wilder**; cinematographers Karl Freund, **Rudolph Maté**, and **Franz Planer**; set designer **Hans Dreier**; scriptwriter Curt Siodmak; and composers **Max Steiner** and **Franz Waxman**. Singly (especially in the case of Lang and Siodmak) and together, these refugees from Nazism had a profound influence over the whole development of film noir, especially in the formative period 1940–44, through their creation of a pervasive atmosphere of doom-laden fatalism, a characteristic **visual style** that showed the influence of expressionist lighting and camerawork, the deployment of complex, time-shifting, and fractured narratives, and the depiction of alienated protagonists.

Other émigrés who had a significant input into film noir include: English—director **Alfred Hitchcock**, actor/director **Ida Lupino**, scriptwriter **Joan Harrison**, and composer Cyril Mockridge; French—director Jean Renoir and composer Michel Michelet; Hungarian—director **André De Toth**, cinematographers **John Alton** and **Ernest Laszlo**, actor **Peter Lorre**, and composer **Miklós Rózsa**; Polish—composer Bronislau Kaper and art director **Anton Grot**; Russian—producer **Val Lewton**, directors **Boris Ingster** and **Anatole Litvak**, art directors Alexander Golitzen and Eugène Lourière, composers Daniele Amfitheotrof, Constantin Bakaleinikoff, and **Dimitri Tiomkin**.

Current émigré personnel include **Roman Polanski**, **Christopher Nolan**, and the Hong Kong director John Woo, who continue to make

important contributions to American neo-noirs. *See also* **BLACKLIST;**
EXPRESSIONISM.

HELLINGER, MARK (1903–1947). Mark Hellinger made his name as a New York theater critic and Broadway columnist before writing screenplays for several films, notably the **gangster** movie *The Roaring Twenties* (1939), whose success persuaded Warner Brothers to make him an associate producer on *They Drive by Night* (1940). Hellinger lobbied hard to have the offbeat gangster film *High Sierra* (1941) made, and its popularity established his reputation as a capable filmmaker. Hellinger was a hands-on, hard-driving producer, working on two or three films simultaneously, but one who recognized the value of writers and that a good script was the key to a successful film. He worked for **Darryl F. Zanuck** and for Warner Brothers, producing *The Two Mrs. Carrrolls* (1947), but he was also an independent producer, head of Mark Hellinger Productions, that released through Universal. *The Killers* (1946), adapted from an austere but suggestive Ernest Hemingway short story, reflected Hellinger's preference for **hard-boiled**, spare narratives and realistic settings, which tempered the work of its more romantically inclined director **Robert Siodmak**.

Brute Force (1947), a quintessential **prison noir**, was also violent and uncompromising, with director **Jules Dassin** asked to emphasize the brutality of prison life. Dassin also directed *The Naked City* (1948), but this was Hellinger's project, which he called his "celluloid monument to New York" and which drew on his cosmopolitan knowingness. Hellinger dispatched screenwriter **Malvin Wald** to work with the New York homicide squad in order to get an authentic story of an actual murder case as the focus of this **semidocumentary** anatomization of New York life. Hellinger was highly involved in the final cut, which was orchestrated to his voice-over, but the stress of the production caused his death of a heart attack shortly after completing the film.

Criss Cross (1949) was released posthumously, and although Hellinger had chosen the subject and source, without his presence

during production, Siodmak moved away from its conspectus of **Los Angeles** life toward a more archetypal but bitterly ironic romantic tragedy. Hellinger had also announced the production of *Act of Violence*, but this was transferred to William H. Wright at MGM and released in 1949. He had also purchased the rights to Willard Motley's novel *Knock on Any Door* that was subsequently produced by **Humphrey Bogart**'s Santana Productions in 1949.

HIGHSMITH, PATRICIA (1921–1995). Patricia Highsmith has influenced the development of film noir in America, France, and Germany through adaptations of her dark novels, with their amoral characters (notably Tom Ripley, the subject of five works) and complex psychological confrontations. Her first novel, *Strangers on a Train*, was published in 1950, but it was **Alfred Hitchcock**'s adaptation, released the following year, that established her reputation. The complex sharing of identities between the two protagonists, in effect an exchange of murders, was typical of Highsmith and congenial to Hitchcock's preoccupations. *Strangers on a Train* had many similarities to Claude Autant-Lara's *Le Meurtrier (Enough Rope)*, 1963) adapted from Highsmith's *The Blunderer* (1954), in which two men are, independently, suspected of murdering their wives and who forge a strange alliance after they become prime suspects. René Clément's *Plein Soleil (Purple Noon)*, 1960) was an adaptation of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955), in which **Alain Delon** played Ripley, a charming but predatory figure, utterly without scruples or conscience, who murders a rich playboy and assumes his identity. It was remade using Highsmith's title in 1999, directed by Anthony Minghella. But, by common consent, Matt Damon could not match Delon's sinister, disturbing presence as Ripley.

Wim Wenders's *Der amerikanische Freund (The American Friend)*, 1977) used Highsmith's third Ripley novel, *Ripley's Game* (1974), to explore the complex relationship between German and American culture (seen as both exciting and predatory), as did Liliana Cavani in the coproduction *Il gioco di Ripley (Ripley's Game)*, 2002) filmed in English. John Malkovich is a more soft-spoken Ripley than Dennis Hopper in the 1977 film, but he is equally manipulative and amoral. *Die gläserne Zelle (The Glass Cell)*, 1978), adapted from Highsmith's 1964 novel, was a dark, brooding tale of a man released from prison who becomes psychologically trapped and tortured by a corrosive jealousy concerning his beautiful wife's activities while he was incarcerated. **Claude Chabrol**'s *Le Cri du hibou (The Cry of the Owl)*, 1987), adapted from the 1962 novel, effectively encompassed the strange psychic

permutations between its two couples, but it became overcomplex and lacked impact.

Other noirs adapted from Highsmith's fiction are *Dites-lui que je l'aime* (*The Sweet Sickness*, 1977), *Eaux profondes* (*Deep Water*, 1981), *Die zwei Gesichter des Januar* (*The Two Faces of January*, 1986), *Der Geschichtenerzähler* (*The Story Teller*, 1989), and *Ripley Under Ground* (2005). *See also* FRENCH FILM NOIR; GERMAN FILM NOIR.

