

CINEMA AS CHANGE MUMMIFIED: OBJECTIVITY AND DURATION IN ANDRÉ BAZIN'S THEORY^{*,**}

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INTRODUCTION

After attending one of the first screenings by the Lumière brothers at the Nizhny Novgorod Fair, Maxim Gorky described the new invention with a certain disappointment as a kind of shadow of life and shadow of movement. Some time later, this initial disenchantment produced by the appearance of the moving image would turn into enthusiasm in the context of the theories of cinema that argued for its right to be considered the art form of reality; an art form which, due to its essential objectivity, presents the world to us in its spatio-temporal unfolding, in its duration. In the 1940s and 1950s, one of the main exponents of this approach, André Bazin, would explore this phenomenon in depth, particularly in *The Ontology of the Photographic Image* (referred to hereinafter as *Ontologie*), laying down the foundations for understanding cinema as a realist art form. More than half a century after André Bazin proposed

his innovative perspective on cinema, his writings and his thought continue to inspire a rich debate amongst academics and cinephiles. It is a conversation that has taken on a new prominence with the arrival of the digital age and the increasing interest in the status of the image. Digital media, however, have not changed the intense appeal that cinema continues to hold for spectators. It is here that Bazin's ideas seem most current, in their assertion of the "essential objectivity" of the photographic image and the singular ability of film to "mummify change". Objectivity and duration are thus presented as cardinal features of a realist understanding of cinema that continues to claim our attention.

This article aims to address these questions in three stages, based on the thought of André Bazin and on subsequent developments contributed by contemporary theorists who have drawn on his work. First of all, we will analyse the automatic process through which photographic images are

created, which points to the centrality of the subject in their reception. Secondly, we will connect this process to the way that the record image vests what it represents with a special credibility. And finally, we will detail the specific feature that distinguishes cinema from still photography: its temporal dimension—its duration—and the effect that this has on the spectator.

I. THE OBJECTIVITY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE AND THE SUBJECTIVITY OF PERCEPTION

“The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe.”

(BERGER, 1972: 8)

The underlying premise of André Bazin’s entire critical and theoretical corpus can be summed up in the idea that what distinguishes the “record image”¹ from painting is its “essentially objective character” (Bazin, 1967: 13). This objectivity depends on its mechanical automaticity or, more precisely, the origin of photography is objective insofar as it is mechanical. The camera, unlike the paintbrush, does not create a subjective image; instead, its mechanism imprints the light reflected on objects onto a reel or celluloid and enables us to perceive their shape and colour. This underlying idea of the French theorist could be compared with the way that Marcel L’Herbier describes the film camera, as “a machine that takes an imprint of life” (L’Herbier, 1918: 7).

It would be a mistake to understand *Bazinian* objectivity in the sense of “impartiality” or “immediacy” (as in without mediation). On this point, Bazin clarifies that in the production of a photographic image “the personality of the photographer enters into the proceedings only in his selection of the object to be photographed, and by way of the purpose he has in mind. Although the final result may reflect something of his personality, this does not play the same role as is played by that

of the painter” (Bazin, 1967: 13). The painter creates the image; the photographer records it. In this sense, the cinema (of record) is not reality, but its raw material is inextricably linked to it. When he speaks of objectivity, Bazin has in mind the device that captures the image of the world, as he suggests that “for the first time, between the originating object and its reproduction there intervenes only the instrumentality of a nonliving agent” (Bazin, 1967: 13). The camera operates automatically. This feature of the recorded arts is essential in André Bazin’s theory, because the connection between the world and its recorded image marks a realist aesthetic trend.

