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RENDERING DETAILS OF LITERARY SETTINGS IN FILM ADAPTATIONS OF ENGLISH NOVELS

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The article in question is based on the language analysis of the properties of English novel setting rendition in cinematic narration. Treating film adaptations of contemporary literary works suggests new research possibilities based on conveying verbal messages from various perspectives. The goal of the scientific research is to identify and analyze the linguistic means and figures of speech indicating key aspects of literary settings, the basis for the contrastive and comparative analysis of the literary and cinematic space being thus contoured. The study reveals language traits of the modifications the place of the action undergoes in modern English prose film adaptations.

Keywords: *narration, narrator, adaptation, film, novel, setting, script.*

DETALIEREA PARTICULARITĂȚILOR LOCULUI DE ACȚIUNE LITERARĂ ÎN ADAPTĂRI CINEMATOGRAFICE ALE ROMANELOR ENGLEZE

Prezentul articol se bazează pe analiza lingvistică a particularităților de redare a locului acțiunii romanelor engleze în narațiunea cinematografică. Abordarea adaptării filmice a operelor literare contemporane propune o nouă direcție de cercetare care se axează pe redarea mesajului verbal din mai multe puncte de vedere. Scopul lucrării științifice este de a depista și de a efectua o analiză a mijloacelor lingvistice și a figurilor de stil care indică aspectele-cheie ale locului de acțiune literară. Astfel, se conturează o bază pentru analiza comparativă și contrastivă a locului de acțiune ficțional și filmic. Cercetarea pune în evidență reproducerea verbală a spațiului literar în adaptările prozei engleze folosind limbajul cinematografic.

Cuvinte-cheie: *narațiune, narator, adaptare, film, roman, loc de acțiune, scenariu.*

Introduction

It has long been argued that the major criterion of any universally acknowledged work of literary art is its patterning in accordance with canonic principles, traditions and norms that any classical piece should follow. Hence the overwhelming and often unjustified tendency to deem the newly emerging art forms as either inferior or hardly worthy of serious consideration, theoretical analysis, appreciation or critical acclaim. Film and literary theory adepts therefore often engage in conflicted and controversial debate based upon the status and merit of literary art adaptations appearing on the screen, and the arguments made are prone to call forth innumerable reasons for denigrating the status of literary film adaptations. Traditionally, film as an art form could hardly have been considered canonic owing to its relative novelty, the increasing appeal to the consumer – based society, and the technical intricacies the end result of any film production is tightly linked to. Moreover, the cultural aspects of cinematic art forms always entail questioning their capacity of either fitting the standardized version of the classical art work or their dangling on the outskirts of the classical as merely a token of cultural commodification.

Analytical Overview of the Outlook on Canonic Prose and Its Screen Adaptations in Contemporary Literary and Film Theory

The purpose of the given article is to present the peculiarities of transforming a classical work of English prose into the printed film in the making, i.e. the script, with the ensuing changes occurring in the texture of the novel, this being the literary subgenre the research focuses on. Namely, the changes in the ways the setting is modelled and represented linguistically will be considered, using the methods of scientific data interpretation and summary. Also, the comparative and contrastive, as well as the stylistic analysis elements will be used in the research. The concept of an adaptation inevitably involves questioning the status of the latter as that of a specific language vehicle, or a code, which is defined by G. Leech and M. Short in terms of its applicability to any language shape, be it the one construed as a means of communication or emerging as that specific of an art form. In their treatise titled 'Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose', the

scientists determine any language as a codified method of conveying information, wherein the sense and the referent play their parts and are correlated, yet may vary depending on the deictic indices the units of the code, i.e. the elements of the language, convey [1, p.99]. The consistency of deictic variation depending primarily on the perspective and the angle assumed by the source of the discourse emission can thus reshape the temporal and spatial boundaries of the place where the action in a novel occurs.

The notion itself is identified by M.Fludernik in her comprehensive theoretical study of narratives in the way largely similar to the outlook shared by G. Leech, placing the additional emphasis on the deictic nature of the space and time, the conceptual categories being unified, in the author's view, once pointed to by the narrator and perceived by the reader, also termed the narratee. In addition, M.Fludernik states that the integrity of the spacial and temporal perception of fictional reality requires that the receiver and sender of the message communicated via the narrative novel code be located within identical or similar reference frameworks [2, p.42]. This can, of course, by no means be viewed as a requirement, for the incongruity of the setting envisioned owing to the deictic markers with the reality the addressee inhabits creates a premise for configuring the world of literary fiction, which is further detailed by the narrator.

