

Endnote

*This article describes the discovery-based learning based on research activities in Europe trip in 2015.

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Fig.5-12. Scenes of Breathless,France, 1960.



Fig.3&4. Scenes of *Breathless*, France, 1960.

While, you should have talked of me, and I of you” (Fig. 3&4).

To provide exact answers to the questions, 12 different scenes from the shots of Champs-Élysées in the movie was shown to 20 MA students to know about their feeling after observing each scene. In the end, after considering the entire answers, another question emerged: What was your feeling after observing the urban landscape of Champs-Élysées in the movie? In the selection of the respondents, it was important that none of them had seen the city and the avenue already. In this way, their answers were not influenced by the landscape of the city and the avenue. A summary

Conclusion

By juxtaposing and comparing respondent’s answers, it is understood that *Breathless* represents a landscape of Champs-Élysées that, if not the opposite, is at least different from what passersby feel when they are present in the actual place. This reflects the power of cinema which can use architecture to fulfill its interests. As it was explained in the first part of this article, “montage” and “angle of view” recreate the landscape of the avenue on the curtain totally different from what it really is. Cinema mostly resembles a novel than a play. Because, as in a novel, it breaks the linear continuity of time and redefines the notion of place. Cinema has close affinity with writing. Thus, the first hypothesis of this article that “the feeling

of the responses and pictures are as follows:

How is the landscape of Champs-Élysées in the movie?

Crowded and cold (seven cases), crowded but indifferent avenue (three cases), suitable for getting lost (three cases), noisy, crowded and strange, crowded and suitable for secrecy, chaotic, irregular and out of order, appropriate for gangsters, disordered and shallow.

Responses to the analysis of the shots were as follows:

Stress, anxiety, fear, mysterious, fury, lost humanity, wanted, under surveillance, mechanical order, hiding (Fig. 5-12).

which the audience experiences after witnessing Champs-Élysées in *Breathless* is different from that of the urban landscape of the avenue” is approved to an acceptable level. Unlike the dominant linear tradition of film editing in Hollywood, Godard insists on interrupting the line of the story. In this way, he interrupts the spatial continuity and, secluding the place and recreating it on the curtain, implies a different feeling of the architectural space from what it actually is. Likewise, according to the second hypothesis, Godard succeeds in representing the theme of the movie, “isolation,” by applying a novel angle of view from the avenue and setting it for serving spatialization, particularly, highlighting the isolation of the protagonist.



Fig.1. Champs-Élysées, Paris. Photo: Zahra Askarzadeh, 2015.



Fig.2. A scene of *Breathless*, France, 1960.

most significant feelings gained when visiting Champs-Élysées. Maybe these are the reason of the popularity of this avenue in competition with other urban spaces. Summarizing these responses, at present a new knowledge of Champs-Élysées is acquired that serves the main question of the research in the following.

Breathless

Discussing the architecture of the avenue, the role and place of Champs-Élysées in the movie is regarded. At this stage, answering three questions will work to confirm or refute the hypotheses:

What are the subject and theme of the movie?

What is the role of the architectural elements in the movie and how Godard puts these elements into function?

What feeling is suggested by the location of Champs-Élysées in the movie, and what feeling is experienced by watching it on the screen?

Discussing the first question, the film critic “Amir Reza Nouri Partov” explains the subject of the movie as human loneliness. Modern loneliness or, to put it into one word, “isolation” is the main theme of *Breathless* by Jean Luc Godard.

Michel is an infinitely lonely human being. Loneliness has a close affinity with rootlessness

and unwantedness. To be rootless means to have no place in the world. Michel has no place! He feels belonging to nowhere and permanently changes his place, struggling to earn some money that he may go to Italy. He does not have any place to be recognized by others and, in this way, unwantedness here connotes the loss of belonging to society (Heydari, 2016). Michel lives in a crowded world with a high population, seeking to get lost and find a hidden corner for isolation. He struggles to be accepted by someone who he even does not know!

