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Today, Icarus: On the persistence of André Bazin's myth of total cinema

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Part III: Perspectives on the Centrifugal Screen

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Summary

Today, Icarus: On the Persistence of André Bazin's Myth of Total Cinema

By means of an in-depth exegesis of André Bazin's (1918-1958) film critical work, this study explains the significance of his notion of "myth" in relation to history, technology, and perspective, and examines several references to religious, scientific and poetic frameworks. Throughout his oeuvre, Bazin develops what he terms a "myth of total cinema" as a critical method that counters canonical film histories, which he crystallizes in the repeated comparison of cinema with a particular mythical figure, namely Icarus. From this perspective, Bazin's understanding of myth offers an original reformulation of the historiography of cinema, via an affirmation of imagination as the driving force of its evolution.

In the introductory part, "**Myth as Method**," I closely examine Bazin's institutional critique to prescriptive aesthetics from the perspective of myth: cinema, first of all, *exists* before any film theory can be composed. Already in his first film essays, Bazin invokes the notion of myth as the "social-aesthetic fact" of cinema, i.e. that cinema's social foundations supersede its aesthetics. He later on develops this in his famed essay "Le Mythe du cinéma total" (1946) in stark opposition with exhaustive film histories. Bazin thereby lays the foundations of myth in an apology for the anti-elitist practice of film criticism as well as for realism: the "low-grade realism" of the talking film was not, in Bazin's view, the decadence of an art form, but rather its vocation.

But what does this mean, really, that a film *exists*? In the second part, "**Cinema Is the Art of Reality**," I approach the socio-aesthetic foundations of Bazin's myth from an ontological point of view. More specifically, I elaborate on Bazin's critical concept of "integral realism," which he develops as the inimitable association of cinema with the world: 'la recreation du monde à son image.'^{1, i} By looking into a series of religious as well as scientific references in Bazin, I argue that he offers an original solution to the dichotomy

¹ Bazin, André (1946). "Le Mythe du cinéma total." *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* Paris: Éditions du Cerf (2008): p. 23

between image versus reality, or cinema and the world. I look specifically at his essays on exploration film, from which I further develop the analogy between Icarus and the invention, or rather, the *imagination of cinema*.

In the third and final part of this dissertation, “**Perspectives on the Centrifugal Screen**,” I elaborate on Bazin’s notion of the “centrifugal screen” via a selection of allusions in his writing to both painting and poetry. First, following up on the Icarian analogy in the Myth-essay, I analyse a specific reference to Pieter Bruegel’s *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* (1556) via which Bazin situates himself within a tradition of twentieth-century anti-war social thought. This particular painting in fact directly informs Bazin’s views on the poetic interplay between reality and image, and will prove to be fundamental throughout his extensive critical work on the relation between cinema and painting. More specifically, in his essays on *Van Gogh* (Alain Resnais, 1948) Bazin further develops what he terms a “new cosmology of film,” alongside a critical reformulation of form versus content. From there on, I reread Bazin’s essay on stereoscopy, dating from 1952, from the perspective of the contemporary discourse on three-dimensional cinema. I intend to approach this discourse, which often centres on notions of spectacle and illusion, from a “more realist” perspective. I will maintain that, rather than turning its back to realism, recent 3-D films, *Adieu au langage* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2014) and *Every Thing Will Be Fine* (Wim Wenders, 2015) in particular, put 3-D at use to attain the integration of image with reality.

Bazin initially described the social impact of cinema as a ‘[...] gigantesque courant d’images et de mythes qui circulent à travers les peuples du monde [...]’^{2, ii} The myth of total cinema conceptualizes this both from a technological and an aesthetic point of view as a particular defence of sound cinema, via which Bazin, as I maintain, more universally reformulates the critical discourse of realism by affirming the poetic interplay between form and content. In his understanding of myth, then, Bazin sees the integration of cinema and reality: as much as he asserts the existence of the world, “integral realism” supports the reality of cinema. By analysing the endurance of the myth of Icarus in a variety of documentary, experimental, animation and feature length films, I will establish the

² Bazin, André and Jean-Pierre Chartier. “Peut-on s’intéresser au cinéma?” *Maison des lettres* (December 1942): p. 14

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persistence of Bazin's myth of total cinema and ultimately argue for the validity of his critical notion of "integral realism" for film studies today.

Samenvatting

Thans, Icarus: Over de Persistentie van André Bazin's Mythe van Totale Cinema

Dit proefschrift is een exegetische studie van het werk van de Franse film criticus André Bazin (1918-1958), en beoogt aan de hand van een nauwkeurig onderzoek naar verschillende poëtische, religieuze en wetenschappelijke referenties binnen zijn denkkader, het belang van zijn notie van “mythe” uiteen te zetten met betrekking tot geschiedenis, technologie en perspectief. Doorheen zijn oeuvre ontwikkelt Bazin wat hij de “mythe van totale cinema” noemt als een kritische methode die de gevestigde historiografische benadering tegengaat, hetgeen zich kristalliseert in een herhaaldelijke vergelijking van cinema met een specifiek mythologisch figuur, met name Icarus. Vanuit deze invalshoek biedt Bazin's begrip van mythe een originele herformulering van de historiografie van cinema, via een bevestiging van verbeelding als drijvende kracht achter de evolutie van film.

In het inleidende deel, “**Myth as Method**,” onderzoek ik Bazin's institutionele kritiek op prescriptieve esthetische theorieën vanuit het perspectief van mythe: cinema *bestaat* vooraleer eender welke film theorie kan worden opgezet. In zijn allereerste filmessay, roept Bazin de notie van mythe reeds aan als “socio-esthetisch feit” van cinema, waarmee hij bedoelt dat het fundamentele sociale karakter van cinema haar esthetiek bepaalt. Hij ontwikkelt dit idee vervolgens in zijn welbekende essay “Le Mythe du cinéma total” (1946) in schril contrast met alomvattende film geschiedenissen. Op die manier legt hij de grondslag voor mythe in een apologie voor de anti-elitaire praktijk van filmkritiek in samenhang met een verdediging van het realisme: het zogenaamde “minderwaardige” realisme van de geluidsfilm was in Bazin's beschouwing geen teken van de decadentie van een kunstvorm, maar juist haar roeping.

Maar wat betekent dit precies, dat cinema *bestaat*? In het tweede deel, “**Cinema Is the Art of Reality**,” benader ik de socio-esthetische grondslag van Bazin's mythe vanuit een ontologisch standpunt. Hiervoor verdiep ik me in Bazin's kritische notie van het “integraal realisme,” hetgeen hij uiteenzet als de unieke associatie van cinema met de wereld: “de recreatie van de wereld naar haar beeld” (1946). Ik analyseer in het bijzonder een reeks

religieuze en wetenschappelijk referenties in Bazin's teksten, en betoog dat hij een origineel antwoord biedt op de dichotomie tussen beeld en realiteit, of cinema en de wereld. Ik richt me hiervoor voornamelijk tot zijn essays over ontdekkingsfilms, waarna ik de analogie verder uitwerk tussen Icarus en de uitvinding, of beter gezegd de *verbeelding* van cinema.

In het derde en laatste deel van dit proefschrift, "**Perspectives on the Centrifugal Screen,**" verdiep ik me in wat Bazin het "centrifugale scherm" van cinema noemt aan de hand van een reeks verwijzingen naar poëzie en schilderkunst doorheen zijn werk. Allereerst volg ik de analogie met Icarus in het Mythe-essay op, via een analyse van een specifieke referentie naar Pieter Bruegels *De Val van Icarus* (1556) waarmee Bazin zich situeert binnen een twintigste-eeuwse traditie van anti-oorlogse sociale kritiek. Met name in zijn essays over de kunstdocumentaire *Van Gogh* (Alain Resnais, 1948), ontwikkelt Bazin wat hij de "nieuwe kosmologie van film" noemt in samenhang met een herformulering van de kritische categorieën van "vorm" en "inhoud." Vervolgens bied ik een nieuwe lezing van zijn tekst over stereoscopie uit 1952 vanuit het hedendaagse discours omtrent driedimensionale cinema. Ik beoog dit discours, dat zich vaak toespitst op spektakel en illusie, te benaderen vanuit een "meer realistisch" standpunt. Ik beargumenteer tenslotte dat recente 3-D films, *Adieu au language* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2014) en *Every Thing Will Be Fine* (Wim Wenders, 2015) in het bijzonder, zich, verre van het realisme de rug toe te keren, de 3-D technologie eigen maken om een integratie van beeld en realiteit te bereiken.

Aan het begin van zijn carrière omschreef Bazin de sociale impact van cinema als een 'gigantische stroom van beelden en mythes die alle populaties wereldwijd doorkruist' (1942). De mythe van totale cinema conceptualiseert dit zowel vanuit een technologisch en een esthetisch standpunt als een specifiek pleidooi voor de geluidsfilm, waarmee Bazin meer algemeen het kritische discours omtrent het realisme herformuleert aan de hand van een bekrachtiging van het poëtische samenspel tussen vorm en inhoud. Op die manier behelst Bazin in zijn begrip van mythe de integratie van cinema en realiteit: voor zover hij het bestaan van de wereld beaamt, zo ook ondersteunt zijn "integraal realisme" de realiteit van cinema. Door de persistentie van de Icarus mythe uiteen te zetten in een diverse selectie van documentaires, experimentele-, animatie- en langspeelfilms, bevestig ik met dit onderzoek de bestendigheid van Bazin's mythe van totale cinema en toon ik uiteindelijk de gegrondheid aan van zijn kritische begrip van het "integraal realisme" voor hedendaagse film studies.