However, photographic objectivity cannot be understood in a vacuum or from an exclusively materialist perspective. Objectivity according to Bazin’s definition is of importance to cinematic realism because of the truth claim that accompanies this type of image. It is worth noting, however, that this concept of “truth claim” has not gone unchallenged by all authors. Martin Seel (2008: 157) views it as something specific to the recorded arts, while for Tom Gunning (2004: 41), the truth claim is not a property inherent in the photograph, but a power conferred by the subject who contemplates it and sustained on two basic pillars: indexicality and resemblance. In this article, we use Seel’s definition of the term. A careful analysis of Bazin’s ideas reveals that, contrary to Gunning’s view, the truth claim does not arise from the resemblance between reality and representation, but from the objectivity in the production of the image. Thanks to its photographic foundation, Bazin suggests that it is impossible to dissociate cinema from realism. In “The Myth of Total Cinema”, Bazin talks about the path taken by the precursors of cinema, who were something like prophets: Muybridge, Marey, Lumière, Plateau, Niepce (Bazin, 1967: 17-19). According to Bazin, all of these precursors foresaw and presaged an integral realism, “a recreation of the world in its own image, an image unburdened by the freedom of



André Bazin

interpretation of the artist or the irreversibility of time" (Bazin, 1967: 21). In cinema, space and time appear in such a way that during their reception the images are accorded credibility by the subject, whose internal faculties recognise the images projected as evidence of the world.

This reception process has its own complexities, because the ontology of the photographic image also includes other qualities, such as resemblance, which in the context of this article is only addressed incidentally in the interests of offering an in-depth study of the way that objectivity operates in cinema and for the spectator. It is therefore important to keep in mind that, in contrast with what Jonathan Friday (2005) concluded in his article on *Bazinian* ontology, for Bazin resemblance is of secondary importance, because it is the result, in turn, of the mechanical process or recording lens. However, Friday is correct to note that Bazin seems to undervalue resemblance when he suggests that whether the image is focused or clearly defined is irrelevant, because he is focused on the psychological effect of photographic images by virtue of their automatic production and not of how much they resemble the model (Friday, 2005: 348). In this respect, Bazin's theory is similar to the proposition of C. S. Peirce, who ex-

plains that the index produces an immediate psychological effect on the individual: "Psychologically, the action of indices depends upon association by contiguity, and not upon association by resemblance or upon intellectual operations" (Peirce, 1965: 172). In other words, the sensory data that we perceive in a photograph are presented to the subject in a manner similar to those we perceive in reality because we *know* that the images have been recorded rather than created.

These observations should serve to establish a preliminary picture of the central role of the spectator in Bazin's theory. The *Bazinian* realist proposition should not be understood as a theory of "the real" expressed in "a new material" through the action of "a machine". This kind of view, paradoxically, overlooks the fact that Bazin's realism is oriented towards subjectivity, an aspect that the French theorist highlights in his exploration of the ontology of the photographic image:

This production by automatic means has radically affected our psychology of the image. The objective nature of photography confers on it a quality of credibility absent from all other picture-making. In spite of any objections our critical spirit may offer, we are forced to accept as real the existence of the object reproduced. (Bazin, 1967: 13).

The credibility to which Bazin refers presents its own complexities, partly because of the risk of confusing the mechanical-genetic sense of the image (its objectivity) with the subjective assertion that it claims (credibility). As will be shown below, this is a process that continues to provoke very different readings among academics.

2. CREDIBILITY AND REALISM

“The ‘landscape’ is the result of the man-nature encounter, mediated by the ‘human gaze.’”

(RÍOS VICENTE, 2008: 353)

Cinematic realism is achieved in a manner analogous to the appearance of the landscape. According to Jesús Ríos Vicente (2008: 353), it is the product of the human gaze, without which, nature goes no further than its physicality, and the image goes no further than its appearance. Philip Rosen (2001: 3-41) addresses this question in *Change Mummified*, where he attributes the misinterpretation of Bazin’s realist theory to the fact that some academics, in their analysis of *Bazinian* ontology in *Ontologie* and “The Myth of Total Cinema”, focus their reading on the technical aspects of photography,² treating materiality and technology in Bazin’s theory as absolute, as if these were the *exclusive* defining features of the French critic’s realist theory:

[T]he ontological basis Bazin established in these essays has sometimes been too quickly read as a kind of technological finality whereby the objective world (materiality) is directly captured by the lens (*objectif*) of the photographic/cinematic apparatus for the subjective (human) (Rosen, 2001: 9).

But for Bazin, photographic objectivity and causality do not *per se* imply any realist superiority over any other type of representation; rather, they are oriented towards and facilitate credibility for the subject. The subject *believes* in the existence of the object represented because he/she *knows* that the existence of a photographic image

depends on the fact that *that* object was actually in front of the camera.

