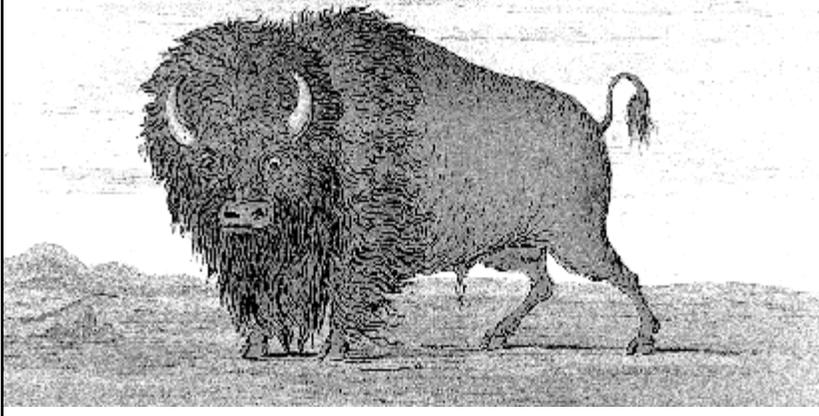
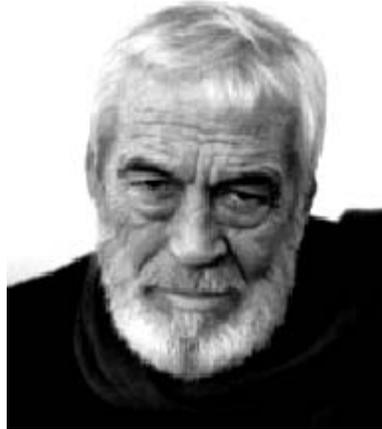


The Buffalo Film Seminars



Conversations about great films with Diane Christian & Bruce Jackson

JOHN HUSTON [John Marcellus Huston, 5 August 1906, Nevada, Missouri – 28 August 1987] was a writer, painter, boxer, actor and, most famously, director. His first film is the classic *The Maltese Falcon* 1941. Soon after finishing it, he was in the army, making documentaries for the Department of War. One of those films – *San Pietro* 1945 – is one of the two or three best documentaries made by the US military during WW II. Another – *Let There Be Light* 1946 – so frightened military officials they kept it under lock and key for 25 years because they were convinced that if the American public saw Huston's scenes of American soldiers crying and suffering what in those days was called "shellshock" and "battle fatigue" they would have an even more difficult time getting Americans to go off and get themselves killed in future wars. One military official accused Huston of being "anti-war," to which he replied, "If I ever make a pro-war film I hope they take me out and shoot me." During his long career he made a number of real dogs e.g. *Annie* 1982, *Victory* 1981, *Phobia* 1980, and *The Macintosh Man* 1973, part of the price of being a director in the studio system. He also made films that regularly turn up on all major critics' lists of classics. Probably no director anywhere made so many films of major works of literature. Some of his fine films are *The Dead* 1987 based on James Joyce's short story, *Prizzi's Honor* 1985, *Under the Volcano* 1984, *Wise Blood* 1979, *The Man Who Would Be King* 1975, *The Misfits* 1961, *Moby Dick* 1956, *Moulin Rouge* 1952, *The African Queen* 1951, *The Red Badge of Courage* 1951, *The Asphalt Jungle* 1950 and *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* 1948. Huston directed both his father and his daughter to Academy Awards: Walter for *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* and Angelica for *The Dead*. Huston was nominated for 14 Academy Awards: best director for *Prizzi's Honor*, *Moulin Rouge* 1952, *The African Queen*, *The Asphalt Jungle*; best screenplay for *The Man Who Would Be King*, *Heaven Knows*, *Mr. Allison* 1957, *The African Queen*, *The Asphalt Jungle*, *Sergeant York* 1941, *The Maltese Falcon*, *Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet* 1940, best supporting actor for *The Cardinal*, 1963. He won Oscars for best director and best screenplay for *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. He was given the American Film Institute's Life Achievement Award in 1983. He also won the Razzie for Worst Director for *Annie*.



