

# THE ARCHITECTURAL SOUL IN THE BODY OF MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI'S FILMS: SHORT REVIEW ON HIS TRILOGY: L'AVVENTURA (1960), LA NOTTE (1961), AND L'ECLISSE (1962)

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## Abstract

In realistic films, the architecture of the cinematic exploitation can be seen. In this regard *Antonioni's* films has an exceptional place. His films point and desire to create a cinematic experience through the use of filming techniques due to the interplay between architecture and the characters. *Antonioni*, in his films, uses architecture to depict the mental state of the characters, or perhaps as an arena for closure their logical inconsistencies and contrary qualities. Three films: *The adventure (L'Avventura, 1960)*, *The night (La Notte, 1961)*, and *The eclipse (L'Eclisse, 1962)* are closely related to the concept and text and are known as the trilogy of the *Antonioni*. In all of these films, director tries to link the process of emotional development of characters to their position in the film. The emphasis on urban-industrial texture, the unusual story structure, the minimal role of dialogue, and in particular the movements of the camera, which follow the unique methods of cinematic expression, all appear in his work. The *Antonioni* trilogy are an example of a series of films that are suited to study the purpose of any study on a serious approach to the question of the relationship between two types of substances and artistic creatures.

Keywords: Cinema, Architecture, Antonioni, The adventure, The night, The eclipse

## Introduction

Understanding an art phenomena is an uphill way that is directly related to the number of elements in it. Intertextuality is one of the categories of contemporary art criticism that deals with the presence of arts and their impacts on each other. Intertextuality is a feature of art and has been specifically addressed in the last few decades. The presence of architecture in the cinema is one of those examples that I have been discussing in this article and I have tried to pave the way to understanding a film as an artwork in combination with architecture through a special look at *Antonioni's* cinema. The cinema of Michelangelo *Antonioni* is a cinematic moment of silence. Philosophical, cultural and human symbols have evolved over half a century of *Antonioni* cinema, along with the richest visual cues and the most beautiful images of emotions, sensitivities and philanthropy [1]. He had a special style in the European cinema, a style that many young film directors of the contemporary cinema repeatedly followed. Those who use the principles of *Antonioni's* cinema have come to realize that reality is an integral part of his cinema, the truths and facts expressed in absolute silence. For example, *Bergman* can be noted who is completely influenced by *Antonioni in the silence*, as well as an orthosis that dominates *Antonioni's* films, which may be due to the presence of women and their influence in all his films. The linkage between cinema and architecture has made a category of successful cinema directors who have either been architects, or have already been involved with architecture, such as *Fritz Lang* and *Carroll Reid*, as well In Italy, many architects were influenced by *Luchino Visconti* and *Antonioni*, who laid the architecture at the heart of their films.

## *Antonioni's* Cinema Style

*Antonioni* started his work with documentaries in cinema. He taught cinema with the help of great film directors, but his work was different from the other filmmakers. He should be listed among those directors whose characters are alive in his films, and this objection may survive his artworks till now. He strongly believed in the integrity between

the elements of the film and the selection of different and unusual places. In his opinion, the differences between the components of a film, or, in other words, the sequences in a film, should lead to its final production. The characters in *Antonioni's* films communicate with their surroundings and sometimes even speak to it. He personifies the environment and makes them speak in profound silence. An important feature of *Antonioni's* films is his extraordinary attention to the soundtrack of his films. He always tried to use natural sounds and he was largely successful in this regard. He tested thousands of types of sounds for *the adventure* film. Every sound from the storm of the sea to the breaking of the waves and the roar of the clouds. When we watch the film, we fully understand that the selected sounds are really a masterpiece [2]. He used the method of filming which would be more effective in influencing the senses and creating a connection with the viewer. The following is a reference to some of these points:

