

Content and Structural-Oriented Effect of Architecture on Expressionism Cinema in Time Interval of 1910-1930

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Abstract: Inseparability between cinematic description of architecture and the cinematic nature of the architectural experience have caused the mutual effectiveness of these two arts from different aspects. Although both have been known as the art that emerges with the help of many thinkers and experts but we must admit that both of them are innovative arts and resulted from artistic ideation of their creators without wanting to neglect their main nature as a result of team effort. Cinematic style is the techniques used by a filmmaker to grant a specific sense to a cinematic work and can be limited to a specific period of time or place. Expressionism cinema is an example of this model. The main purpose of this research will be to investigate the content and structuralism effects of architecture on art of cinema during expressionism period. The most important question of this research can be stated what has been the effect of conceptual elements, theoretical and intellectual principles of expressionism architecture on the cinema of that era and the artistic style? The research theoretical framework will be based on reviewing expressionism architecture and its theoretical principles, also the analysis of expressionism cinema features and reviewing successful case examples in this style in order to answer this question. The research methodology is based on two descriptive-analytical and historical-interpretive forms. The research statistical population will be Germany and America, respectively because of the depth of effectiveness. It can be concluded that Architecture, as a helpful and producer art has played an important role on shaping the framework and abstract forms in expressionistic cinema. It has facilitated spatial creation of expressionistic cinema concepts in form of architectural space.

Key words: Expressionism architecture, expressionism cinema, sermany cinema, art, Nouveau

INTRODUCTION

Expressionism 1 in English is the name of an artistic ideology. A great movement was formed against realism and impressionism at the beginning of the 20th century. The word expressionism has been used for the first in the definition of some of the paintings by “Herve August” 2. Expressionism from the beginning was an ideology to show anguishes and suffocation of the modern world.

On the other hand, it also denied tradition and cumbersome agreements existing in the past artistic forms. The same issue made expressionists to think about changing the existing status and moving in a new path. Therefore, expressionism can be considered one of the starters of post-modern art (Fig. 1).

Expressionism can be considered the reaction and indication of romantic tendencies of artists who lived in growing industrial community of the early 20th century. It was stimulating indifference of that community

toward their artistic values to find new methods and applying different forms of artistic expression. Especially Freud’s ideas that were exploring the depths of the human mind in those years were forcing artists to accurate report of angles inside the human (Sadeghi, 2006).

Constructionist or expressionism is an ideology in literature, painting, sculpture and cinema. This ideology was created in Germany painting in 1905 and was continued during the decade after World War I (1918-1941 AD).

This theory has been with a significant effect in Germany and Scandinavia countries. Apparently, the term expressionism was applied for the first time for the painting by Julian-Auguste Herve-French painter. Vincent Willem van Gogh 3 (1890-1853 AD), Dutch painter and Basil Hadley 4, Swiss painter can be considered among the artists who have played an effective role in the emergence of this ideology (Sadeghi, 2006).

Expressionist artists are trying to show inside of the objects without showing outside of it. Expressionism



Fig. 1: Marche: Russian Ballet, 1912 (www.britannica.com)

emerges in poetry in form of attention to sounds and color and attempts for Synesthesia that sometimes is sacrificed for their concept. Distortion of topics of the outside world and displacing time sequence and applying accurate effort to show the world around in a way that can be revealed in agitated, restless mind are considered features of expressionistic poetry (Dad, 1992).

Literary expressionism movement period was very short. It was encompassing the interval between the years of 1925-1915 AD. Expressionistic poetry was continued in Germany from 1910 AD to mid-1920 AD that was replaced by surrealism. It has remained the greatest effect in the show in literary categories.

Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht 5 can be mentioned of the Expressionist playwrights in Germany. Since, most of the initial effects are originated from visual arts for example, Van Gogh, Munch Vroden and then Picasso, painting is in the first place and then is the turn of poetry. Theatre is in third place, followed by which the issue of histrionics and choreography are posed.

Music and cinema come into act after them. Architecture and decorative art are placed at the end. Advertisements art should not be forgotten among these. In fact, it was against the posters and the shop's vitrine that the majority of people became familiar with the spirit and style of expressionism later and converted to it (Seyyed, 2005) (Fig. 2).