Appendix: Translations

Prologue: Myth, Reality, Cinema

Used existing translations from: *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009)

- i 'The guiding myth of the invention of cinema is thus that it will accomplish the dominant myth of every nineteenth-century technology for reproducing reality, from photography to the phonograph: a complete realism [*réalisme intégral*], the recreation of the world in its own image – an image upon which the irreversibility of time and the artist's interpretation do not weigh. [...]
- The ancient myth of Icarus had to await the internal combustion engine before descending from Plato's higher world, but this myth had been present in every human being since we began to observe the birds.' (Barnard, pp. 17-18)
- ii '[...] the recreation of the world in its own image.' (Barnard, p. 17)
- iii '[...] gigantic flow of images and myths that circulate across all people of the world!'

Part I: Myth as Method

- i 'What social influence can this gigantic flow of images and myths have, that circulate across all people of the world! One might say that, perhaps, the diffusion of cinema is the greatest recurring aesthetico-social fact since the Middle Ages.'
- ii 'No, it is not the concern of a serious critic; cinema is less significant than the dung of a goat.'
- iii 'Cinema was about twenty or thirty years younger than Paul Souday; one shouldn't be too young to please the old critics.'
- iv '[...] their refusal to believe in anything that is not established with a bookish or academic tradition.'

Chapter I: Talking Cinema: Cinephobia and Myth

Used existing translations from: *French Cinema of the Occupation and Resistance: The Birth of a Critical Esthetic*. Trans. Stanley Hochman. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing (1981); *What Is Cinema? Volume 2*. Trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California press (2005); "On the *Politique des auteurs*." Trans. Peter Graham. In: *Cahiers du cinéma*:

The 1950s Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave. Vol. 1. Ed. Jim Hillier. Oxon: Routledge (2005): pp. 248-259; *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009); *André Bazin's New Media.* Trans. Dudley Andrew. Berkeley: University of California Press (2014); *Bazin On Global Cinema, 1948-1959.* Trans. Bert Cardullo. Texas: University of Texas Press (2014)

- v 'The cinema will be bergsonian, or it won't be.'
- vi 'The cinematographic aesthetic will be social or cinema will do away with aesthetics.'
- i 'So? So perhaps in twenty years the "young critics" of some new form of spectacle that we cannot even imagine, and which can't be guaranteed to be "an art," will be reading our film criticism from 1953 with a condescending smirk. Our views today could seem to them more naïve than the aesthetic sectarianism we find in our predecessors from the 1930s, who were properly outraged at the death throes of an art of the pure image that had finally reached maturity. In the meantime and while waiting, let's just play dodgeball; I mean, let's go to the cinema and treat it as an art.' (Andrew, p. 316)
- ii 'A couple of decades old, this art nevertheless supplies us with no document. [...] The previous generation, which has real-life experience of film history, did not suffer from this lacuna; memory functioned as their cinemathèque. Today's youth, on the contrary, commences a series of generations which will know less and less of cinema, even if they consume it more and more.' (Hochman, p. 27)
- iii 'Will we turn our backs on this prodigious development because it is contemporary? Will we be so blind to our own times? Will we continue to limit our humanism and our culture to written civilization because we are accustomed to confusing it with all civilization?' (Hochman, p. 28)
- iv 'A remark in relation to the condition of the film historian is essential. This condition is very different from that of a historian *tout court*. [...] The importance of Sadoul, and the work demanded from him to the extent of his mission, is to contribute largely to the creation of a cinema history. By its scale and the critical system it supposes, his undertaking is the first that really deserves the name of history.'
- v 'Thus, since four or five years, a situation arose partially comparable to that of literature: an elitist public for elitist criticism. Unfortunately it is not as simple as that, because there is no such thing as an elitist cinema and, as "scientific" or distinguished as they might be, the critics are very much obliged to speak about films unworthy of this attention. And this is the uncalled-for difficulty: how to apply to the whole of cinematographic production a critical reflection, which is equally

worthwhile? In other words, and in its most elevated manifestations, criticism suffers from a crisis of references.'

- vi 'In this way, every new improvement to cinema merely brings it paradoxically closer to its origins. Cinema has yet to be invented!' (Barnard, p. 17)
- vii 'When the infant art pronounced its first word, this unexpected sound provoked a real consternation in the world of the aesthetes and theoreticians of the screen. It took twenty years to create theories on the silent art. Were we [suddenly] supposed to change everything? We preferred to ignore the new invention. [...] If, just as your child is about to pronounce its first words, some sceptical philosopher came to tell you, with a smile: "He will start talking nonsense. Cut off his tongue"- would you assent to it?'
- viii '[...] a very curious example of this resistance to reality, of this intellectual laziness, [...].'
- ix 'The primacy of the image is a historical and technological accident; the nostalgia some still feel for the silent screen does not go back far enough in the childhood of cinema.' (Barnard, p. 17)
- x 'Intellectuals don't like to be interrupted. When the screen started to talk, they kept quiet. This was not out of politeness. They enjoy making it heard that it is instead out of contempt or out of heartbreak. We think ourselves that it is out of spite. Let's agree that such boorishness was bound to offend our aestheticians: so much intellectual audacity, so many turbulent articles and discussions, such generous advice and many oracles without appeal, only to arrive at this ungratefulness. By rejecting their rule, cinema indulged in a second-rate realism. That's it, this will end in tears.'
- xi 'Cinema has yet to be invented!' (Barnard, p. 17)
- xii 'From then on, the identification between Stalin and History was accomplished once and for all, so that the contradiction of subjectivity does not occur anymore when it comes to him.'
- 'The problem that arises in cinema as well as in theology is the retroactivity of eternal salvation. Now, in all evidence, a saint does not exist in the present, only a person who becomes it and, moreover, risks damnation up until death.'
- xiii 'The speech of the Dictator is precisely the only passage in the film that profoundly moved me, not for the script lines (I barely listened to them), but for the sole and unique reason that we see Chaplin's face at length in close-up and that we hear his voice. I indeed say Chaplin and not Charlot, because for the first time we witness in this sequence of the Dictator the sketch of a metamorphosis. The proximity of the camera and, perhaps even more, the range of panchromatic greys shows the clearly legible face of Chaplin, like a superimposition under the mask of the little man with the moustache. [...] I owe to this shot, which is technically speaking banal, and to his

speech, completely superfluous, one of my purest cinematographic emotions. This passage is unanimously condemned by the critics in favour of the dance with the globe, or the barber being shaved to the waltz of Brahms; but from the perspectives of a critique in accordance with myth, this sequence is on the contrary one of the most perfect scenes. The speech veils it in my memory with a transparent and transient smoke that leaves the image surrounded with the deafening aura of his voice.'

xiv '[...] some mysterious aesthetic necessity and (since I have plunged into geographical metaphors) to see in Monsieur Verdoux the work nearest to that equilibrium in which the myth, like a river flowing effortlessly and without hindrance to the sea, deposits no more than a fine carpet of silk and of gold dust.' (Gray, *Volume 2*, p. 123)

xv 'FROM THE CHARLOT CHARACTER TO THE MYTH:

In less than fifteen years, the little man with a silly tailcoat, a small trapezoid moustache, his cane and bowler hat occupied the consciousness of humanity. Never, ever, has a myth been so universally upheld. [...]

We cannot understand anything of the character of Charlot if we try to do so according to categories that are not his own. Charlot is a mythical character that dominates each adventure in which he gets involved. [...] For hundreds of millions of people on this planet, Charlot is a hero, as were Odysseus and Roland le Preux to other civilizations, except that today we know the ancient hero through completed literary works, which have fixed their adventures and avatars. For the people of the twentieth century, on the contrary, Charlot can always play a new role in a new film. Chaplin, so to speak, is not the author of this or that film, his work does not align itself in a filmology; he is Charlot's creator and guarantor.'

xvi 'Charlie is essentially a socially unadapted person; Verdoux is super-adapted.' (Gray, *Volume 2*, p. 105)

xvii 'The backwards kick, especially when it has no precise use (even if this use is mere revenge), perfectly expresses Charlie's constant concern not to be tied to the past, to drag nothing along behind him.' (Barnard, pp. 31-32)

xviii 'The practical function of objects is part of the human order which is itself practical and anticipates future events.' (Barnard, p. 26)

xix 'But while makeshift solutions are always enough for him, he demonstrates an extraordinary ingenuity in the present moment. No situation ever leaves him at a loss. For him, there is a solution to every problem, even if the world, and perhaps the object world even more than the human world, was not made for him.' (Barnard, p. 26)

xx '[...] this [...] was a misunderstanding of the essential nature of film history.' (Barnard, p. 112)

