

Investigating Film Noir: Programme Notes & Sources

4. Gender (27th October)

Films

The Killers (Robert Siodmak, 1946)

Double Indemnity (Billy Wilder, 1944)

Scarlet Street (Fritz Lang, 1945)

The Woman in the Window (Fritz Lang, 1944)

Out of the Past (Jacques Tourneur, 1947)

The Maltese Falcon (John Huston, 1941)

References

Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (1930)

‘But down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished or afraid. ... He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man. He must be ... a man of honor ... He is a relatively poor man, or he would not be a detective at all. He is a common man or he could not go among common people. He has a sense of character, or he would not know his job. ... He is a lonely man ... He talks ... with rude wit, a lively sense of the grotesque, a disgust for sham, and a contempt for pettiness. ... The story is this man’s adventure in search of a hidden truth ... He has a range of awareness that startles you, but it belongs to him by right, because it belongs to the world he lives in’.

‘Hammett took murder out of the Venetian vase and dropped it into the alley.’ He ‘gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse.’ His writing ‘had a basis in fact; it was made up of real things.’

Raymond Chandler, ‘The Simple Art of Murder: An Essay’ in *The Simple Art of Murder* (1950) 1-18

Agatha Christie, *The Murder at the Vicarage* (1930)

Agatha Christie, *The Body in the Library* (1942)

‘For many commentators, the principal hallmarks of *noir* include a distinctive treatment of sexual desire and sexual relationships, a distinctive array of male and female character types, and a distinctive repertoire of masculine and feminine traits, ideals, characteristics and forms of behaviour.’

Steve, Neale, *Genre and Hollywood* (2000)

- ‘characterised by a certain anxiety over the existence and definition of masculinity and normality.’ Richard Dyer
- ‘an obsession with male figures who are both internally divided and alienated from the culturally permissible (or ideal) parameters of masculine identity, desire and achievement.’ Frank Krutnik
- ‘to dramatise a particular crisis in male identity.’ Deborah Thomas
- ‘the genre wherein compulsory masculinity is presented as a nightmare.’ Florence Jacobowitz

Richard Dyer, ‘Resistance Through Charisma: Rita Hayworth and *Gilda*’ in E. Ann Kaplan, ed., *Women in Film Noir* (London: BFI, 1978), 91-99

Florence Jacobowitz, ‘The Man’s Melodrama: *The Woman in the Window* and *Scarlet Street*,’ in Ian Cameron, ed., *Movie Book of Film Noir*, 152-64

Frank Krutnik, *In a Lonely Street: Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity* (1991)

Deborah Thomas, ‘How Hollywood Deals with the Deviant Male,’ in Cameron, ed., *Movie Book of Film Noir*, 59-70

Sylvia Harvey, ‘Woman’s Place: The Absent Family of Film Noir,’ in Kaplan, ed., *Women in Film Noir*, 22-34

Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction, 1800-2000: Death, Detection, Diversity* (2004)