- Breaking the rules: During the years 1920-1905, the directors realized that it was necessary to stick to certain rules to maintain a realistic atmosphere in which the spectator constantly sensed his direct relationship with the actor such as adaptation to the direction of movement and the position of actors and things on the screen [3]. In the late 1940s, some of the most discriminating movie makers, such as *Luchino Visconti*, in *the earth shakes* film, *Hitchcock* in *the rope* film, and *Antonioni* in *the story of a love affair* film questioned the need for discontinuities and did not use it as far as possible. The longer the space left for the scene the more tension between the space on the screen and the space beyond the curtain was felt. This is one of the most prominent features of *Antonioni's* films. In most cases, we see an empty scene, then we see the character who entered the frame, and after leaving the frame, we are still watching the empty framed [4].
- The entry and exit of the frame: *Antonioni* is one of the great masters of coordinating movements inside and outside the frame, and this is especially evident in his first film, *The story of a love affair*. The main structural factor of the film is to move inside and out of the frame, which is mainly used to create a rhythmic effect, and is also a means to revive parts of the space outside the film frame. This entry and exit is due to camera movements and movement of characters outside the camera's view, in unexpected moments and places. In some of the other sequences of the film, *Antonioni* often exits an actor a long time with the prolonged look of acting from the frame to the exit direction, thus reviving that portion of the outside of the frame.
- The nature of the pictures: *Antonioni* used a whole new approach in *the night* film, so that the dimensions and the true nature of the images on the curtain, before a person enters in the frame remains uncertain. For example, when the husband (*Marcello Mastroianni*) goes to the floor where his apartment is located, the first thing we see is a rippling surface that is not possible to determine its true dimensions. When he arrives from an elevator (which before opening it can not be guessed, that he is in an elevator), the following image changes. The point is that this space has smaller dimensions and the camera is much closer to the scene [4].

### Interconnections of architecture and cinema

The interconnections between architecture and cinema, one archetype dating back to humankind and one hundred years old since the early days of the cinema that coincided with modern architecture. Both architecture and cinema create the atmosphere and spirit, with the difference that the materials are real in architecture but imaginary materials are used in cinema. In one hand, this connection can be conceptual included; Content, for example, In creating the atmosphere, ideological thought or It can be structural elements such as rhythm, hierarchy of light, sound, motion. On the hand, there are reciprocal connections included; Architecture presence in the cinema, such as a stage design for a cinematic element or the presence of cinema in architecture, for example, the presence of specific structural elements of the cinema, such as light, motion and rhythm, and the perception of the architectural structure. Objective tools like using computer software regarding architecture, cinema, graphics, multimedia and digital technology is also counted in this connection. Architecture plays a role in cinema as a cinematic structural factor, such as the role played by a voice, dialogue, and music in a film. Any concept of architecture such as city, street, house, wall, etc. can be considered as an artist in the film. Even a fixed architecture in different films can have different roles. For example, New York - a city and as a cinematic element in *Woody Allen's* films - is ideologically flavoring the memories of a 7-6 year old boy coming out of the underground train station and discovering intersections and urban streets. New York is a safe place for his characters. Contrary to the bizarre and outspoken characters of *Martin Scorsese's* films that sometimes do not know the streets of their city. New York City in the light of the night in the View of *Woody Allen* is a dream land and a place for fun and relaxation. But light of the night of New York is the nightmare of gangsters in *Scorsese's* films. Philosophical and sociological approaches to architectural concepts, such as a city and a house, are seen in films which are influenced by that insight. Such cinema and architectural connections represent the role of architecture in the cinema and the aspect of the

specialization of film based on ideologies and cinematic concepts. In fact, architecture is used in cinema as an expression tool. Although what resembles the concept of cinema and architectural design is the structure that deals with the role of cinema in architecture. The concept, rhythm, and time in cinema and architecture, which ultimately leads to the creation of an atmosphere that is discovered by a film audience or architecture visitors [5].

### **Architecture is a concrete image**

The mental images are also visible by architecture. People build architectural buildings. Buildings that define their culture and architectural aesthetics that are defined in the culture and distinguish the simple construction from art. Architecture is a material image that really exists, unlike paintings, pictures or cinema, which is an image on a canvas, paper or film ring. Undoubtedly, paper or film is made up of materials, but these are the only medium to hold the image. The architecture is an image that is displayed and occupies the real space. Architecture is also an image that transfers itself without the need for photography or cinema. As time goes on, the culture grows, while it saves time in all its forms. Past, present and future. This effect is called " Crystals of Time ". Crystals of Time is visible in the cinema. *Gilles Deleuze* (contemporary philosopher) explains that the advancement of cinema can be a great way to capture time in pictures, because cinema is a collection of images that have been taken in the past and are being replayed in present. In his article, *Deleuze* described that the time inside the crystal, as it passes, is divided into two parts. "The time should be halved, at the same time as it restricts or opens itself: it is divided into two non-symmetric craters, one of those that is passing all the time, while the other preserves the entire past. It is the time that is composed of those that keep up the past. Time is composed of this piece, which is what we see in crystal [6]. This is an example of the Crystal Time form. Time is divided into two parts: Past and Present. Which constantly changes, it always turns into the past, so the two forms of time are interconnected. Together they make crystal of the time. Since the creation of photography, new angles of architectural space have been discovered. The role of photography in recording landscapes, playing light and shadows, and displaying it to architects was so important that all architectural schools used this new opportunity to introduce students to new art, and photography became a basic course in architecture schools. But when the *Lumiere brothers* managed to take twenty-four consecutive frames on the white screen, an art came up with an exciting similarity with architecture. The film is unlike a photo, timed and animated, also like the architecture is made of the sequence of landscapes and events. The difference between the architecture and the film is that in the architecture, there is the possibility of choosing an angle of view for the viewer, but in the film, this choice has already been made by the filmmaker, so the understanding of the architecture has no beginning and ending, but the film starts and ends.