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- xxi ‘Cinema cannot exist without a minimum number (and this number is immense) of immediate viewers. Even when film directors challenge an audience’s taste, their boldness is valid only to the extent to which we allow that viewers are mistaken about what they should like and what they will come to like one day. The only possible contemporary analogy is with architecture, because a house only has meaning when it is habitable. Film too is a functional art. Using another reference system, we would have to say that its existence precedes its essence. Critics must take this existence as their starting point, even in their most adventurous extrapolations. Like history and with many of the same reservations, taking note of a shift surpasses reality and is already a value judgment. This is something that those who damned talking cinema from the start did not want to admit, when it already had the incomparable advantage of silent cinema of having replaced it.’ (Barnard, p. 133)
- xxii ‘Even if this critical pragmatism does not seem to readers to be very well founded, at least they will admit that it justifies humility and methodical prudence in the face of any sign of cinema’s evolution.’ (Barnard, p.133)
- xxiii ‘Bazin appears to tell Sartre that he does not understand his discourse on cinema. The entire article is structured around the critique that Sartre forgets, when he talks about cinema, what he himself had said about American literature.’
- xxiv ‘It is true that we could have, and perhaps should have, fused these articles into a continuous essay. We have renounced doing so out of fear of falling into didactic artifice and preferred to trust the reader and leave it only to him or her to discover if this exists: namely, the intellectual justification for the reconciliation of these texts. The title of the series *What Is Cinema?* holds not so much the promise of an answer, but rather enunciates a question, which the author will pose himself throughout these pages.’
- xxv ‘These books do not pretend to offer an exhaustive geology and geography of cinema, but merely carry the reader along in a succession of probes, explorations, and practical overviews on the occasion of films suggested for everyday critique.’
- xxvi ‘The filmic fact, which is individual, distinguishes itself from the cinematographic fact, which is much broader, more vague: in one word “social”.’
- xxvii ‘[...] ostentatious of “scientific” generalisation and of philosophical abstraction.’
- xxviii ‘It will not be necessary for a distinguished filmologist to have more familiarity with the classics of the screen than a matriculating student has with palimpsests. Far from this ignorance being here a totally unacceptable obstacle, filmology glorifies it. Of course filmologists are not restrained from going to the film theatre, but one should not recommend it to them either; instead, this redundancy risks to obscure the nascent science. Filmology is the study of cinema-in-itself. Nothing proves that Pavlov loved dogs.’

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- xxix ‘[...] as my administrative neighbour tells me: “the only thing missing is his speech”.’
- xxx ‘[...] out of context, in relation to the film in itself, [...].’
- xxxix ‘Here, I don’t want to speak in favour of pessimism, but only plead an historical realism to which I, as a professional critic, am particularly sensitive. I want to say that the big movements in the technological evolution of the cinema escape our initiative or our control; it is more fruitful and more interesting to consider these a priori as developments rather than to hold them for inventions on behalf of a priori critique. It is this kind of critique which almost unanimously condemned the talking cinema at its birth.’
- xxxix ‘[...] the cinematographic purity of the scholars, whose patronage we desire, is a symbol of this new science: of the rigidity of its methods and the asepsis of its laboratories.’
- xxxix ‘I don’t remember which philosopher or psychologist maintained that consciousness was nothing but an epiphenomenon and that, with or without, Descartes would have just as well written the *Discourse on the Method*. Evidently, this theory is false, but I’ll keep only its value as metaphor. With or without criticism, Chaplin, Griffith, Murnau, Stroheim, Dreyer would have existed in the same way: not a single shot in their films would have been changed. When it comes to their work, the abundant criticism that it aroused is merely an epiphenomenal conscious fact, whose necessity does not tackle its usefulness. Nevertheless, I do think that this parasitical vegetation on an impressive tree maintains with it, a fortiori, symbiotic relations that are necessary not only, obviously, to its growth, but without a doubt to its happy ageing.’
- xxxix ‘[...] the principal satisfaction this profession gives me resides in its seeming uselessness: writing film criticism is almost like spitting into water from a bridge.’ (Cardullo, p. 51)
- xxxix ‘It is good for an art to be enriched by its past on the condition that it is not out of an incapacity to create its future, i.e. the past of the day after tomorrow.’
- xxxix ‘Let us not renew with cinema the mistakes of academic pedagogy in teaching literature, for example; mistakes against which the University itself is reacting today. To be more precise, when it comes to the presentation, the commentary or the discussion of a film, for instance, the point will be to start from the normal sensitivity of the spectators.’
- xxxix ‘Cinema starts to enter history. Twenty years ago, it was possible to have seen almost everything noteworthy in cinema; today, many young people are ignorant about most of the outstanding works of film history. There could therefore be no more cinematographic culture that does not start with knowledge of the classics of the “seventh art.” Besides, the evolution of cinema has been so the past twenty

years, that the enlightened amateurs themselves will have the greatest benefit from revising their conceptions after a new viewing of the masterworks.’

- xxxviii ‘[Cohen Seat] has voluntarily obscured his work by transposing the most concrete facts to the vocabulary and the rhetoric of academic philosophy. With a calculated euphuism, he has carefully eliminated, for example, all film titles, all references to specific cinematographic events, the slightest evocation of a name of a star, even one known to anyone; one refers to Plato, Bergson, Euripides, Shakespeare, Molière or Tabarin, but circumvents the names of Lumière, Méliès and René Clair with epiphrases and allusions. [...] Cinematographic language, the medium of the most childish melodramas (provided that one goes to watch them), becomes for the filmologist (who avoids it) a “logos in silver salt”.’
- xxxix ‘When we stop seeing editing and the formal composition of the image as the very essence of film language, the arrival of sound no longer seems to be an aesthetic fault line dividing two radically different kinds of film. A certain kind of film believed itself to have died at the hands of the soundtrack, but it was in no way *the* cinema.’ (Barnard, p. 92)
- xl ‘[...] setting up some sort of atmosphere in the theatre, primarily by listening to records or reading texts.’
- xli ‘The function of criticism is not to bear on a silver platter a truth that may not exist, but, as much as possible, to further – in the minds and hearts of those who read it – the impact of the work of art which is true to itself.’ (Cardullo, p. 59)
- xlii ‘Bazin is inevitably a theoretician, he has the taste for and a preoccupation with abstraction and generalization, he loves drawing out vast wholes, to embrace big categories of films, to bring out common traits, to apply them to other films, etc. I am not sure whether there is one theory of Bazin, because these theorizations lack that which would unify them in a coherent system.’
- xlili ‘There are no works, there are only authors.’
- xliv ‘[...] a polemical sally, which seems to me of limited significance.’ (Graham, p. 250)
- xlv ‘[...] certain “greats” have suffered an eclipse or a loss of their powers, [...].’ (Graham, p. 255)
- xlvi ‘[...] there is no reason why there should not exist - and sometimes they do - flashes in the pan of otherwise mediocre filmmakers.’ (Graham, p. 252)
- xlvii ‘How come that this film completely failed, like mayonnaise that refused to “thicken”? Everything in it is good, yet all together it is inedible.’
- xlviii ‘*Agence matrimoniale* reminds me of curdled mayonnaise. In it, I perfectly distinguish the oil of realism from the egg yolk of good intentions.’

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- xlix ‘If Filmologie “thickened,” this happened like with mayonnaise. All the ingredients existed, ignored, unconsciously and scattered for twenty years. All it took was to think, like a good housewife, of putting in some more egg yolk and to stir in a certain way.’
- l ‘One last remark: a debate is like mayonnaise. It can fail even when all the ingredients are there. But this shouldn’t surprise us. It proves that this is not an arithmetic class, that more is needed than competence: the complicity of chance, some unknown emanations, a certain grace that sometimes denies itself, and at other times sweeps down on you at the very moment of despair. I have seen debates gone astray for forty-five minutes saved by the last, and everyone pleased when they left. It’s that the film is not the only work of art. Critical reflection is one as well; it demands love, sincerity, and inspiration. There is a muse of the ciné-clubs.’
- li ‘The drama does not reside in the growing old of men but in that of cinema: those who do not know how to grow old with it will be overtaken by its evolution.’ (Graham, p. 255)
- lii ‘When [Charles] Baudelaire was paralyzed and unable to utter anything other than his “cré nom,” was he any less Baudelairian?’ (Graham, p. 255)
- liii ‘[...] the equation I just used was artificial, just as much so, in fact, as the distinction one learnt at school between form and content.’ (Graham, p. 255)
- liv ‘[...] the cinema is an art which is both popular and industrial. [...] naturally, [every director’s] artistic course has to be plotted according to the currents - it is not as if he were sailing as his fancy took him on the calm waters of a lake.’ (Graham, p. 250-251)

Part II: Cinema Is the Art of Reality

Used existing translations from: *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009)

- i ‘The production of images has even dispensed with any notion of anthropocentric usefulness. It is no longer the question of the individual’s survival, but more generally of creating an ideal universe in the image of reality, endowed with an independent temporal destiny.’ (Barnard, *Ontology* p. 4)
- ii ‘[...] in less philosophical terms: cinema as the art of reality.’

Chapter II: The Photograph of Danger: A Shark In the Cinema

Used existing translations from: “Death Every Afternoon.” Trans. Mark A. Cohen. In: *Rites of Realism: Essays on Corporeal Cinema*. Ed. Ivone Margulies. Durham: Duke University

Press (2002): pp. 27-31; *What Is Cinema? Vol. 1*. Trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press (2005); *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009); “The Cinema Seen from Etna.” Trans. Stuart Liebmann. In: *Jean Epstein: Critical essays and New Translations*. Eds. Sarah Keller and Jason N. Paul. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press (2012): pp. 287-310; “The Logic of Images.” Trans. Thao Nguyen. In: *Jean Epstein: Critical essays and New Translations*. Eds. Sarah Keller and Jason N. Paul. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press (2012): pp. 330-333

- i ‘*Kon-Tiki* is the most beautiful of all films, but it does not exist! [*Kon-Tiki est le plus beau des films mais il n'existe pas!*] Like those moss-covered stones that, surviving, allow us to reconstruct buildings and statues that no longer exist, the pictures that are here presented are the remains of an unfinished creation about which one hardly dares to dream.’ (Gray, p. 160) [Slightly modified]
- ii ‘These few images in the midst of a flood of film rolls with close to no objective interest, are like invaluable and very moving flotsam on the monotonous swell of the ocean. It’s that their poor state is not experienced as a lack: the huge gaps in these films are in reality a fullness, the fullness of human adventure to which [these images] so fully testify only through their emptiness.’
- iii ‘This term appears in an addition dating from 1958 [...], which suggest, given its rarity, that it was included out of a desire for belated accuracy, able to qualify as scientific; it indeed appears more serious, and is practically never used in any of its two meanings in French.’