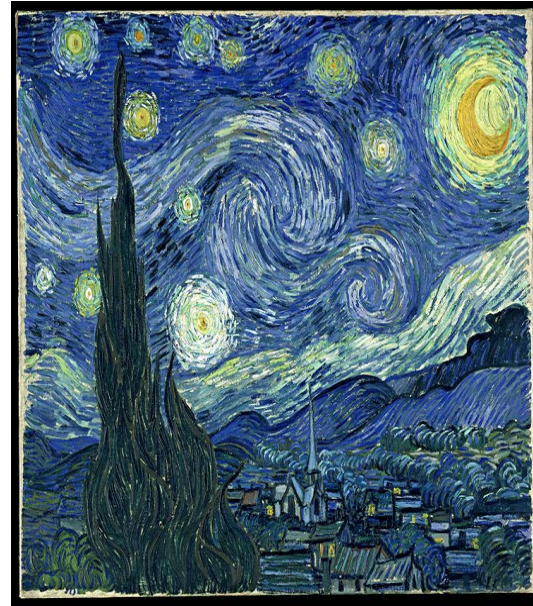


Fig. 2: Van Gogh; The Starry Night in 1889 (www.britannica.com)

Literature review: Book of Architecture and Urbanism in the 20th century, work of Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani: This book contains nine sections. Phenomena of historical development, constructional theories and forms, architecture and urbanism related to a particular subject have been investigated in each section. The second section of this book called expressionism is related to the research topic.

Expressionism book: From painting to architecture and urbanism, work of Hamideh Mohammad Zadeh: This book consists of six sections. Phenomenon of expressionism since the emergence and its effects on art, architecture and urbanism has been investigated in it.

Book of History of modern architecture, work of Leonardo Benevolo: This book consists of four sections and eleven chapters. The author studies all social, economic, political, military, philosophical issues that have led to various ideologies of architecture.

Book of from time and architecture, work of Manouchehr Mazini: This book consists of eight chapters. The purpose of its compilation has been the familiarity of experts with theoretical, philosophical principles and physical features of modern architecture and architectural movements after it. The phenomenon of expressionism has been investigated in the first chapter of this book.

Research questions: The main question of the research is posed as follows:

- What has been the effect of theoretical and intellectual principles of expressionism architecture on expressionism on cinema between the years of 1910-1930 AD
- Secondary question of the research is as follows
- Which effective features of architecture on Expressionist cinema has affected contemporary cinema

Research purpose: The most important purpose of the research is to identify the main effective elements and features of architecture on expressionism cinema between the years of 1910-1930 AD.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Expressionism in architecture

Historical change process: Expressionistic architecture is like as expressionistic poetry inspired by the work of Nietzsche Friedrich Wilhelm 6. It means negation of bourgeoisies, negation of history and negation of the existing status and belief in individualism, sanctity of sensorial perceptions, waiting for emergence of the new man and finally creation and creativity as appearance of transcendental inspirations were all the issues that were forming philosophical principles of this movement and artistic style (Ahmadi, 1992).

An architect named, Erich Mendelsohn though did not create so important works in modern architecture but he is important as someone who entered the expressionism principles and movement into the architecture (Fig. 3).

Mendelsohn became known in 1919 AD because of providing his figurative sketches in Cassirer Gallery. His first sketches have been inspired from the language of Wagner and Olbrycht. Sketches that have been designed during the War and immediately after it have aggressive force and symbolic vague character. They are well placed within the format of contemporary expressionism movement (Yene, 1998).

Mendelsohn found the first practical opportunity to express his ideas with construction of Einstein Observatory Tower in Potsdam in 1920. This architectural work is considered the most possible direct way to realize one of the impermanent insights.

Mendelsohn intends a form in this building that to be recorded in a fluid mass at the first mutation. Naturally, reinforced concrete is the appropriate materials which seems a tool in this period to free from the restrictions of right angle and floors conforming on each other for modern architects of that era. This is because of its specific ductility (Yene, 1998).