DASHIELL HAMMETT [Samuel Dashiell Hammett, 27 May 1894, St. Mary's County, Maryland—10 January 1961, New York, throat cancer] was the best of the hard-boiled school of detective fiction writers who were published in pulp magazines and then in novels from the 1920s through the 1950s. Much of his work, sometimes credited and sometimes not, was filmed, such as *No Good Deed* (2002, from a short story), *Last Man Standing* 1996 [based on Kurosawa's *Yojimbo* which was based on Hammett's *Red Harvest*], *Miller's Crossing* 1990 [uncredited, based on the novels *Red Harvest* and *Glass Key*], *The Wizard of Malta* (1981 [based on *The Maltese Falcon*], "The Dain Curse" (1978 [tv miniseries, based on his novel], *Yojimbo* (1961 [based on *Red Harvest*, uncredited], *The Glass Key* 1942 [based on the novel], *The Thin Man* 1943 [based on the novel], *The Maltese Falcon* (1941 [based on



J

The Maltese Falcon (1941)

Humphrey Bogart....Sam Spade
 Mary Astor....Brigid
 O'Shaughnessy/Miss Wonderly/Miss
 LaBlanc
 Gladys George....Iva Archer
 Peter Lorre....Joel Cairo
 Barton MacLane....Detective
 Lieutenant Dundy
 Lee Patrick....Effie Perine
 Sydney Greenstreet....Kasper Gutman
 Ward Bond....Detective Sergeant
 Tom Polhaus
 Jerome Cowan....Miles Archer

Elisha Cook Jr.....Wilmer Cook
 Walter HustonCaptain Jacobi
 Runtime: 101

Script: John Huston, based on the
 novel by Dashiell Hammett
 Produced by Henry Blanke
 Cinematography by Arthur Edeson
 Film Editing by Thomas Richards
 Art Direction by Robert M. Haas
 Costume Design by Orry-Kelly
 makeup artist Perc Westmore
 script supervisor Meta Carpenter

nominated for Best Actor in a
 Supporting Role (Greenstreet), Best
 Picture (Hal B. Wallis), Best Writing
 Screenplay (Huston). Selected for
 National Film Registry 1989.

the novel], *Satan Met a Lady* 1936 [based on *The Maltese Falcon*], *The Glass Key* [1935, based on the novel, seven *Thin Man* films, *Roadhouse Nights* 1930 [based on *Red Harvest*], and more.

HUMPHREY BOGART [25 December 1899, New York, New York— 14 January 1957, Los Angeles, California, throat cancer] was best known for playing tough guys and hard cases, but he didn't start out that way. His father was a surgeon, his mother a magazine illustrator, and he went to Trinity School in Manhattan and Phillips Academy in Andover. It's hard to tell which "facts" about Bogart's life are true, which are folklore and which are studio hype; there's a web site devoted to the subject:

<http://www.macconsult.com/bogart/legends.html>. After several years of minor stage and film roles, he got his breakthrough part as the gangster Duke Mantee in *The Petrified Forest* 1936, a role he'd played on Broadway. The studio wanted to give the part to Edward G. Robinson, maybe American's most famous snarly gangster because of *Little Caesar* 1930, but Bogey's pal Leslie Howard, who also starred in the film, insisted that he and Bogart play the roles they'd played on Broadway. [Bogart later named one of his children Leslie.] Lauren Bacall was 19 years old when she co-starred with Bogart in John Huston's *To Have and Have Not* 1944. Her famous line from the film was: "You know you don't have to act with me, Steve. You don't have to say anything, you don't have to do anything. Not a thing. Oh, maybe just whistle. You know how to whistle, don't you? You just put your lips together and [beat] blow." Bogie's coffin contains a small, gold whistle, which Bacall put there. You never know. His longtime friend and 7-time director John Huston said of him, "The trouble with Bogart is he thinks he's Bogart." Huston also said, "Himself, he never took too seriously - his work, most seriously. He regarded the somewhat gaudy figure of Bogart the star with amused cynicism; Bogart the actor he held in deep respect." He died in his sleep after surgery for throat cancer. His last words are supposed to have been, "I should never have switched from scotch to martinis." George Raft was as important to Bogart's film career as Leslie Howard: in two of the dumbest career moves ever, Raft turned down the role of "Mad Dog" Earle in *High Sierra* and Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*, both in 1941. Bogart won a best acting Oscar for *The African Queen* 1951 and nominations for *The Caine Mutiny* 1954 and *Casablanca* 1942. Some of his other films are *The Harder They Fall* 1956, *The Desperate Hours* 1955, *The Barefoot Contessa* 1954, *In a Lonely Place* 1950, *Knock on Any Door* 1949, *Key Largo* 1948, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* 1948, *Dark Passage* 1947, *The Roaring Twenties* 1939, and *Angels with Dirty Faces*



1938.

