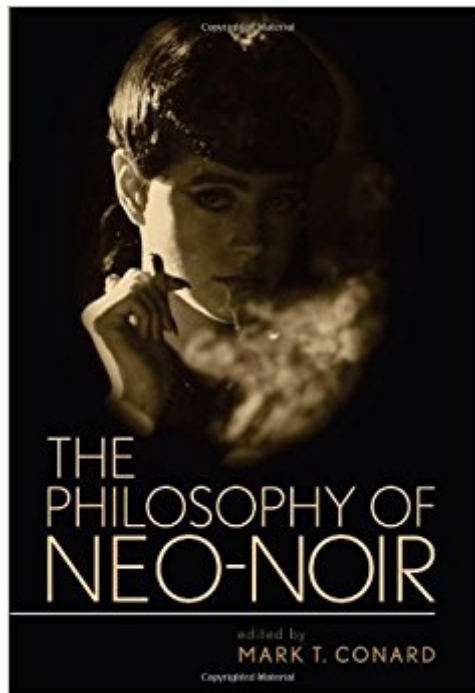


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# The Philosophy Of Neo-Noir (Philosophy Of Popular Culture)



## Synopsis

Film noir is a classic genre characterized by visual elements such as tilted camera angles, skewed scene compositions, and an interplay between darkness and light. Common motifs include crime and punishment, the upheaval of traditional moral values, and a pessimistic stance on the meaning of life and on the place of humankind in the universe. Spanning the 1940s and 1950s, the classic film noir era saw the release of many of Hollywood's best-loved studies of shady characters and shadowy underworlds, including *Double Indemnity*, *The Big Sleep*, *Touch of Evil*, and *The Maltese Falcon*. Neo-noir is a somewhat loosely defined genre of films produced after the classic noir era that display the visual or thematic hallmarks of the noir sensibility. The essays collected in *The Philosophy of Neo-Noir* explore the philosophical implications of neo-noir touchstones such as *Blade Runner*, *Chinatown*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Memento*, and the films of the Coen brothers. Through the lens of philosophy, Mark T. Conard and the contributors examine previously obscure layers of meaning in these challenging films. The contributors also consider these neo-noir films as a means of addressing philosophical questions about guilt, redemption, the essence of human nature, and problems of knowledge, memory and identity. In the neo-noir universe, the lines between right and wrong and good and evil are blurred, and the detective and the criminal frequently mirror each other's most debilitating personality traits. The neo-noir detective—more antihero than hero—is frequently a morally compromised and spiritually shaken individual whose pursuit of a criminal masks the search for lost or unattainable aspects of the self. Conard argues that the films discussed in *The Philosophy of Neo-Noir* convey ambiguity, disillusionment, and disorientation more effectively than even the most iconic films of the classic noir era. Able to self-consciously draw upon noir conventions and simultaneously subvert them, neo-noir directors push beyond the earlier genre's limitations and open new paths of cinematic and philosophical exploration.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As the title suggests, this book covers the philosophical background behind films defined as neo-noir. Surprisingly this contains a large number of films most people wouldn't readily identify as Film Noir. Blade Runner, Memento, A Simple Plan and the works of Quentin Tarantino and the Cohen Brothers are amongst some of the movies that are analysed in depth. Many other movies are touched upon including Fight Club, Minority Report, The Bourne Identity and many others. The essays in this book give new insight into these movies and are easily readable by those without any background in philosophy. I would highly recommend it.

Neo-noir films incorporated the visual style, characterizations, and subject matter of the classic film noir of the 1940s and '50s. But this latter film genre was able to employ more advanced film techniques; and with the replacement of the moralistic Production Code with the more flexible modern ratings system, neo-noir film was able to add new dimensions of subject and visual matter. The 1974 "Chinatown" may be "the first authentic neo-noir," writes Richard Gilmore, professor of philosophy at a Minnesota college. The TV program "Miami Vice"--first program, September 1984--was set in the Great Miami area for its "cycle of decline, decay, development, and renewal (invariably followed by further repetitions of the cycle) [which] affirmed the indeterminacy and contingency of the postmodern noir," as Stevens Sanders, emeritus professor of philosophy at a Massachusetts university writes. Thirteen essays by these and other philosophy professors relate neo-noir films not only to the film noir which preceded them, but also philosophical thoughts and ethical perspectives of Sartre, Plato, Kant, Kierkegaard, Marx, and others. Blade Runner, L. A. Confidential, The Onion Field, Parallax View, Dances With Wolves, and Raiders of the Lost Arc are among the films analyzed as neo-noir or which contain elements of this genre. This collection of essays is a companion of the editor Conard's "The Philosophy of Film Noir."

This book is a series of essays on the topic of neo noir films, citing specific films for topical treatment in each essay. Such as Memento, China Town, etc. Gives some clues on how Neo Noir differs specifically from classic noir. How the noir genre has changed since the classic era. Each "chapter" is basically its own essay on some aspect or interpretation of the Neo Noir genre. Haven't quite finished the book, but have liked the half I've read so far. Those who like this might also check out such titles as Tech-Noir: The Fusion of Science Fiction and Film Noir, The Philosophy of Film Noir) or Neo-Noir, Neo-Noir: The New Film Noir Style from Psycho to Collateral, Detours and Lost Highways: A Map of Neo-Noir and Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner. Haven't picked them up yet, but they all look a bit interesting.

. . .to The Philosophy of Film Noir. As good as the previous volume and maybe even better. Highly recommended!

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