To answer the second question, Jean Luc Douin’s delicate contribution is quoted here. He argues that in *Breathless* recording was done by a shoulder mount camcorder. Therefore, the film goes through an incessant shaking. The interrupted movement of the camera in the lanes and streets creates stress and anxiety. Godard uses this stressful technique for filming in the quiet and wide sidewalk of Champs-Élysées. When Michel finds Patricia in Champs-Élysées, instead of the classic shot, camera follows them as they walk along the avenue and, developing two soliloquies, the movie holds the two characters as two parallel lines on the ground that continue as they eye catches them and never cross each other. It is when Michel says: “Whenever we talked together, I talked of myself and you of yourself.

landscape of Champs-Élysées?

To respond to this question as exactly as possible, an interview was arranged with a statistical group having eleven members with particular features. The common feature among them was that they were researchers and architects and, therefore, they were familiar with the architectural concepts; they answered the questions with a scientific sensitivity. Moreover, all of them confronted with the landscape of the avenue for the first time and, therefore, had no previous personal memories from the avenue to influence them. To add a third feature, none of them were French or French speakers. Consequently, the influence of the social, historical, and cultural entity of the avenue on their architectural analysis of this urban space was not shaped by French language.

Considering the question about the unique elements of the avenue, the respondents' overall answers concerned the harmony and rhythm of the buildings on the two sides of the avenue, monotonous skyline along with wide sidewalks combined with green spaces, and the passersby or the cars moving on two separate lines, all of which widened the breadth and stretch of the view as well as the spatial landscape of the avenue. The stretch of the view in the avenue is emphasized by the order of the vertical elements such as trees and utility poles at night and day. Simultaneously, it creates a feeling of order in observers. The width of the sidewalks lets passersby move easily despite the throng, and the separation of sidewalks from the avenue via bypass leads to the feeling of serenity and security in bystanders. In addition to the commonly accepted boundary of the internal space of the avenue, its initiating and closing points, that is to say one of the obelisks in Concorde square (Fig.1) and Arc of Victory in Place de l'Étoile (Fig.2), determine the longitudinal boundary of the avenue and create a pleasant feeling of belonging in the observers; a sweet feeling that incessantly reminds them of "I

know where I am."

To answer the second question, the respondents generally highlighted the point that the simple elements like utility poles and trees as vertical lines, and flooring and walls as extended surfaces with suitable, human-friendly length and width, create the dominant space of Champs-Élysées. Though the avenue is covered with the same dominant color of the city, but the difference in flooring and the constituting material of sidewalks, bypass, and roadway as well as the lines perpendicular to the extended surface of the avenue, like trees and utility poles, combine the functional elements with landscape aesthetics and achieve Vitruvius' three principles including fitness, aesthetics, and stability (Vitruvius 2019). Given that the entire of these elements are in harmony in Champs-Élysées, their combination has led to a suitable totality which immerses passersby in a deep joy. Also, this architectural quality has social and economic effects, rendering Champs-Élysées more booming compared to other urban spaces of the city.

If the three aims of landscape, identity, beauty and function are achieved (Seyyedi, 2015), the combination of these simple elements will create a sense of space and the feeling of belonging in the people present in that space.

Answering the determinative third question of the survey about feeling the atmosphere of Champs-Élysées, the respondents explained that, on the whole, the avenue creates a feeling of familiarity in human. Champs-Élysées with that crowded places is minimal. Having the least familiar elements for the newcomers, this avenue more than any other one in Paris gives a sense of serenity and belonging to the first-time visitors and tourists. In this way, Champs-Élysées is familiar for newcomers in the first encounter.

In total, as is evident in the answers, the feelings of security, serenity, and belonging are the

this discovery that he could discover montage. In *Battleship Potemkin*, there are three angular shots from a rising lion. This rising is due to angles not montage. Montage does not offer any thing about the lion. This is just a lion, but you have an idea about a rising thing (Godard, 2010).

These explanations elaborate on the mechanism through which a lifeless thing, a tree, an animal or human being (other than role playing with individual will) can create a role in cinema independent or diverse from their real entity. Using the techniques of montage, optic and establishing shot along with the theories of creative geography, and angle of view, cinema can expose the subject with new roles free of its will. Again the hypothesis is brought to the fore: “The landscape of Champs-Élysées in *Breathless* creates a space which is understood differently from the architectural space of Champs-Élysées.” What is argued in the next seeks to clarify that cinema is capable of representing architecture differently. What is the difference about Champs-Élysées in *Breathless* exactly?