MARY ASTOR [Lucile Vasconcellos Langhanke, 3 May 1906, Quincy, Illinois—25 September 1987, Woodland Hills, CA, heart attack] first appeared in film in *The Scarecrow* 1920. She worked again the next year in *Sentimental Tommy* 1921 but her scenes were all deleted. Her last screen job was in the 1980 TV miniseries "Hollywood." Along the way she was in *Hush... Hush, Sweet Charlotte* 1964, *Return to Peyton Place* 1961, *Any Number Can Play* 1949, *Little Women* 1949, *Meet Me in St. Louis* 1944, *Across the Pacific* 1942, *The Prisoner of Zenda* 1937, *Dodsworth* 1936, *Trapped by Television* 1936, *Red Dust* 1932, *The Lost Squadron* 1932, *Other Men's Women* 1931, *Ladies Love Brutes* 1930, *Dry Martini* 1928, *The Rough Riders* 1927, *Don Juan* 1926, *Bullets or Ballots* 1921. She won a Best Actress in a Supporting Role Oscar for her work in *The Great Lie* 1941.

PETER LORRE [László Löwenstein, 26 June 1904, Rózsahegy, Austria-Hungary, now Ruzomberok, Slovakia—23 March 1964, Los Angeles, California, USA, stroke] had only one uncredited screen-role before his star-turning performance in *M* 1931—as a dentist's patient in *Die Verschwundene Frau* 1929. He is probably best known these days for his performances as Ugarte in *Casablanca* 1942 and Joel Cairo in *The Maltese*

SYDNEY GREENSTREET [27 Dec. 1879, Sandwich, Kent, England—8 Jan 1954, Hollywood, diabetes and nephritis] had a long and distinguished stage career in England and the US before he made his screen debut as Kaspar Gutman in *The Maltese Falcon* when he was 62. He appeared in 24 films, 5 with Bogart and 8 with Lorre. Some of his other roles were in *Malaya* 1949, *Flamingo Road* 1949, *The Hucksters* 1947, *The Mask of Dimitrios* 1944, *Passage to Marseille* 1944, *Casablanca* 1942, *Across the Pacific* 1942, *They Died with Their Boots On* 1941,

ELISHA COOK, JR. [26 December 1903, San Francisco—18 May 1995, Big Pine, California, stroke] outlasted everybody else in the *Falcon* cast. He was sometimes described as "the

Falcon 1941. His last film was *The Patsy* 1964. In the 1930s he starred in nine films about a detective named Mr. Moto. Some of his other 87 films were *The Raven* 1963, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* 1961, *Silk Stockings* 1957, *Around the World in Eighty Days* 1956, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* 1954, *Beat the Devil* 1953, *The Chase* 1946, *Arsenic and Old Lace* 1944, *The Mask of Dimitrios* 1944, *Crime and Punishment* 1935, and *The Man Who Knew Too Much* 1934. The Nazis used footage of him in *M* in what is probably their most famous antisemitic propaganda film, *Der Ewige Jude The Eternal Jew*, 1940

BARTON MACLANE [25 December 1902, Columbia, South Carolina—1 January 1969, Santa Monica, California, cancer] was in nearly 150 films, most of them westerns or cop films. Among them were: *Law of the Lawless* 1964, *Best of the Badmen* 1951, *Tarzan and the Huntress* 1947, *San Quentin* 1946, *Tarzan and the Amazons* 1945, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* 1941, *Western Union* 1941, *High Sierra* 1941, *San Quentin* 1937, *Bullets or Ballots* 1936, *G' Men* 1935, *The Cocoanuts* 1929, and *The Quarterback* 1926.

screen's lightest heavy." He did a lot of TV work in the '60s, '70s and '80s, often appearing as a semi-regular in such series as "Baretta" and "Magnum, P.I." He appeared in about 120 theatrical and made-for-tv films, among them *Hammett* 1982, *Tom Horn* 1980, *The Black Bird* 1975, *Electra Glide in Blue* 1973, *The Emperor of the North Pole* 1973, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* 1973, *The Great Northfield, Minnesota Raid* 1972, *Rosemary's Baby* 1968, *Baby Face Nelson* 1957, *I, the Jury* 1953, and, perhaps his most famous role after *Falcon*, *Shane* 1953.