Along these lines, Rosen proposes a reading of Bazin’s theory from a phenomenological perspective, focusing first of all on the subject who perceives the images, instead of prioritising the images themselves, which on their own determine nothing because it is in the human gaze that they acquire their meaning. Rosen (2001: 11) asserts that “the processes by which human subjectivity approaches the objective constitute the basis of his [Bazin’s] position.”³ In this way, the idealism or essentialism with which Bazin has often been identified is also avoided. As mentioned above, for Bazin, the objective origin of cinema mainly involves two features of the photograph that are what determines its credibility for the subject: that it is an image unburdened by both “the freedom of interpretation of the artist” and “the irreversibility of time” (Bazin, 1967: 21).

In terms of the first feature, it is clear that Bazin is talking about how and on what basis the subject reads the photographic image. These are not subjective (created, drawn) images, but objective (recorded, captured and projected) images, which the spectator, in taking them in, recognises their realism by virtue of the fact that he/she *knows* about their automatic origin. As for the second feature, the irreversibility of time, this comes down simply to the fact that the subject also *knows* that there is a temporal gap between the moment of production of the image and its projection, and, even more importantly, that the recorded image will remain immortalised “forever”; in contrast with things and people in reality, the image has been “snatched” from the natural flow of time and will never decay; instead, it will be preserved and repeated as often as may be desired.

Philip Rosen accepts these two features of the photographic image as true, but understands them as “gaps” that the subject needs to fill/cover to be able to speak of realism:

The first gap lies in considering the photographic image to have *referentiality* to reality. Rosen argues that because the photograph is referential, there is a *gap* between reality and representation. This is something that distances the two, and it is a distance that can never be eliminated, because reality and its photographic image are ontologically different from each other. Rosen then relates this gap to the mummy complex, and he explains that this complex arises from the obsession with resemblance; an obsession—or irrational desire—that will never be fulfilled, because what is saved in the photograph is not the entity itself, but merely its appearance. This is where Rosen methodologically includes the subject. According to Rosen, the subject connects the two factors—the image as referential, as the asymptote of reality, and its way of mummifying change—within itself and contributes a third factor, which he designates with the term “belief”.⁴ *Believing* is a human activity that describes an attitude of the subject with respect to the object: “the special appeal to the subject rests on the pre-existence of concrete objects, a preexistence offered by their preservation via indexicality” (Rosen, 2001: 23-24).

While the first gap signals an ontological distance between reality and its representation, the second gap is found in the temporal dimension. Rosen takes up the *Bazinian* idea of photography as an imprint because its origin—and the reality it represents—is always located in a past moment: “The referential credibility of indexicality assumes something absent from any immediate perception: a different *when* from that of the spectator” (Rosen, 2001: 20). And again, he underscores the centrality of the subject when he adds that “since this different *when* cannot be immediately present, it must be ‘filled in’, ‘inferred’, ‘provided’ by the subject” (Rosen, 2001: 20-21).

But these two gaps described by Rosen do not fit perfectly with the *Bazinian* intention, because the American author’s starting point fails to accord sufficient value to the dual nature of the photographic image. By denying the ontological equivalence between photographic image and image of the world, Rosen understands photography as a referentiality that necessarily generates these distances or gaps in his reading of Bazin. But Bazin does not consider photography to be *only* a referentiality that has the particular feature of being causal and objective. The ontology of the photographic image, as Bazin understands it, is twofold. To designate the two dimensions that comprise the nature of the photograph, in this article we propose to use the terms “object-image” and “image-of-the-world”.

THE ONTOLOGY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE, AS BAZIN UNDERSTANDS IT, IS TWOFOLD. TO DESIGNATE THE TWO DIMENSIONS THAT COMPRISE THE NATURE OF THE PHOTOGRAPH, IN THIS ARTICLE WE PROPOSE TO USE THE TERMS “OBJECT-IMAGE” AND “IMAGE-OF-THE-WORLD”

Bazin does not employ these two terms exactly, but he does tend to distinguish between these two modes of conceiving photography and other images. Thus, while the object-image refers to photographic materiality in terms of representation (medium + image), the image-of-the-world refers to the reality re-presented in the photograph. To signal the first we would refer to “the picture of Pedro”, while to talk about the second we would say “this is Pedro”. The object-image is therefore that which *alludes* to something other than itself. This dimension of the image is what Bazin calls “appearance” and, as in the case of other referential objects, the photograph thus un-