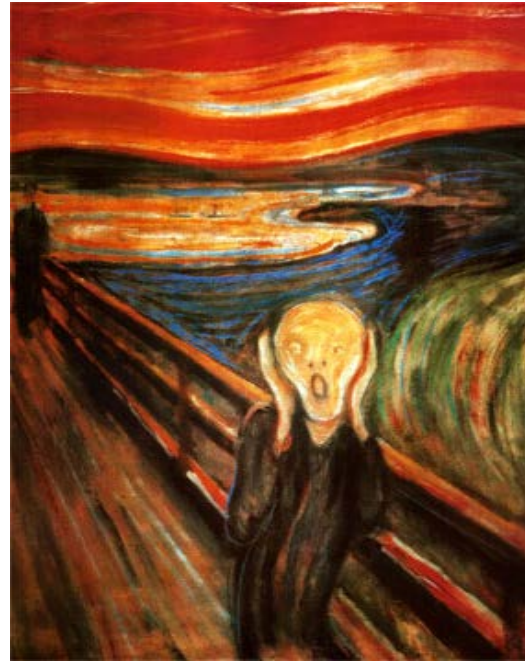


Fig. 3: Edward Munch, Scream in 1893 (www.artyfactory.com)

But this tower is built with brick and a facade covered with white cement because of lack of necessary and sufficient facilities to implement a continuous and curved format. However, the building glasses are in flat form because of lack of access to process of bending glass. This research follows a particular concept at pictorial extent. It along with Goetheanum, the work of Dornach and some works of Poulzich is considered an attempt to apply expressionistic elements in detail in the field of architecture of the years after war (Yene, 1998).

Expressionist architects use decorative strips that emphasize on unknown elements and show starting points of the curves by generalizing their plastic refers. Their work-method is confident, direct and apparently without doubt. their works have always been expressed by preferring forms that existed in expressionist painters designs-with the indicator of emotionality of the lines (Gideen, 1986).

Freshness of the primary insight is fully felt in the completed buildings and has been transferred into the intensity of each image. Of course, there are particular similarities between Expressionist's works and people like Theo van Doesburg 8 who founded De stijl style. That was because of start of a new outlook in architecture design and start of the modern movement (Gideen, 1986). In general, sources of inspiration of expressionism architecture can be expressed in the following cases:



Fig. 4: Einstein Tower, Mendelsohn in 1920 (www.britannica.com)



Fig. 6: Sagrada familia church, Antoni Gaudi in 1884 AD (www.greatbuildings.com)



Fig. 5: Church of Colorado Air Force, Walter Nash in 1962 (www.greatbuildings.com)

- Effective social factors and wide participation of the people in building construction activities and manual products prior to machine products
- Various gnostic tendencies as a reaction to materialism and positivism in the late 19th century through the influence of Eastern arts
- Art Nouveau as raw material and source of inspiration of expressionism architecture (Fig. 4 and 5)

Expressionism architecture and art Nouveau: Many expressionist architects owe their basis and principles of their work to the Art Nouveau movement. Also, some fundamentalist Art Nouveau architects such as Antoni Gaudí can be considered so justifiably as an expressionist. So any decisive boundary cannot be considered between Art Nouveau and expressionism. It can be said that the emergence of expressionistic architecture was a strict confirmation on continuity of Art Nouveau (Gideen, 1986).

These two movements emphasized on sculpture-building and form aspects of the buildings. Glass and color were playing an important role in design in both. Both aimed to achieve unity in artistic works (Fig. 6).

Tendencies and features of expressionism architecture:

Two specified branches can be distinguished in expressionistic architecture specifications:

First branch: It was specifying by applying ductile curved elements (plastic) derived from biological and human structures. These architects were considering Euclidean geometry as an arbitrary and unacceptable restriction for manifestation of the art of that era. They were searching for a kind of vitality, freedom of imaginative aspects of forms and multiplicity of ductile shapes and freedom from any kind of restrictive assortment (Francois and Thomas, 2006).

