



CINEMATIC NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES OF BARICCO'S PROSE

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Annotation

This article is devoted to the study of the cinematic narrative techniques of the Italian writer Alessandro Baricco's prose. The connection between his narrative and cinematography is noted. The author's works have an 'audiovisual' dimension that guarantees the written word the same communicative possibilities as cinema. Having analysed the narrative techniques of the author's works ("Ocean Sea", "Silk", "Novecento", "Thrice at Dawn"), it is found that they manifest such cinematic techniques as montage, close-up, mise-en-scene. Some of his works are similar to film scripts: scenery, gestures, movements of characters are shown.

Key words: *cinematography, script, frame, details, close-up, real-time, montage, mise-en-scene*

Introduction

Alessandro Baricco is one of the outstanding creative people who has shown himself to be worthy and talented in music, cinema and literature. His works provoke multi-volume criticism. He writes works that become bestsellers.

In addition to his work as a writer, Baricco has been and continues to be involved in a number of other related activities, acting as a playwright, journalist, musicologist, publicist, lecturer and presenter of television programmes dedicated to opera and literature.

For this reason critics often turn to a wide variety of contexts when analyzing Baricco's narrative and resort to analogies from the fields of music, cinema and theatre to describe his language. Indeed, when evaluating a writer's work, it is necessary first of all to take into account his familiarity with the technique of literary narration: in many works, the author seeks to express himself through "cinematic language".

Discussion and results

Many critics have noted the "cinematographic" technique of Baricco's prose. Some of his short stories are suitable for turning them into films: they are easy to adapt to the language of cinema. According to Scarsella, "Seta" ("Silk") has a cinematic script (Scarsella, 2003). Ambroso believes that "Novecento" is a completely cinematic work (Ambroso, 2019).

In an interview, Baricco, reflecting on the success of his first novel, "Castelli di Rabbia" ("Castles of Anger", 1991), attributes his merit to the innovative formula of storytelling that he discovered: "I was referring to a less literary way of storytelling based on film editing. The idea was that it was possible to work with different materials, such as non-fiction and fiction, and that editing would turn them into a homogeneous unit. I was thinking about how to write a dialogue without intros. Such things were unheard of back then." (<https://italiaeisagunt.blogspot.com/2009/09/baricco-docet.html>).

This statement demonstrates Baricco's firm desire to find a form of expression capable of giving his novel an "audiovisual" dimension that guarantees the written word the same

communicative possibilities as cinema. This dimension will be present in all subsequent works of the writer.

In 1993 Baricco's novel "Oceano mare" ("Ocean Sea") was published. The novel consists of three parts, reminiscent of movie episodes. The first part is divided into many small chapters, similar to the movie scenes. In each chapter, the author shows different characters who are connected by being in the Almayer tavern. Gradually, scene by scene, you can get to know each of the characters, understand the development of the plot. Baricco uses the technique of retrospection: in the second part, the author tells about the shipwreck that precedes the meeting of the characters in the tavern. The third part is divided into chapters, each named after a character. It provides a denouement of all events.

It is important to emphasise that in each chapter (scene) there are several situations (frames). A. Baricco masterfully creates recommendations in 'gestures and movements' of what the character should do: "*Posa la penna, piega il foglio, lo infila in una busta. Si alza, prende dal suo baule una scatola di mogano, solleva il coperchio, ci lascia cadere dentro la lettera, aperta e senza indirizzo*" (Baricco, 1994).

The author also accurately describes the interior in which the action takes place: "*Nella stanza in fondo al corridoio (primo piano) c'erano un letto, un armadio, due sedie, una stufa, un piccolo scrittoio, un tappeto (blu), due quadri identici, un lavabo con specchio, una cassapanca...*" (Baricco, 1994).

His work "Novecento" (1994) is a theatrical monologue, a prose poem, a jazz tale. "Novecento" resembles a finished film script. The author himself notes: "I wrote this text for the actor Eugenio Allegri and the director Gabriel Váchez. They staged a play based on it, which debuted this July at the Asti Festival" (Baricco, 2012).

In 1998 Baricco acted as a screenwriter for the film "The Legend of the Pianist" based on the Novecento directed by Italian director Giuseppe Tornatore.

The particular montage by which the author organizes his material can indeed be better understood through comparison with the narrative techniques of cinema. Some techniques of Baricco's prose really resemble clip editing. According to Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky, "montage combines dramaturgy with directing, casting it into a complete form" (Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky, 1977). Scarsella also notes that cinematography teaches literature the technique of montage (Scarsella, 2003). We agree that A. Baricco's works use the technique of montage: alternating frames, changing rhythms, long and close-ups, mise en scene.

In 1996 "Seta" ("Silk") was published. It represents a fragmentary prose in verse, short chapters that resemble scenes from a film. It should be noted that in this work the author uses many techniques significant for cinematography: close-ups, gestures, details, mise-en-scene.

Reading the book, one is struck by the peculiar division into paragraphs, by which the writer organizes the narrative material: the story unfolds through a series of sixty-five homogeneous short sequences that have very little in common with the traditional chapters of a novel. In order to describe the particular structure of Silk, we inevitably have to resort to parallels with the models used in cinema, since this continuous fragmentation of narrative unity can be understood as a technique adopted in order to create within the text a series of juxtaposed scenes, each of which has an autonomous significance in the economy of the narration.

Let's note the details in chapter 13: the "rice paper partition" reflects the national space – Japan, the "kimono" - the Japanese mentality, the empty space, the minimalism of objects in the room reflects the aesthetics of Japan. Baricco creates mise en scene that resembles movie frames. The author creates a logically fixed mise-en-scene technique when, purely visually, rather than

verbally, the reader understands the subtext of the scene and the relationship between the characters.

In 2012 "Tre volte all'alba" ("Three Times at Dawn") was published. It also represents a ready screenplay for a film. In the first chapter there's a dialogue between a woman and a man in a hotel. It can be noticed that the author mentions the characters only at the beginning of the dialogue, but then, over the next few pages, never once includes the author's words. This is because there is no need for author's words on the screen that which also points to the similarity with the film's script:

Aveva l'aria di piovere, ma poi non l'ha fatto, disse la donna.

Sì, non si decide, disse l'uomo.

Aspetta qualcuno?

Io? No.

Che stanchezza. Le spiace se mi siedo un attimo?

Prego.

Niente da bere, vedo.

Non credo che diano la colazione prima delle sette.

Alcol, dicevo (Baricco, 2023).

The dialogue between the characters takes place in real-time, which is also a cinematographic feature of Baricco's prose.

Conclusion

Thus, it is possible to notice the connection between A. Baricco's narrative techniques and cinematography. The author's works have an "audiovisual" dimension, which guarantees the written word the same communicative possibilities as cinema. Some of his works are similar to film scripts: they describe the scenery, gestures and movements of characters, while others have cinematic techniques: montage, close-up, and mise-en-scene.

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