ARTHUR EDESON [24 October 1891, New York, New York—14 February 1970, Agoura Hills, California] got his first cinematographer credit with *The Dollar Mark* 1914 and his last

with *The Fighting O'Flynn* 1949. There were more than 130 other films between the two, many of them truly memorable. He did *My Wild Irish Rose* 1947, *The Mask of Dimitrios* 1944, *Casablanca* 1942, *Across the Pacific* 1942, *They Drive by Night* 1940, *Each Dawn I Die* 1939, *They Won't Forget* 1937, *Gold Diggers of 1937* 1936, *Satan Met a Lady* 1936 [the previous film version of TMF], *Mutiny on the Bounty* 1935, *The Invisible Man* 1933, *Frankenstein* 1931, *Doctors' Wives* 1931, *All Quiet on the Western Front* 1930, *Stella Dallas* 1925, *The Thief of Bagdad* 1924, *Robin Hood* 1922, and *The Three Musketeers* 1921. He was nominated for three best cinematographer Oscars: *Casablanca* 1942, *All Quiet on the Western Front* 1930 and *In Old Arizona* 1929.

Tim Dirks on film noir

(<http://www.filmsite.org/filmnoir.html>):

The primary moods of classic *film noir* are melancholy, alienation, bleakness, disillusionment, disenchantment, pessimism, ambiguity, moral corruption, evil, guilt and paranoia. Heroes (or anti-heroes), corrupt characters and villains include down-and-out, hard-boiled detectives or private eyes, cops, gangsters, government agents, crooks, war veterans, petty criminals, and murderers. These protagonists are often low lifes from the dark and gloomy underworld of violent crime and corruption. Distinctively, they are cynical, tarnished, obsessive (sexual or otherwise), brooding, menacing, sinister, sardonic, disillusioned, frightened and insecure loners, struggling to survive and ultimately losing.... The females in film noir are either of two types - dutiful, reliable, trustworthy and loving women; or *femmes fatales* - duplicitous, double-crossing, gorgeous, unloving, predatory, tough-sweet, unreliable, irresponsible, manipulative and desperate women.... *Film noir* films... show the dark and inhumane side of human nature with cynicism and doomed love, and they emphasize the brutal, unhealthy, seamy, shadowy, dark and sadistic sides of the human experience. Film noir is marked by expressionistic lighting ... disorienting visual schemes, circling cigarette smoke, existential sensibilities, and unbalanced compositions. Settings are often interiors with low-key lighting, Venetian-blinded windows, and dark and gloomy appearances. Exteriors are often night scenes with deep shadows, wet asphalt, rain-slicked or mean streets, flashing neon lights, and low key lighting.... Story locations are often in murky and dark streets, dimly-lit apartments and hotel rooms of big cities.... An atmosphere of menace, pessimism, anxiety, suspicion that anything can go wrong, dingy realism, fatalism, defeat and entrapment are stylized characteristics of *film noir*. Narratives are frequently complex and convoluted, typically with flashbacks (or a series of flashbacks) and/or reflective voice-over narration.

Some other FilmsNoirs: *Murder, My Sweet* 1944, *The Big Sleep* 1946 *Lady in the Lake* 1946 *Farewell, My Lovely* 1945 & 1975, *The Long Goodbye* 1973, *Scarlet Street* 1945, *D.O.A.* 1950, *The House on 92nd Street* 1945, *Call Northside 777* 1948, *The Naked City* 1948, *The Wrong Man* 1956, *Double Indemnity* 1944, *Mildred Pierce* 1945, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* 1946, *The Lady From Shanghai* 1948, *Gilda* 1946, *You Only Live Once* 1937, *They Live By Night* 1948, *Citizen Kane* 1941, *Gaslight* 1944, *Laura* 1944, *Sorry, Wrong Number* 1948, *In A Lonely Place* 1950, *Rebecca* 1940, *Suspicion* 1941, *Shadow of a Doubt* 1943, *Spellbound* 1945, *Notorious* 1946, *The Woman in the Window* 1944, *Leave Her to Heaven* 1945, *In a Lonely Place* 1950, *The Night of the Hunter* 1955, *The Asphalt Jungle* 1950, *The Big Heat* 1953, *Kiss Me Deadly* 1955, *The Killing* 1956, *Sweet Smell of*

Success 1957, *They Drive By Night* 1940, *Key Largo* 1948, *White Heat* 1949, *Chinatown* 1974, *Body Heat* 1981, *Blade Runner* 1982, *Blood Simple* 1984, *L.A. Confidential* 1997.