Table 1: Expressionist cinema

Source of inspiration	Key words	Famous architect	Indicator building
East architecture	Pure colors Bold and strong lines	Gaudi Erich Mendelsohn	Sagrada Familia Church Einstein tower
Art Nouveau	Expressive vitality Freedom of imaginative aspects of forms crystal	Le Corbusier Calatrava	Ronchamp Church Milwaukee Art Museum



Fig. 7: Ronchamp Church, Le Corbusier in 1955 (www. etdip.com)



Fig. 8: Milwaukee art museum, Aantiago Calatrava in 2001 AD (www.greatbuildings.com)

Second branch: they were inspiring from crystals in their work, something that found specific importance in expressionism movement. This is because it was supplying both relationship with cosmic mysteries and geometrical perfection in terms of semantics. Its realization structurally requires the use of glass. Purity, clarity and transparenance andeffect of continuous refinement and its releasing power was always praised and glorified.

Architecture in this outlook was a combination of orderly volumizing and sharp edges and distributive beams (Francois and Thomas, 2006) (Fig. 7). Expressionism architecture features in overall look can be stated in the following (Fig. 8 and Table 1).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Expressionism in cinema

Historical change process: Bases of expressionism cinema were formed in Germany in the late 19th century. But it could also be transferred later to other parts of Europe. The period after the first world war which was a very difficult period for the Germans is considered the richest cinema period of this country. German cinema in this period is the mirror that shows that day’s community of Germany. The period after the first world war is period of suffocation, fear and terror in Germany. These cases are evident in the cinema of that country (Rahimyan, 2004).

The first example of Expressionist cinema is the film Prague student. This 45 min film is the story of a person who sells his soul to the devil. Any citable works in this ideology was not made in Germany cinema between interval of 1913 and 1919. Until Expressionist cinema culminated in this year with the film The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Robert Wiene 9). The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari can be considered prediction of the emergence of a dictator like Hitler (Rahimyan, 2004) (Fig. 9).

Expressionism cinema remained at culmination in the 20’s Germany by two others: Friedrich Wilhelm “F.W.” Murnau 10 and Friedrich Christian “Fritz” Lang 11. Domination of sharp triangular-shape and specific angle of the camera in the made films has created expressionistic modes. The Last Laugh and Nosferatu are successful films of Morena. Trace of expressionism can be clearly seen in them (Fig. 10).

Fritz Lang continued to make Expressionist films until the forties AD. He made films such as spiders and Dr. Mabuse the Gambler with expressionistic modes in the early 20th. He finally caused another culmination for Expressionist cinema with expensive film Metropolis.

Metropolis somehow in addition that was mentioning the risk of mechanical life to the man was also prediction of the emergence of Hitler. It considered somehow the

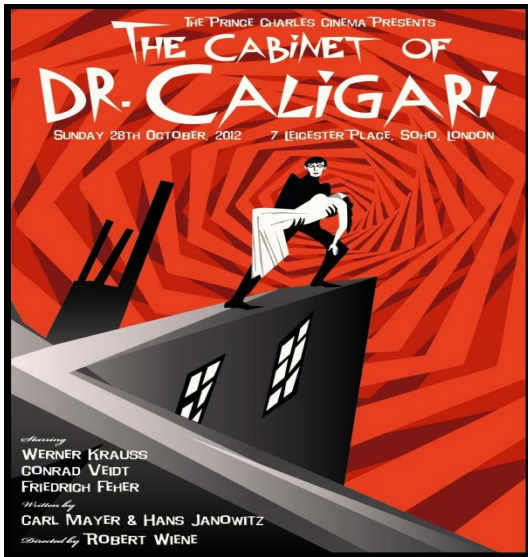


Fig. 9: The cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Wiene in 1919 (www.imdb.com)

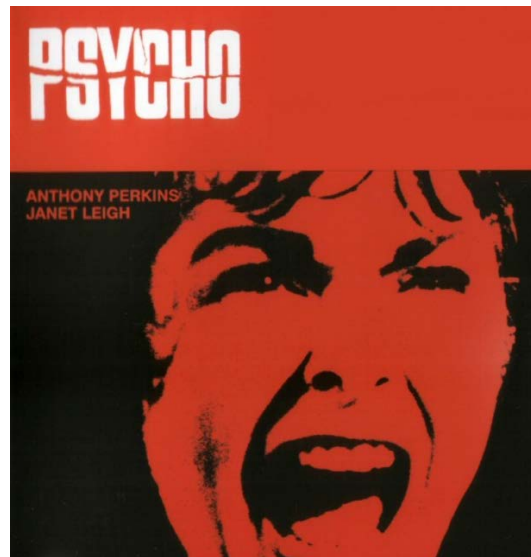


Fig. 11: The film Psycho, Alfred Hitchcock, 1960 (www.imdb.com)