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ITS MATERIAL BASIS AND ITS USE OF LANGUAGE IS NOT ENTIRELY ARBITRARY, AS IS THE CASE IN ALL OTHER VISUAL ARTS; INSTEAD, THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES PREDISPOSE CINEMA TO A CERTAIN TYPE OF USE OF THOSE IMAGES, WHICH, THROUGH THEIR MATERIALISATION, ARE ANCHORED IN TIME AND SPACE

derstood is relative to something other than itself. On the other hand, the image-of-the-world is the essential and particular dimension of photography and of cinema. This dimension is what distinguishes photography from painting, and it is definitive for according the photographic image an essential realism. The image-of-the-world is the referentiality of the photograph itself in relation to its origin. From the *Bazinian* perspective, the photographic image is a natural image, like the appearance of physical objects and living beings. The French critic would say that the photograph is the object itself, but liberated from its temporal contingencies.⁵ The image-of-the-world does not refer to a different reality; rather, it is reality itself, in the sense that it *not only* represents, but re-presents the objects of sensory reality. For this reason, Bazin calls it an imprint of light (without distinguishing it from the imprints of light that we witness in everyday life), i.e., he considers it a re-materialisation of a specific reality.⁶ It could therefore be asserted that the photograph refers to the real in such a way that the picture itself is the closest thing to a mental concept: its resemblance consists in the possibility of re-directing the spectator's perception to the things themselves. The appearance of a particular object *x* is the same in two manifestations: the photographic and the real. Thus, the photographic images not only allude to a referent, but also, by virtue of their

automatic origin, *are* the referent. All other signs and images, on the other hand, allude only to the existence of something other than themselves, without managing to be proof of the reality from which they originated. An imprint may perhaps allow us to infer the height of a walker and a wound on the face could enable us to discern a physical injury that a person has suffered in the past, but only the photographic image allows us to perceive a real object without need of its present existence.

On this point, it is important to remember that Bazin proposed to focus attention on the photographic image as a starting point rather than a goal when explaining cinematic realism. Therefore, cinematic realism does not consist exclusively in the relationship that the photograph establishes with the world. Rather, the centrality of ontology in *Bazinian* theory points to a differentiation between cinema's raw material and cinema as art, because this raw material, in contrast with what happens in other art forms, is not created, but recorded, presenting to us the image of the world itself. Thus, the relationship between its material basis and its use of language is not entirely arbitrary, as is the case in all other visual arts; instead, the photographic images predispose cinema to a certain type of use of those images, which, through their materialisation, are anchored in time and space.

This way of understanding the photographic image might be objected to on the basis that a different medium of an image already constitutes an ontological difference. However, it could also be argued that Bazin himself explained that the photograph snatches that recorded appearance from the flow of time, reinserting it in real time, immortalising the image. Mummification is a process of the image and not of the medium.

It could be said that for Bazin the photograph is not a photograph *of* something, but a something past that is immortalised in a photograph. Thus, after explaining why the referentiality described

by Rosen does not entirely cover what Bazin meant, it is nevertheless possible to take up a certain aspect of the second gap mentioned by Rosen to explain the relationship between the change of temporality and the subject who perceives the photograph. Because the photograph effectively *presentifies* something that is in the past and it is the subject who, by knowing how the photographic image is produced, recognises it. However, it is also important to clarify an element of this argument: the role played by the subject with respect to the temporality of the photograph in relation to the past reality does not consist in *refilling*, *inferring* and *providing*—as Rosen understands it—but simply in *recognising* that it is a past image, a bodiless vision.