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### **The art of using architecture by Antonioni**

The use of architecture in the works of *Antonioni* is neither neutral nor rather abstract. In *Antonioni's* movies, the use of architecture based on the ground-breaking presence of buildings that put people inside their compass. Presence of buildings in twenty-four frames of the film to portray the nonappearance of characters or the vacuum of the story, which is to demonstrate the showdown of individual standards and social imperatives in the most ideal way.

A considerable visual subtleties of *Antonioni's* film lies in his use of architecture. In all his films factories and industries are dependably the foundation and the background of the images. *Antonioni* isn't uninformed of the reference to classical architecture, for example, the early scenes of *the eclipse* where the columns reminding of Roman architecture. However, as a rule, its utilization of modern architecture, and particularly half-timbered buildings, is even more worth mentioning. Like the final scene of *the eclipse* and concentrating on the corner of the road, which occurs nearby a residential building under construction.

### **City features in the phenomena of Antonioni**

From the primary image of the city in the cinema (100<sup>5</sup> years ago) to date, there has been a continuous connection among cinema and the city. Absolutely, a standout amongst the most imperative purposes behind the appeal of urban topics for the first filmmakers was the genuine and justifiable truth of these spaces for them [7].

In spite of the fact that many of the *Antonioni's* scenes are brimming with motion, their unconventional cinematic space and the continuous narrative obscurity often transfer the senses of still pictures photography. His film atmosphere is frequently a cold and unfamiliar city with betrayed buildings that it appears the reflection of human relationships. A high level of buildings, a high horizontally skyline, scaffolds fabric coatings such as modernist sculptures, complex tree foliage, water sources, lumber, etc. are preceded by any transcendental symbolism, and more importantly, they are not only directly related to the theme of the film and the fate of the characters, but they succeed in a unique method to show the contemporary humanity. In this type of cinema, "the story is nothing but a small narrative without a classic design that can be focused on a trivial event such as dropping an object in a barrel of water, overflowing the water out and going The water route will be focused on pride [8]. The final chapter of *the*

*eclipse* will keep on going through bystanders, people who have been seen previously, and some are basically recalling the main characters of the film. In the end, the bus comes and goes, and its end clamor striking the unusual quiet of the place, so the city's atmosphere still shadows on the characters, and the story is ended.

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### Multi-Selected *Antonioni's* film Analysis

- Film introduction: *The Adventure, 1960*
- Film production: Italian-French joint product (1960) - 143 minutes
- Screenplay: *Michelangelo Antonioni*
- Casts: *Gabriele Ferzetti- Monica Vitti-Lea Massari*
- The film was awarded the Jury Prize at the 1960 Cannes Film Festival.

**Analysis:** The female character in *Antonioni's* films has such a very high power, so that she can defeat her favorite man as she wishes. Female sexual power in *Antonioni's* films can be hesitated at first sight [9].

*Monica Vitti* is in the trio of *Antonioni* is a very visible representative of a powerful woman who can attract and push away any man in time. In *the adventure*, we see a large number of men around her while she ignores them and passes. In *the adventure* film, *Antonioni* illuminates all the angles of the rich bourgeoisie's environment in its hidden weaknesses. The hero of the story is not only unthinkable, but also varies emotionally. They arrive on an island. They split apart, lie down, take a sunshine and fight. And then, suddenly, a woman (*Anna*), who played by *Lea Massari* disappeared. Both from the life of the accompanying characters and from the film's frame [10].