The basic *film noir* reference book is Alan Silver and Elizabeth Ward, eds., *Film Noir: An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style*, 3rd ed., 1992. And there are good essays in Alan Silver and James Ursini, eds., *Film Noir Reader* 5th ed., & *Film Noir Reader 2*, both Limelight, NY 1999. Fiona A. Viella, editor of the excellent online film journal *Senses of Cinema*, has a very smart piece about *In a Lonely Place* online at <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/00/10/lonely.html>

from *John Huston's Filmmaking*. Lesley Brill. Cambridge U Press NY 1997

Why has Huston's artistic personality gone more or less unremarked for so long? Briefly, his neglect seems to be a consequence partly of the history of taste and fashion among critics and academics in film studies, and partly of a stylistic finish so smooth and self-effacing that it conceals its remarkable art as straightforward, generic story-telling (if such a thing exists). Huston's art looks to us, I suspect, as Shakespeare's did to his contemporaries: like nature itself.

James Agee, in his enormously influential 1950 *Life* magazine portrait established this understanding: "Each of Huston's pictures has a visual tone and style of its own, dictated to his camera by the story's essential content and spirit."

James Naremore characterizes Huston's method by contrasting it with Dashiell Hammett's: "Hammett's art is minimalist and deadpan, but Huston, contrary to his reputation, is a highly energetic and expressive storyteller who like to make comments through his images."

To my knowledge, at least thirty-four of Huston's thirty-seven features films derive directly from novels, stories, or plays.

Huston began in the movies as a writer of screenplays.... He has spoken of the intimate connection between writing and directing: "There's really no difference between them, it's an extension, one from the other. Ideally I think the writer should go on and direct the picture. I think of the director as an extension of the writer."

Implicit in early works like *The Maltese Falcon*, *In This Our Life*, and *Key Largo* ('48), themes of identity continue to dominate at the end of Huston's career in *Prizzi's Honor* and *The Dead*.

In a 1981 interview, Huston spoke of his first film as "a dramatization of myself, how I felt about things."

from *An Open Book*. John Huston Knopf NY 1980

[Huston] I came well to my very first directorial assignment. *The Maltese Falcon* was a very carefully tailored screenplay, not only scene by scene, but set-up by set-up. I made a sketch of each set-up. If it was to be a pan or dolly shot, I'd indicate it. I didn't want ever to be at a loss before the actors or the camera crew. I went over the sketches with Willy Wyler. He had a few suggestions to make, but on the whole, approved what he saw. I also showed the sketches to my producer, Henry Blanke. All Blanke said was, "John, just remember that each scene as you shoot it, is the most important scene in the picture." That's the best advice a young director could have.

Peter Lorre was one of the finest and most subtle actors I have ever worked with. Beneath that air of innocence he used to such effect, one sensed a Faustian worldliness. I'd know he was giving a good performance as we put it on film but I wouldn't know how good until I saw him in the rushes.

During the entire filming not one line of dialogue was changed. One short scene was dropped when I realized I could substitute a telephone call for it without loss to the story.

Blanke put me together with the composer Adolph Deutsch.

Working with the composer was a privilege afforded only to top directors. This was another example of Blanke's confidence in me. Deutsch and I ran the picture many times, discussing where music should be used and where not. As with good cutting, the audience is not as a rule supposed to be conscious of the music. Ideally, it speaks directly to our emotions without our awareness of it, although, of course, there are moments when music should take over and dominate the action.

from *Perspectives on Huston*. Edited by Stephen Cooper. G.K. Hall & Co. NY 1994

"Flitcraft, Spade, and *The Maltese Falcon*: John Huston's Adaptation" Stephen Cooper

While it has been remarked that *The Maltese Falcon* (both novel and film) consists largely of dialogue, but it has not sufficiently been emphasized how much of that dialogue

Join us next week, Tuesday, October 8 for

Roberto Rossellini, *Open City*, 1945

Aldo Fabrizi and Anna Magnani star in this seminal work of Italian neorealism, written by Rossellini, Federico Fellini and Sergio Amidei. Grand Prize, Cannes, 1946.

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Write Diane at engdc@acsu.buffalo.edu. Write Bruce at bjackson@buffalo.edu.

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consists of characters' telling stories.

"John Huston and *Film Noir*" Keith Cohen

It has been established with considerable force that *film noir* can be seen as a response to the growing ambivalence about national prosperity, employment, and masculinity in a country that is watching its male population first march off to fight a war it was more or less pressured into, then return to a nation whose work force has been significantly feminized. Stylistically rooted in German expressionist films and ideologically derivative of American "hard-boiled" detective fiction, *film noir* creates a distinct, fairly easily identifiable, set of films during one of Hollywood's periods of greatest flourishing.

The *noir* idiom can be used in a variety of contexts without necessarily leaving its entire ideological baggage intact.