

Analysis of myth of total cinema: bazin essay



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The Myth of Total Cinema Andre Bazin in his article, The Myth of Total Cinema, asserts that motivation behind cinema is realism. He explains his theory by examining the technology of cinema. He argues that cinema was not born from the technology advancement but rather from innate desire to reproduce the realism of our world. “ The basic technical discoveries [are] fortunate accidents... essentially second in importance to the preconceived ideas of the inventors” (Bazin, 200). What Bazin means is that the invention of technology was not to gain profit rather to replicate and reproduce our real world on screen.

Though he does argue that some were in it for the profit of the technology. Inventors of photography and cinema thought about what they will show and reproduce primarily to how they will achieve the reality of the world. In another words, the essential drive to reproduce the real led to the production of technology. The desire for realism did not come from the production of technology. Bazin goes on to explain that our understanding of cinema should not derive from the technology but from the reality that is perceived through the reproduction.

Bazin goes on to state that: “ The guiding myth, then, inspiring the invention of cinema, is the accomplishment of that which dominated in a more or less vague fashion all the techniques of the mechanical reproduction of reality in the nineteenth century, from photography to phonograph, namely an integral realism, a recreation of the world in its own image, an image unburdened by the freedom of interpretation of the artist or the irreversibility of time” (Bazin, 202). What he is trying to elucidate is that the

guiding myth of realism and cinema should be the production of cinema unburdened by an artist's interpretation or subjectivity.

It also means that the time is not restricted. In addition Bazin continues, "The real primitives of the cinema, existing only in the imaginations of a few men of the nineteenth century, are in complete imitation of nature" (Bazin, 202). He is stating that a real cinema is established by those who dream of cinema as a replicate of nature. Bazin concludes that the myth of total cinema is 'realism', and that it has been a part of every man before invention of technology. Bazin's article is very interesting and reasonable but his arguments only justify one side of the story.

Cinema is not only a tool for reproduction of nature but also an apparatus for fantasy and dreams. It can be argued, I too agree, that the development of technology was created for the purpose of recreating nature, but the development of technology has advanced artistically. This artistic development of technology has aided many in creating their imagination that are beyond reality. For example, the film, Inception, contains scenes that are impossible to film in reality. Scenes containing upside buildings, never ending stairs, buildings crumbling and etc. are very difficult to accomplish without the help of the advancing technology. Yet the advancing technology has made it possible to create the impossible. What I am trying to say is that the story of Inception was not created prior to the advancement of technology but after. The story of the film was thought out with the possibilities of the technology in mind. Bazin maybe correct in stating that cinema was essentially the instinctive drive of human desire to

reconstruct and imitate reality though we can argue that it is not the 'only' drive of cinema.