

MSc Interactive Digital Media

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**Spectator and Screen: The evolution of immersive cinematic technologies  
through the lens of Bazinian classic realist theory**

**Abstract**

Since the advent of the film industry, the way cinematic text has been captured, processed and exhibited has changed dramatically as the corresponding technology has developed, from the very first motion picture filmed by the Lumière Brothers, to more recent innovations in virtual reality cinema (VR). As a result, the wide range of interpretations surrounding current modes of spectatorship and the nature of exhibition begs the question: What is cinema, really? Is it inextricably linked to the presence or absence of celluloid, or is it an all-encompassing term that includes the new and varied developments in cinematic technology? At the heart of cinema lies the human desire to understand the world and recreate an alternate reality, but with the move towards digital film, the definition of the ‘real’ and ‘realism’ has also evolved to create a more active and participatory form of film consumption, particularly with 3D cinema and VR. The pioneering film critic and theorist, André Bazin, asserted that only through an honest depiction of flawed humanity and the harsh realities of life could an *authentic* truth be realised in film and so, taking this into consideration, the primary aim of the research paper is to explore the changing definition of cinema in line with the technological developments of the last century, through the lens of the Bazinian theory of classical realism in order to demonstrate not a regression to traditional cinematic practices, but the evolution of a medium that is, by its very nature, immersive.

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