

Filmic Referencing in *Blood-Drenched Beard*, by Daniel Galera / *Referenciação fílmica em 'Barba ensopada de sangue', de Daniel Galera¹*

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at studying the use of intermedial writing in the novel *Blood-Drenched Beard*, by contemporary Brazilian writer Daniel Galera. It follows the assumption that the novel is expressed and organized through filmic referencing, herein proposed as a designation for the specific relation between cinema and literature that functions by means of intermedial referencing - as defined by Irina Rajewsky (2012) –, but in a way that it highlights the visual component. The study also examines the critical reception of the novel regarding the analyses of the aspects related to filmic language. The reflections of Gilles Deleuze in *Movement-image* (1983) and *Time-image* (1985) provide the theoretical foundation on the characteristics of this language born with cinema and widely used by other media nowadays. This paper intends to offer further contributions to the studies on the relationship between cinema and literature, which have received less attention than the ones focusing on the relationship between literature and cinema,

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even less than the adaptation from book to screen. One final purpose is to increase knowledge on contemporary Brazilian literature.

KEYWORDS: Intermedial reference; Daniel Galera, Filmic Referencing.

RESUMO

Este artigo tem por objetivo estudar a intermedialidade presente no romance *Barba ensopada de sangue*, do escritor brasileiro contemporâneo Daniel Galera. O estudo parte da hipótese de que a obra se expressa e se organiza por meio de uma referência filmica, proposta aqui como designação para a relação específica, entre o cinema e a literatura que trabalha intermediariamente por referência - como a definiu Irina Rajewsky (2012) -, mas o faz privilegiando a parte visual. O trabalho examina também a recepção crítica da obra no que diz respeito a análises de aspectos seus relacionados à linguagem filmica. As reflexões de Gilles Deleuze em seus *Imagem-movimento* (1983) e *Imagem-tempo* (1985) fornecem a fundamentação teórica sobre as características dessa linguagem nascida com o cinema e amplamente praticada por outros meios nos dias de hoje. O trabalho visa contribuir com os estudos sobre as relações entre cinema e literatura, menos desenvolvidos que as relações entre literatura e cinema, mormente menos que a adaptação. Por fim, esta análise espera enriquecer o conhecimento sobre a literatura brasileira contemporânea.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Referência intermediária; Daniel Galera; Referência filmica.

1 Introduction

Published in 2012, the novel *Blood-Drenched Beard*, by Daniel Galera, had great repercussion in the media and caused thought-provoking critical reactions, which sometimes were quite conflicting among themselves by either praising the book as a significant representative of contemporary literature or dismissing it as a minor product full of flaws. This study intends to deepen such analyses and discover the forces propelling the contrasting readings evoked by the novel, thereby proposing the hypothesis that the narrative is expressed and organized by means of what will be referred to here as filmic referencing. This fact would explain the discrepancies regarding the reception of the book.

Filmic referencing is understood as a relationship between cinema and literature and, more specifically, as an intermedial reference – according to Rajewsky's definition (2012) – that favors the visual content of cinematographic language. It is an expression, in literary terms, of the constitutive ways related to filmic narration, that is, a literary way of narrating “as if we saw a film”. The term “filmic”, associated with “referencing”, arises from the need to indicate the literary work of inserting the cinematographic language by its visual content apart from its sound content². Even

² The prominent visual content in literature has, over time, received the most different designations and theoretical approaches. In many studies, the purely pictorial components are confused with those of the motion picture (or of the cinematographic language that creates the illusion of movement). The considerations focusing specifically on the dialogue between film and the literary text also use a wide range of expressions (SCHWANECKE, 2015). In Portuguese, the term “cinematographic” is commonly used, which refers to the whole of cinema as a medium, in its audiovisual dynamics. As in many novels, in *Blood-drenched beard*, the filmic visual part stands out substantially over



though image and sound are always combined nowadays, literature has historically appealed more to cinematic visuality than to its sonority³. This paper, therefore, aims at studying and examining the text in the light of theories and concepts related to filmic language that allow the identification and understanding of this type of intermediality in Galera's novel.

This hypothesis was formulated based both on the impressions after reading the book and on its convergence with other works by the author in which the filmic content is present. Two examples can be given here. First, it should be noted that, in 2010, Galera (in fact) scripted the graphic novel entitled *Cachalote*, wherein paintings without any verbal expression are predominant, thus making them look like storyboards; second, in a work from 2006 – *Mãos de Cavalo* (*The Shape of Bones*)⁴ –, the cinematographic medium and its filmic language are explicitly mentioned in the narrative:

His imagination worked as if he were projecting a film, cutting the fierce struggle into shots, making a choreography of each blow and using slow motion without restriction. [...] Sometimes the camera appeared at the crucial moments of its existence, sometimes it captured the reality of ordinary and lonely moments [...] It was not just feeling observed, imagining indefinite witnesses for scenes in his life. It was as if he detached himself from the body to become the observer. He himself operated the camera, left the scene, crossed the membrane between reality and imagination and chose a chair in the empty audience of a dark cinema (GALERA, 2016, p. 139-40, our translation⁵).