*Antonioni* never explains what happened to *Anna*. Was she drowned? Did she fall from the cliffs? Did she escape from her friends to start a new life? We never understood. After *Anna* disappeared, the film focuses on *Claudia* (played by *Monica Vitti*) and her friend *Sandro* acted by *Gabriele Ferzetti*. They start looking for *Anna*, and from now on it seems that they did not focus on searching according to the camera motions. It is not known where the camera will go, and who or what will follow. Similarly, the characters of the film also pay attention to other things: they focus on light, heat, architecture, and sense of place which the influence of architecture is bolded a lot. Whilst we watch more, we learn more about *Antonioni's* visual language through the combination of architecture and cinema. The visual rhythms of brightness and darkness, the architectural forms, and the people who seemed to be widely perceived to be fearful, are like a human mark. And there is also a multiplication of music, which seems to coincide with the rhythm of time. *The adventure* has no top of the pinnacle and in the film everything ends in silence and calm. The masterfully use of architecture to create the visual forms by *Antonioni* is aggravated the *Claudia's* horror because of the absence of *Sandro*. It also hides a stupidity that is childish but real. *Antonioni* presents one of the most unforgettable scenes in all of the history of cinema in the final chapter: "the pain of being alive. Also the puzzle of it".

*Antonioni* tried to match the story length of each scene with its real time point; on the other hand, it tries to convey the psychological and mental experience of the characters to the spectator. Therefore, the viewer during the film experiences the same long-term and pointless search of the characters on the island. What is quite clear from *the adventure* is the failure of human being in confronting the modern civilized society and the duties assigned to it [11]. The final view of this film is helping to better understand this defeat where *Claudia* is back to the frame and shows an erosive structure from her sight. That is a great example of interconnections of architecture and cinema as we discussed earlier. *Antonioni* commented on his film: "The instability of human behavior, morality, politics and the nature of today's world which there is no boundary between reality and emotion found is the core of my film. The drama of our life is the disagreement and this feeling on The characters of the film is ruling".

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### Film introduction: *The night, 1961*

- Film production: Italian-French Joint Composition (1961) - 122 minutes
- Screenplay: *Michelangelo Antonioni*
- Casts: *Jeanne Moreau- Marcello Mastroianni- Monica Vitti-Bernhard Wicki*
- The film won the Golden Bear in 1961 from the Berlin International Film Festival.

**Analysis:** In *the night* film, *Lidia* (*Jeanne Moreau*) is looking for something that she does not know. As if she has no purpose in her life. The only thing that kept her was the love of her husband, *Giovanni* (*Marcello Mastroianni*), which is now gone. She searches herself in old and new streets and looks for her identity in different neighborhoods. *Valentina* (*Monica Vitti*) is another young girl who has no focus all over the place. Somewhere she says: I choose some of the voices and listen to them. She also admits that there is nothing in her mind, and even her love disappears with the strengthening of her relationship with someone.

In some architectural aesthetics, *Antonioni's* attention to architectural art has been praised, which he is described as one of the great architects of the world. This point can be a significant point in *Antonioni's* work. In *the night* film, not only the content but also the visual form and architecture are very significant. What makes *the night* attractive apart from its modern and psychological narrative is original images that form the overall structure of the film frames. Playing with light, objects, geometric shapes, and even the characters, have made the film more appealing in addition to content. *Antonioni's* relationship with the architecture is amazing. He points out the horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines of typical urban buildings so much to the characters in his film that the human scenarios of each of them can be felt after this confrontation. Let's remind you of the loneliness scene of *Lidia* after the departure of the *Giovanni's* car in the first sequences of the film. She was walking along high-rise buildings, with low colors and at 90 degrees, then this building with dry and math angles collapsed and her emotions collided simultaneously with entering half-ruined buildings with broken lines and finally, when it reaches the plains, with its horizontal lines, she became calm. The city is enormous, brilliant and beautiful, full of concrete, glass and aluminum, as *Antonioni* emphasizes in the script, without any distinction, and the margin of empty space with a tranquil horizon. But the film is not summarized in lines and spots.

*The night* film has an in-depth view that apart from its aesthetic meanings, will help the film's narrative. Let's remind you of that *Valentina* anti-light scene between the door frame. The subject's distance from the camera and its separation due to the optical contrast produces a volume that results in a balanced square where something is going to happen [12].