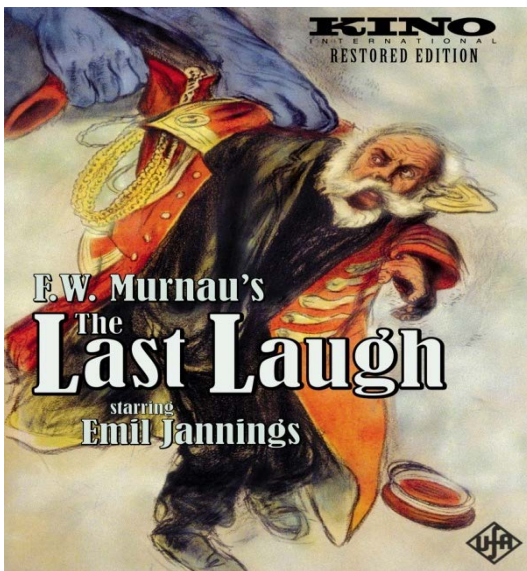


Fig. 10: The last laugh, Friedrich Wilhelm ("F.W." Murnau in 1924 AD (www.imdb.com)

presence of such a dictatorship as a help for German's escape from these suffocating conditions. That's why, it became one of the most popular movies of the Nazis (Francois and Thomas, 2006).

Germany's silent film had great distance from Hollywood cinema. In addition to the direct effect of filmmakers who emigrated from Germany to Hollywood, expansion of the style and technique that were grown in Germany expressionism influenced also the contemporary

filmmakers in many places. It was placed in their works and remained in the body of international cinema from the thirties onwards.

Expressionism in contemporary cinema: Expressionistic films left an important legacy that includes the effect that put terror in film, especially in terms of style. Germany's Expressionist style and especially its distortion manifestations that were creating through lighting, décor and use of the shadows, was reflecting inner disturbance and self-alienation in the films (Fig. 11).

According to some critics, fiction and horror films of the next decades of cinema and psychological dramas are somehow influenced by this cinematic movement. They considered directors like Ridley Scott 12, Timothy Walter "Tim" Burton 13 and Jonathan James Christopher Nolan 14 to 13 under effect of this cinematic tradition. Alfred Hitchcock 15 who was working in one of the German film-making studios in the twenties was also influenced by this cinematic movement. The example of this effect can be seen in the movie Psycho (Rahimyan, 2004) (Fig. 12).

Sample case of expressionism cinema (The film Metropolis): The world completely is changed into objects and tool of makeup in the film Metropolis in 1926 AD. Imaginary images of the city in the future world is evaluated and investigated with a great and fallacious scale. The masses of the people are changed into slaves and bear large pieces of rock with uniform steps. The interior space of a factory is changed into Betty's face.



Fig. 12: The film The beginning, K. Nolan in 2010 AD (www.imdb.com)

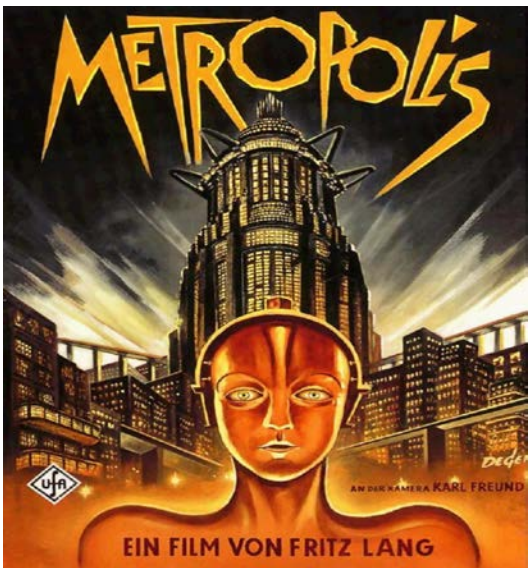


Fig. 13: The film Metropolis, Fritz Lang in 1926 AD (www.imdb.com)

The hands of these slaves are changed into strings that stretch toward their liberator (Francois and Thomas, 2006) (Fig. 13).

