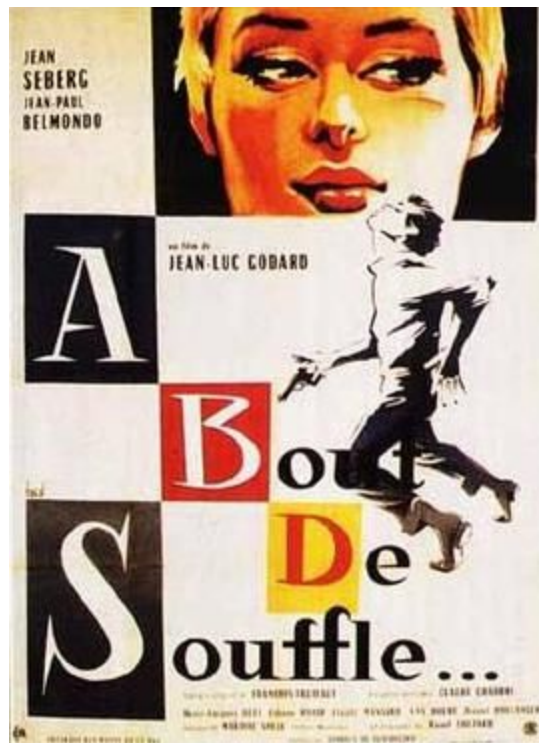


Perspectives of World Cinemas (DE 410)

Film Review by Himanshu Upreti (173059004)

Jean-Luc Godard

A Bo De Souffle (Breathless)



Director - Jean-Luc Godard

Release year - 1960

Plot:

The movie has classical dramatical plot. The movie revolves around the person Michel and his quest to make an identity. The movie starts with protagonist stealing a car and killing the cop. Wanted by authorities, he renew his relationship with Patricia Franchini. He wanted her to elope with him. Before leaving Paris, he plans to collect debt from an underworld acquaintance. Michel continues his love and ignores the fact that his face is local papers. Patricia at first get along with Michel but eventually betrays him, but before the police arrive she tells Michel what she has done. The police shoot him down in the street and after a prolonged death run, he dies "Breathless".

French New Wave

Breathless is regarded as a production of french new wave. The french new wave marked a change in production by rejecting the practices of normal films churned out by the studio system and instead favouring new modes of production based around experimentation and the rethinking of film form. This included favouring real locations, available resources, lightweight cameras and small areas. In a nutshell pretty much breaking all conventions those were considered to be rules of proper filmmaking.

Analysis of the movie

- The movie shows fun in breaking rules, and is regarded as one of the top rule breaking films in world cinema.
- The movie seems to have very much influence of American Cinema which was kind of aftermath of World War II as history says.
- The protagonist seems to be search of his identity. The use of plenty of mirrors and reflections shows that the director wants the viewer to feel that protagonists were self-conscious. It is because of this reason that his work is called cinema of the self.
- The movie is an extended investigation of french filmic identity in the shadows of hollywood dominance. The protagonist models his personality on Humphrey Bogart just as the film models itself on a hollywood crime thriller but these identities are continually frustrated.
- Peculiar shootout in the start of the movie. The whole scene plays like misfire of these kinds of moments. The shootout takes place within 10 seconds and with jumbled shots and no landscape shots and even cops face was not visible. Camera seems to obscure the action by taking close-ups. But why director has done that is still a question.

- The scene in room reveals another identity of Michel of flirty nature. The scene was long enough to reveal identity of both protagonist. Patricia was shown as a lover who tries to see only good in Michel. The use of mirror and portraits is again main focus in that scene.
- The female protagonist also seemed to be in quiet of her identity. Her identity that was earlier subdued by Michel's nature took a turn of being independent woman after the interview. It looks like it was because of the interview, she decided to turn to police.

Conclusions

The overall watch of movie was pleasant and it has clear elements from french native movies like bedroom scene or the ending long death run which makes it different from hollywood cinema.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Iz3JTGHRh0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yV5Wf5VGVy8>

Kuleshov Effect

- After the first world war and disintegration of USSR the ruling party wanted to use film as a medium of propaganda to bring some kind of political stability, that why they formed a Cinema Committee known as New People's Commissariat of Education. A film school is founded by the committee known as VGIK (*Vsesoyuznyi Gosudarstvennyi Institut Kinematografii*) : All Union State Institute of Cinematography in 1919. This was the world's first film school.
- Lev Kuleshov was one of the founders of the school . Lev Kuleshov founded a study group known as "The Kuleshov Workshop" that attracted the more radical and innovative students. **Sergei M. Eisenstein** was one the student of The Kuleshov Workshop.
- **The Kuleshov Effect** - I think, in simple words it says that the audience itself can derive or deduce the emotions to the actors face by the natures or ordering of shots around it. For example: consider three shots
 - An actor smiling
 - Closeup of a revolver
 - Same actor looking frightened

Well, if the shots are shown to the audience in this sequence, interpretation must be that the actor is growing cowardly, but reverse the order of the shots now the interpretation changes to actor is growing brave.

Theory of Montage

- After watching this movie, I came to know that it was early Soviet Filmmakers established the "The Theory of Montage"- an editing style of assembling together different shots that added a new sophisticated element to cinematic language.
- Eisenstein used the theory of montage properly to show all the emotions. Example boiling water shot is shown to show food is being cooked, empty bowls to show sailors didn't eat food etc. Another example closeup shots of clenching fist of hundred of spectators .

Music

- The director has used the music beautifully to show the intensity of scenes. I think he was well aware of importance of the music in films. The movie starts with a music that tells something going to happen, then changes to soothing music to tell story starts.
- It changes when something happens in the movie that brings the twist in the story or introduces a new element in the story.
- Music has also reflected the time and brings a sequencing to the event and audiences. The music when crew started complaining about the meat or music at climax, clearly show this points.

Lack of main lead

- Though Vakulinchuk played a main lead in ACT I, but he died soon enough to become a main leader.
- In every act it seems like there was a new protagonist in the movie, example the lady who addresses people in ACT III.

5 acts

- The movie was arranged into five acts . I think that was due to the fact the Theater was much more prevalent at that time.
- I think it is good move by the director to not to switch completely because after all every director just don't want to reduce it's audience.
- This technique looks like to favour the story plot also as story involves many plot, and having no voice in movie may also be reason to break the movie into plots.

Using long movie scenes

- The director has used long scenes many time to show the intensity and to increase the anticipation in the people.
- Example- Odessa massacre, to show the brutality of Tsar soldiers in ACT 4 (The Odessa Staircase). It is one of the most liked part in terms of cinematography. The true use montage is visible in this sequence.
- Another example of long and stretched sequence of shots is the climax in ACT 5. The climax of movie also seems to long enough to create the anticipation in the audience.

Conclusion:

The movie is based on true events that happens in Potemkin ship during first world war. But the movie is pure propaganda. The Odessa Staircase was so influential that anyone who had no firm political conviction could become a Bolshevik after seeing the film.