On the other hand, *Antonioni* to avoid the misunderstanding of a triangle love relationship never made any triangle in its picture frame with the presence of *Tommaso, Lidia and Giovanni*, or *Valentina, Giovanni and Lidia*, and even we watch the trio objects in the whole film. *Antonioni* discovers his difference with a painter in the fact that the painter discovers the only reality. But the director must stop all of them because even the images in the cinema are fading. *Antonioni* does not characterize but analyzes the psychological and mental behavior of the characters. It is here that objects come to help him to offer the inner spirits of his characters as good as possible [13]. The end of the night is a good example for this, as *Lidia* reaches her final destination in the daylight where the trees are. While the couple walk alongside, on the sidelines there are a lot of trees. A little later, two single trees will be appeared. The two trees side by side, which, as general lines, promise the instability of the couple, and then the trees are no longer seen together. Single trees are separated, such as *Lydia's* single relationship with her husband. This is a clear point of the objective nature of the film's characters as human beings who are considered to be trees. The night of the second part of *Antonioni's* trilogy should be considered the second half of *the adventure*. Characters are basically the same with only few tangible differences, but this time due to a change in the construction and timing of their love story, they marry and live under a roof instead of taking place on the rocky Sicilian island. Here we have black and huge city of concrete, glass and aluminum that its skyscrapers are shrinking, and its people, like all other cities, are looking for a kind of life, like the puppets of the hanging ceiling looking for their shadows.

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#### Film introduction: ***The Eclipse, 1962***

Film production: Italian-French joint (1962) - 126 minutes

Screenplay: *Michelangelo Antonioni*

Casts: *Monica Vitti- Alain Delon- Francisco Rabal- Louis Seigner*

The film won the Special Jury Prize at the 1962 Cannes Film Festival.

**Analysis:** The eclipse begins with the end of an emotional relationship between *Vittoria (Monica Vitti)* and *Riccardo (Francisco Rabal)*. *Vittoria* is looking for someone who can live with him. She goes to the stock market. She feels alien to them and their behavior as if they are come from another world. In the stock market, she is introduced to a stockbroker called *Piero (Alain Delon)*. Then she goes to a friend and travels go and back to Verona; She goes to the stock market again, and this time she set a date with *Piero* but none of them show up. The last part of the film shows pictures of the date location. The same places we already saw *Vittoria* and *Piero*, but now they are not there. In this view, we see people who at first glance can be mistaken by *Vittoria* and *Piero*, but we find that we are deceived and We should not expect that the main characters will be shown. In this episode *Antonioni*, in an unprecedented innovation in the history of cinema, eliminates the presence of his characters from the story to remind the "presence" or "absence" of something deeper. In this film, *Antonioni's* focus is on techniques much more than his attention to storytelling [14]. The scenes, despite the smallest events, have fantastic visual effects. *Vittoria* is a young and thin woman with long, blond hair in black dress farewells to the man at the exit of the apartment complex, and both stand for two moments between the two concrete pillars. We see *Vittoria* from back who is relying on one of the pillars. It seems that man - *Riccardo* - does not feel stable for his relationship. Then *Riccardo* moves out of the courtyard with

a swirling roar of metal closing, and *Vittoria* looks behind him through the glass doors. Then, with a short pause, one of the glass doors opens and she enters. The camera follows *Vittoria* as she passes quickly from the integrated entrance hinge, while the large volume of its steps moves through the glass obstruction. The interior wall facade of the brick and floor are large dark stones with white doors, and the appearance of the building in total is official, modern, and even a bit cold. In the next and now from the inside, the camera moves from the back of the concrete column above the staircase, and for a moment it seems that *Vittoria* is surrounded by the brick grounds. She quickly passes through the hallway, opens the door of her house, and in the open view and again from the outside, she enters the house, which is very messy but the lamp is clearly visible.

The camera pulls back during the chase and takes up the window's exterior, as if from the outside we see the interior. *Vittoria* disappears in the moment and the camera re-moves forward and fits it in an exceptional position, while enclosing a column of brick in the center of the image. *Vittoria* is shown at the end of the right-hand side, and the upper atmosphere fills a section of the window cap, in a way that more emphatically emphasizes her humble situation in the frame.

We see through the lower edge of *Vittoria's* upper torso that she whispers to the hidden walls from our perspective at the left of the room, as if looking from the window to the outside, and the corner of a curtain and a part of a panel is portrayed. On the left side of the brick column outside the window frame is a dense mass of branches and leaves, shaking with a breeze which leads to the sky from the end of the left-hand side. It is also worth mentioning the scene that *Vittoria* is talking with *Piero* behind a huge column that reminds the ancient architecture of the Roman era [15]. The last seven minutes of *the eclipse* film (the third part of the triple, *Antonioni*) was much more frightening and smoother than the final scenes of the first two. *Alain Delon* and *Monica Vitti* set a date, but none of them are shown. That's why we only see the objects after this. Pedestrian crossings, a piece of wood dipped in a barrel and we find that the images we see are actually places they once were there but now they are not there. *Antonioni* slowly brings us to the time and space, not more or less. And these themes are gazing at us which is both frightening and emancipating.

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