‘[...] the phrase in Bazin means that the functioning of cameras for both photography and cinema (the “genesis” extends from the mechanical operation of image creation) is known just well enough by the average viewer to credit in his eyes the resulting image as faithful trace of recorded reality, regardless of its “objective” qualities of resemblance.’
- iv ‘The image may be out of focus, distorted, devoid of colour and without documentary value; nevertheless, it has been created out of the ontology of the model [*elle procède par sa genèse de l'ontologie du modèle*].’ (Barnard, p. 8)
- v ‘[...] this film is not made up only of what we see – its faults are equally witness to its authenticity. The missing documents are the negative imprints of the expedition – its inscription chiselled deep [*son inscription en creux*].’ (Gray, *Vol. 1*, p. 162)
- vi ‘[...] it is not so much the photograph of the shark that interests us as the photograph of danger.’ (Gray, *Vol. 1*, p. 161) [Slightly modified: Gray renders Bazin’s *requin* into a whale and adds an emphasis on “danger” that is absent in the original text.]
- vii ‘What the film records, is the repetition of events that should or could have in all likelihood happened the same way in absence of any camera. This principle of course precludes fantasies like “death struggle with a shark.” Not because,

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- ultimately, the event is inconceivable, but because its repetition would be the denial of the danger that imbues the event with pathos. Either the shark is harmless and it is an ignoble comedy, or it is dangerous and the cameraman who continues to film is found guilty of failing to assist a person in danger.’
- viii ‘[...] some aspect of reality will always have to be sacrificed to reality.’ (Barnard, p. 232)
- ix ‘[...] the qualitative instant in its purest form, [...]’ (Cohen, p. 30)
- x “‘Reality’ [...] should obviously not be understood quantitatively.’ (Barnard, p. 228)
- xi ‘[...] there are cases where, far from constituting the essence of cinema, editing is its negation.’ (Barnard, p. 86)
- xii ‘*Kon-Tiki* is the most beautiful of all films, but it does not exist! [...] [these images are] the remains of an unfinished creation about which one hardly dares to dream.’ (Gray, p. 160) [Slightly modified]
- xiii ‘Death is surely one of those rare events that justifies the term, so beloved by Claude Mauriac, cinematic specificity. Art of time, cinema has the exorbitant privilege of repeating it [...] Cinema only attains and constructs its aesthetic time based on lived time, Bergsonian “durée,” which is in essence irreversible and qualitative. [...] I cannot repeat a single moment of my life, but cinema can repeat any one of these moments indefinitely before my eyes. [...] For every creature, death is the unique moment par excellence. The qualitative time of life is retroactively defined in relation to it. It marks the frontier between the duration of consciousness and the objective time of things. Death is nothing but one moment after another, but it is the last.’ (Cohen, p. 30)
- xiv ‘Dead without requiem, the eternal dead-again of the cinema!’ (Cohen, p. 31)
- xv ‘Reality is not art, but a realist art is one which can create an integral aesthetic of reality.’ (Barnard, p. 51)
- xvi ‘[...] if what we see on the screen were real and carried out in front of the camera the film would cease to exist, because it would cease thereby to be a myth. It is on the fringes of trick effects, on the margins of the subterfuge necessary to the logic of the story, that the imaginary is able both to join reality and to replace it [*à la fois d’intégrer la réalité et de s’y substituer*].’ (Barnard, p. 80)
- xvii ‘[...] a fragment of raw reality, inherently multifacious and ambiguous, whose “meaning” [Barnard drops Bazin’s “...”] becomes apparent after the fact, through other “events” [again, the “...” are dropped, also Bazin’s *image-fait* is more accurate than “event,” cf. his stance against the notion of dramatic events, **2.4.2 Bazin on Umberto D: Reformulating the Pregnant Instant**], connected up in our minds. Rossellini undoubtedly chose these events [“faits”] wisely but while respecting their integrity as events [“faits”]. [...] The nature of an “image-event” [“image-fait”], however, is not simply to connect with other “image-events” [“images-faits”] in

ways invented by our minds. This in a sense is the centrifugal nature or the image, which makes it impossible to create a narrative. Because each image, seen on its own, is only a fragment of reality and exists prior to its meaning, the entire surface of the screen must have the same concrete density.’ (Barnard, pp. 241-242)

xviii ‘[...] if *The Red Balloon* owes essentially nothing to editing, it resorts to it fortuitously.’ (Barnard, p. 79) [Barnard drops the emphasis on “*essentiellement*” and “*accidentellement*” and thereby loses the implied opposition between essence and accident.]

xix ‘One breaks a window, counts the pieces and declares: this window was composed of four triangular, two quadrangular, six pentagonal pieces and so on. This is the model of the false reasoning of all atomic theory, which is, besides, very similar to Zeno’s reasoning.’

‘[...] the cinematograph appears as a mechanism mysteriously destined to the expertise of the false accuracy of the famous reasoning of Zeno about the arrow, to the analysis of this subtle metamorphosis of rest in mobility, of the lacunar in fullness, of continuity in discontinuity – a transformation that staggers as much as the generation of life out of the inanimate.’

xx ‘[...] two modes of unreality that are easily interchangeable.’

xxi ‘I would describe as photogenic any aspect of things, beings, or souls whose moral character is enhanced by filmic reproduction. And any aspect not enhanced by filmic reproduction is not photogenic, plays no part in the art of cinema.’ (Liebmann, p. 293)

xxii ‘The unit of *Paisà*’s narrative is not the shot, with its abstract perspective on the reality being analysed, but the event [*“fait”*]. [...] In *Paisà* (and by this I mean, to varying degrees, most Italian films), close-ups of doorknobs are replaced by the image-event [*“l’image-fait”*] of a door, all of whose concrete qualities are equally visible.’ (Barnard, pp. 241-242)

xxiii ‘[...] Bazin will entirely transfer that which in Leenhardt is still a stylistic description based on a literary trope, onto the theoretical definition of a cinematographic mechanization.’

xxiv ‘[...] the centrifugal nature of the image, which makes it possible to create a narrative.’ (Barnard, p. 242)

xxv ‘The non-contradiction ceases to be a valid criterion of truth. Zeno’s arrow, which is immobile in flight, does not surprise us anymore. Any being combines movement and stillness, solidity and fluidity, languor and precipitation, tininess and immensity according to space-time conventions, where the lens arbitrarily places that being. Had the neurotic Pascal seen a few films, he would have had to find a new support to this anguish other than the size differences between mite and man – a difference that

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- cinema can cancel or reverse at will, like the most banal optical illusion.’ (Nguyen, p. 332)
- xxvi ‘[...] the moving conclusion to a dramatic series of events.’ (Gray, *Vol. 2*, p. 80)
- xxvii ‘The cinema here is conceived as the exact opposite of that “art of ellipsis” to which we are much too ready to believe it devoted. Ellipsis is a narrative process; it is logical in nature and so it is abstract as well; it presupposes analysis and choice; it organizes the facts in accord with the general dramatic direction to which it forces them to submit.’ (Gray, *Vol. 2*, p. 81)
- xxviii ‘[...] both to join reality and to replace it [*à la fois d’intégrer la réalité et de s’y substituer*].’ (Barnard, p. 80)
- xxix ‘If one assumes some distance from the story and can still see in it a dramatic pattern, a single general trend in its component events, this is only after the fact. The narrative unit is not the episode, the event, the sudden turn of events, or the character of its protagonists; it is the succession of concrete instants of life, no one of which can be said to be more important than another, for their ontological equality destroys drama at its very basis.’ (Gray, *Vol. 2*, p. 81)
- xxx ‘[...] De Sica and Zavattini attempt to divide the event up in still smaller events and these into events smaller still, to the extreme limits of our capacity to perceive them in time. Thus, the unit event in a classical film would be “the maid’s getting out of bed;” two or three brief shots would suffice to show this. De Sica replaces this narrative unit with a series of “smaller” events: she wakes up; she crosses the hall; she drowns the ants; and so on. But let us examine just one of these. We see how the grinding of coffee is divided in turn into a series of independent moments; for example, when she shuts the door with the tip of her outstretched foot. As it goes in on her the camera follows the movement of her leg so that the image finally concentrates on her toes feeling the surface of the door.’ (Gray, *Vol. 2*, pp. 81-82)
- xxxi ‘[...] nothing but one moment after another [...] it is the last.’ (Cohen, p. 30)
- xxxii ‘A painter, whose means are spread out in space, does not need to worry about time, but rather about choosing an instant, or the skilful deduction of the best instant, the most significant, the most typical and the most “relevant [*le plus pregnant*]”.’ [*pregnant* in French also means “meaningful,” which Aumont links to *grossesse*, pregnancy in English]
- xxxiii ‘[...] does not exist in reality, [...].’
- xxxiv ‘One can only harmonise instantaneity and relevance [*la prégnance*], the authenticity of the event with its meaningful charge, at the expense of a trick.’
- xxxv ‘[...] the need for narrative is more biological than dramatic in nature. It buds and grows with the verisimilitude of life itself.’ (Barnard, p. 234)
- xxxvi ‘De Sica and Zavattini are concerned to make cinema the asymptote of reality – but in order that it should ultimately be life itself that becomes spectacle, in order that

life might in this perfect mirror be visible poetry, be the self into which film finally changes it [*Telle qu'en elle-même, enfin, le cinéma la change*].’ (Gray, *Vol. 2*, p. 82)