To answer the question, at first, we study the space and architectural elements of Champs-Élysées through a field survey and architectural knowledge and, then, compare it with the space of the avenue created in the film. This helps to clarify the differences.

Champs-Élysées

Champs-Élysées is an avenue with the length of 1910 M in the 8th arrondissement of Paris, in the north-west of the city near The Élysée Palace. The avenue runs from Concorde square to Place de l'Étoile. At first glance, the avenue seems like the other avenues of Paris: same gray color, regular vegetation cover and the aroma smelt throughout the city. Of course this is other than the more pleasant weather of the avenue resulted from the vegetation cover, proximity

of gardens, and surrounding green spaces which absorb humidity. Should be added here the luxurious shops and terrace restaurants. To trace our hypothesis and gain an understanding of the architectural space of Champs-Élysées, comparing it with what is reflected in the movie, three questions are introduced:

What are the essential architectural elements and the landscape of Champs-Élysées avenue? The importance of the question lies on the deep knowledge and understanding of the architecture of the avenue. This will pave the way for comparing it with its cinematic reflection.

What is the role of visual elements such as vertical and horizontal lines, tissue, flooring, surface, field and skyline in the landscape and spatial feeling of the avenue? The answer significantly elaborates two points: First of all, the picture of the avenue on the two-dimensional curtain is represented by these elements. If there is any difference between the recreation of the avenue in the movie with the actual world, it is probably resulted from the difference in the perceived visual elements. But more significant than this, as explained above, is that Champs-Élysées at first glance is an avenue in Paris and the entire urban and architectural regulations and criteria that are applied in this avenue, are applied in the other avenues and alleys in the city. Therefore, what distinguished this avenue from other avenues in the city or even the most famous ones in the world is the very feeling that the combination of the visual elements creates in passersby. In the end, one of the main things that, according to the hypothesis of this article, distinguishes the representation of the architectural structure in cinema and the original structure is the different spatial feeling a person receives in the place compared to the one s/he feels while watching *Breathless*. According to this, the most critical question of the discussion is What is the common or dominant feeling received from the architectural space and urban

well and, in Aristotle's words, is capable of "imitation." But, architectural construction is devoid of imitation capability. Therefore, it can be argued that this comparison is irrelevant. Yet, with the aid of montage and "angle of view" this weakness is transformed into a point of strength.

Montage and the Angle of View

For a better understanding a question is raised: have you never observed any puppet show on cinema screen? Is the puppet character that you know the same as the lifeless cloth doll? The answer to this question clarifies the procedure through which lifeless items gain character and identity on cinema screen. On the other hand, on the refutation of this hypothesis, it can be debated that it is the human agent which puts the cloth doll into action. Though this argument is not fully affirmed, it raises the question of how architecture can create a new and different role in cinema from that in its architectural world, without the interference of human agent, and just through the depiction of some animate and inanimate pictures.

Understanding two theories and a vital cinematic technique helps to answer the question. First the theory of the "creative geography" that was compiled and emerged by communist filmmakers such as "Kuleshov" (Cook, 2008). Based on the theory, the geographical narrative continuity in a film differs from geographical continuity in the actual world. For example, if in a movie a person opens the door of a room in hallway and enters the room, the room which the person enters in the next episode is not necessarily the one which he opened its door through the hallway. More tangible example is the scene in which the actor ascends the staircase of the bell tower in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and, then, falls down. Necessarily this does mean that he falls down the tower.

After the theory of creative geography, "establishing shot" is very influential and

widespread in the recreation of an architectural construction. Instead of dipping into complicated realm of montage, establishing shot is introduced by articulating an example. In the popular serial of *Friends* (David Crane & Marta Kauffman), in the beginning of each sequence that happened in "central café" location, at first the exterior view of the entrance of "central café" was shown and, in the next shot, the story continued in the café. Or before any action in the apartment of "Monica," an exterior view of the apartment is displayed. These two cases are samples of establishing shot. Apart from the introduction of the place of the story, the point is that the place of recording probably has no relation with the very establishing shot. In the two examples, the next scene of both cases is recorded in the "NBC" studio. The two examples make it clear that the architecture represented in the film is completely in the service of plot narration and dramatic art, and differs from the original architecture in the real world.