HYBRIDS. Noir hybrids are films that can be securely located in a particular genre but which have significant noir elements. From the first, noir

shared many elements with **Gothic** horror—an investigation that moves into unknown territory, a convoluted plot, aberrant psychology, claustrophobic spaces, social disintegration, stylized lighting and décor—and therefore horror-noir is a persistent hybrid. The **Universal horror films** were a major influence on film noir and produced a number of hybrids, including *Calling Dr. Death* (1944) and *The Brute Man* (1946), as did **Val Lewton**'s cycle of psychological horrors for RKO, including *Curse of the Cat People* (1944). **Edgar G. Ulmer**'s *Bluebeard* (1944), set in 19th-century Paris, was also a typical horror-noir hybrid, using **expressionist** sets, low-key lighting, and oblique angles, all noir visual tropes. The cadaverous John Carradine plays a puppeteer who kills women in order to preserve his artistic creativity but is a haunted, disturbed character, desperate to be released from his uncontrollable compulsions. **John Brahm**'s *The Lodger* (1944) and *Hangover Square* (1945) had similar hybrid elements.

The horror–noir hybrid was rare in the 1950s and the 1960s with the exception of **Alfred Hitchcock**'s *Psycho* (1960), which influenced **Brian de Palma**'s blendings of noir and horror in *Obsession* (1976), *Dressed to Kill* (1980), and *Body Double* (1984). Horror-noir became an important component of 1980s **neo-noir**, as in *The First Deadly Sin* (1980), *Blowout* (1981), and *Wolfen* (1981). In *Angel Heart* (1987), set in 1955, detective Harold Angel (**Mickey Rourke**) is summoned by his demonic client Louis Cyphre (**Robert De Niro**) to find a missing singer in Harlem, Johnny Favorite, who, 12 years earlier, sold his soul to the devil. Other supernatural horror-noirs include Kathryn Bigelow's *Near Dark* (1987), *From Dusk Till Dawn* (1996), scripted by **Quentin Tarantino**, which splices the noir thriller with the vampire tale, and **Roman Polanski**'s *The Ninth Gate* (2000), in which an unscrupulous rare book dealer (Johnny Depp) is hired to track down an occult text.

Another variation was the “slasher noir,” in which the monster and the victim are both female, as in *Single White Female* (1992). **Michael Mann**'s underrated *Manhunter* (1986) was the beginning of an extended concern with the psychopathic serial killer continued (or started again) in *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991). Anthony Hopkins reprised his role as Hannibal “The Cannibal” Lecter in *Hannibal* (2001) and *Red Dragon* (2002), which were baroque, neo-Gothic horror-noirs abandoning the investigative realism of the first film. A prequel, *Hannibal Rising* (2007), dramatized Hannibal's formative years. Other serial-killer noirs included *Copycat* (1995)—in which the killer commits killings

modeled on famous cases—*Roberto Succo* (2001), and *Tattoo* (2002), but the most accomplished was *Se7en* (1995).

The melding of sci-fi and noir has its roots in **Fritz Lang**'s *Metropolis* (1928), but in America the emerging science fiction genre of the 1950s occasionally incorporated noir elements to express Cold War anxieties: Roger Corman's *The Day the World Ended* (1955), *Indestructible Man* (1956), and *Not of This Earth* (1957). The most powerful was **Don Siegel**'s *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), narrated in flashback by an hysterical doctor (Kevin McCarthy) who believes the inhabitants of his small hometown of Santa Fe in California have become “pod people,” their bodies taken over by aliens. There were also several interesting examples in the 1960s: *The Most Dangerous Man Alive* (1961), *Brainstorm* (1965), in which Jeffrey Hunter plays a physicist working on a project to develop atomic weapons, Jean-Luc Godard's influential **French film noir** *Alphaville* (1965), and **Edward Dmytryk**'s *Mirage* (1965). *The Groundstar Conspiracy* (1972) and Richard Fleischer's *Soylent Green* (1973), with their intrigues, betrayals, and dark secrets, were later examples.

Following sci-fi's powerful and sustained re-emergence in the late 1970s, a recognizable hybrid called, variously, “future noir,” “cyber noir,” or “tech noir” was established that drew upon a noir register in order to project a dystopian, often terrifying, vision of the future. The most celebrated and influential example remains Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), depicting a nightmare **Los Angeles** of 2019. Others included *The Terminator* (1984), *Miracle Mile* (1988), and Kathryn Bigelow's *Strange Days* (1995), set in Los Angeles in the closing days of 1999. *Dark City* (1998), *The Thirteenth Floor* (1999), and *The Matrix Trilogy* (1999/2003) depicted dystopian future worlds ruled by aliens. In the latter, Nemo (Keanu Reeves), a warrior cyber-hacker, has to combat a simulated world in which the majority of humanity has become enslaved by a race of machines that live off their body heat and which, to forestall a revolution, project an artificial reality—The Matrix—where life appears perfectly normal. Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* (2002), like *Blade Runner*, loosely based on a Philip K. Dick story, takes place in Washington, D.C., in 2054 where murders are solved before they are committed by the “precrime” unit headed by John Anderton (Tom Cruise), who goes on the run when the “precogs” predict he will kill the man who abducted his son.

Westerns, with their wide-open spaces and sense of unlimited expansion, are thematically and iconographically remote from noir, but

several display a noir sensibility in the genre's postwar development. *Pursued* (1947), starring **Robert Mitchum** as Jeb Rand, who narrates the tale through a series of flashbacks, is the story of a **troubled veteran** (after the Civil War) tormented by events he cannot recollect clearly but which haunt his dreams and thwart his relationships. Mitchum also starred in *Blood on the Moon* (1948), a dark tale of divided loyalties. *Ramrod* (1947), a violent and dark Western, has a femme fatale (**Veronica Lake**), while *Station West* (1948) transposes the detective story into a Western setting with **Dick Powell** as an army intelligence officer and **Jane Greer** as a femme fatale; **Alan Ladd** played a similar character in *Whispering Smith* (1948). *Yellow Sky* (1949), coscripted by **W. R. Burnett** about a group of bank robbers on the run, has a classic noir plot, and the atmosphere is one of fear, suspicion, betrayal, and claustrophobia. Two Westerns directed by William Wellman—*The Ox-Bow Incident* (1943) and *Track of the Cat* (1954)—also show clear noir influences, as does *Rimfire* (1949). Henry King's *The Gunfighter* (1950) was the study of a tragic, isolated man (Gregory Peck) anxious to retire but finding it impossible, another noir protagonist trapped by his past.