- xxxvii ‘There is a kind of “ci-ne-ma” that is like poetry. It is madness to see cinema as something isolated that can be set down on a piece of celluloid and projected on a screen through an enlarging lens. [...] Cinema is not some sort of independent matter whose crystals must be isolated at all costs. It is, rather, matter in an aesthetic state, a form of narrative entertainment.’ (Barnard, p. 67)
- xxxviii ‘The only way to imitate Wyler would be to adopt the ethic of his *mise en scène* [...] There can be no imitators of Wyler, only disciples.’ (Barnard, p. 46)
- xxxix ‘[...] a film’s purity, or better yet, to my mind, its cinematic quotient should be calculated by the effectiveness of the way its scenes are conceived [*découpé*].’ (Barnard, p. 67) [Barnard translates “coefficient” as “quotient,” which is a different mathematical concept]
- xi ‘If one recalls that for Bazin, in his first essay, “cinema is the mummification of change,” it becomes evident that this formula substitutes for theory: to change nothing (to the adjacent world) to change everything (making a film = changing the world) is the maxim of ontological realism at its purest reformulation of classical mimesis.’
- xli ‘[...] if there would have been a human witness, he would have undoubtedly been taken away by a sensible cowardice.’
- xlii ‘We were informed about the projects of M. Reichelt, we knew of his experiences and made him aware of the consequences. But M. Reichelt was deaf to the advice we gave him. The poor soul died a victim of his own temerity.’
- xliii ‘[...] the irrational power of photography, in which we believe without reservation.’ (Barnard, p. 8)
- ‘[...] the irrational power of the photograph to bear away our faith.’ (Gray, p. 14)
[As I explain in the subsequent chapter, cf. **Chapter III: A Leap of Faith In Reality**, I prefer Gray’s translation to Barnard’s.]

Chapter III: A Leap of Faith In Reality

Used existing translations from: *Jean Renoir*. Trans. W.W. Halsey, William H. Simon. New York: Simon and Schuster (1973); “Science Film: Accidental Beauty.” Trans. Jeanine Herman. In: *Science is Film: The Films of Jean Painlevé*. Eds. Andy Masaki Bellows, Marina McDougall and Brigitte Berg. Cambridge: The MIT Press (2000): pp. 144-147; “Death Every Afternoon.” Trans. Mark A. Cohen. In: *Rites of Realism: Essays on Corporeal Cinema*. Ed. Ivone Margulies. Durham: Duke University Press (2002): pp. 27-31; *What Is Cinema? Vol. 1*. Trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press (2005); *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009)

- i '[...] the negative imprints of the expedition – its inscription chiselled deep [*son inscription en creux*].' (Gray, *Vol. 1*, p. 162)
- ii 'In Bazin's writing, the work of the negative, which departs from so-called "objective" resemblance and opens onto dissemblance, starts out with his "paradoxes, reverse side of contradiction," and ends in his film analyses and the theses he derives from them.'
- iii 'The modern Orpheus of this ascent to a hell of ice could not preserve the camera's sight of it. But then begins the long road to Calvary of the descent, with Herzog and Lachenal strapped like mummies on the back of their Sherpa's. This time the camera [*le cinéma*] is there like the veil of Veronica pressed to the face of human suffering.' (Gray, *Vol. 1*, pp. 162-163)
- iv 'Death is not the preordained end of our final agony, only its conclusion and a deliverance. Henceforth we shall know to what divine ordinance, to what spiritual rhythm the sufferings and actions of the cure respond. They are the outward representation of his agony. At which point we should indicate the analogies with Christ that abound towards the end of the film, or they may very well go unnoticed. For example, the two fainting during the night; the fall in the mud; the vomiting of wine and blood – a remarkable synthesis of powerful comparisons with the falls of Jesus, the Blood of the Passion, the sponge with vinegar on it, and the defiling spittle. These are not all. For the veil of Veronica we have the cloth of Seraphina; then finally the death in the attic – a Golgotha with even a good and a bad thief.' (Gray, *Vol. 1*, p. 135)
- v 'The outer edges of the screen are not [...] the frame of the film image. They are the edges of a piece of masking that shows only a portion of reality.' (Gray, *Vol. 1*, p. 166)
- vi 'The screen is a mask whose function is no less to hide reality than it is to reveal it. The significance of what the camera discloses is relative to what it leaves hidden. But this invisible witness is inevitably made to wear blinders; its ideal ubiquity is restrained by framing, just as tyranny is often restrained by assassination.' (Halsey & Simon, p. 87)
- vii '[...] Bergsonian *durée*, which is in essence irreversible and qualitative.' (Cohen, p. 30)
- viii 'Philosophers are hardly ever fond of the tireless appeal to theological debates on the topic of the image. By acknowledging history, that history of mankind, of wars, revolutions and ideas, most of them conclude that the question of the image and a fortiori that of cinema, proper to the 20th century, recovers from an entirely different vocabulary that owes nothing to those obscure Byzantines. It is from Hegel onwards that one should think about questions of modernity and therefore the image.'

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- ix ' [...] never informs his theory beyond certain metaphors that are often ironic. The style of his discourse on these issues is closer to that of an anthropologist than that of a preacher; one feels in it that his training at the *École normale supérieure* takes the upper hand over his Christian activism.'
- x ' [...] the excessive concretion tied to a progressively distant, inaccurate memory of its opposite, which I call the bazinian text,' or, ' [...] I call bazinism the lazy and deceptive recital of arguments claimed to be held by Bazin.'
- xi ' [...] the imprint is a better word to perceive Bazin. Primarily because it is part of his lexicon.'
- xii ' [...] in the black market of Christian metaphors in Bazin [...]'
- xiii 'In short, because of the significance it took in his lexicon, this word is the opposite of "impurity," the other fundamental and general term in his system. In an initial analysis, impurity groups together everything that relates cinema to other arts; ontology everything that solely belongs to cinema and that no other art had before it.'
- xiv 'Because of this human presence, a doubt about the image persisted. Moreover, the important thing about the passage from Baroque painting to photography is not mere material improvement (for a long time, photography was inferior to painting in recreating colour). It is, rather, psychological: photography completely satisfies our appetite for illusion by means of a process of mechanical reproduction in which there is no human agency at work. The solution lay not in the resulting work but rather in its genesis.' (Barnard, p. 6)
- xv 'One could say that Bazin is only so important in the discourse on cinema, in the entire history of criticism, all eras and countries combined, and this in a simultaneously evident and confused manner, because he has simply managed to divert toward cinema the discursive and most traditional flux of art history, namely that of mimesis. But one can also maintain that the dominant discourse needs to maintain Bazin in this place, as the incarnation of the Mimetic. From this follows his role as scapegoat (sacralised, liquidated), the oblivion of his texts, the endless procrastination of a detailed publication of his contribution to art history. His relation to a thought of the imprint is much more convincing in his actual body of texts, but less acceptable from a discursive point of view.'
- xvi ' [...] an ancestral practice and techniques that have run across art history [...]'
- xvii ' [...] by means of an impassive mechanical device [...]' (Barnard, p. 8)
- xviii ' [...] achieves a synthesis of the relic and the photography [...]' (Barnard, p. 12)
- xix ' [...] to save being through the appearance of being.' (Barnard, p. 3)
- xx 'All art is founded upon human agency, but in photography alone can we celebrate its absence. Photography has an effect upon us of a natural phenomenon, like a

flower or snowflake whose beauty is inseparable from its earthly origin.’ (Barnard, p. 7)

xxi ‘The production of images has even dispensed with any notion of anthropocentric usefulness. It is no longer a question of the individual’s survival, but more generally of creating an ideal universe in the image of reality, endowed with an independent temporal destiny.’ (Barnard p. 4)

xxii ‘Why does the involuntary transposition of values, which is exclusively due to the emulsion of film used at the time and to the counter-type, render the corner of the garden where Monet is painting precisely more akin to the painter’s most impressionist paintings?’