Yet, the roles which architecture plays in cinema is not confined within the theory of creative geography or establishing shot technique. Godard introduces a third and completing theory into the world of *Breathless: Angle of View*. Of course, the camera angle technique had been applied in many films before Godard, but it was Godard who equipped this technique with cinematic thought. He explains: You see a train hanging from a gully... only cinema can create such pictures. Look at some fixed pictures from a lower place. There are terrific angles that only could be designed by Eisenstein, with no similarity to those of Welles, whose function reflects mediation; completely different ones. In Eisenstein's works, formalist angles resemble painting or things like that. So, it is easily observable that by combining two angles a real montage is achieved. Accordingly, it can be argued that Eisenstein discovered angle after De Gas and others in painting and it was by

its selection is intentional. Its importance lies not on the movie, but the wave that it created in French cinema, today known as the French New Wave Film. Apart from the aesthetic discussions related to this new wave, the reason behind its selection is its realistic shooting style, lacking the optical and practical special effects as well as trucages, and serving as a model for the entire New Wave films. Actually, in this movie the least interference of cinema in the natural and urban space takes place. There is a light Arriflex camera with no special tools to move. The camera man carries it on his shoulder and uses the natural light and ordinary photography negatives with the sensitivity of 100 (Ilford H.P.S is a kind of negative used for recording under natural light). This creates the most natural photos (after the news films and photos) of Champs-Élysées (Internet Movie Database). Of course, this choice renders the confirmation of the hypotheses difficult because in the New Wave cinema the difference between the architectural constructions and the real, original structures is very small. Nevertheless, by the affirmation of the difference, its extension to other cinematic styles (which are more influential in matching architecture with drama) will be easier.

History-Architecture-Cinema

Breathless embodies neither the entertaining features that were already attributed to cinema nor the professional field belonging to its fans. Breathless reflects cinema as it is; not as an original artistic form of the twentieth century, but its center. Cinema encompasses the overall humanitarian entity of the century, ranging from the horror of its crimes to struggles for salvation through art (Douin, 2010). The reason is that Breathless and the French New Wave Film on the whole, and the Art of cinema more generally, illustrate the negligible relation between cinema and reality. According to Godard, Cinema created the twentieth century; the power of

cinema equals that of history (Godard, 2010). Here there is a simple example to understand this: The Minute 58 in Breathless was recorded in 1959 in Champs-Élysées when the car carrying De Gaulle and Eisenhower was passing. In this way, it is Champs-Élysées and the passing of the car that is represented in the movie. This does not embody the relationship between history and cinema or architecture with cinema, but the one between architecture in cinema and architecture itself. Particularly, in this movie it embodies the relationship of Champs-Élysées with Champs-Élysées! Is the Champs-Élysées represented in the documentaries of the German Reich parade under Arc of Victory same as the one represented in Breathless (Nazi forces parade, March 1940, Aparat Web site)? The question resembles the one about the relationship between an actor's two roles in two different movies and his real life. An actor in any movie, depended on the role, accepts a new character different from his real one. Though some aspects of his life affect the role he creates and that is why one fixed role played by two different actors will end in two various roles (Stanislavski, 2004). An ordinary person's idea about a famous actor who s/he encounters for the first time is shaped by his previous roles. If the person is given the chance to know the actor more, after a while, those cinematic characters disappear and, relieved of cinematic preconceptions, the person discovers the actor's real character. This is true of any other cinematic element. The reason is that everything represented through cinema serves "drama." Same is true of architecture. Architecture gains a new identity in cinema as the actor gains a new one in front of camera. This varies from what it really is. In front of camera, human being turns to actor and architecture to location. Maybe comparing the shift in an actor's character in front of a camera with that in architecture and location seems hyperbolic. Because it is understandable that a human being enjoys free