The most important noir director who made Westerns—10 in all—was **Anthony Mann**. *Winchester '73* (1950), one of six starring James Stewart, has a pursuit and revenge plot, while *Naked Spur* (1954) and *Man of the West* (1958), the latter starring Gary Cooper, have an atmosphere of uncertainty and bitterness that demonstrate how Mann's noir sensibility was transposed to a Western setting. *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955) was thoroughly noir in its gradual unearthing of corruption and buried secrets. Although the Western's popularity waned, occasional later examples show a noir influence, including *Welcome to Hard Times* (1967), and three by **Clint Eastwood**: *High Plains Drifter* (1973), *Pale Rider* (1985), and *Unforgiven* (1992).

The 1960s and 1970s saw the development of the noir political thriller beginning with *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), directed by **John Frankenheimer**, in which a troubled veteran from the Korean War (Laurence Harvey) has been brainwashed by Communist forces and programmed to become a political assassin. Frankenheimer also directed *Seven Days in May* (1964) about a potential right-wing military coup led by General Scott (**Burt Lancaster**), and he directed **John Huston** in the equally desolate *The Kremlin Letter* (1970). In these hybrids, noir conventions are used to create a paranoid world that displayed a deep mistrust of American institutions subsequently fuelled by the Watergate revelations. These influenced Alan J. Pakula's *The*

Parallax View (1974), in which journalist Joe Frady (Warren Beatty) investigates a widespread conspiracy controlled by the mysterious Parallax Corporation. Pakula uses off-center framing and low-key lighting to suggest a corrupt and unbalanced world. Others included: *Executive Action* (1973), *Three Days of the Condor* (1975), *The Domino Principle* (1977), **Robert Aldrich's** *Twilight's Last Gleaming* (1977), and *Capricorn One* (1978). Although noir political thrillers are now less common, they continue to be made, notably the Bourne trilogy (2002, 2004, 2007) starring Matt Damon and the 2004 **remake** of *The Manchurian Candidate* starring **Denzel Washington**.

Comedy might seem the most remote genre from noir, but there are examples of comedies that contain noir elements and also comic parodies of noir. *Whistling in the Dark* (1941), a screwball comedy, has noir elements in its story of the abduction of The Fox (Red Skelton), a radio sleuth, by a cunning religious cult led by Conrad Veidt, which wants his services to perform the perfect murder. *Lady on a Train* (1945), in which Deanna Durbin plays a society girl who becomes involved in solving a murder that no one else takes seriously, has farcical action, but there is an underlying atmosphere of menace and corruption. There is a noir sensibility at work in several of Preston Sturges's comedies, including *Hail the Conquering Hero* (1944), with its troubled veteran, and *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948), in which an orchestra conductor (Rex Harrison) plans to murder his supposedly unfaithful wife during a concert.

There were comic **neo-noir** hybrids, notably *The Late Show* (1977), with its aging, disenchanted **private eye** (Art Carney), who has to act when his ex-partner Harry (**Howard Duff**) arrives at his house riddled with bullets. The action is played for comic effect, but there is an underlying seriousness in the bleak picture of 1970s Los Angeles that emerges. Woody Allen's *Manhattan Murder Mystery* (1993) and Jake Kasdan's *Zero Effect* (1998) were comedy thrillers with an affectionate spoofing of noir conventions. *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (2005) was partly comic, its bogus private eye Harry Lockhart (Robert Downey Jr.) interrupting his flashback narration with cajoling voice-over asides as he becomes inadvertently mixed up in a real case. Noir comic parodies include *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (1947), starring Danny Kaye, and *My Favorite Brunette* (1947), in which Bob Hope gets involved with a criminal gang because his photography studio adjoins that of a private investigator (a cameo appearance by **Alan Ladd**) who is away on a case. *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (1982) starring Steve Martin

was a labored parody, intercutting scenes from classic noirs with modern pastiche, but better than the leaden *The Black Bird* (1975), a spoof of *The Maltese Falcon*. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988) was a private-eye burlesque in which a hard-drinking tough guy (Bob Hoskins) investigates Roger Rabbit, a fictive star framed for murdering a human. *Blondes Have More Guns* (1995) was a send-up of two highly successful neo-noirs, *Lethal Weapon* (1987) and *Basic Instinct* (1992), while the **Coen Brothers'** *The Big Lebowski* (1998) was a Chandleresque spoof, starring Jeff Bridges as Jeffrey "The Dude" Lebowski, mistaken for a millionaire who owes the mob money.

A minor noir hybrid is the noir road movie, beginning with **Ida Lupino's** *The Hitch-Hiker* (1953), but developed through neo-noir, notably *The Hitcher* (1986), starring Rutger Hauer, and its 2007 remake starring Sean Bean. Others include *Bright Angel* (1991), *Cold Around the Heart* (1998), and *Kalifornia* (1993), which takes the form of an inverted westward journey in which a middle-class researcher (David Duchovny) discovers Third World America with its elemental amoral killers, represented by Early Grayce (Brad Pitt) with his strange visions, and **John Dahl's** *Joy Ride* (2001).

Another minor hybrid is the sexploitation (soft-core) noir: a development of the erotic thriller, most famously *Basic Instinct* (1992). These hybrids, including *Body Chemistry* (1990), where a married sex researcher is lured into a sadomasochistic affair with his colleague, an unhinged femme fatale, are usually aimed at the straight-to-cable market. Others include *Carnal Crimes* (1991), *Night Rhythms* (1992), in which the hero is a promiscuous disc jockey framed for the murder of a resentful colleague who is a lesbian femme fatale, *I Like to Play Games* (1994), *Sinful Deeds* (2001), and *Young and Seductive* (2003), where the heroine is a sex worker who helps a detective catch her former boyfriend who is a serial killer. *See also* THE CITY; GANGSTER FILMS; KISS OF DEATH; SEMIDOCUMENTARY.

