

no country for old men ebert

no country for old men ebert is a phrase that resonates deeply with film enthusiasts and critics alike, particularly when discussing the acclaimed 2007 thriller directed by the Coen Brothers. Roger Ebert, one of the most influential film critics, offered a compelling review that dissected the film's narrative, themes, and cinematic techniques. This article explores Ebert's perspective on "No Country for Old Men," providing insight into his critique and analysis. It further examines the film's plot, characters, and the broader cultural impact acknowledged by critics such as Ebert. For those interested in film criticism, especially from a respected voice like Roger Ebert, understanding his take on this modern classic enriches the viewing experience. The following sections will delve into Ebert's review, the film's thematic elements, and its reception in the landscape of contemporary cinema.

- Roger Ebert's Review of No Country for Old Men
- Plot and Narrative Structure
- Thematic Analysis According to Ebert
- Character Study and Performances
- Cinematography and Direction
- Cultural and Critical Reception

Roger Ebert's Review of No Country for Old Men

Roger Ebert's review of no country for old men ebert highlights the film's mastery in storytelling and

tension-building. Ebert praised the Coen Brothers for their adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's novel, noting how the film captures the stark, brutal essence of the source material while maintaining cinematic suspense. He appreciated the film's refusal to follow conventional thriller formulas, instead opting for a meditation on fate, violence, and morality. Ebert's review emphasized the film's minimalist dialogue and the powerful use of silence, which contribute to its chilling atmosphere. His critique also recognized the film's blend of genre elements with philosophical undertones, making it a standout in modern American cinema.

Key Points from Ebert's Review

In his review, Ebert made several important observations about the film:

- The film's ambiguous and unsettling ending, which defies typical Hollywood closure.
- The chilling portrayal of Anton Chigurh, a hitman embodying fate and inevitability.
- The thematic exploration of old versus new, order versus chaos, as seen through Sheriff Bell's reflections.
- The effective use of sparse dialogue and lingering shots to build suspense.
- The Coen Brothers' faithful yet cinematic adaptation of the novel's tone and narrative style.

Plot and Narrative Structure

No country for old men ebert often discusses revolves around the film's tightly woven plot and narrative mechanics. The story follows Llewelyn Moss, who stumbles upon a drug deal gone wrong and decides to take a case filled with money, setting off a violent chain of events. The narrative is propelled by the relentless pursuit by Anton Chigurh, a merciless assassin, and the moral

contemplations of Sheriff Ed Tom Bell. Ebert highlighted the film's use of parallel storylines and minimal exposition, allowing the tension and character dynamics to unfold naturally. The structure avoids typical action-thriller clichés, favoring a slower, more deliberate pace that enhances the story's existential themes.

Narrative Techniques

The film employs several narrative techniques that Ebert found noteworthy:

- Nonlinear storytelling elements that emphasize character perspectives.
- Use of silence and ambient sound to create an immersive environment.
- Limited use of musical score, relying instead on natural sounds to heighten realism.
- Subversion of genre expectations, particularly in the portrayal of violence and resolution.

Thematic Analysis According to Ebert

The themes explored in *No Country for Old Men* that Ebert identified are complex and multifaceted. Ebert viewed the film as a meditation on the nature of evil, fate, and the passage of time. He noted that the film contrasts the old ways of law enforcement and moral certainty, represented by Sheriff Bell, with the new, chaotic brutality embodied by Chigurh. The film addresses the erosion of traditional values in the face of modern violence, highlighting a world that is increasingly difficult to understand or control. Ebert's analysis also touched on the randomness of violence and the idea that evil is not always rational or comprehensible, a notion powerfully conveyed through the character of Chigurh.

Philosophical and Moral Questions

Ebert's insights on the film's philosophical depth include:

1. The inevitability of fate and the limited control humans have over their destinies.
2. The moral ambiguity of characters, challenging simple notions of good and evil.
3. The sense of generational change and loss, encapsulated in the film's title and Sheriff Bell's narrative voice.
4. The portrayal of violence as senseless and indiscriminate, rather than glorified.

Character Study and Performances

In his review, Ebert praised the performances in *No Country for Old Men*. Ebert frequently mentioned, particularly those of Javier Bardem, Tommy Lee Jones, and Josh Brolin. Bardem's portrayal of Anton Chigurh was described as haunting and unforgettable, capturing a chilling mix of calm determination and ruthless violence. Tommy Lee Jones brought gravitas and a reflective quality to Sheriff Bell, embodying the film's themes of aging and moral uncertainty. Josh Brolin's Llewelyn Moss was noted for conveying the desperation and vulnerability of a man caught in a deadly game. Ebert acknowledged how the actors' restrained performances contributed to the film's tension and realism, avoiding melodrama and instead embracing subtlety.

Notable Performances

- **Javier Bardem** as Anton Chigurh: Praised for his menacing presence and unique characterization of evil.

- **Tommy Lee Jones** as Sheriff Ed Tom Bell: Commended for his portrayal of wisdom, weariness, and moral reflection.
- **Josh Brolin** as Llewelyn Moss: Recognized for his convincing depiction of a man on the run and facing consequences.
- **Kelly Macdonald** as Carla Jean Moss: Noted for adding emotional depth to the narrative through her character's plight.

Cinematography and Direction

No country for old men ebert reviews often highlight the film's technical excellence, particularly its cinematography and direction. The Coen Brothers' direction was lauded for its precision and restraint, crafting a tense atmosphere without relying on excessive action or special effects. Cinematographer Roger Deakins' work was singled out for capturing the bleak, expansive landscapes of West Texas, which serve as a backdrop to the film's themes of isolation and desolation. The film's visual style employs stark lighting and composed framing to underscore the narrative's tension and thematic weight. Ebert noted that this careful visual storytelling enhances the film's mood and supports its narrative economy.

