8-2012

Scott, Ian. American Politics in Hollywood Film (Book Review)

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Recommended Citation

and masculinity in modern American film. The authors consider a large body of work from the Clinton-Bush years (1992-2008). Focusing on the nexus of the political and the cinematic, "because they both draw on the same reservoir of cultural values and myths," the authors do some deep readings of films that have been outside the purview of contemporary theorists. Kord and Krimmer wisely also take on huge blockbusters and franchises (*The Lord of the Rings*, *The Matrix*, *Spiderman*) in their attempt to demonstrate the iconic importance of such films in negotiating the terrain of masculinity. The authors' readings are remarkably insightful and deliberate when they steer clear of moralizing. Emphasizing "destabilized masculinity," they illustrate how this body of films differs from the hard-body action films of the Reagan 1980s. Many of the readings illustrate the reconciliation between violence and softness in such texts. The chapter on the Pierce Brosnan-Daniel Craig transition in the Bond series deserves special recognition for its brilliant analysis of how star charisma, changing political circumstances, and reconsiderations of masculinity can mold a seminal franchise. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ Lower-division undergraduates and above.—*G. R. Butters Jr., Aurora University*

49-6777   PN1995   2011-25314 CIP
Marcink, Robert A. **The working class in American film: the creation of image and culture by Hollywood in the 1960s and 1970s.** Cambria Press, 2011. 290p bibl filmography index ISBN 9781604977721, $114.99

Marcink (English, Joliet Junior College) provides a well-documented survey of motion pictures that reflected and defined the working class from 1967 to 1981. For example, in *Cool Hand Luke* and *Bonnie and Clyde*, both 1967, working-class characters endorsed counterculture ideals. On the right wing, the white working class is defined as defending tradition in films such as *Dirty Harry* (1971) and *Rocky* (1976). As the author states, this simplistic version of the responsible middle class responding to the attacks of counterculture ideals had the effect of bringing both groups into the movie theaters. Putting people into seats is Hollywood's business. As Marcink points out, the arguments in this roughly 20-year period were played out on the screen and have reverberated throughout American society since. What is good about Marcink's commentary is that he is merciless in pointing out weaknesses on both sides of the political spectrum as well as noting the strengths of these films. He comments on 44 films and includes a ten-page index. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ All readers.—*R. Blackwood, emeritus, City Colleges of Chicago*

49-6778   PN1995   2011-44504 MARC
Mason, Fran. **Hollywood's detectives: crime series in the 1930s and 1940s from the whodunnit to hard-boiled noir.** Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 187p bibl index ISBN 9780230578357, $85.00

This useful study, which could also serve as a reference resource, is full of information on Hollywood detectives (all men) of the 1930s-40s, from the gentleman detective (Sherlock Holmes, Philo Vance, the Thin Man), to hard-boiled PIs (Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe, Michael Shayne), to noir detectives (private dicks, policemen), to Oriental sleuths (Charlie Chan, Mr. Wong). There's even information on Dick Tracy films. Mason defines and analyzes each type of detective in terms of his relation to the social order. Though the primary concern here is sociological, attention is also paid to the personal psychology that drives each detective's behavior. Expansive in coverage and very well researched, this volume is part of the "Crime Files" series, which is devoted to studies in crime and detective

fiction, published by Palgrave. Valuable for libraries supporting popular culture and film studies, though libraries with smaller budgets might want to pass on this one. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Lower-division undergraduates through faculty and professionals; general readers.—*R. Ducharme, emeritus, Mount Saint Mary's University*

49-6779   PN1995   2011-25773 CIP
Rhodes, Gary D. **The perils of moviegoing in America: 1896-1950.** Continuum International Publishers Group, 2012. 358p index afp ISBN 9781441110190, $120.00; ISBN 9781441136107 pbk, $34.95

Covering "perils" from moral dangers to crimes, fires, and disease, from pranksters and jokers in the balcony to occasional bombings, Rhodes (The Queen's Univ., Belfast, Northern Ireland) considers the influence and danger of motion pictures during the first half century of film. As generous endnotes attest, the work was minutely researched, mostly from newspapers and trade journals; even journals of ophthalmology reported on early films causing eyestrain. From this evidence, the author builds a study that, ironically, belongs alongside tributes to the history of public theaters. Many of the earliest complaints appear to emanate from those with church affiliations. Also, city leaders wished to protect moviegoers from the danger of the darkened auditorium. The many incidents involving "mashers" insinuate that these moral hazards extended to the locations of the men's and women's restrooms. Also discussed are "blue laws," which closed theaters on Sunday. A problem with this study is Rhodes's violation of the "distortion index," a phrase coined by Jeffrey Schrank (in *Snap, Crackle, and Popular Taste*, 1977)—which is to say, Rhodes makes it seem as if something bad happened every time one went to the movies. And this reviewer wonders why this study ended at 1950. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ With reservations. All readers.—*A. Hirsh, emeritus, Central Connecticut State University*

49-6780   PN1995   2011-431368 MARC
Scott, Ian. **American politics in Hollywood film.** 2nd ed. Edinburgh University Press, 2011. 264p index ISBN 9780748640249, $90.00; ISBN 9780748640232 pbk, $30.00

The second edition of this excellent introduction to film and politics in the US (first edition, CH, Feb'01, 38-3241) has been updated to include post-9/11 cinema, the George W. Bush era, and expanded discussions of television programs and political documentaries. The author of studies of director Frank Capra and the Hollywood studio system, Scott (American studies, Univ. of Manchester, UK) provides a cogent summary of US film history, genre theory, and political philosophy while combining in-depth discussions of specific films with short plot descriptions and broad historical arguments. He examine ideologies of class, race, and gender; the subgenres of action, paranoia, and conspiracy; political biographies (with a focus on Oliver Stone); and election films set on the campaign trail. Through the incorporation of contemporaneous reviews and relevant secondary literature from the disciplines of film and media studies, American studies, and political science, Scott documents the changes in the reception and political meanings of well- and less-known films over time. This lucidly written revision improves on what was already the best historical overview of the subject available. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ Lower- and upper-division undergraduates; general readers.—*J. P. Castonguay, Sacred Heart University*

49-6781   PN1993   Can. CIP
Spaner, David. **Shoot it!: Hollywood Inc. and the rise of inde-**