MITCHUM, ROBERT (1917–1997). Robert Mitchum was the single most important male performer, appearing in over 20 films noir. Mitchum's size and muscular physique were counterpointed by the wry, ambivalent attitude he projected, and his indolent, soft-spoken style lacked the usual aggression and dynamism of the American star but made him perfect for the introverted, skewed noir world. He perfected a minimalist style that lent meaning to the smallest gesture and suggested

intelligence and the capacity for reflection. Mitchum had supporting roles in *When Strangers Marry* (1944), *Undercurrent* (1946), and *The Locket* (1947) and a more substantial one in *Crossfire* (1947), but his first starring role came in *Out of the Past* (1947). As **private eye** Jeff Bailey, whose world-weary skepticism is blown apart by his romantic longings for the femme fatale (**Jane Greer**), Mitchum gave what became his most iconic performance and established him as RKO's most bankable male star. He played several similar roles, including *The Big Steal* (1949) again with Greer, *Where Danger Lives* (1950) with Faith Domergue, and *Angel Face* (1953) with Jean Simmons. In *His Kind of Woman* (1951) and *Macao* (1952), he starred opposite Jane Russell, essaying the same weary, sardonic character, apparently indifferent to his fate. Mitchum starred in two noir **hybrids**, the westerns *Pursued* (1947) and *Blood on the Moon* (1948), savage tales of persecution, guilt, and paranoia in which he adopted a more demonstrative style, as he also did in what is considered to be his best performance in Charles Laughton's *Night of the Hunter* (1955). Mitchum is genuinely terrifying as the psychotic criminal posing as a fundamentalist preacher who preys on his victims across Bible-belt America. In the late noir *Cape Fear* (1962), he was Max Cady, another frighteningly convincing psychotic waiting patiently for his revenge.

Mitchum appeared in a number of **neo-noirs**, notably the adaptation of a George V. Higgins's novel, *The Friends of Eddie Coyle* (1973). Mitchum played a middle-aged loser, haunted by his past, caught between the police and the mob. In *The Yakuza* (1974), he portrayed a retired detective summoned to assist his friend in his dealings with a yakuza **gangster**, becoming embroiled in a different culture he gradually learns to respect. His performance as Philip Marlowe in the two **Raymond Chandler** adaptations *Farewell My Lovely* (1975) and *The Big Sleep* (1978) provided a self-consciously nostalgic link to 1940s noir, but Mitchum gave the character a new sense of middle-aged weariness and ennui.

Mitchum's other noirs are *The Racket* (1951), *Second Chance* (1953), *Thunder Road* (1958), *Going Home* (1971), *Nightkill* (1980), and *Cape Fear* (1991). See also MEN.

REMAKES. Although the most obvious remakes are those **neo-noirs** that adapt classic noir originals, film noir has been, from its inception, partly a process of remaking and reworking the same material. **John Huston's** *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) was the third adaptation of **Dashiell Hammett's** novel, the others being in 1931 and 1936; **Edward Dmytryk's** *Murder, My Sweet* (1944) was a radical remake of *The Falcon Takes Over* (1942), an adaptation of **Raymond Chandler's** *Farewell, My Lovely*. In each case the studio owned the rights, and talented filmmakers saw the potential for a darker treatment of the story, closer to the temper of the **hard-boiled** original. Similarly, Maxwell Shane's *Nightmare* (1956), a remake of his 1947 noir *Fear in the Night*, adapted from the **Cornell Woolrich** story, used the opportunity of a larger budget to enhance the **visual style**, introduce an expressive jazz score, and film in evocative New Orleans' locations. The noir **precursor** *Blind Alley* (1939) was remade as *The Dark Past* (1948) with director **Rudolph Maté** pointedly emphasizing the psychological aspects of the story. By contrast, *Vicki* (1953), Harry Horner's remake of *I Wake Up Screaming* (1941), although more coherently noir and excising the intrusive moments of light comedy, lacked the original's edgy menace.

Often the remake is an adaptation from one national cinema into another, usually, though not exclusively, from a French original into

an American remake. **Fritz Lang's** *Scarlet Street* (1945) was a remake of Jean Renoir's **French film noir** *La Chienne* (*The Bitch*, 1931), and his *Human Desire* (1954) remade Renoir's *La Bête Humaine* (*Judas Was a Woman*, aka *The Human Beast*, 1938). **Anatole Litvak** remade *Le Jour se lève* (*Daybreak*, 1939), a classic of **poetic realism**, as *The Long Night* (1947). Lang's own **German noir** *M: Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder* (*M: A City Searches for a Murderer*, 1931) was remade by **Joseph Losey** in 1951. By contrast, Maté's American noir *D.O.A.* (1950) spawned an **Australian film noir** *Color Me Dead* (1969), an EastmanColor remake directed by Eddie Davis starring the American Tom Tryon. Although transferring the action to Australian locales, it followed the original much more faithfully than the 1988 American remake, an updated version starring Dennis Quaid and Meg Ryan. John Huston's *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950) was remade as the **British film noir** *Cairo* (1963), directed by Wolf Rilla, who had already made as *Marilyn* (U.S. title *Roadhouse Girl*, 1953), a version of the **James M. Cain** story *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. *The Asphalt Jungle* was remade again as a "blaxploitation" noir *Cool Breeze* (1972), directed by Barry Pollack, in which proceeds from the jewel **heist** will go to fund a black people's bank. More recently, Asian film noirs have been remade by American filmmakers, notably **Martin Scorsese's** *The Departed* (2006), a remake of Wai-keung Lau and Siu Fai Mak's **Hong Kong film noir**, *Wu jian dao* (*Infernal Affairs*, 2002).