P.Simpson insists in his study of the language codes found in various discourse types, be these of the literary or cinematic nature, and entitled 'Language, Ideology and Point of View', that the place where the actions of a printed matter occur can and should be interpreted as the camera angle or a view, a mere perspective adopted by the narrator and enhanced through descriptive or any other narrative elements. The unusual interpretation of the setting and the narrative 'T' equated with the camera angle is coupled with categorizing the setting, the members of the opposition underlying it being the visual art of a film opposed to and yet tied with the verbal universe of literature [3, p.11]. Therefore the setting of literary or cinematic nature is still retrieved owing to the angle adopted by the narrating source.

These viewpoints correlate with the broader vision and the dictionary definition of the setting in its generalized hypostasis by M. Abrams, who brings to the fore the two basic literary genres, i.e. the prosaic and the dramatic ones, where the setting plays its part revealing the spatial boundaries, temporal conditions and social circumstances the events occur within [4, p.283]. The consistent coupling of the space and time is connected to the social foregrounding and makes a case for deictic markers noted above; thus, the deictic points of reference can be construed as inseparably linked to the camera or narrative angle of vision.

Accordingly, the status of a film adaptation as non – canonic could be discarded on the mere grounds of the verbal and visual narratives of the cinema being tied by the theoretical tradition and practical approaches to their review and scrutiny, for the film theory, unlike the one of the adaptation, has long gained its status as scientifically grounded and conceptually exacting, while film translations of novels should still require a firmer self – positioning within the framework of cinematic studies as a whole. This daring argument made by Th. Leitch in his critical article '12 Fallacies in the Contemporary Adaptation Theory', which has arguably become one of the theoretical foundations forming the bases of the XXIst century adaptation principles, is in itself the feasible proof of the cinema gaining its status as a classical art form, with screen adaptations of novels being its very core [5, p.149]. Although the controversy persists as to whether one should view literary works as strictly canonic and their cinematic versions as most obviously inferior, the canon itself is often questioned owing to the growing influence and impact media studies exert upon the perception of art in any of its manifestations.

Thus, the position screen adaptations have recently gained, being theoretically scrutinized and recognized as a feasible form of contemporary verbal and visual art, is that of a contemporary art translation. The latter should inevitably emerge despite the enhancement of uniqueness and prestige normally ascribed to literary works, the process viewed from quite a critical angle by H. Bertens in his treatise exploring the basics of literary theory [6, p.1]. Consequently, the film adaptation as a piece of modern and popular art entails significant setting modifications or properties of reproduction in the film script, which presents special interest given the angle of the study in question.

Elements of Comparative and Contrastive Analysis Applied to the Scrutiny of Rendering Literary Settings in English Prose Adaptations

The issue of selecting canonic literary pieces among the multitude of English novels hardly poses a problem owing to the centrality of specific works of literature as the most appropriate film adaptation samples. One of suchlike model Gothic novels which catches the eye of many a film director and producer has long been

recognized as one of the pinnacles of literary perfection, this being *'Jane Eyre'* by Charlotte Brontë. The masterpiece itself, long revered by both the literary critics and adaptation specialists, to let alone its avid adherents and readers, represents a variegated palette of strikingly multilateral settings where the actions tend to evolve at varying speed depending on the pace of the narrative unfolding. The adaptation selected for the purpose of the comparative and contrastive juxtaposition with its literary counterpart is Robert Stevenson's *'Jane Eyre'*, the film version of the novel released in 1943, based on the script by John Houseman and Aldous Huxley, and produced by Orson Welles. The undeniably powerful collaboration of the directing, acting and producing crew along with the literary masters resulted in the script version gaining its momentum as soon as the film came out, enjoying popularity and even these days considered one of the best cinematic adaptations of the novel.

The script will be viewed from the perspective of the verbal setting reproduction and presentation, the incipit of the novel presenting special interest owing to its iconographic value and a series of emblematic tropes, as well as deictic indices. The setting, as it is often the custom of Gothic narratives, is the primary element emerging at the very first page of the printed matter: "*There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further out-door exercise was now out of the question. I was glad of it: I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons: dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John, and Georgiana Reed*" [7, p.7]. The setting of the book serves as an organic exposition element jumpstarting the action, the indices of the locality being demarked by the temporal (*'that day'*, *'chilly afternoons'*, *'raw twilight'*, *'an hour in the morning'*, *'since dinner'*) and spatial (*'leafless shrubbery'*, *'outdoor exercise'*), phrase entities, most of them patterned as either nominal and adjectival or adverbial in nature.

