The "Rebound Effect": Formal and Structural Influences of Cinema on Italian Literature

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The "rebound effect" is the deep influence of cinema on literature–not at the thematic level, but at the formal and structural one. This essay offers an overview of this theoretical issue, using Italian literary works as examples (e.g., Pasolini, Tabucchi, and Camilleri).

Intersections, Contaminations, Relations

"Rebound effect" is the syntagma I chose, quoting Genette, to define the particular influence exerted by cinema on literature.

> "Unlike the filmmaker, the novelist does not have to put the camera anywhere: he has no camera. It is also true that today, because of a rebound effect of one medium on another, he can pretend to have one" (Genette, *Nouveau discours* 49).

I took this idea as my starting point when I set out to write my book *Rebound Effect*. My aim was to examine the effect of cinema on literature not from a thematic perspective, but from a formal one. The subject that drew my attention was not the relation between a hypotext (a novel or a short story) and a hypertext (a movie), but the interference between the two linguistic and narrative codes.

When discussing cinema and literature, several aspects of their relationship should be considered, at both the diachronic and synchronic levels. Three different phases can easily be identified at the diachronic level. At the beginning of this relationship between cinema and literature, when writing was still the predominant means of artistic expression, movies took inspiration from literary stories by adapting many novels and short stories to the screen. It was the simplest way to ennoble the new medium and

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transform it into a new art form. After this initial stage, a great migration of writers and intellectuals from literature to cinema took place. Finally, the same writers, after learning new techniques, began to build stories in a new manner, taking something new from the language of cinema.

After borrowing stories from novels, cinema not only gave back themes and stories to literature, but also provided writers with a number of new techniques and, more importantly, readers with a new kind of sensibility, a new collective imagination, and a new set of interpretative skills.

At the synchronic level, too, there are various kinds of relationships and intersections between literature and cinema. Certainly the first thing that comes to mind is adaptation. The transformation of a written story into a filmed one is the simplest and commonest relationship between the two media and it is also the most studied by both literary and film critics. However, it is not the only potential place for dialogue between the two arts. For one thing, this dialogue also takes place the other way around, with novels adapted from movies or screenplays. Jean Baetens called this practice novelization. Second, it is not uncommon for screenwriters, directors, or even actors to write novels and short stories or for writers and intellectuals to become interested in moviemaking. The third type of intersection is a thematic relationship. One can easily read novels about cinema and its world, just as one can see movies about books and writers.

The final intersection between the two media is less easily recognized, analyzed, and classified. At the same time, it is the most effective and, to me, the most interesting: it is a formal and structural influence that radically changes the way one can imagine and therefore also tell a story. This formal and structural influence is the deepest one that film language can exercise on verbal narration and it represents what I call the "rebound effect." The birth of cinema has effectively changed the status of literature, taking possession of some of its functions (most notably the entertainment function), providing it with some of its expressive means, and ultimately generating a series of important transformations in the literary system.

The script is the privileged point of intersection of the two codes because of its hybrid quality (as Pasolini explained, a script is a hybrid because it is a written text conceived to be performed and visualized on the screen; see Pasolini) and also because of the frequent collaboration of writers with the cinema industry. When a writer approaches this kind of writing, he has to force himself to imagine, visualize, and describe all aspects of the story in terms of visibility. For instance, he will not simply write "Philip was jealous," but will have to imagine the gestures and looks that make this jealousy evident. Like in the theater, the story time and narration time must perfectly coincide: what happens in the diegetic

world has exactly the same duration of its representation on the stage (or on the screen). For writers, this is a writing exercise that often produces a new style that is easier for the reader to imagine like a movie. At the same time, screenplays are more frequently being read as novels: readers are increasingly getting used to a particular style that is more image-based and capable of turning each reader into a director of his own imagination. Thus, scriptwriting practice is very relevant to the rebound effect, from the perspective of both readers and writers.

Time and Space

In their studies of adaptation, several narratology critics (e.g. Chatman, Garcia, and Gaudreault) have compared verbal and audiovisual narrations, highlighting a number of differences in the ways they present and make use of the basic elements that compose a story: character, time, space, narrator, and focalization. In many respects, the structuralist analytical approach to the relationship between literature and cinema is now outdated. Nevertheless, it is true to say that its contribution to the identification of these differences is still valuable, alongside the insight that they are mainly related to distinct approaches to the categories of time and space.