Although neo-noirs can spawn their own remakes—Sam Peckinpah's *The Getaway* (1972) was remade in 1994 by Roger Donaldson, heightening the criminal elements, sexuality, and violence of the original—they typically remake classic noirs to cover a spectrum ranging from a slavish attempt to recreate the original to a radical and highly creative reworking. The 1992 remake of *Detour* (1945), directed by Wade Williams, although in color, cast Tom Neal's son, Tom Neal Jr., as Al Roberts, redeployed the actual Packard that **Edgar G. Ulmer** had used, and followed the original script very closely with only minor additions. Dick Richards's *Farewell, My Lovely* (1975) set out to recreate Chandler's 1940s **Los Angeles** and used noir icon **Robert Mitchum** as Marlowe. David Goodman's screenplay follows the novel's plot more closely than Dmytryk's version and takes the opportunity of a more liberal **censorship** regime to depict the sleazier parts with Velma (Charlotte Rampling) clearly being an ex-prostitute. Similarly, Rob Rafelson's 1981 remake of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, scripted by David Mamet,

took the opportunity to have more explicit sex scenes, thus again bringing the remake closer to Cain's original novella.

Other neo-noir remakes depart more widely from their originals. **Robert Altman's** *Thieves Like Us* (1974), a remake of **Nicholas Ray's** *They Live by Night* (1948), although in color and CinemaScope, determinedly avoided the original's romanticism in its bleaker, more objective delineation of the Depression era. Lawrence Kasdan's *Body Heat* (1981) was a deliberately loose remake of *Double Indemnity* (1944) in which the original is a source rather than a blueprint. Roger Donaldson's *No Way Out* (1987), based on *The Big Clock* (1948), reconfigured the original as a Cold War conspiracy thriller. **Don Siegel's** *The Killers* (1964) is not interested, as was **Robert Siodmak's** 1946 original, in recreating small-town America or romanticizing the love affair through chiaroscuro photography, but it focuses on the killers (Lee Marvin and Clu Gulager) as much as their victim Johnny (John Cassavetes) and is much more violent and sadistic than the original. Writer-director Steven Soderbergh's *Underneath* (1995) was an intelligent updating of Siodmak's *Criss Cross* (1949), located not in working-class Los Angeles but in Austin, Texas, to which Michael Chambers (Peter Gallagher) returns. Soderbergh accentuates the dysfunctional familial elements, and the protagonist is not yearning for love. He radiates a disaffected, directionless anomie; his motives are enigmatic and ambiguous. In Soderbergh's fatalistic universe there is no romanticism, only deceit and betrayal. Tamra Davis's *Gun Crazy* (1992) reworked the **outlaw couple** paradigm, in particular **Joseph H. Lewis' *Gun Crazy*** (aka *Deadly Is the Female*, 1950), by privileging the subjectivity and experiences of the woman partner, Anita (Drew Barrymore), abandoned by her mother and abused by her stepfather (Joe Dallesandro). She teams up with ex-convict Howard (James LeGros), another ill-educated redneck, in a film that depicts a rarely glimpsed, impoverished rural America dominated by revivalist religion.

Remakes continue to be produced: Lang's *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* (1956) has been remade in 2009, starring **Michael Douglas**; a remake of *Rififi* (1955), starring **Al Pacino**, is in production.

Other remakes include: *The Big Sleep* (1946/1978); *Black Angel* (1946) / *Night without Sleep* (1952); *Body and Soul* (1947/1981); *Dark Passage* (1947) / *Johnny Handsome* (1989); *The Desperate Hours* (1955) / *Desperate Hours* (1990); *Les Diaboliques* (1955) / *Diabolique* (1996); *La Femme Nikita* (1990) / *Point of No Return* (1993); *Get*

Carter (1971/2000); *High Sierra* (1941) / *I Died a Thousand Times* (1955); *I, the Jury* (1953/1982); *A Kiss Before Dying* (1956/1991); *Kiss of Death* (1947/1995); *The Narrow Margin* (1952) / *Narrow Margin* (1990); *Night and the City* (1950/1992); *Out of the Past* (1947) / *Against All Odds* (1984); *Plein Soleil* (*Purple Noon*, 1960) / *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999); *Point Blank* (1967) / *Payback* (1999); *The Prowler* (1951) / *Unlawful Entry* (1992); *Psycho* (1960/1998); *Ransom* (1956/1996); and *Vertigo* (1958) / *Obsession* (1976) / *Mirage* (1995). See also RETRO-NOIR.

SIMENON, GEORGES (1903–1989). A prolific writer, best known for his creation of the Parisian detective Commissaire Jules Maigret who first appeared in 1929, the Belgian-born Georges Simenon was a seminal influence on the development of film noir in France and was also adapted occasionally in Great Britain and in America. Like his American **hard-boiled** counterparts, Simenon took the detective novel away from the English murder mystery and placed his ordinary characters in realistic settings, downplaying action, suspense, and violence in favor of atmosphere and a dreary quotidian actuality. His stories gradually uncover the social and psychological pressures, the dishonesty, fear, and guilt, which lead to crime and murder. In Simenon's fiction there are no long expositions; the past is evoked rapidly in a series of flashbacks and the focus is always on the crisis, a turning point in the character's life. His killers often act in a dreamlike state that separates them from their actions or crimes and demonstrates the fundamental alienation that Simenon sees at the heart of existence.

Three adaptations of Maigret novels in 1932 constituted the beginning of **French film noir**: Jean Renoir's *La Nuit du carrefour* (*Night at the Crossroads*), Julien Duvivier's *La Tête d'un homme* (*A Man's Neck*), and Jean Tarride's *Le Chien jaune* (*The Yellow Dog*). An adaptation of *Les Inconnus dans la maison* (*Strangers in the House*, 1942) was one of the major noirs made during the Occupation and was remade in Britain in 1967, as *Stranger in the House*. *Panique* (*Panic*, 1947) was a typical Simenon story, focusing on the fear and suffering of an unattractive loner (Michel Simon) after he is suspected of murder. It was **remade** in 1989 by Patrice Leconte as *Monsieur Hire*, starring Michel Blanc. Leconte called Simenon a "false friend" because his novels are full of what appear to be visual images but which are not translatable into cinematic terms. Indeed, Simenon's distinctive atmosphere, subtle psychological states, sensory impressions, and minute details of everyday life are difficult to realize on film. However, *Le Chat* (*The Cat*, 1971) was one of the most successful adaptations, as was *La Veuve Couderc* (*The Widow Couderc*, 1971), a portrait of village life and two doomed lovers, Simone Signoret and **Alain Delon**. Bertrand Tavernier's *L'Horloger de Saint Paul* (*The Watchmaker of St Paul*, 1973) managed to translate Simenon's novel into a finely drawn portrait of ordinary life in Lyon as a father (Philippe Noiret) tries to understand his son's reasons for murdering an industrialist.

