

1. How does neo-realism confirm Bazin's aesthetic of cinema? In what ways does classical narrative cinema violate phenomenal reality? How does *Bicycle Thieves* satisfy a Bazinian perspective narratively, aesthetically, and narrationally (the structure of the story)? Please be very specific in your use of examples from the film. The link is below. (About 2.5 pages)

Through his theories, Bazin stressed the importance of preserving reality and conveying it beautifully and seamlessly to the viewer. What the viewer observes must align with the phenomenal world, for Bazin believes that film should serve as a surrogate for natural human perception. A key characteristic that places *Bicycle Thieves* alongside the viewpoints of Bazin is the film's use of untrained actors. The use of ordinary people in the place of trained actors helps maintain a natural feeling of authenticity, a feeling that aligns precisely with the design of Neo-realism. Bazin's viewpoint on cinema is inherently Neo-realistic, as Neo-realism too strives to communicate the genuine. Continuing this legitimacy, *Bicycle Thieves* is entirely shot on location instead of on a set. There are beautiful shots following the characters as they walk in and out of alleys, strutting through streets and riding about trolley cars around the city. Incorporating these everyday surroundings maintains the Bazinian ideal by avoiding a reconstructed reality in favor of actuality.

We also see in this film a step away from the excessive cutting and editing of classical Hollywood realism, and instead an embrace of longer shots. These longer takes, with a deeper focus from the camera, are made to look more like real life. This increased depth of field puts the background into the focus and allows the audience to choose what to look at, instead of forcing a point of view onto them as in classical realism. The deeper focus aligns with the Bazinian ideal that the viewers must derive meaning for themselves.

There is a scene about midway through the film when Antonio is at a parts shop looking for the parts from his bike. A downpour then ensues, and there is a long shot that follows Antonio as he peers around the camp watching the merchants pack up shop. Without cutting, it then pans down to Antonio's son holding up his jacket as a shield from the rain, then pans up again to Antonio. Adhering to ideals of Bazin, the overuse of editing is discouraged as it disrespects reality, cutting it up into shards. This scene of the rainstorm also maintains a characteristic of Bazin in terms of narration, offering an example of dead-time. Dead-time is a pause in the narrative of a film, placed instead to maintain the feeling of reality. As the rain continues, Antonio and his son retreat under an overhang to stay dry. The scene of them watching others take shelter with them from the storm is nonessential to the plot, but follows the Bazinian concept of an accidental reality.