Images and cinema are intrinsically related to the dimension of space because they can (and indeed must) show the setting in one single shot (see Metz; Chatman, *Story and discourse*). In contrast, words and literature are mainly concerned with the time dimension (for a thorough explanation of this, see Ivaldi, chapter 2).

The verb form, by itself, is able to communicate whether an action occurs in the present or in the past, or whether it is real or hypothetical (see Benveniste): the phrase "Sally says" immediately appears different from "Sally said." In contrast, a cinematic shot can easily show "Sally saying" but it is not able to express temporality without the use of editing and without juxtaposition with other shots and different times.

As Genette (*Figures III*) has thoroughly explained, discourse time is related to the connection between narration and story. The narrative instance can vary the order and frequency of events and the speed of narration. Obviously, both the literary and the cinematic narrator can use these categories, but not in the same way. Even if anachronies are perhaps more frequent in cinema than in literature, the category of *order* is equally useful for both of them and literary and cinematic narrators can choose to present the events of the plot either chronologically or discontinuously. Instead, narrative speed and frequency pose different problems for verbal or audiovisual narration.

As far as the *speed* of literary narrative is concerned, among the four narrative movements that Genette (*Figures III* 129) lists for literature, cinema uses only two: scenes (Narrative Time = Story Time) and ellipses (NT = 0; ST = n). This is quite obvious, if one considers that it is forced to do this by the nature of the cinematic discourse itself, composed of shooting (NT = ST) and cutting (NT = 0; ST = n).

In a movie scene, narration time perfectly corresponds to story time and the transition from one scene to another—the cut—is effectively a temporal ellipsis. From a purely technical and physical point of view, a film is made of pieces of shots (isochronous and singulative scenes) and temporal ellipses that are sometimes minimal and sometimes more extensive between one piece and another. It is obvious that montage in film is much more than mere ellipsis; in fact, the viewer perceives discontinuous shots as a homogeneous fictional world. Montage can give temporality to the plot because there is a narrative and aesthetic aim that leads to the choice of the pieces to select and to the order in which to insert them into the movie. I argue that literary narrators have learned to produce temporality not only through their usual linguistic links, but also through the spectatorial inferences required by film editing, in an attempt to utilize in the novel a succession of scenes and ellipses similar to that in the movie.

Whereas cinematic language can build the plot using only scenes and ellipses, literary storytelling can also use summaries (NT < ST) and descriptions, which are pauses in the story time (NT = n; ST = 0); in other words, in a novel there is more space for the narrator's discourse and the literary narrator can produce more effect in the reader than the cinematic one. It also seems that narrative *frequency* is managed more easily by words rather than images; for example the phrase: "Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure" ('For a long time I used to go to bed early,' the incipit of *Du côté de chez Swann*) is evidently iterative. To obtain the same effect on the screen, several images are necessary. The phrase, translated into images, would be equal to several shots of a child going to bed. Whereas in literature verbs and adverbs immediately indicate if an action is iterative, singulative, or repetitive, a movie image is always singulative.

This is why Gianfranco Bettetini rightly observed that the main feature of image time is its "hardness," meaning both its illusion of reality and its durability: what people watch on the screen seems to be really happening now in front of them. He said:

> For the hardness identified with the illusion of reality produced by the dynamic iconism of the film, you can imagine a possible reduction of its effects, due to the awareness of its artificiality. On the other hand, for the duration you cannot conceive any gradation, because it is neither false nor illusory: the duration exists

and the viewer can only take note of it. The hardness of the duration is typical of the nature of cinema (Bettetini 13–14).

Therefore temporal hardness and spatial concreteness are intertwined with the action taking place on the screen. In comparing the time of the film image and the verb tense, one can make (not perfect but effective) equivalents of the film "present" and the verbal "present continuous," indicating that the action is happening while one is watching. Rather than a specific tense, the cinematographic image seems doomed to a specific narrative speed and frequency: the film image is always singulative but also isochronous.

What happens when literature calls into question its own space and time categories and tries to imitate the cinematic model? To tell his story like a movie, a writer must employ isochronous scenes and ellipses; perhaps the simplest way is through dialogue, which is supposed to be read at the same speed as it is spoken by the characters. It is very easy to imagine a novel as a movie if it is composed of separate chapters, without explanation or narrative transitions, with a lot of dialogue and very few descriptions.