I now speak to the directors: why does it rain precisely when a sergeant is being degraded and when Déroulède pronounces his discourse? Why does the sky put itself on its own in unison with the event in a more certain fashion than the subtlest studio atmosphere? To make a long story short, why are chance and reality more talented than all the filmmakers in the world?’

xxiii ‘In the photograph, a natural image of a world we are no longer able to see, nature finally does more than imitate art: it imitates the artist.’ (Barnard, p. 9)

xxiv ‘At the far extreme of inquisitive, utilitarian research, in the most absolute proscription of aesthetic intentions, cinematic beauty develops as an additional, supernatural gift. What cinema “of imagination” could have conceived of and produced the bronchoscope’s fabulous descent into the hell of bronchial tumors, where all the rules of the “dramatization” of color are naturally implicated in the sinister bluish reflections of this visibly deadly cancer. What special effects could have produced the magical ballet of freshwater microorganisms, arranged miraculously under the eyepiece as if in a kaleidoscope? What brilliant choreographer, what delirious painter, what poet could have imagined these arrangements, these forms and images! The camera alone possesses the secret key to this universe where supreme beauty is identified at once with nature and chance: that is, with all that a certain traditional aesthetic considers the opposite of art. The Surrealists alone foresaw the existence of this art that seeks in the almost impersonal automatism of their imagination a secret factory of images.’ (Herman, pp. 146-147)

xxv ‘Whoever has not seen that has no idea how far cinema can go.’ (Herman, p. 147)

xxvi ‘[...] creating an ideal universe in the image of reality, [...]’ (Barnard, p. 4)

Chapter IV: Myth, Invention and Imagination

Used existing translations from: *What Is Cinema? Vol. 2*. Trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press (2005); *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009)

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- i 'The guiding myth of the invention of cinema is thus that it will accomplish the dominant myth of every nineteenth-century technology for reproducing reality, from photography to the phonograph: a complete realism [*réalisme intégral*], the recreation of the world in its own image – an image upon which the irreversibility of time and the artist's interpretation do not weigh.' (Barnard, p. 17)
- ii '[...] the original sin of Western painting.' (Barnard, p. 6)
- iii 'Most certainly, there is a derisory side to critiquing *Le Monde du silence*, because, after all, the magnificence of the film is first that of nature, and therefore it would be better to criticize God. From this point of view, at the most, we're allowed to indicate that this magnificence, indeed, is ineffable and that it constitutes the greatest revelation that our little planet has made to mankind since the heroic age of terrestrial exploration. We can also observe that, for the same reason, underwater films are the only radical innovation in documentary film since the great travel films of the 20s and 30s.'
- iv 'Of course, other examples of the convergence of research could be found in the history of technology and inventions, but we must distinguish those which are, precisely, the product of scientific advances and industrial (or military) needs from those which clearly precede these advances. The ancient myth of Icarus had to wait the internal combustion engine before descending from Plato's higher world, but this myth has been present in every human being since we began to observe birds.' (Barnard, p.18)
- v '[...] to imitate nature completely.' (Barnard, p. 17)
- vi 'In this way, every new improvement to cinema merely brings it paradoxically closer to its origins. Cinema has yet to be invented!' (Barnard, p. 17)
- vii '[...] the most important book of the French post-war bibliography [...].'
'With cinema, civilization has returned the closest to the archaic and perhaps most universal myth.'
- viii 'Niépce, Muybridge, Leroy, Joly, Demeny and Louis Lumière himself were obsessive eccentrics, handymen or, at best, clever industrialists.' (Barnard, p.13)
- ix '[...] neither industrialists nor great thinkers, but men with imagination, [...]' (Barnard, p. 18)
- x 'There are other Annapurnas in the lives of men!'
- xi 'What matters more is the probable outlook on new knowledge and new technological possibilities, the courage and the personal virtues of Gagarin, science that has enabled this achievement and everything this, in turn, assumes from a selfless and sacrificial mind set. But that which, perhaps, matters above all is to have left Place. For one hour, a man has existed outside any horizon – everything was sky around him, or more precisely, everything was geometrical space. A man existed in the absolute of homogenous space.'

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- xii ‘This time the camera [*le cinéma*] is there like the veil of Veronica pressed to the face of human suffering.’ (Gray, *Vol. 2*, pp. 162-163)
- xiii ‘[...] the satisfaction of an age-old human desire: defying gravity. It could be that the dream of Icarus began with his plunge into the ocean. The sky was at our feet; it starts to reveal its marvels to us.’
- xiv ‘I’m only indicating that it is not a matter of symbolism attached to the surface of the water, changing, streaming, lustral, but of the Ocean: water considered as another half of the universe, a three dimensional environment, more stable and homogeneous, moreover, than the air and whose envelopment frees us from gravity. This liberation of terrestrial chains is just as well symbolized by fish as it is by birds, but traditionally, and for obvious reasons, the dream of mankind unfurled barely in the blue sky. Dry, solar, aerial. The sea shimmering with light was to the Mediterranean poet but a tranquil roof where doves walk, the roof of the jibs and not the one of the seals [*La mer scintillante de lumière n'était au poète méditerranéen qu'un toit tranquille où marchent les colombes, celui des focs et non des phoques.*] Ultimately, it is science stronger than our imagination that should, by revealing to mankind its virtuality as a fish, realize the old myth of flight, which is much better fulfilled by the scuba set than by the noisy and massive mechanism of the airplane, which is as stupid as a submarine and as dangerous as a standard diving dress with a hose and a helmet.’
- xv ‘[...] every change of real importance, which enrich our cinematic heritage, is closely tied to technology. Technology is cinema’s infrastructure.’ (Barnard, p. 53)

Part III: Perspectives on the Centrifugal Screen

Used existing translations from: *What Is Cinema? Vol. 2*. Trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press (2005); *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009)

- i ‘[...] seeking the dramatic expression of the moment, a sort of psychic fourth dimension capable of suggesting the presence of life in the tortured immobility of Baroque art.’ (Barnard, p. 5)
- ii ‘The infinity of a landscape by Jean-Bapstiste-Camille Corot is an infinity that is internal to the existence of the painting; it cannot merge with the infinity of nature without (and this would be absurd) acting as its substitute.’
- iii ‘[...] in the perfect aesthetic illusion of reality there is no more cinema.’ (Gray, *Vol. 2*, p. 60)
- iv ‘[...] a piece of raw reality [...].’

Chapter V: Cinema and Painting

Used existing translations from: “Sacrificial Mutilation and the Severed Ear of Vincent Van Gogh.” Trans. Allen Stoekl. In: *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*. Ed. Allen Stoekl. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1985): pp. 61-72; “Van Gogh as Prometheus.” Trans. Annette Michelson. *October*, Vol. 36 (Spring 1986): pp. 58-60; *What Is Cinema? Vol. 1*. Trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press (2005); *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009)

- i ‘[...] despite an apparent similarity with the frame of a painting, the screen maintains essentially different relationships with the image. The cinema screen is not a frame, but a mask, it does not serve to show, but to reserve, to isolate, to choose.’
- ii ‘One will at least admit that everything we see in cinema is perceived as real, i.e. as participating in a uniformly stretched out space, in other words: in a universe. One of the most correct definitions of cinema is the one from Jean Cocteau: “reality seen through a keyhole.” What the keyhole hides from us does not cease to exist itself outside our visual field.’
- iii ‘[...] it is still the opposite of the *mise en scène* like the “doorknob,” in which the colour of the gloss paint, the thickness of grime on the wood on hand level, the brilliance of metal, the wearing out of bolt are as much perfectly useless facts, concrete parasites of abstraction, whose elimination is appropriate.’
- iv ‘In Bruegel’s admirable painting, Icarus falling to the water in rustic indifference prefigures Cousteau and his companions diving into the green sea off some Mediterranean cliff, ignored by the farmer who works his field and takes them for swimmers.’
- v ‘[...] loses its importance in face of this new conception of the cosmos.’
- vi ‘[...] there is no doubt that Bruegel would have resorted directly to the text [by Ovid], because he is the first to have represented the farmer at work, the shepherd on his staff, the fisherman with his line by hand. But he does this by reversing this exact text: rather than contemplating Icarus and Daedalus with astonishment, flying through the sky like gods, the carefree farmer continues his work, the shepherd turns his back to Icarus, stares fixedly at the emptiness ahead of him and the fisherman continues to be absorbed by his fishing; even the partridge, whose wings Ovidius makes flap to eternally mock Daedalus, sits here immobile on its branch; even better, the ship next to which the catastrophe unfolds, clears off with its sails inflated towards the sun.’
- vii ‘The first time you found yourself in front of this painting, your eye had immediately been attracted to the red blouse of the ploughman; later on, when you discovered Icarus on the right of the composition, you have smiled. Immediately, a

strange litany started to resonate in your head. It lasted the entire afternoon: a man works his field, a shepherd looks at the sky; a boat arrives slowly at a port; the sea is calm; a man is drowning.’

- viii ‘[...] a printing press of reality, [...]’
- ix ‘Icarus swims, from both sides of the linguistic border.’
- x ‘[...] the distance between the one who is looking and that which is being looked at.’
- xi ‘[...] a hymn to man with his feet anchored on earth.’
- xii ‘[...] each film is a social documentary!’
- xiii ‘Even to your eyes, all of this ended up not being real anymore. Nevertheless, everything is there, and everything is irrefutable real.’
- xiv ‘The logical distinction between the imaginary and the real was eliminated. [...] Photography was thus a privileged technology for Surrealist practice because it produces an image which shares in the existence of nature: a photograph is a really existing hallucination.’ (Barnard, p. 9-10)
- xv ‘[...] [the visual arts] from the complex of resemblance.’ (Barnard, p. 7)
- xvi ‘For years, people have suffered to such an extent that they all aspire change. It appears to me that each of us, unsatisfied with the miserable world around us, awaits and wishes, more or less, that this world would change. It seems to me that this desire, this wish for change, works equally well in relation to the artistic domain, as it does in the material or moral world.’
- xvii ‘Cinema has yet to be invented!’ (Barnard, p. 17)
- xviii ‘I am totally certain that art has to transform itself, because art, from an aesthetic point of view, is a human function which is profoundly rooted in our being [...]’
- xix ‘Like a lichen born from the symbiosis between the seaweed and the mushroom, the combination of cinema with painting here gives birth to a new aesthetic being; its ontology will perhaps enlighten us on some fundamental laws pertaining to the existence of painting and of cinema.’
- xx ‘It is extremely interesting to notice, as André Bazin very rightly said, that upholding the communication between art and the people is here an absolutely vital condition; it is a condition without which, given its financial conditions, cinema cannot even exist. It is for this reason that we can not only conceive of, but know, but point out works that are considered beautiful by the artists, in cinema, and works which can perfectly touch a popular audience.’
- xxi ‘[...] cinema makes novels being read and popularizes theatre plays. I position myself on this ground in a very worldly manner: cinema gives passport to the theatre and the novel.’

