Film Noir and the Cinema of Paranoia
Wheeler Winston Dixon

Description

Wheeler Winston-Dixon demonstrates the ways in which American cinema has instilled a climate of fear in our daily lives, reinforced from the 1950s by television, and later videocassettes and the Internet. Now in the early twenty-first century, this has created a hypersurveillant atmosphere in which no one can avoid the barrage of images that continually assault our senses.

The book begins with the return of American soldiers from World War II, ‘liberated’ from war in the Pacific by the newly created atomic bomb. This new weapon permeated American consciousness through much of the 1950s and 1960s and then became a fixture of terrorist hardware in the post-paranoid era of the twenty-first century. Film Noir and the Cinema of Paranoia is constructed in six chapters, each highlighting a particular ‘raising of the cinematic stakes’ in the creation of a completely immersible universe of images. It gestures towards an expanded vision of what constitutes a noir film, and as well as the usual catalogue of tough guys and hard-boiled dames, it includes a host of other characters, from a variety of genres such as science fiction noir, horror noir and even musical noir.

Key Features

- Expands the definition of noir
- Deals with Red Scare films of the 1950s in the US
- Examines the ‘dark side’ of the 1960s; films that questioned the emerging counterculture
- Details the ‘noir’ aspects of the cybernetic age, both in online and videogame uses

The Author

Wheeler Winston Dixon is the James Ryan Endowed Professor of Film Studies at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln and, with Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, Editor-in-Chief of the Quarterly Review of Film and Video. His newest books include A Short History of Film (co-written with Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, 2008); Film Talk: Directors at Work (2007) and Visions of Paradise: Images of Eden in the Cinema (2006). He worked as a filmmaker in the 1960s and 1970s.

In 2003, Dixon was honored with a retrospective of his films at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, and his films were acquired for the permanent collection of the Museum, in both print and original format.

Readership

Film Studies

Undergraduates, postgraduates and academics in Film Studies.