Montage and dialogues existed in literature before the birth of cinema. The question, then, is which types of cutting and dialogue are really "film-like." Umberto Eco explained that the real cinematic novel uses "a treatment of temporality as an accumulation of presents," which offers "a new way of understanding both the sequence and the contemporaneity of events" (Eco 208).

In a "film-like" novel, narration is obtained through a succession and accumulation of separate and intertwined scenes. Story time and narration time occur coincidentally, like in a film shot. Between one scene and another there is an ellipsis (equivalent to the cutting and the splicing of the film) that is usually not justified by the narrator. It is up to the viewer to reconstruct the chronology of the scenes and the cause-and-effect relations between the different actions. Finally, in a "film-like" novel, there is a high level of iconism but descriptions are narrativized as if they were actions, and there are no longer pauses in the story time. For example, in *Agostino*, a short novel by Moravia, descriptions do not interrupt the flow of story time, but they are part of it because they are filtered through the character's perception.

> "Come on, Pisa," the black man said with buttery boldness, lying down in front of him. He had a boneless voice, womanlike, and as soon as his face was a palm away from Agostino's, he saw that he didn't have a flat nose, as you might imagine, but a hooked one, small and crooked on itself like a curl of oily, black flesh, with some kind of clear mole, almost yellow, over one of the nostrils. Even the mouth was not as big as those of the black people, but thin and purplish. He had big round

eyes, pressed by the swelled forehead over which a big mop of sooty hair grew. "Come on, Pisa … I won't hurt you," he added, putting in the hand of Agostino his own: delicate, with thin black fingers and pink nails. (Moravia 172)

The text says that Agostino sees his opponent and immediately shows the shift of his gaze to him (this is a cinematographic subjective shot, obtained by putting together the shot of the seeing character and the shot of the object observed); then the text describes what Agostino sees and also what he had expected to see. The story time, in the meantime, has not stopped; if Homs has to call to Agostino, repeating "Come on, Pisa," this is because the boy had lingered to observe him. This way, description is not a "pause," as in Genette's traditional classification (NT = n; ST = 0), but a "scene" (NT = ST). It is a *temporalized* description, or *narrativized*, or a *description-tale* according to Pellini's definition, in which "action (in time) and description (in space) coincide" (Pellini 27). Here is a further example:

Saro grabbed the mast with the six fingers of his right hand and then with the six of his left; he lifted and planted it in the hole in the center seat. Then he climbed into the boat, tied the sail lines, and made the rope run: the sail rose up to the top of the mast (Moravia 184–185).

Moravia splits the action of hoisting the sail into its individual components in order to extend narration time (NT) and make it coincident with story time (ST). In fact, this kind of description aims to create isochronous scenes. If he had written "Saro hoisted the sail," the narration time would have been too short compared to the story time; however, the detailed description of the action occupies a time much closer to the time of the diegesis.

Many of the latest commercially popular novels seem like simplified screenplays (and as such they are easily and rightly accused of flirting with selling their film rights), but there are also many good examples of a cinematic way of writing. For this purpose, Antonio Tabucchi's first work, *Piazza d'Italia*, is very interesting. The Italian writer stated that, while writing his novel, he read *Film Form* by Eisenstein and was very impressed.

I had written the manuscript of my first book, Piazza d'Italia, in a very traditional way; and then I used Eisenstein's teachings to "edit" this novel in a cinematographic way. It was very experimental and very pragmatic at the same time. I cut each sequence, I wrote each shot on my sheets with scissors, I arranged them on the tiled floor, and then I mounted them for "time displacement," "visual sequence," "analogic rhyme," "metaphorical recall," "sensory correspondence," collages similar to those I had discovered reading Eisenstein's Film Form. It was great fun and it really resembled editing with pieces of paper instead of pieces of film (Tabucchi, *Écrire* 18).

In the novel there are some traces of this crude cutting, which is first a physical rather than a conceptual or an aesthetic process: the first chapter of the "third act" ("act" is, significantly, the term chosen to designate the sections of the book) ends in a sudden and strange way. The last punctuation mark of the chapter is a colon, and the last paragraph introduces an unresolved proposal and an interrupted memory. The next chapter, indeed, opens *in medias res* with a suspended phrase, after an abrupt temporal and spatial cut.