In Britain, Lance Comfort's *Temptation Harbour* (1947), based on the novella *Newhaven—Dieppe*, successfully captured the Simenon universe using Otto Heller's somber, gray cinematography; Robert Newton gave a fine performance as the alienated victim drawn into crime. In *The Man Who Watched the Trains Go By* (U.S. title *The Paris Express*, 1952), Claude Rains engagingly played a drab little man, whose well-ordered life is shattered by a chance encounter. *The Man on the Eiffel Tower* (1949) was the one Maigret novel to be filmed in the United States, but despite its Parisian setting, director and star Burgess Meredith fails to capture either quotidian realism or psychological torment. Much more powerful was **Phil Karlson's** adaptation of *The Brothers Rico* (1957), one of Simenon's American-set novels, which emphasizes ordinary, everyday lives as much as gangsterism and how Eddie Rico (**Richard Conte**) is inexorably pulled back into a criminal milieu.

Simenon's fiction continues to be the basis for French films noir, including *Feux rouges* (*Red Lights*, 2004) and *L'Homme de Londres* (aka *A londoni férfi*, *The Man from London*, 2007).

TELEVISION SERIES. During the 1950s, the impetus of the postwar American film noir cycle migrated to television series, and numerous creative personnel moved across, including **John Brahm**, **Jonathan Latimer**, **Ida Lupino**, and **Dick Powell**. Although there are profound similarities in style and subject matter between noir films and television series—in particular a shared concern to depict the seamy recesses of the noir **city** and the depiction of the lonely, troubled antihero whose identity is under threat—because television series are ongoing their storylines are less fatalistic than their film cousins, if no less doom-laden and angst-ridden.

Noir television series began with *China Smith* (1952–55) starring **Dan Duryea** but became more prominent in the late 1950s when the film cycle was in decline. *Johnny Staccato* (1959–60) is a celebrated example, starring John Cassavetes (who occasionally directed) as a New York jazz pianist turned **private eye**, trying to help those who ask for his aid in a corrupt and duplicitous world. The voice-over, lighting, **expressionist** *mise-en-scène*, and the haunted, world-weary Staccato were a throwback to 1940s noir. By contrast, the private eye (Craig Stevens) of Blake Edwards's *Peter Gunn* (1959–61) looked forward toward the suave “cool” of James Bond. *The Man with a Camera* (1958–59) starred Charles Bronson as a **Weegee**-style crime photographer, a lonely, volatile figure, often perilously close to being sucked into the world he captures on his camera. Others, notably *Dragnet* (1951–59), inspired by **Anthony Mann**'s *He Walked by Night* (1949), and *Naked City* (1958–1963), indebted to the 1948 film *The Naked City*, continued the tradition of the noir **semidocumentary**. *The Fugitive* (1963–67) had a similar style, but for 120 episodes David Janssen, who had starred in *Richard Diamond, Private Detective* (1957–60), played Dr. Richard Kimble, the archetypal noir man-on-the-run, falsely accused of murdering his wife, who endlessly searches for the one-armed man whom he thinks is responsible. Unusually, the series had a two-part finale, “The Judgment,” in which Kimble was exonerated. *The Fugitive* was **remade**

in 1993 as a feature film starring Harrison Ford. Occasionally, as in *The Twilight Zone* (1959–64), television noir inhabited other genres, in this case science fiction.

Noir television series were rare in the 1970s, though Janssen starred in *Harry O* (1974–76), but returned strongly in the 1980s, notably with **Michael Mann**'s *Miami Vice* (1984–89) and *Crime Story* (1986–88). In the latter, set in a rundown, racially fractured Chicago of the 1960s, Mike Torello (Dennis Farina) is a police lieutenant in charge of the Major Crime Unit whose investigations into the criminal empire of his nemesis Ray Luca (Anthony John Denison) constantly require him to bend the rules. Immersed in the violence and corruption, Torello, haunted by flashbacks and nightmares, is always on the verge of losing his moral sense, even his own identity.

Miami Vice had a similar central theme, its vice squad policemen Sonny Crockett (Don Johnson) and Ricardo Tubbs (Philip Michael Thomas) are also haunted by the past. Crockett is a Vietnam veteran, and Tubbs is driven by trying to find his brother's murderer. Both struggle to maintain a precarious balance between their actual identities and their undercover masks. In the final season, Crockett's identity seems to merge with his undercover persona, Sonny Burnett, and he must come to terms with the killer inside him. Shot on film rather than videotape, *Miami Vice* broke new ground aesthetically, depicting a fast-paced, ultramodern world in which most of the color was bleached out, leaving a seductive but unstable landscape of shimmering white beaches, glistening office complexes, and pastel waterside mansions. This was complemented by an innovative soundtrack blending reggae and pop music that was more akin to a **music** video than film noir. This highly influential series helped popularize **neo-noir**.

The 1990s began with **David Lynch**'s surrealist cult series *Twin Peaks* (1990–91), whose complex generic **hybridity**—an allusive and unstable blend of black comedy, horror, mysterious supernatural occurrences, and Lynch's brand of surrealism—was highly influential, inspiring *The X-Files* (1993–2002), in which Federal Bureau of Investigation agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) investigate cases involving paranormal phenomena. *The X-Files* producer, Chris Carter, was also responsible for *Millennium* (1996–99), with a deliberately older investigator, freelance forensic profiler Frank Black (Lance Henriksen), who has the unique ability to see the world through the eyes of serial killers and compulsive murderers. *Night*

Stalker (2005–06) had a similar mixture of sci-fi, horror, and film noir. In *Angel* (1999–2004), a darker spin-off from the supernatural horror series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the central character (David Boreanaz) is a 200-year-old vampire who investigates the underworld of demons and supernatural beings in a transformed **Los Angeles**.