The filmic language, inserted in this previous novel as a particularity of the character's imagination, will prove to be a structuring element in the work herein analyzed, which was published later.

Studies on the 21st century narrative are still in their early stages. They undoubtedly portrait the context they've been created in, as well as influences of narrative modes from the past. The twentieth century saw the spread and birth of many means of communication that gradually converged to the digital environment. Amid these changes, the subject inevitably came to be something completely different. Understanding the narrative modes of the 21st century also means

any sound reference, so it would be inaccurate to say that in this and other literary works there is "cinematographic reference". Thus, the concept of "filmic referencing" used here designates both the intermedial relationship with cinema and the specific expressive dynamics of motion pictures.

³ The prevalence of imagery in contemporary times has been postulated by theoretical approaches since the 20th century as that of a "visual culture" linked to a whole "literary visuality" (RIPPL, 2015, p 19). Studies on an acoustic culture and its emerging presence in literature are more recent (SCHWEIGHAUSER, 2015).

⁴ Translated by Alison Entrekin as *The Shape of Bones* (New York: Penguin, 2017).

⁵ "Sua imaginação trabalhava como se projetasse um filme, cortando a luta encarniçada em planos, coreografando cada golpe e abusando da câmera lenta. [...] Às vezes a câmera surgia nos instantes cruciais de sua existência, às vezes captava a realidade de momentos banais e solitários [...] Não era simplesmente sentir-se observado, imaginar testemunhas indefinidas para cenas de sua vida. Era como se ele mesmo se destacasse do corpo para se tornar o observador. Era ele quem operava a câmera, quem saía da cena, atravessava a membrana entre a realidade e a imaginação e escolhia uma cadeira na plateia vazia de um cinema escuro."

understanding how literature now portrays the relationship among the media resulting from this convergence and also how it understands the narrating subject and his/her manner of conceiving time and space.

2 Intermediality and context

Among the many new forms of expression that have emerged in the last 200 years, those that articulate moving images stand out. In his 1990 book, *Tecnologias da inteligência*⁶, Pierre Lévy pondered on the changes brought about in the way people think and live, emphasizing how close we were then to bringing together “all the technical conditions for the audiovisual to reach the degree of plasticity that made writing the main intellectual technology” of recent times (LÉVY, 2004, p. 103, our translation⁷). Gilles Deleuze, in his lengthy study of cinema carried out between 1983 and 1985, had already related the evolution of cinematographic language to the gradual introduction of a new articulation of thought to this appended language (DELEUZE, 1985 and 2004).

Image sequencing, born in cinema and expanded with the introduction of the soundtrack in the films, is further diversified with the development of television and VHS (as an audiovisual language expressed by more than one medium) and, later, with its diffusion allowed by digital technology (as an audiovisual resource present in almost all daily communication media and devices). The predominance of audiovisual in the contemporary world has inevitable consequences, among which is the one that enables the purpose of this paper: investigating the presence of filmic media references in the literary writing of a contemporary novel. As will be shown below, concerning specifically *Blood-Drenched Beard* (2012), by Brazilian writer Daniel Galera, it is only the cinematic imagery that stands out in literary writing.⁸

Of the possible relations between literature and audiovisual language, the most studied one to this day has been the adaptation of verbal narratives to cinematographic language. As André Bazin's (1952) pioneering considerations and Linda Hutcheon's (2006) expanded reflections

⁷ “todas as condições técnicas para que o audiovisual atinja o grau de plasticidade que fez da escrita a principal tecnologia intelectual”


⁸ References to cinematographic sound are not prominent in the novel. For this reason, this study focuses on visual references typical of filmic language. Although image and sound are essentially articulated in contemporary cinema, the conceptual elements of the cinematographic language to support the analysis, extracted from the reflections of Deleuze (1983 and 2005), were established, according to him, before the implementation of soundtrack in films.



demonstrate, encompassing other media besides cinema and with regard to exchanges between languages, the focus has always been mostly directed from the printed media (mainly, from books) to the audiovisual media. This prevailing trend supplanted remarks in the opposite direction, that is, from audiovisual to printed media, even when they were expressed by important cinema theorists like Eisenstein in 1937 (EISENSTEIN, 2002b) and Bazin in 1952 (BAZIN, 1991, p. 88), or by scholars like Magny (1949) and Murray (1972). Certainly, the reason for the disproportionate attention given to a vector at the expense of its opposite in the relationship between pages and screens lies in the uneven development of theoretical reflections regarding the intermedial processes involved. Adaptations of literary narratives for the cinema or any audiovisual medium have long been providing specific theorizations, as seen in seminal texts from the beginning of the 20th century – such as those by Béla Balázs (2011), written in the 1920s, or those by Sergei Eisenstein (2002a), from the 1940s – until the most recent contributions of the 21st century – for example, the texts written by Robert Stam (2006) and Linda Hutcheon (2006). On the other hand, the theoretical works related to the opposite vector cannot be compared, in extension and depth, to the production devoted to adaptations. When historicizing the studies of this second vector, Christine Schwanecke (2015) shows that, since the 1960s, critics have been aware of the cinematic element in literature, but it was not until the 1990s that conceptual problems preventing the development of these studies were first overcome and enabled, only at the turn of the millennium, the possibility of effective analyses.