> "I have a proposal," he said, "but we'll talk tomorrow." … He stood up and went home. He thought about that night ten years before, an identical evening, when he had gone to Asmara and announced:
> 2. THE TODDE
> "I got a job," Garibaldo announced. (Tabucchi, *Piazza* 123–124)

As he stated, Tabucchi followed Eisenstein's theories, and made his novel "experimental not only from the point of view of the language, but above all as far as the writing process is concerned" (*Écrire* 18). The Russian theorist conceived montage, the real essence of the cinema, as a specific aesthetic and intellectual use of film editing; in *Film Form*, he explained that cutting and editing are more than just expunging a scene or a moment: the "collision" of shots could be used, through a "linkage" of related images, to manipulate the spectator's emotions, create film metaphors, and multiply the sense. His "theory of attraction assembly" or "montage of attractions" is conceived as a production of sense, an interpretation of reality, a construction of a discourse that grows thanks to the sum of its parts.

Instead of the static reflection of the given event, and the possibility to resolve it uniquely through the actions logically linked to that event, the Russian theorist introduced a new procedure: the "free contagion" of actions, arbitrarily chosen and autonomous, but also oriented towards a specific final thematic effect. In his novel, Tabucchi imitates this kind of montage in which the virtual shots, separate and autonomous, generate associations and involve the viewer's imagination in the reconstruction of the wholeness, activating his emotional and intellectual process in an extraordinary way. From Eisenstein, Tabucchi learned "analogical association" (which compares similar situations multiplying the sense), "time displacement," and "repetition" (which describes the same event twice, in order to highlight the value and create a crescendo of intensity); by utilizing these techniques, the writer creates connections between the events and multiplies the sense. For example, the same event opens and closes the novel: a strong analepsis anticipates Garibaldo's death, opening the book:

"The stone slipped from his hand and it rolled up to the rivulet of the fountain in the square. A smirk remained frozen on his face … Asmara came running, barefoot, dressed in an incredible apron with two huge strawberries embroidered on the pockets, and she crossed the square in a rush" (Tabucchi, *Piazza* 11–12).

The first scene is finally explained and organized in the last scene, when the event repeats itself.

Pushed by the certainty she rushed outside, wiping her hands on her apron, which had two huge strawberries embroidered on the pockets. She lost a slipper at the gate and, to avoid stopping to put it back on, she threw away the other one with a kick.
"Comrades, this is the only answer!" Garibaldo shouted.
Asmara came out at the end of the square and she moved forward running.
She was making ample signs with her arms in despair. "Garibaldo," she shouted … . We heard a shot, just one. Garibaldo broke the embrace of the statue and he slowly turned in on himself. He opened his raised fist and the stone rolled on the square. While he walked after it he gurgled something, but only a few of them heard him. (145)

The repetition of the scene, with similar and recognizable shots, forces the reader to rethink the entire story and reorder the chronology. Meanwhile the asynchronous sound (Garibaldo's words are superposed on the image of Asmara) ironically reveals the novel's message: fate is inevitable.

Narrator and Ellipsis

What is the narrative role that the special status of the film narrator suggests to writers? Is the "ellipsis of the author's voice" conceptualized by Beach (in 1932), Magny (in 1948), and more recently by Cohen (in 1973 and 1990) really possible in literature—an ellipsis that is understood as a mere imitation of the silence into which a director seems to be forced by images? My argument is that such ellipsis of the author's voice is not possible, but a voluntary silence of the narrator could occur. In fact, the camouflage of the narrator produces a literary work that "seems to be narrated from itself," although in a completely different way compared to the theories of French Naturalism and Italian Verismo.

Starting from Benveniste's celebrated opposition between *histoire* and *discours*, story and discourse, it is clear that no story can exist without a discourse and a storytelling instance. It is obvious that, if the linguistic code of this storytelling changes, the storyteller's role will change too. Whereas

the literary storyteller must deal only with words and can only *tell* a story, the film narrator is forced to manipulate different codes and he must *show* an action rather than tell it. Whereas verbal language clearly bears the trace of the teller (by the deictic system) and indicates temporal relationships between the story and discourse (by the verbal system), the movie narrator does not show himself. "In that regime of *showing* (monstration) … the discursive instance is less apparent than in a written tale. Events seem to tell their own stories. Yet this is misleading, because without any mediation there would have been no recording and we would not have seen the events at all" (Gaudreault and Jost 45). As André Gaudreault explained, the cinematic narrator is a "meganarrator" because he has to operate in two different ways: he must compose and film the scenes that form the movie while they are played by actors, and he must cut and edit these scenes in order to ordinate different times and spaces and to give sense to the story.