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- xxii 'Freed from the complex of resemblance, modern painters surrendered it to the people, who henceforth identified it with photography on the one hand and with the only kind of painting that applies itself to it on the other.' (Barnard, p. 7)
- xxiii 'This crisis in realism began in earnest in the nineteenth century, with Picasso as its mythic embodiment in the present day. This crisis called into question both the conditions of the visual arts' formal existence and their sociological underpinnings.' (Barnard, p. 7)
- xxiv '[...] any art, the art of every day if you will, which was for a long time concerned with painting the portrait of citizens, that particular art has largely been transformed and replaced by photography. I'm thinking of illustrations in numerous books, scientific and biological ones, where photography has also largely rendered the activity of the artist almost useless, superfluous.'
- 'It would be interesting, from this perspective, to examine the rivalry in the illustrated press in the period 1890-1910 between photographic reportage, which was still in its infancy, and drawings. The latter in particular satisfied the Baroque need for the dramatic (consider *Le Petit journal illustré*). The sense of the photograph as a document emerged only gradually.' (Barnard, p. 11)
- xxv 'It seems to me that if we go into the veritable influence or inter-influence of these arts more closely, we would be incited to take on a more flexible and more sceptical position, which would perhaps be this: namely that the influence, if really there is an influence of cinema on other arts and I indeed believe that it is blatant, among others in the novel and for photography on painting, if really there has been an influence, then this is not one from cause to effect. This would not be an influence through which painters at one point, seeing photographs, would have said to themselves: "it is absurd to make portraits, I am going to do something else than portraits; I am going to make things that don't need to resemble nature anymore," that's not the case. Besides, historically speaking one finds that the history of photography is on the contrary a history of influences from painting on photography. Indeed, the first photographers tried hard to attempt to resemble painters. It is rather [...] an influence of the sensibility of the time period, of a profound need of that time period. In this manner, Degas for instance composes his paintings exactly like the end of a sequence on screen. Yet, cinema needed fifty years to recall the style of Degas on screen, and to construct its cinematographic framing totally naturally throughout the evolution of its language, like Degas made a painting. But this is because Degas was prophetic in his time and felt throughout this scientific and mechanistic nineteenth century the need to represent reality seized in some sort of simultaneously realist and dramatic synthesis, which cinema would find much later. So, if it is really there, we can speak of an influence of cinema on Degas, but not historical, since Degas precedes the cinema, but somehow of a myth of cinema, which was still subconscious, at the time and which has influenced painting through an artist as sensible as Degas.'

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- xxvi ‘[...] this is that indeed cinema may be defined by the screen, and paintings by their frame.’
- xxvii ‘This crisis in realism began in earnest in the nineteenth century, with Picasso as its mythic embodiment in the present day. This crisis called into question both the conditions of the visual arts’ formal existence and their sociological underpinnings.’ (Barnard, p. 7)
- xxviii ‘What *Le Mystère Picasso* reveals is not what we already know, the duration of creation, but this duration that might be an integral part of the work itself, a supplementary dimension, stupidly ignored at the finishing stage.’
- xxix ‘We see clearly that already the notion of the picture [*le tableau*] is subordinated here to the more integral notion of painting [*la peinture*] of which the picture is but a moment.’
- xxx ‘Because, finally, not a trait, not a stain of colour that appears - appearing is the word - rigorously unforeseeably. This unpredictability supposes, inversely, the non-explication of the compound by the simple. This is so true that the entire principle of the film as spectacle itself, more precisely as “suspense,” is held in this waiting and this perpetual suspense. Each trait of Picasso is a creation that entails another, not as a cause implies an effect but as life generates life.’
- xxxi ‘The spectacle as such is then a fascination by the appearance of forms, free and in nascent state.’
- xxxii ‘[...] the fish becomes a bird and the bird becomes wildlife.’
- xxxiii ‘[...] everything settles as if painting would truly become soluble in the duration only after having undergone a mutation of its spatial structures under the action of cinema.’
- xxxiv ‘Thanks to the cinema, the “world” of a painter is not merely a metaphor anymore, “entering in his universe,” the privilege of a sensible and cultivated spectator, the pictorial imaginary has become the reality of our perception.’
- xxxv ‘[...] the sequence of a film gives it a unity in time that is horizontal and, so to speak, geographical, whereas time in a painting, so far as the notion applies, develops geologically and in depth.’ (Gray, *Vol. 1*, p. 165)
- xxxvi ‘Van Gogh’s landscape spreads nature to substitute for three suns at the same time, if it pleases the mentor to assemble them in a sequel of these images that turned irrefutably in this new aesthetic cosmology.’
- xxxvii ‘Van Gogh’s cut off ear exists somewhere in this world, which inevitably beseeches us.’
- xxxviii ‘The point is not to explain to us why Van Gogh was “mad” and what the necessary connection was between this madness and his predilection for yellow, for example,

but to bring us closer to this point of spiritual incandescence where the transmutation will be made sensible to us through its radiance.’

- xxxix ‘Furthermore, if ontological realism, following the advice of Rohmer (great meteorological filmmaker, of four seasons), dictates that “art is in the model,” in the sense that it is in the landscape, and the anticipation [*artialisation*] of Alain Roger says that art offers its models to landscape, then cinema is the double trigger: on the one hand, as a machine of automatic reproduction, it captures the schemes offered by the other arts, on the other hand, as art, it offers them to nature.’
- xl ‘This is to make nature resemble art, as [Oscar] Wilde said, which is true only a posteriori. Van Gogh has transformed our vision of sunflowers but before he had painted them, sunflowers were not yet “Van Goghs”.’
- xli ‘It is not for nothing that sunflowers are called suns.’
- xlii ‘[...] in order to show the importance and the development of Van Gogh’s obsession, it is necessary to link suns with sunflowers [...]. This flower is also simply known (in French) by the name “the sun;” in the history of painting it is linked with the name of Van Gogh [...]’ (Stoekl, p. 63)
- xliii ‘Given the forgoing, it must be said that after the night of December ’88, when, in the house to which it came, his ear met a faith which remains unknown (one can only dimly imagine the laughter and discomfort which preceded some unknown decision), Van Gogh began to give to the sun a meaning which it had not yet had.’ (Michelson, p. 59)
- xliv ‘[...] how can we ignore the chain of knots which so surely links ear, asylum, sun, the feast and death?’ (Michelson, pp. 59-60)
- xlv ‘[...] it is madness to see cinema as something isolated that can be set down on a piece of celluloid.’ (Barnard, p. 67)
- xlvi ‘The nineteenth century, with its objective visual and sound reproduction technologies, introduced a new category of images. Their relationship with the reality at their source needs to be rigorously defined. [...] Cinema’s efficacy can also be found in its ontology. It is false to state that the movie screen is completely powerless to place us in the presence of an actor. It does so like a mirror (which, we can all agree, conveys the presence of the person it reflects) – a mirror whose reflection is at a variance with the person whose image is imprinted on its silvering.’ (Barnard, p. 185)
- ‘Just as footlights and scenery in the theatre serve to mark the contrast between it and the real world so, by its surrounding frame, a painting is separated off [...] from reality as such [...]’ (Gray, *Vol. I*, p. 165)
- xlvii ‘The cinema screen is not a frame, but a mask; it does not serve to show, but to reserve, to isolate, to choose.’
- xlviii ‘[...] the skin is that which is the most profound in us.’

Chapter VI: A Matter of Form

Used existing translations from: “The Graveyear by the Sea.” Trans. C. Day Lewis, <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~cooneys/poems/fr/valery.daylewis.html>; *The Flowers of Evil*. Trans. James McGowan. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1993); *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009); *André Bazin's New Media*. Trans. Dudley Andrew. Berkeley: University of California Press (2014); *Bazin On Global Cinema, 1948-1959*. Trans. Bert Cardullo. Texas: University of Texas Press (2014)

- i ‘[...] if cinema is a language, then this is first because it tells stories; therefore, the content of scenarios is essential, because it must be in charge of the subject.’
- ii ‘Each painting is defined in relation to a frame, at least virtual, which carves in some way the hole of the painter into the world, reserves in the natural macrocosm the microcosm of the artist. This comes back to noticing that the frame of the painting is oriented from the exterior towards the interior, that it defines a heterogeneous centripetal space in the background which it surrounds. Completely opposite of this, despite an apparent similarity with the frame of a painting, the screen maintains essentially different relationships with the image. The cinema screen is not a frame, but a mask; it does not serve to show, but to reserve, to isolate, to choose. [...] In this manner, whereas the frame orients the closed off space of the painting towards the interior, the screen on the contrary diffuses the space of the cinematographic image into infinity: it is centrifugal.’
- iii ‘The only thing needed was, first, to be freed from this reversed gravity which is Archimedes' principle; then, to be given ambient pressure by the pressure modifier to not end up in the fleeting and dangerous situation of a diver, but in that of Neptune, master and inhabitant of water. Finally, man flies with his arms!’
- iv ‘It is not anymore about a symbolism attached to superficial, mobile, streaming, lustral water, but rather about the Ocean: a three-dimensional milieu, more stable, moreover, than the air and of which the wrapping frees us from gravity.’
- v ‘[...] the fish becomes bird.’
- vi ‘[...] the space below, which is the space of life.’
- vii ‘This quiet roof, where dove-sails saunter by, [...] This quiet roof where sails like doves were pecking.’ (Day Lewis)
- viii ‘If nature proceeds from the inside to the outside, from cause to effect, it is the privilege of art, as of science, to induce matter or to deduce form. Paul Valéry built *The Seaside Cemetery* upon the cadence of a single line of verse.’ (Cardullo, p. 17)