Expressionistic mode of the film scene's physical environment has been with significant effect at visualization of nervous characters and their view toward



Fig. 14: Use of architectural elements in space-making of expressionistic films (www.artyfactory.com)

the world around them. Contradiction and contrast of Black and white colors in décors and strange shapes on the screens of decor make its mode intensified and acute. There are also strange shadows that can be seen on the screen for special lighting mode. They play a major role in make the scenes more imaginary and fallacious.

Effect of architecture on expressionism cinema:

Architecture and cinema both create space and spirit of life. Both arts adhere to common principles in the process of perception of space. Architecture materials generally are material and real and film materials are fictitious and imaginary. The most attractive artistic link occurs when architecture as the most common form of art makes relationship with the cinema (Nichols, 1999).

In a group of expressionistic films, architecture has been with a profound and rigorous effect. The imaginary images of the cities have formed the film in another group such as metropolis and blade runner. Cinema is under the great and wondrous effect of architecture (Fig. 14).

Architecture like cinema flows in two dimensions of time and motion. Human imagine and perceive a building in his mind in different sequences. Forecasting and searching for mutual effects and relationship of humans who pass in front of it seems essential affair in the design and construction of a building. A building is formed from sequence-continuous plans that the architect creates them with cuts, montages and frame-works and delimitations (Rahimyan, 2004) (Fig. 15).

Expressionism cinema in which imagination is boundless can be an important tool for the change of architecture. Cinema is able to criticize architecture and the made environment. It can reveal and signalize the hidden beauties and ugliness of it. It can turn having more architectural surrounding with the charm of the film to desire and wish of the viewers by impressing the viewer's perception (Nichols, 1999).



Fig. 15: Use of architectural elements in space-making of expressionistic films (www.artyfactory.com)



Fig. 16: Use of architectural elements in space-making of expressionistic films (www.artyfactory.com)

On the other hand, architecture has been with a wondrous effect on creating excitement in expressionistic films by creating unusual forms, winding corridors, complex spaces, cracked stairs, playing with light and various paintings (Fig. 16).

CONCLUSION

The relationship between architecture and cinema is beyond their inherent relationship. Cinema in which imagination is boundless can be an important tool for the change of architecture. Cinema can criticize architecture and the made environment. It can signalize and reveal the hidden beauties and ugliness of it.

Expressionism cinema tried to modify and change the architecture after the world war by utilizing the art of

painting by creating unique virtual spaces. This effort manifests in the decades after the modern and postmodern architecture. It is actualized by utilizing modern materials and facilities of virtual spaces created in expressionistic films.

On the other hand, architecture has played fundamental and major role in more impressibility of Expressionism cinema by creating abstract and complex forms, use of light, specific light and shade chiaroscuro and lines with distortion and other conceptual elements. Generally, the architectural factors affecting expressionism cinema can be summarized briefly in the form of the following cases:

- Unusual forms
- Heavy and short ceilings
- Winding and dark corridors
- Cracked stairs
- Streets with colorful and deceptive lamps and play of light and shade and wet asphalt
- Old halls
- Creation of mental space
- Ruins of castle
- Creation of very large shadows on the edges of the wall
- Warning characteristics of congresses, trees, triangles and jagged lines
- Painted shadows
- Scattered lighting
- Dreamlike space
- Imaginary images of the city in the future
- Expressionism
- Julien-Auguste Herve
- Vincent Willem van Gogh
- Basil Hadley
- Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht
- Nietzsche Friedrich Wilhelm
- Erich Mendelsohn
- Theo van Doesburg
- Robert Wiene
- Friedrich Wilhelm "F.W." Murnau
- Friedrich Christian "Fritz" Lang
- Ridley Scott
- Timothy Walter "Tim" Burton
- Jonathan James Christopher Nolan
- Alfred Hitchcock

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