The Sopranos (1999–2007), created and produced by David Chase and inspired by **Martin Scorsese's** *Goodfellas* (1990), depicted the life of New Jersey mobster Tony Soprano (James Gandolfini) who suffers from a range of family and work problems revealed during his frequent therapy sessions and in the numerous dream sequences that were a distinctive feature of this multiaward winning series. Also highly popular was *24* (2001–) in which Kiefer Sutherland plays Jack Bauer, an investigator for the Los Angeles Counter Terrorist Unit, an **existentialist** hero battling with anxieties about loss of identity and meaninglessness in a series that played on the fears of the “terrorist threat” following 9/11. Its innovation was to present the investigation as if in real time, with each series charting a day in the action, criss-crossing between the predicaments of various characters.

24 is one of a number of ongoing, internationally popular noir series—others include *Law & Order* (1990–) and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000–) featuring a team of Las Vegas police forensic scientists, which spawned *CSI: Miami* (2002–) and *CSI: New York* (2004–). The huge success of these series demonstrates that television continues to be an important medium for the exploration of noir ideas and themes.

Other series include: *The Edge of Night* (1956–84), *Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer* (1956–59), *The Untouchables* (1959–63), *The Outsider* (1968–69), *The Streets of San Francisco* (1972–77), *Police Story* (1973), *Kolchak: the Night Stalker* (1974–75), *The Rockford Files* (1974–80), *Hill Street Blues* (1981–87), *Moonlighting* (1985–89), *Spenser for Hire* (1985–88), *Wiseguy* (1987–90), *Magnum P.I.* (1980–88), *Philip Marlowe*, *Private Eye* (1983), *Gabriel's Fire* (1990–91), *Nightmare Café* (1992), *Fallen Angels* (1993–95), *L.A.P.D. Blue* (1993–2005), *Boomtown* (2002–03), *The Shield* (2002–), *The Wire* (2002–08), *Carnivàle* (2003–05), *Veronica Mars* (2004–07), *Dexter* (2006–08), and *Southland* (2009–).

TROUBLED VETERANS. Trained to kill but left rootless by their military service, returning veterans represented a major social problem after the end of World War II. They were often disaffected and insecure, unable to readjust to peace, and frequently exhibited an array of psychological problems. It is therefore unsurprising that the troubled veteran became a central figure in the films noir of the immediate postwar period, most notably in *Crossfire* (1947), which contained the widest range of maladjusted returnees and was set in the transition period before full demobilization. *The Blue Dahlia* (1946), **Raymond Chandler's** only original screenplay, featured three disillusioned wartime comrades. Their leader Johnny Morrison (**Alan Ladd**) finds his wife has been unfaithful, and one of his buddies "Buzz" Wanchek (**William Bendix**) is accused of murdering Johnny's wife while suffering from a blackout caused by his war wound.

Similarly unsettled and unpredictable figures, often subject to bouts of amnesia, occur in *Deadline at Dawn* (1946), *Somewhere in the Night* (1946), *The Guilty* (1947), *High Wall* (1947), *The Crooked Way* (1949), and *Undertow* (1949). Bill Saunders (**Burt Lancaster**) in *Kiss the Blood off My Hands* (1948) is a particularly unstable version: his long incarceration as a prisoner of war has left him embittered, with shattered nerves and a furious temper. After he accidentally kills a bar owner in a fit of rage, Saunders becomes the prey to blackmailers and the denizens of a nocturnal London populated by outcasts and criminals.

Disgruntled veterans are easy prey for **gangsters**: in *Nobody Lives Forever* (1946), **John Garfield** plays a disaffected ex-soldier sucked into criminal activities; *The Chase* (1946) has Robert Cummings as a down-at-the-heel veteran who slides into a corrupting relationship with a gangster (**Steve Cochran**); or *The Bribe* (1949) and *Slattery's Hurricane* (1949), in which **John Hodiak** and **Richard Widmark** respectively have become smugglers. In *Violence* (1947), a domestic fascist organization run by racketeers is composed of discontented veterans.

Veterans are also resentful about wartime profiteering and the abuse of comrades or loved ones—as in *Cornered* (1945) starring **Dick Powell**, *Ride the Pink Horse* (1947) with **Robert Montgomery**, *Dead Reckoning* (1947) in which **Humphrey Bogart** is on the trail of a murdered comrade, *Thieves' Highway* (1949) with **Richard Conte**, or *Backfire* (1950), in which army veteran Gordon MacRae searches for his buddy (**Edmond O'Brien**), who has become involved with gangsters. In *The Clay Pigeon* (1949), Jim Fletcher (Bill Williams) clears himself of collaboration by revealing the identity of another soldier who worked with a corrupt Japanese prison guard, while in Fred Zinneman's *Act of Violence* (1949), Joe Parkson (**Robert Ryan**), a disabled and near-psychotic veteran, wants revenge on his former commanding officer Frank Enley (**Van Heflin**), who betrayed his fellow captives in a prison camp.

There are occasional disillusioned servicemen who are veterans of the Korean campaign: *Niagara* (1953), *Strange Intruder* (1956), and *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962). **Neo-noirs** sometimes depict Vietnam veterans, as in *Taxi Driver* (1976) or *Who'll Stop the Rain?* (aka *Dog Soldiers*, 1978). Christian Bale plays a Gulf War veteran in *Harsh Times* (2005), unable to adjust to civilian life and suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder with flashbacks and nightmares about the killings he performed during the war. Rejected by the **Los Angeles** Police Department, he reunites with an old buddy, and they fall back into their former life of crime.

Other troubled veteran noirs include: *Swamp Fire* (1946), *Boomerang!* (1947), *Singapore* (1947), *The Unfaithful* (1947), *The Woman on the Beach* (1947), *Key Largo* (1948), *The Breaking Point* (1950), *Sound of Fury* (aka *Try and Get Me*, 1951), *The Strip* (1951), *Three Steps North* (1951), *Hoodlum Empire* (1952), *The Lost Hours* (aka *The Big Frame*, 1952), *Macao* (1952), *Suddenly* (1954), *The Unfaithful* (1954), *A Woman's Devotion* (1956), *Thunder Road* (1958), and *Cutter's Way* (1981). See also AMNESIAC FILMS NOIR.