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- ix 'The sea shimmering with light was to the Mediterranean poet but a tranquil roof where the doves walked by, the roof of the jibs and not the seals.'
- x '[...] the (moral) parenthesis of modern cinema being finished, cinema (or what remains of it) rediscovers the question of the bottom [*le fond*]: *where do the dream bodies come from?*'
- xi 'The filmed cinema, that of Besson, inherits "forms" but no "bodies" (Platonic, not Aristotelian). These forms, which are rather derisory, are nevertheless the only existing memory (genetic memory of cinema) and the only truth. [...] What is needed are bodies that correspond to the publicity advertising world in which we find ourselves.'
- xii '[...] when I see *Le Grand Bleu*, I don't see the sea, I see an advertising concept of the sea that has once and for all replaced the sea.'
- xiii 'The famous "crisis of scenarios," which bores our ears, it is there: in the privatisation of experience and the aphasia it produces, especially among the young.'
- xiv '[...] through Daney, Luc Besson has seen Bazin.'
- xv '[...] symbolism attached to superficial, mobile, streaming, lustral water,'
- xvi '[...] [the images] are the accomplishment of an entire mythology of water, of which the material fulfilment by these subaquatic supermen encounters within ourselves secret, profound and age-old connivances.'
- xvii 'Water. Filmed as never before. [...] A refusal of depth - which makes of this film the answer of cinema to the audio-visual (*Le Grand Bleu*). Water is a special surface that one needs to cover incessantly, ploughing it with ones body (boustrophedon).'
- xviii 'The decisive event was undoubtedly the invention of the first scientific and, in a sense, already mechanical system: perspective (with Leonardo Da Vinci's camera obscura prefiguring Niépce's darkroom).' (Barnard, p. 5)
- xix 'Perspective made it possible for artists to create the illusion of three-dimensional space in which objects could be placed the way they would if we perceived them directly.' (Barnard, p. 5)
- xx '[...] the expression of spiritual realities in which the model was transcended by the symbolism of form - while the other was simply a psychological desire to replace the outside world with its double.' (Barnard, p. 5)
- xxi '[...] the pseudo-realism of trompe l'oeil (or trompe-l'esprit), which is content with the illusion of form.' (Barnard, p. 6)
- xxii '[...] the art of the Middle Ages, for example, appears immune to this conflict: both violently realist and highly spiritual, it did not know the upheaval that technical

possibilities have since introduced. Perspective was the original sin of Western painting.

Niépce and Lumière were its redeemers.’ (Barnard, p. 6)

- xxiii ‘I want to make you understand that medieval painting and cinema are the same thing! [...] These painters had tried to introduce in their works the meaning of the world, because they did not know perspective.’
- xxiv ‘And when, with Cézanne, form took back the canvas, it was no longer in the service of perspective’s illusionist geometry.’ (Barnard, p. 10)
- xxv ‘In their imagination, they conceived of cinema as the complete and total representation of reality. From the outset they foresaw the creation of a perfect illusion of the outside world through sound, color and three-dimensionality.
- With respect to the latter, the film historian Georges Potonniée has even gone so far as to suggest that “it was not the discovery of photography but rather that of stereoscopy [...] which opened the thinkers’ eyes.’ (Barnard, p. 16)
- xxvi ‘Since two or three years a quarrel divides the cinematographic critique. It is true that it might seem as nothing but the shadow of a great dispute between realism and formalism in art [...]. Nevertheless, I think that the problem of formalism arises very differently in cinema and in most of the arts.’
- xxvii ‘If one day 3D cinema evolves beyond a trivial scientific curiosity, as it will likely do, directing the garden hose to spray the audience will not be enough to astonish us. The distant future of 3D cinema will see a leap as great as the one from *L’Arrivée d’un train en gare de La Ciotat* to the train engine sequence in *La Bête humaine*. The labor of Mr. Spottiswoode and its still-experimental application in the films at the Festival of Britain already prove that 3D affords the same interpretations, with a function as orchestrated and utterly artistic as “flat” cinema. Let us nimbly take this new and decisive step toward total cinema.’ (Andrew, p. 241)
- xxviii ‘When I look at the end of my nose, I go cross-eyed and work hard to see clearly. But at the cinema, I dissociate these two physiological actions.’ (Andrew, p. 240)
- xxix ‘[...] revolutionizing the field of animation with his brilliance and poetic sensibility. [...] abstract painting in motion and in 3-D.’ (Andrew, p. 241)
- xxx ‘[...] corresponding to an angle of vision that the spectator would have in reality.’
- xxxi ‘[...] a really existing hallucination.’ (Barnard, p. 10)
- xxxii ‘[...] a perfect illusion of the outside world through sound, color and three-dimensionality.’ (Barnard, p. 15)

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- xxxiii '[...] a function as orchestrated and utterly artistic, as "flat" cinema.' (Andrew, p. 241)
- xxxiv '[...] a new and decisive step toward total cinema.' (Andrew, p. 241)
- xxxv 'If perspective was the original sin of Western painting, technique was its gravedigger. The conquest of space made us all lose memory.'
- xxxvi 'I think that one should cite Bazin in every article on cinema.'
- 'Cinema substitutes for our gaze a world according to our desires.'
- xxxvii 'You see, Sergei, you have felt that there is no space in the Kremlin and not in San Francisco either, isn't that true Orson Welles?'
- xxxviii 'And then, depth; depth! Declares the professor of the Titanic.'
- xxxix 'Make sure that you can hear me; make sure that I can speak.'
- xl 'We've seen the stars
And waves, and we have seen the sandy shores;
Despite disasters, all our jolts and jars,
On sea, on land we find that we are bored.
The glorious sun across the violet sea,
Great sunlit cities dreaming as they lie,
Made our heart yearn with fierce intensity
To plunge towards those reflections in the sky.' (McGowan, p. 513)
- xli 'The stage thus incites [the actors], even obliges them, to indulge in hyperbole. Only in film could Charlie achieve his perfect mathematics of situation and gesture, to convey the greatest degree of clarity in the least amount of time.' (Barnard, p. 164)

Epilogue: Cinema Is Also a Language

Used existing translations from: *What Is Cinema? Volume 1*. Trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California press (2005); *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009); *André Bazin's New Media*. Trans. Dudley Andrew. Berkeley: University of California Press (2014); *Bazin On Global Cinema, 1948-1959*. Trans. Bert Cardullo. Texas: University of Texas Press (2014)

- i 'There is also a certain type of literary criticism which is likewise a re-creation - Baudelaire on Delacroix, Valéry on Baudelaire, Malraux on Greco. Let us not blame the cinema for human foibles and sins.' (Gray, *Vol. 1*, p. 169)

- ii ' [...] built [...] upon the cadence of a single line of verse, [...]' (Cardullo, p. 17)
- iii 'Then again, film is a language.' (Barnard, p. 10)
- iv 'Every image should be experienced as an object and every object as an image.'
(Barnard, p. 9)
- v '[...] every technique is completely responsible for what it expresses, or every form is a sign, and where nothing is really said without its being couched in the necessary form. Criticism could then be practiced, at least on the best films, as it has been practiced now for a century on the best literature, by means of the otherwise artificial categories of form and content.' (Cardullo, p. 16)
- vi '[...] the recreation of the world in its own image.' (Barnard, p. 17)
- vii '[...] the fish becomes bird.'
- viii 'To lose sight of the subjects ends up in classifying films according to their technology [...] which is like thinking that the vintage of a wine is determined by the form of the bottle, of a Champagne, Bordeaux or Bourgogne.'
- ix 'The relationship between form and matter is not that of container and contents, of bottle to liquid, but more that of shell to clam.' (Cardullo, p. 17)
- x 'Once it has reached its equilibrium profile, a river flows effortlessly from its source to its mouth without further eroding its bed. But should any geological movement occur to raise the peneplain and modify the height of its source, the river's water sets to work again, penetrating the ground underneath it, eating away at, boring and breaking through it. Sometimes it encounters limestone and hollows out a new and almost invisible course across the tableland, a course whose flow of water is twisted and complex.' (Barnard, p. 96)
- xi '[...] a superficial or partisan analysis [...].'
- xii '[...] cinema is not an Art plus an industry, it is an Industrial Art.' (Andrew, p. 315)
- xiii 'On the other hand, cinema is an industry.'
- xiv 'The cinematographic aesthetic will be social or cinema will do away with aesthetics.'
- xv 'Intellectuals don't like to be interrupted. When the screen started to talk, they kept quiet.'
- xvi 'Cut off his tongue!'

Summary

Used existing translations from: *What Is Cinema?* Trans. Timothy Barnard. Montreal: Caboose (2009)

- i ' [...] the recreation of the world in its own image.' (Barnard, p. 17)
- ii ' [...] gigantic flow of images and myths that circulate across all people of the world!'