Lee Carruthers (2011: 14) explores this temporal question when he explains that “[f]inding its basis in photography, cinema ‘makes the past’ when it captures a temporal instant, yet is experienced ‘now’ as a succession of images unfolding before us in the present.” Carruthers explains how the ontological identity of two separate temporal moments is effectuated through the *re-presentification* of the past. According to Carruthers, the photograph does not have a referentiality because it does not (only) refer to a past moment, but it also re-presents that moment to us, and actualises it. Carruthers also views the subject as indispensable to an understanding of *Bazinian* realism; however, he astutely proposes an understanding of its importance that stresses the subject’s experience of a particular reality, which is accessed through cinema and not in more material aspects of cinematic time and space.⁷ The spatial materiality of the image serves as a starting point, but it does not cover everything that Bazin pointed to as the possibility of a realist aesthetic trend. We need to take a step further, towards the concept of *duration*, where photographic objectivity, cinematic temporality and the subject all converge, to understand why realism is inseparable from cinema in Bazin’s theory.

3. FROM MOVEMENT TO DURATION

“We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves. Our vision is continually active, continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present to us as we are.”

(BERGER, 1972: 9)

Although in *Ontologie* Bazin focuses particularly on the description of the ontology of the photographic image, there are two points where he makes direct reference to cinema: when he suggests that it has inherited all of its properties from photography, and when he alludes to the temporal dimension that is incorporated into the moving image. The theorist describes this temporal aspect in terms of *duration*: “the cinema is objectivity in time. ... for the first time, the image of things is likewise the image of their duration, change mummified as it were” (Bazin, 1967: 14-15).

This is an aspect that was also developed by the theorist Siegfried Kracauer, a contemporary of Bazin’s who, however, never knew of his work. Both for Bazin and for Kracauer, spatial objectivity (photography) and temporal objectivity (cinema) have the same “basic” properties. To these properties, cinema *adds* its own quality of the automatic recording of reality in time: the flow of life (Kracauer, 1989: 102-105). Although the two authors adopt a similar premise when they argue that realism in the recorded arts (photography and cinema) is derived from the specific nature of the medium, their respective theories stress different aspects. Kracauer takes an approach that is materialist, or “functional”, as Francesco Casetti (1994: 47) would call it, while Bazin approaches the question from a phenomenological perspective. The basic difference between the two lies in the fact that the first emphasises physical reality in itself, while such reality for Bazin *only* constitutes a privileged point of access to the essential signification of the world. These differences also

give rise to two different readings of the temporal dimension of cinema. Kracauer understands cinematic temporality in material terms, as *movement*, while Bazin views it from a personalist perspective, understanding it as *duration*.⁸ For Bazin, cinema is not a series of moving images following one after another to create the illusion of movement or flow, but a means of capturing the *duration* of events: cinema mummifies change. The difference between these two readings resides in the fact that while the first underscores its operation (bringing a real image to life), the second is more interested in the subjective experience of that operation, in the sense of its perception and the consequences of that perception on the subject. The recovery of time is important for Bazin because, in addition to bringing a fragment of movement recorded in the past into the present, the film camera re-presents an integral set of actions and events, a duration. Cinematic duration is a visual experience of reali-

ty that occurs when our eyes witness a particular event, even though that event was recorded by the camera in a past moment. This duration becomes lived and current because it takes place in the present moment of the projection.

In view of this double temporality, the mummification of change is a paradox, an apparent contradiction, because just as the camera freezes reality in order to immortalise it, snatching it from the flow of real time, by recording the movement it recomposes a visual sequence. This makes it possible to re-visit the past and to halt the decay inherent in the temporal flow: the progression or duration that cinema has snatched from the flow of time, reincorporating it into a “time” now that is not its original time. And, paradoxically, this temporality is restored in cinema to be repeated again and again during the projections. Thus, the fragment of time that has been rescued from temporal decay is doomed to decay again and again *ad infinitum*.

Siegfried Kracauer



This updating of time produced by cinema is something more than mere succession. The very term that Bazin uses is chosen based on the particular internal action of the subject: *duration* (*durée*), in direct reference to Henri Bergson, for whom duration is defined precisely as an essential subjective element of knowledge and not from a measurable, materialist perspective (cfr. Bilsker, 2002). In this way, Bazin positions himself epistemologically as a realist and an anti-positivist who is at the same time convinced that cinema is a privileged means of access to reality. In the era in which Bazin wrote his theory, any discussion of flow or duration implied a discussion of reality in its totality, because Bergson attributed this character to existence itself. Indeed, according to Bergson, reality is not immobile, but in a state of constant change: “the body is changing form at every moment; or rather, there is no form, since form is immobile and the reality is movement. What is real is the continual *change* of form: *form is only a snapshot view of a transition*” (Bergson,