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VERTIGO (1958). Although only a moderate success on its initial release, *Vertigo* is now recognized as a seminal noir and one of **Al-**

fred Hitchcock's finest films. A profound exploration of delusion, obsession, and betrayal, *Vertigo's* preoccupation with the nature of perception and deceptive appearances is signaled in the giant eyes of Saul Bass's celebrated opening credits. *Vertigo* was based on the 1954 French **hard-boiled** thriller *D'entre les morts* (*From Among the Dead*) by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac, the locale shifted from Paris to San Francisco. Although set in the present, *Vertigo* is a tale obsessed with the past, with the European remnants of 19th-century San Francisco. Hitchcock collaborated on the screenplay in detail with first Maxwell Anderson, then Alec Coppel, and finally Samuel Taylor, an indication of the complexity of the themes and the care that was taken in their construction.

The central character is "Scottie" Ferguson (James Stewart), a detective with a fatal weakness, fear of heights, which in the opening rooftop chase results in the death of a fellow policeman. Hitchcock uses subjective shots of Scottie's petrified gaze down at the horrifying drop to the street below to indicate psychological trauma. In his damaged state, Scottie is approached by an old college friend, Gavin Elster (Tom Helmore), to shadow his wife Madeleine (**Kim Novak**), who is obsessed with Carlotta Valdes, her great-grandmother who committed suicide. Scottie falls in love with the enigmatic and beautiful Madeleine, who he saves from trying to drown herself. But his vertigo makes him powerless to prevent what seems to be Madeleine's suicide from the mission tower they visit. Blamed by the coroner at the inquest, Scottie becomes possessed by his own death wish. In an innovatively subjective sequence, Scottie experiences a nightmare in which he advances toward the open grave gaping to receive him. As he falls, the void becomes a revolving tunnel round his disembodied head, then the dark silhouette of a male figure falling through endless space, first toward the roof where Madeleine died, then dissolving into nothingness, represented by a blank white screen.

Scottie retreats into wordless catatonia, eventually wandering the streets of San Francisco in the search for a woman he knows to be dead, which, as Hitchcock witheringly remarked, is an act of necrophilia. In a grim irony, he catches a glimpse of the woman, Judy, who impersonated Madeleine, and, unaware of the truth, he obsessively recreates this gauche working-class girl from Kansas as the "real" Madeleine, with exactly the same clothes and hairstyle. Discovering the deception at the heart of the film, Scottie, in a desperate act of exorcism, takes her

back to the mission tower where Madeleine's "death" was staged. For Scottie it is not her part in the crime that must be confronted but her act of betrayal toward him—"I loved you so"—that is bound up with his determination to redeem his weakness and, in the great dream of the noir protagonist, be free of the past. Judy, fleeing from a dark, shadowy figure she mistakes for Madeleine/Carlotta, throws herself from the tower in a "true" re-enactment of the faked death. Hitchcock ends on the stark image of the dark shape of Stewart's outstretched, etiolated figure gazing down at her body, seemingly poised for a final plunge into the abyss of death.

Vertigo's bleak ending and its dark exploration of psychic trauma, together with its radical narrative strategies, were too uncomfortable for contemporaneous audiences, as was the score by **Bernard Herrmann**, who worked with Hitchcock several times. He deliberately avoids a conventional melody. It is replaced by an insistent, but harmonically ambiguous, shifting, and unpredictable rhythm and tempo, which reinforce the ambiguity in the film's themes and visual effects. Like John Boorman's *Point Blank* (1967), Hitchcock's most radical suggestion is that the whole story might all be Scottie's compensating dream as he is about to die ignominiously in the opening scene. A remastered print was re-released theatrically in 1996, making it possible to appreciate the full subtlety of Hitchcock's color scheme and restoring this masterpiece to its full beauty. *See also* FREUDIANISM; MEN; MUSIC; VISUAL STYLE.

WHEELER, LYLE (1905–1990). Lyle Wheeler was one of Hollywood's foremost set designers whose work made a distinguished contribution to film noir. He received one (of 29) Oscar nominations for his design of Manderley, the cavernous mansion that dominates **Alfred Hitchcock's** *Rebecca* (1940). Moving to Twentieth Century Fox as supervising art director, Wheeler collaborated on nearly all of Fox's films, including 31 films noir, receiving Oscar nominations (with Leland Fuller and Thomas Little) for *Laura* (1944), with Little and **Maurice Ransford** for *Leave Her to Heaven* (1945), and with Little, John De Cuir, and Paul S. Fox for *The House on Telegraph Hill* (1951). *Laura* best exemplifies the sophisticated, elegant, precisely evocative sets that Wheeler specialized in, encouraging **Otto Preminger** to open the film with a long take that took in every facet of the overfastidious apartment of Waldo Lydecker

(Clifton Webb). Each dwelling in the film is expressive of its occupant's character, including that of Laura (**Gene Tierney**), narcissistically dominated by her own portrait over the fireplace. Wheeler collaborated with Preminger again on *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1950) and *The Thirteenth Letter* (1951).

Wheeler was also partly responsible for the evolution of Fox's other major strand of noirs, the **semidocumentaries**—*The House on 92nd Street* (1945), *Kiss of Death* (1947), *Call Northside 777* (1948), *Cry of the City* (1948), and *Panic in the Streets* (1950)—which favored location shooting and a restrained naturalism in their settings and décor. In two of Wheeler's later noirs with Samuel Fuller, *Pickup on South Street* (1953) and *House of Bamboo* (1955), this style is modified to incorporate Fuller's more insistent *mise-en-scène*. The latter (in color and CinemaScope) contains some of Wheeler's best work in its pachinko parlors, Great Buddha, and whirling globe, where the final confrontation takes place.

Wheeler's other noirs are *Hangover Square* (1945), *Circumstantial Evidence* (1945), *Fallen Angel* (1946), *Shock* (1946), *Nightmare Alley* (1947), *Road House* (1948), *The Street with No Name* (1948), *Thieves' Highway* (1949), *House of Strangers* (1949), *Whirlpool* (1949), *No Way Out* (1950), *Fourteen Hours* (1951), *Night without Sleep* (1952), *A Blueprint for Murder* (1953), *Niagara* (1953), *Vicki* (1953), and *Black Widow* (1954).