The film storyteller splits himself and his own work in two: the "monstrator" takes into account the visual appearance and the temporal "hardness" of the image; like a painter or a theater director, he acts in the frame. Then, as the literary storyteller, the "narrator" introduces the distinction between temporal levels and manages the plot through editing. All scenes take place in the present, and only the montage can give temporality to the plot.

The dual nature of this meganarrator may be one of the most useful keys to recognizing which are the most cinematographic types of montage within the general phenomenon of literary plot. It is also useful to give the right value to certain effects of visual framing and to identify a conscious use of film rhetoric on the page and the attempt to reproduce some typical operations of the cinematic meganarrator.

If the writer pretends to have a camera, he must virtually place it (as a virtual microphone) someplace within the *diegesis*. Among the other rebound effects, there are three ways of pretending to write with a virtual camera: the limitation of the image by a frame, the anchorage of an image to an optical point of view well positioned in the diegetic space, and the attempt to reproduce several codified effects of montage through words.

There are some examples of these in *Teorema* by Pier Paolo Pasolini; this is a very peculiar novel, written while he was filming a movie of the same name and plot. Despite what one might think, this is not the screenplay of the movie (which was written separately), but it clearly conveys the experience of the set and, above all, the imagination required in movie creation. The novel tells the story of an upper-middle class family with very traditional roles, habits, occupations, and certainties.

At the beginning of the story, a mysterious Visitor appears in this family's life—nobody knows where he is from, who he is, or why he has

come—and by means of his behavior, he reveals the roles, constrictions, and false beliefs of all the family members. The Visitor has evident god-like peculiarities and his arrival seems to be an "epidemic" visit, in the etymological sense, of a Greek divinity. After having shocked the family and destroyed its routines, the Visitor leaves as suddenly as he had arrived. At the beginning of the story, the family receives a telegram announcing the arrival of the mysterious Visitor: "The father looks up from the bourgeois newspaper he is reading, and he opens the telegram, which says: 'I'll BE WITH YOU TOMORROW' (the father's thumb covers the sender's name)" (Pasolini, *Teorema* 904). To maintain the mystery that is so important in the divine characterization of the Visitor, the reader must not know his name.

But is it really necessary, on the written page, to specify that the sender's name is blocked by the father's thumb? Because the reader cannot physically see the telegram, reticence would be enough to ensure that the Visitor's name remains anonymous. This is a good example of the writer's desire to frame a virtual image by giving, in brackets, a real indication of direction.

Something similar occurs at the end of the book. After giving his factory to his workers, the father decides to strip off his clothes in the train station—a symbol of his abandonment of all bourgeois conventions and rules—and the reader's attention is directed to his naked feet, much like a detail shot.

> As if defeated and grateful, he diligently begins to take off his beautiful light coat, a flawless work of English origin—and lets it fall at his feet, where it collapses like something dead and soon becomes unknown to him; the jacket shares the same fate, followed by the pullover, the tie, the shirt …
> The same way, first the undershirt falls over the other clothes, then the trousers, the underpants, the socks, and the shoes. Eventually two bare feet appear next to pile of clothes: they turn and, at a slow pace, they move away along the grey and polished floor of the platform roof, in the middle of the crowd that surrounds him, with their shoes on, alarmed and silent. (Pasolini, *Teorema* 1048)

The reader imagines the father stripping, then shifts his attention from the long shot of the man to the detail of the pile of clothes that accumulate at his feet. The description seems to be written by the setting down of a virtual camera that shows, with a deep-focus shot, both the father's naked feet and the shod feet of the crowd watching the scene. The symbolic opposition between "naked" and "shod" becomes more significant thanks to the use of a close-up, the most useful shot for transmitting this rhetorical value.

Given the particular location of the shooting, the virtual frame is not neutral but, to borrow from Jost, "ocularized": the marked point of view chosen to broadcast the representation has a greater value on the page,

where the foyer is not necessary. In his novel Pasolini alludes to virtual scenes using tones, brands, and phrases identical to those he used in the script: he demands that the reader transform words into cinematic images while he is reading. In order to signal the intention to resume two successive stages of the same action with two different camera angles in the screenplay, Pasolini changes only the setting:

> XXXVII HOUSE: DAY INTERIOR
> The two nurses carry her out.
> XXXVIII GARDEN AND ROAD: DAY EXTERIOR
> The nurses take the girl outside, into the street. (Pasolini, "Teorema" Script 3119–3120)

Here there are different settings but the same action: the match-cut ensures the continuity of the story and ties one image to another. In the novel, Pasolini often does the same thing in passing from one chapter to another.