Henri Bergson

1964: 328). However, Bergson rejected the idea of cinema as a medium for reinstating duration. Indeed, he resorted to cinematic metaphors to explain the human being's inability to know the true duration of things, which can only be ascertained, in his view, through intuition (cfr. Bergson, 1964: 331-332).⁹

While for Bergson the illusion of movement generated by the perception and cinema prevents the subject from apprehending the flow of reality, for Bazin both the perception and cinema are ideal media for capturing that flow or duration of reality. The paradoxical expression "mummifying change" (or "setting the flow") would find its ideal tool for representation in the sequence shot, and, especially, in the *Bazinian* fact-image. Bazin's preference for this kind of tool of cinematic representation finds its origins in the ontology of the image and in the place that the subject holds in the appreciation or, more precisely, in the recognition of the realism of record images, which, in cinema, gives us access to the essential through the concrete and to duration through the illusion of movement.

CONCLUSIONS

To make sense of cinematic realism as described by André Bazin, it is necessary to understand photographic objectivity in terms of the "automatic production" of the record image. This genetic quality of the image, in being recognised as such by the subject, produces a credibility in what is represented that overcomes the limitations of other visual representations. The realism of the photographic image is not limited to resemblance but refers to reality, standing as evidence thereof. In this way, the record image allows access, according to Bazin, to things themselves, through their own manifestation.

The genetic aspect of photography has been inherited by cinema, which also enables a kind of temporal objectivity: the mummification of change. However, Bazin's emphasis is not on the mere materiality of the medium, but on its subjective reception. What Bazin calls attention to in this respect is its duration, a duration that can only be experienced by a living being who possesses a notion of the passage of time. It can thus be concluded that behind certain stylistic preferences that enhance the realism of a film we can find both the objective origin of the record image and the subject who recognises, in the succession of still frames, an experience of the flow of the world. Cinema, viewed in this way, is not merely a series of more or less conventional techniques, but a window granting access to the reality of living beings and of things. As Bazin himself would say, it is a means of accessing the concrete and essential of the world, in its own duration. ■

NOTES

- * This article is a translation of the original Spanish version, published simultaneously in the same journal, *L'Atalante*. The bibliographical references from the Spanish version have been maintained, except for two books: G. Deleuze's *Cinema 2*, and A. Bazin's *What is Cinema?*

** An early version of this article (in Spanish) is included in the unpublished doctoral thesis titled *El cine como acceso al mundo: Teoría del realismo cinematográfico de André Bazin* (Esqueda Verano, 2016).

- 1 The term “record image” (and further on “cinema of record”) is used here in distinction from animated cinema, whose images are drawn by hand or computer generated.
- 2 Rosen refers to Colin MacCabe and Jean-Louis Comolli as two examples. In his first response to Bazin in the 1970s, MacCabe considered that for Bazin photography possesses a transparency that creates a direct connection between reality and knowledge of reality. For Rosen, MacCabe’s view of Bazin’s realism elides any participation of the subject, making identification in realism impossible. Recently, MacCabe has rectified this view in *Opening Bazin* (Joubert-Laurencin and Andrew, 2010: 66). Meanwhile, Comolli was also highly critical of Bazin, dismissing him as an idealist. However, Comolli was correct in highlighting the centrality of the subject in *Bazinian* theory (Rosen, 2001: 9-10).
- 3 Also for Peirce, who defined the indexical sign, the knowledge of the subject is central. This is made clear when he explains that “an index is a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed” (Pietarinen and Bellucci, 2016: 153). If we apply this *Peircean* premise to the photographic image, we would conclude that if the referent of the image (for example, a face) is removed, the photographic image acquires an autonomy in relation to the object represented. It is only when the subject recognises that image as an impression of a real face that it acquires its automatic referentiality and, in so doing, its realism.
- 4 The term “belief” in relation to *Bazinian* theory has been developed by Rosen over the years. Its origins can be found in “History of Image, Image of History: Subject and Ontology in Bazin” (1987) and subsequently, in *Change Mummified* (2001). However, it is in his contribution to *Opening Bazin*, “Belief in Bazin”, that Rosen addresses the concept exclusively. In that article, Rosen distinguishes between “belief” (*croyan-*

ce) and “faith” (*foi*). The second refers to the religious sphere and the first to the epistemological sphere (Joubert-Laurencin and Andrew, 2010: 107).

