

Neo-noir in the
1980's with films like
blue



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Neo-noir is a contemporary translation of film noir (En. wikipedia. org, n. d.).

The term film noir, when translated from French to English, means black film indicating a sense of something sinister and shadowy. The film noir genre includes stylish Hollywood crime dramas; however, Neo-noir is the same, but with an “unconventional nature”(Byabortta, 2015), updated themes, ideologies, content, style, visual elements or media that were absent in the films of the film noir period from the 1940s and 1950s. Neo-noir films in themselves are aware that they are regularly attaching intertextual references back to the classic film noir style, which can be seen from various titled camera angles, experimental lighting to generate dark shadows, paranoia, alienation and other features that are borrowed elements of film-noir.

This particular film style in itself is post-modern within the 21st century. “Film-noir, as a genre, is most commonly said to begin with John Huston’s ‘The Maltese Falcon’ (1941) and end with Orson Welles’ ‘Touch of Evil’ (1958)”. (Geekcentricity, 2017) Many critics suggest that Touch of Evil (1958) was the last true noir film, not because the studios stopped making hard-boiled noir films, but because it seemed that as a society, as a culture, America was moving towards something different and was unable to associate themselves with the ambiguous morals of the genre (it’s ironic that postmodernism would base itself on this idea).

However, the genre has actually evolved – it has elevated itself – into new, more controversial, more sophisticated realms. Beginning in the uncertain

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times of post-war America in the 1970's (Chinatown), moving towards Reagan's America in the 1980's with films like Blue Velvet and Blade Runner there seemed to be a new kind of noir that was being labeled as " neo-noir." These films were representations of how the genre was moving outside the boundaries of noir only being films about seedy gangsters, femme fatales, and cops and robbers; these classic elements of the genre were now being replaced by greedy water companies, and corrupt politicians or policemen who were representations of the evil America never thought could exist in the people they trusted. Neo-noir then began around 1958, however there is questioning debates about which is the first US film that should be classified as such as Neo-noir. Internationally, the first neo-noir film would have to be Jean-Luc Godard's ' A bout de souffle' (1960), which was remade by Jim McBride in 1983 as Breathless (which is a translation of the French title), starring Richard Gere.

The reason the first neo-noir film is a French film is at the heart of one of the main reasons the two genres are divided in the first place.