Introduction

The advent of cinema led to the emergence of a new concept in architecture: “Location.” While cinema was regarded as a collection including all the previous arts, yet it was captivated by architecture; the story of any film happened in a “place,” but the cinematic place was different from Architectural place. Cinematic places consist of the frames presence of which in each shot depends on the necessity of the plot. The cinematic location is introduced via the term *mise-en-scène* while its architectural corresponding term is understood through attendance and space. It was necessary to have architecture serving the line of the story. Captivated by architecture, the theorists of this new field struggled to present it as favorably as possible in cinema. The favorable presentation here does not point to serving human beings or gods and creating an architectural space, but points to serving the main line of the story (not even the protagonist) and the director. Following the struggle, the theory of the Creative Geography was introduced in the second decade of the history of cinema. Using this technique, the filmmakers could deconstruct architecture and, recombining it as the pieces of a broken

mirror on a wall based on the necessary scenes in plot, recreate the cinematic location. Due to this, the representation of the architectural structure on the silver screen embodies both the very structure and another structure. As cinema took time and mercilessly extracted its dramatic value as the only needed concept, similarly it makes use of architecture based on its interests. How much the architecture reflected in cinema embodies what it exactly is? Is there any expert architect who can recreate the castle of “Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*” after watching it? Besides, how much the effect of the familiar architectural spaces, which are accompanied by dozens of memories, is compatible with dramatic effect in cinema?

To answer this question, we will consider two famous cases in the two artistic fields with inseparable common connections: *Breathless* and Champs-Élysées Avenue in Paris. What we seek to answer is to see how much the Champs-Élysées which is represented in *Breathless* embodies the real Champs-Élysées of Paris; which architectural aspects are employed by Godard, with that artistic sense which he enjoys, to advance the plot.

Hypotheses

The feeling that the audience experiences after witnessing Champs-Élysées in the *Breathless* is different from that of the urban landscape of the avenue.

In *Breathless*, Godard uses Champs-Élysées to offer a dramatic theme and makes space for the protagonist of the story.

Why “Champs-Élysées” in “*Breathless*”?

In the first place, we address the question of why *Breathless* is chosen to confirm the hypothesis of the difference of architecture in cinema and actual world. There has not been

any particular aim in choosing Champs-Élysées avenue as an urban landscape and space; any other architectural, urban structure could be selected as well. However, in another layers, this avenue has particular features which work to clarify the hypotheses and case of the study. First, it is known worldwide. Second, during the twentieth century many films and photographs, professional and amateur, have been made from it. All over the world, it has been seen, at least through mass media. Finally, the author is completely familiar with this avenue and its architectural landscape. In case of *Breathless*,

Cinematic Landscape in Breathless*

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Abstract

By the advent of cinema, a new concept, location, was added to Architecture. Location is one of the essential cinematic elements. Its importance is to the extent that at the beginning of each scene there will be a short explanation of location and time. The reason is that each screen story has its specific time and place.

Till now, many architectural constructions have served as a location. Still, what is understood as space from architectural design in cinema is different from that in the actual outside world. In fact, directors make use of architectural construction based on their interests. This explains why a skillful architect cannot reconstruct Notre Dame Cathedral merely by watching the movie. If we consider space creation as the final aim of architecture, since in cinema space serves dramatic narration, director relies on the architectural aspects of the product to unfold its story. Accordingly, as the dramatic time differs from real time, cinematic architecture differs from architecture in the real world. Cinema deconstructs and then reconstructs the concept of architecture. What is seen as architectural construction on the screen completely resembles the original structure so that the movie recreates the structure in audience's mind. At the same time, the difference is so great that if the audience has not seen the original structure, s/he cannot reconstruct it or figure out its atmosphere; it is the architectural structure that helps the director to create the intended atmosphere in the movie. In addition, the feeling that the audience receives from the reconstructed structure in a movie is different from the feeling that the person experiences in the actual place.

To approve the hypotheses of the article, the space and architectural landscape of Champs-Élysées avenue are compared to their representation in the film. In this way, it is proved that, making use of the techniques of montage and angle of view, choosing special shots from the avenue and, thus, breaking the linear unfolding of the movie, *Breathless* offers a landscape from Champs-Élysées which implies, if not the opposite, at least a different understanding of Champs-Élysées, felt by passersby.

Keywords

Landscape, Champs-Élysées, *Breathless*, New Wave in Cinema.