Technical Highlights

- Use of natural light to create authentic and haunting imagery.
- Long, steady shots that build suspense and focus on character expressions.
- Minimalist sound design that intensifies the impact of violence and silence.

- Careful pacing and editing that avoid sensationalism, emphasizing realism.

Cultural and Critical Reception

The reception of *No Country for Old Men* by Ebert consistently references the film's critical acclaim and cultural significance. Ebert's positive review was echoed by many critics who praised the film's bold approach to storytelling and its philosophical depth. The film won several major awards, including multiple Academy Awards, further cementing its status as a modern classic. It sparked widespread discussion about the nature of violence in contemporary society and the evolving landscape of American cinema. Ebert's analysis contributed to the film's reputation by highlighting its artistic merit and thematic resonance, encouraging audiences to engage with it beyond its surface thriller elements.

Impact on Film and Audience

The film's influence includes:

- Encouraging a wave of serious, genre-blending cinema in Hollywood.
- Raising the profile of the Coen Brothers as auteurs with a unique vision.
- Stimulating academic and critical discourse on morality and fate in film.
- Enhancing appreciation for minimalist storytelling techniques in thriller genres.

Frequently Asked Questions

What was Roger Ebert's overall opinion of the film 'No Country for Old Men'?

Roger Ebert gave 'No Country for Old Men' a highly positive review, praising its tense atmosphere, strong performances, and the Coen Brothers' direction.

Did Roger Ebert consider 'No Country for Old Men' one of the best films of 2007?

Yes, Roger Ebert listed 'No Country for Old Men' among the best films of 2007 and later included it in his Great Movies collection.

How did Roger Ebert interpret the themes in 'No Country for Old Men'?

Ebert highlighted the film's exploration of fate, morality, and the changing nature of violence, noting its philosophical depth beneath the thriller surface.

What did Roger Ebert say about Javier Bardem's performance in 'No Country for Old Men'?

Roger Ebert praised Javier Bardem's portrayal of Anton Chigurh as chilling and memorable, emphasizing his character's role as an embodiment of relentless evil.

Did Roger Ebert give 'No Country for Old Men' a perfect rating?

Roger Ebert awarded 'No Country for Old Men' four out of four stars, indicating his strong approval and recognition of the film's quality.

Additional Resources

1. *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy

This novel, like **No Country for Old Men**, is written by Cormac McCarthy and explores a bleak, post-apocalyptic world through the journey of a father and son. It delves into themes of survival, morality, and the bond between parent and child. The stark, poetic prose and intense emotional depth make it a compelling read for fans of McCarthy's style.

2. *Blood Meridian* by Cormac McCarthy

Another McCarthy masterpiece, **Blood Meridian** is a violent and philosophical Western that examines the brutal nature of humanity. Set in the 19th century, it follows a teenager known as "the Kid" who becomes embroiled with a ruthless group of Indian-hunters. The novel's vivid imagery and complex narrative have earned it a reputation as one of the greatest American novels.

3. *The Sisters Brothers* by Patrick deWitt

This darkly comedic Western follows two brothers, Eli and Charlie Sisters, who are hired assassins during the California Gold Rush. The book blends violence, humor, and a quirky narrative style, offering a fresh take on Western motifs similar to those found in **No Country for Old Men**. It explores themes of loyalty, morality, and survival in a lawless land.

4. *Winter's Bone* by Daniel Woodrell

Set in the rural Ozarks, this novel centers on a young woman named Ree Dolly who must track down her missing father to save her family's home. The gritty realism and tense atmosphere parallel the suspense and moral complexity found in **No Country for Old Men**. Woodrell's portrayal of a harsh, unforgiving landscape shapes a compelling story of resilience.

5. *Hell or High Water* by David Mack

This novel, which inspired the acclaimed film of the same name, follows two brothers who commit a series of bank robberies to save their family ranch in Texas. Themes of justice, desperation, and family ties resonate throughout the story, echoing the moral ambiguity and gritty tone found in **No Country for Old Men**. The narrative offers a modern Western perspective on crime and survival.

6. *The Power of the Dog* by Thomas Savage

Set in 1920s Montana, this psychological Western explores complex relationships and hidden tensions on a cattle ranch. The story's slow-building suspense and exploration of masculinity and cruelty create a dark atmosphere reminiscent of McCarthy's work. It's a profound look at power dynamics and emotional repression in a rugged frontier setting.

7. *Justified: City Primeval* by Elmore Leonard

This novel features Raylan Givens, a U.S. Marshal with a sharp wit and a tough sense of justice, navigating crime and corruption in Kentucky. Leonard's crisp dialogue and morally ambiguous characters evoke the tone of *No Country for Old Men*. The book combines suspense with a distinctive Western crime flair.

8. *The Cold Dish* by Craig Johnson

The first book in the Longmire series, it introduces Sheriff Walt Longmire, who investigates a brutal murder in Wyoming. The novel blends mystery and Western elements, focusing on themes of justice, honor, and the complexities of rural life. Its atmospheric setting and grounded characters appeal to readers who appreciate the tense, character-driven stories like *No Country for Old Men*.

9. *Blood on the Land* by Tom Franklin

Set in the Mississippi Delta, this crime thriller follows two men from vastly different backgrounds who join forces to solve a murder. The novel's exploration of violence, race, and morality in a deeply divided society shares thematic similarities with *No Country for Old Men*. Franklin's vivid storytelling and intense suspense create a gripping narrative.

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