The paragraph structuring is framed by the complex metaphor, the focal image of the *'cold winter wind'* bringing with it the *'sombre'* clouds and so *'penetrating'* a rain, the epithets contributing to the enhancement of the natural imagery. The demonstrative pronoun *'that'* along with the temporal index *'an hour in the morning'* can be attributed to the deictic identification of the place where the plot develops. As a whole the expository paragraphs fit organically into the ensuing narrative represented by the autodiegetic voice of the literary discourse, and therefore the perspective of the main character dominates the novelistic set.

In the script the starting point of the film narrative is established in an unusual manner which is equally unexpected and self – explanatory. The plot of the script version begins to unravel as follows: "*Note: Until otherwise noted the CAMERA represents Jane. All characters speak directly into the CAMERA as though they were talking to Jane. We never see her but on several occasions we see her hands just as her own eyes would see them...*", and the perspectivization requires for the narratee to skip the following three pages of the scenario exposing the proleptic settings to be encountered further in order to fully reconstruct the image of Jane Eyre as a child inhabiting the grim precincts of Gateshead.

Further, "*the CAMERA zooms back to an extreme long shot;... in the mist we begin to hear the narration: JANE'S VOICE My name is Jane Eyre, I have no father or mother, ... As a child I lived with my aunt, Mrs. Reed, at Gateshead Hall. I do not remember that she ever spoke one kind word to me. Through the grey mist slowly comes the bright flaring light of a candle as the voice fades out. DISSOLVE TO: UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR – GATESFIELD HALL – EARLY SPRING OF 1829*" [8, p.1-4]. These significant modifications the script undergoes refer to the spatial and temporal markers, the focus though being attributed to the *'CAMERA'* almost exclusively, replacing the autodiegetic narrative entity at times.

The exactness of the literary temporal markers found in the novel is replaced by the vague phrasal indices as *'on several occasions'*, *'ever'*, *'slowly'*, the temporal deictic references being blurred at the beginning, and yet coming into view in the close shot emphasized by the script writers' spatial remarks as *'UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR'* and *'GATESFIELD HALL'*, with the temporal boundaries shifting from winter in the novel to the early spring *'OF 1829'*. The temporal boundaries of the setting are mostly adverbial, the pace of the script thus being faster, and the spatial dynamics changing from the indefinite to the precise place of the action. First being represented as the protagonist within neither the time or place specified, the character reminisces about the childhood years later in the film script narrative, indicating the locale as geographically precise

(*'Gateshead Hall'*). The image of the mansion is prefaced by the trite metaphoric *'coming'* of the *'bright flaring'* candle light piercing the *'grey mist'* and the *'fading'* of the voices.

It is in this particular respect that the exposition of the novel and the one reconstructed in the script are congruent. The settings in both the cases are verbal and perceived as figurative, though the literary work relies more obviously on the natural imagery, while the portrayal of the place in the script tends to follow the principle of laconism, greater precision and adherence to the endemic iconography proper to the works of Ch.Brontë. The setting, as well as its imagery in the novel and the script are distant reminders of the areas the author herself was largely familiar with and most probably resided in, as the semi – autobiographic generic indicator of the book suggests.

Conclusions

Overall, the exquisite and at times languid storytelling slant adopted by the autodiegetic narrator of the literary work analyzed above, abounding in the nominal and adverbial space, as well as time phrasal identifiers and deictic reference points, partly correlates with the reconstructed expository set in the script version. The latter is more laconic and explicit, which is easily explained by the requirements of the fast – paced film genre and development, as well as the time limitations imposed upon the adapted version of the novel. The metaphoric framing proper to the expository setting elements of the verbal literary and film narratives along with incorporating phrasal deictic references into the scenario is another proof of the fidelity to the original version of the plot the script is noted for. The deictic indicators are built by the singular first – person narrator in the literary work, being structurally homogeneous and most of the time precise as far as the exposition is concerned, while the cinematic version is more fluid in this respect, blurring the chronos, as well as the topos at the very beginning and introducing the first – person voice instead.

The printed film version also focuses upon the setting further in the script adaptation, letting the camera share the privilege of narrating along with the protagonists' verbal commentary, the technicality impossible to attain in the primary source. Thus, the setting of the novel commonly defined as the space and time of the action and the foundation for the episodic structuring in the novel, noted for its figurativity, emblematic value and specificity of deictic indicators, is rendered with relative fidelity to its language and style in the film script, which is apparently dynamic, deictically specific and narratively meritocratic.

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