- 5 This point would require a more in-depth exploration than is possible within the scope of this article. An introduction to this exploration is offered by Daniel Morgan (2006), who explains the transfer process from reality to representation, which may clarify certain points on the question.
- 6 This *Bazinian* distinction between the photograph as an object (medium + image) and the photographic image (the image alone) is related to Jean-Paul Sartre’s perspective in *Liminaire*, which influenced Bazin throughout his career as a critic, and especially in the development of *Ontologie*.
- 7 In his article, Carruthers first offers an overview of how subjectivity has been addressed in relation to realism from a more material perspective in authors like Rosen, Doane and Mulvey (Carruthers, 2011: 17-22). Subsequently, he develops his own reading of the experience of the subject in *Bazinian* theory with reference to Deleuze (Carruthers, 2011: 23-29). A more thorough study of the difference between the respective positions of Rosen and Deleuze or Carruthers can be found in Esqueda Verano and Cuevas Álvarez (2012).
- 8 Despite their differences, it is surprising to note how Kracauer and Bazin, approaching the question from different perspectives, agree on some of the most characteristic features of the films they review. These similarities can easily be confirmed in a comparative analysis of their reviews of *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941) (Bazin, 1947a; Kracauer, Rawson and Von Moltke, 2012); *Paisà* [Paisan] (Bazin, 1947b; Kracauer, Rawson and Von Moltke, 2012); or even *Dumbo* (Bazin, 1947c; Kracauer, Rawson and Von Moltke, 2012). These characteristics are due precisely to the ontology of the photographic image, which has passed on many of its properties to the cinema.
- 9 It would be Gilles Deleuze who would ultimately bring Bergson’s theories into dialogue with cinema, and who would finally synthesise Bergson and Bazin apropos of the time-image in his book *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (1989).

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CINEMA AS CHANGE MUMMIFIED: OBJECTIVITY AND DURATION IN ANDRÉ BAZIN'S THEORY

Abstract

This article focuses on objectivity and duration as main features of the realistic understanding of cinema defended by André Bazin. In so doing, it establishes a dialogue between Bazin's ideas and those of contemporary theorists such as Gunning, Rosen and Carruthers. It is thus observed that the "essential objectivity" of the photographic image, which Bazin associates with its "automatic" or mechanical origins, demands a central position for the subject, who recognises the images projected as evidence of the world. Cinema adds duration, the "mummification of change", which Bazin understands in a *Bergsonian* sense. Cinema thus snatches reality from the flow of time, halts the inherent decay of that flow, and incorporates it into a moment—the moment of its projection—that is not its original time and that can be revisited *ad infinitum*.

Key words

André Bazin; Film theory; Realism; Photographic image; Objectivity; Duration; Credibility.

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EL CINE COMO MOMIFICACIÓN DEL CAMBIO: OBJETIVIDAD Y DURACIÓN EN LA TEORÍA DE ANDRÉ BAZIN

Resumen

Este artículo estudia la objetividad y la duración como rasgos cardinales de la comprensión realista del cine defendida por André Bazin. Con este fin, contrastamos las propuestas bazinianas con teóricos contemporáneos como Gunning, Rosen o Carruthers. Se observa así que la «esencial objetividad» de la imagen fotográfica, que Bazin vincula a su «génesis automática» o mecánica, reclama una posición central del sujeto, quien reconoce las imágenes proyectadas como evidencia del mundo. El cine añade la duración, la «momificación del cambio», que Bazin entiende en sentido bergsoniano. De este modo, el cine sustrae la realidad de su cauce temporal, detiene la corrupción inherente al flujo temporal, y lo incorpora a un tiempo —el de la proyección— que no es el suyo original y que se puede visitar *ad infinitum*.

Palabras clave

Teoría del cine; realismo; imagen fotográfica; objetividad; duración; credibilidad; André Bazin.

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