> So, still with his amazed and mean smile on the lips—he enters the house.
> ***
> Leaving the garden to its light—here the father goes back fumbling, walking again through the reverse route, to the inside of the house, up to the entrance of the corridor sadly illuminated by electric light. (Pasolini, "Teorema" Novel 935–936)

Thus some passages of *Teorema* (the novel) are constructed that simulate typical phenomena of narrative mounting, as encoded by Metz in his "large syntagmatic category of the image track." For example, the artistic vocation of the child is described in synthesis through short scenes separated by typographical white spaces (virtual cuts): this technique is interesting because it imitates the "episodic sequence" codified by Metz, chronologically ordinated and useful to give a summary. By showing similar but not identical scenes several times, narration cracks the temporal hardness of the image to suggest the iteration and continuity of the action, even if each scene remains in the present.

> Pietro is leaning on blank sheets of paper. He's drawing. (Pasolini, "Teorema" Novel 1006)
> Pietro is still drawing. (1006)
> Pietro is still bent drawing. (1007)
> Still hunched over the sheets, Pietro tests new techniques. (1008)

The script functions exactly the same way, providing the shot indication in each case:

XL GARDEN AND HOUSE: EXT. / INT. DAY.
The son is bent over the sheets, drawing, turned away, so fierce and intent that he forgets that he is alone and speaks loudly.
XL/A GARDEN AND HOUSE : EXT. / INT. DAY.
The son is still drawing.
XL/B GARDEN HOUSE: EXT. DAY.
Still bent drawing.
XL/C GARDEN HOUSE: EXT. / INT. DAY.
Bent over the large sheets. (Pasolini, "Teorema" Script 3120–3121)

Elsewhere in the novel, Pasolini uses techniques similar to those described by Metz. The first four chapters of the novel, short scenes dedicated to presenting the characters, combine themselves to form the perfect equivalent of a "bracket syntagma," a sequence where the contained elements do not in any way represent a narrative temporal continuity, but instead produce a common theme. Here, parallel and simultaneous scenes show the activities of all the protagonists and then converge into an "establishing shot" that shows the family finally gathered together around the table. Thus, the virtual camera conceptualizes an idea of bourgeois life.

In another passage of the novel, the novelist imitates a cinematic summary or, according to Metz's definition, an "ordinary sequence" in which he recounts Emilia's journey from the family house to her farmhouse. It is easy for the reader to imagine each scene like a shot because of the use of the present and the high iconism of the style.

With a large cardboard suitcase in hand, Emilia leaves the house, closing the door behind her … she climbs down the stairs on tiptoe … she walks along the stretch of path that runs through the garden … here she is on the road … she walks through the long straight road of that perspective, slowly, struggling with her suitcase—which she shifts from one hand to another every now and then—until she shrinks, far away, and disappears.
***
She reaches a big circular square, with a central green flowerbed, and around it a fan of streets that all open up the same way, with the same perspectives … . [the tram] leaves again with a new load, getting lost in one of those streets that originate from the big and crowded circus going towards a deep end of hanging mists.
***
Emilia is sitting under another platform roof … the vehicle approaching now is a big, old, almost disused bus.
***
The bus stops in a small square on the edge of a town (Pasolini, "Teorema" Novel 981–983).

In general, the entire novel is built through small scenes, independent and nearly isochronous, which are separated by spatial and temporal el-

lipses that must be filled in by the reader, just as he must do while watching a movie.

From Reader to Spectator (and Return)

What are the new roles and skills of the reader, the different "encyclopedias" he now needs to refer to, and the changed nature of his expectations in terms of his perception of the novel? A few years ago during an interview discussing the influence of cinema on his writing, I asked Andrea Camilleri what kind of collaboration he demands of his readers. Commenting on a novel seemingly far removed from the cinematographic model, he answered that sometimes the narrator has to leave space to the reader and ask for his collaboration in the visualization of characters and, above all, in the creation of all the missing connections. From this point of view, the influence that cinema has on Camilleri (like on Pasolini) is not only visual or formal, but it even becomes structural because it affects the construction of the narrative and the relationship between story and plot. Camilleri added that if the reader was not also a viewer accustomed to cinematic language and narrative techniques, he would not have the "visual/interpretive expertise and tools" that are now also indispensable to reading literary novels. Indeed, in his perspective, today's readers are much better equipped to engage with literary narrations characterized by ellipses and a highly disjointed temporality. Before cinema had become a widespread sort of "native language," the majority of readers did not possess the mental tools necessary for such an engagement. In other words, a collaboration exists between text and reader that originates from this "visual training" acquired from a direct engagement with media rather than literary texts (Camilleri, *Intervista* 299–300).

