

Visual and ideologic elements in Film Noir

Lauro Zavala

Visual elements in film *noir*

Camera: excentric angles, total tilt, Dutch camera, violent and labyrinthic movements

Composition: dramatic chiaroscuro, internal contrasts, closed spaces

Ideologic elements in film *noir*

Characters: doppelgängers, disenchanted private detective, female archetypes
(*femme fatale*, black widow)

Philosophy: social determinism, moral ambiguity, ironic skepticism, paranoid universe
(double betrayal, etc.)

Stylistic and ideologic Evolución of *Film Noir*

BACKGROUND

1929 Economic Crack in the USA

1930 **Cynicism: Tragic hero, creator of his own destiny**

1933 German exile

German Expressionism / French Poetic Realism / English Documentary

US: Gangster Films: Stylization / Impatience (*Little Caesar*)

CLASSIC NOIR

1941 **Denounce: Society as guilty of the death of the gangster**

(A) Gray Melodrama (*Citizen Kane*) / Hard-Boiled / Ominosity

Dialogues are more important than action / Detectives

1945 **Individual disenchantment: "They wanted to live, and that led them to death"**

(B) Street crime / Irony / Premodernity

Neorealist inheritance: Moral dynamism but emotional primitivism

1949 **Collective Paranoia: Madness as the only possibility of meaning**

(C) Threats: bomb, communism, women, madness / Psychotic desperation

Slow recovery of the place of woman

MODERN NOIR

1955 Moral ambiguity / Discontinuity in time and space / Incommunication

Touch of Evil (1958): epitaph to classic *noir*

French New Wave

POSTMODERN NOIR

1981 Cinema of Allusion / Intertextual strategies: remakes, retakes, parodies, allusions, quotations, pastiches, simulacra, etc. / *Body Heat* (1981)

NOIR: Artistic solutions to social problems. More of a style than a theme or a genre