It is with a similar narrative agreement that Camilleri wrote his *Il birraio di Preston*, which appears to have very little to do with cinema. Set in 1864, the novel tells the story of the grand opening of the Caltanissetta theater, following the adventures of numerous characters in different scenes, each of which occupies a chapter. The chapters are not in chronological order and several of them take place simultaneously. A reader that is accustomed to perceiving the narration through images will certainly be able to infer connections and create order between different scenes. *Il birraio di Preston* is a mocking text that spells out its mechanism only at the end of the book, in a very strange chapter: despite being the last one, it is titled Chapter One and closes as follows: "But we will extensively discuss this episode and others still unknown in the chapters to come" (Camilleri, *Birraio* 232).

After the index, in an ironic *postscript*, the author makes fun of his narrator, the reader, and the narrative agreement they seemed to arrange. Chapters are not chronologically ordered and several of them narrate simultaneous events. A reader accustomed to narrations conveyed through images will certainly be able to infer relations and bring (or create) a narrative order rearranging the scenes in a mental narrative sequence.

> "Arriving at this time of night, meaning the index, the surviving readers will certainly have realized that the succession of chapters arranged by the author was just a simple proposal: in fact, if he wants, each reader can establish his own personal sequence." (Camilleri, *Birraio* 232)

If readers can actually replace the text as they wish, the narrator's role is immediately questioned. As Camilleri suggests, a new narrative agreement was born when readers learned to fill in the gaps in cinematic storytelling, rearrange the chronology of events, and draw conclusions from missing information. This is possible because the cinematic code and movie storytelling have deeply changed the imaginations of writers as well as those of readers, turning each of us into a "homo cinematograficus":

> The homo cinematographicus looked at the threshold of the new century and travelled for decades at the light speed of cinema. It was weaned by it, fed in a sentimental and cultural sense, educated and driven to new worlds … The entire mapping of twentieth-century human DNA reveals branched presences of the cinematic gene, but also of genes that form his vision, coming from farther away. He is the last link in the chain of evolution of an earlier species, which I like to call "icononauts," or travelers through images, which date back to the first appearances of Leonardo and to the great geographical discoveries. (Brunetta 14–15)

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Odbojni učinek: formalni in strukturni vplivi kinematografije na literaturo

Ključne besede: literatura in film / italijanska književnost / naratologija / semiotika / pripovedna tehnika / intermedialnost

Študija preučuje daljnosežni vpliv filmskega jezika na literarno pripovedništvo; opredeljuje ga s konceptom, ki ga Gerard Genette definira kot »odbojni učinek enega medija na drugega«. Kaj se zgodi, ko začne literatura prevpraševati kategorije lastnega prostora in časa, pri čemer poskuša imiti-

rati filmski model? Kako lahko literarni opis vzdrži vizualni napad filmske naracije? Kakšne so povezave in razlike med realizmom literature devetnajstega stoletja in novim ikoničnim realizmaom, ki ga je uvedla filmska naracija? Kakšna montaža in dialogi so resnično »filmski«? Kakšna je narativna vloga, ki jo posebni položaj filmskega pripovedovalca narekuje drugim piscem? Je v literaturi elipsa avtorskega glasu resnično mogoča, kot imitacija tišine, v katero režiserja na videz prisilijo podobe? In posledično, kakšna je nova vloga bralca v doživljanju romana; kakšne veščine in znanja se zahtevajo od njega? Ali novo podobje, ki ga ustvarja kinematografija, ustvarja spremembe v bralčevem horizontu pričakovanj? Rojstvo kinematografije je spremenilo status literature tako, da je prevzelo nekaj njenih funkcij, obenem pa jo obogatilo z novimi izraznimi sredstvi in naposled ustvarilo številne spremembe v literarnem sistemu. Pričujoči članek ponuja teoretski vpogled v »odbojni učinek«, pri čemer kot primere uporablja dela iz italijanske literature (Pasolini, Tabucchi, Camilleri).

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