It should be noted, however, that those two vectors have altogether different natures. While the novel turned into a film considers the content of the literary work as a whole, the reverse process, in which the film becomes literature, is generally focused, according to Bazin, in “cinematographic references”, understood as “[cinematographic] procedures with which the writer builds his private universe” (BAZIN, 1991, p. 89, our translation⁹). Films whose entire plot is transposed to the pages of a book have different characterization. Such is the case with *Pan’s Labyrinth* (2006), a feature film whose original screenplay was written by director Guillermo del Toro and which was turned into a homonymous book, written by author Cornelia Funke and published in 2019. It is worth noting that the book is not a printed publication of the film’s screenplay, but a novelization of the film. This backward adaptation, however, has not attracted the interest of

⁹ “de referências cinematográficas”, entendidas como “procedimentos [cinematográficos] com os quais o escritor constrói seu universo particular”.

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critics for several reasons – as pointed out by Jan Baetens (2008) –, therefore, better research and theorization about it remains to be seen.¹⁰

It was just at the end of the 20th century that the film-book relationship, understood as a cinematographic reference of novels or narratives in general got relevant attention from critics and academics by means of so called Inter-art Studies, that looked at the relationship between various artistic expressions and literature. From the challenges of the comparative analysis between poetry and photography, novel and painting, among others, there came at last a theoretical tool capable of conceptually differentiating the types of relationship between the media: intermediality. Due to the recent nature of its postulations, the vast scope of the intermedial theoretical perspective has been gradually adding analytical contributions. This paper then intends to follow the same path, in addition to collaborating with the development of studies on contemporary Brazilian literature.

3 Narrative prosopagnosia

Reading *Blood-Drenched Beard* offers surprises right on the front pages. A traditional first-person narrative - graphically marked by formatting in italics - introduces the reader to a universe that afterwards changes abruptly by the loss of italics and with the emergence of an ecfastic writing of juxtaposed elements, articulated by a single and very short initial verb in third person:

He sees a bulbous nose, shiny and pockmarked like tangerine peel. A strangely youthful mouth between a chin and cheeks covered in fine lines, slightly sagging skin. Clean-shaven. Large ears with even larger lobes that look as if their own weight has stretched them out. Irises the color of watery coffee in the middle of lascivious, relaxed eyes. Three deep, horizontal furrows in his forehead, perfectly parallel and equidistant. Yellowing teeth. A thick crop of blond hair breaking in a single wave over his head and flowing down to the nape of his neck. His eyes take in every quadrant of this face in the space of a breath [...] (GALERA, 2012, p. 13, our translation¹¹).

¹⁰ It should be noted that the novelization of films is a controversial topic, because for many, it is confused with the overall marketing campaign to promote the film (MAHLKNECHT, 2012). Such is the case, for example, with the historical novelization of the script for the film King Kong, written by Delos W. Lovelace and released in 1932, before the film's premiere in 1933.

¹¹ “Vê um nariz batatudo, reluzente e esburacado como uma casca de bergamota. Boca estranhamente juvenil entre queixo e bochechas tomados por rugas finas, pele um pouco flácida. Barba feita. Orelhas grandes com lóbulos maiores ainda, parecendo esticados pelo próprio peso. Íris da cor de café aguado no meio de olhos lascivos e relaxados. Três sulcos profundos na testa, horizontais, perfeitamente paralelos e equidistantes. Dentes amarelados. Cabelos loiros abundantes quebrando numa única onda por cima da cabeça e escorrendo até a base da nuca. Seus olhos percorrem todos os quadrantes desse rosto no intervalo de uma respiração [...]”.

The fragmented description, which imposes on the reader a diachronically gradual montage of the face seen by the character, is immediately explained afterwards when the narrator states that, even though the character may swear never to have seen in his life the person whose facial fragments he contemplates, he “knows it’s his dad because no one else lives in this house on this property in Viamão and because lying on the floor next to the man in the armchair is the Blue Heeler bitch who has been his dad’s companion for many years” (GALERA, 2012, p.13, our translation¹²). Thus begins the narrative about a young physical education teacher suffering from prosopagnosia (a neurological inability to memorize faces) who, after his father’s suicide, and having to take care of his father’s dog, decides to leave for the city of Garopaba to recover from what happened and to forget his ex-girlfriend, who married his brother. In a quest to understand himself and his relationships with his family, the protagonist, whose name we do not know, seeks to discover information about his mysterious grandfather, father of his father, who had lived in that location.

To tell this story, Galera’s novel uses many dialogues and descriptions, some of them fragmented like the one mentioned above. This particular descriptive mode is related to the protagonist’s neurological problem, but the reader will only know that in the second chapter, when the narrator mentions “his incapacity to remember any human face for more than a few minutes” (GALERA, 2012, p. 43-44, our translation¹³). The narrative focus is also quite unusual: it is, for the most part, placed on an omniscient third person who, nevertheless, acts as if the focus were on a first person, as it is totally centered on the protagonist’s perception. There are, however, other narrative outlooks, in the form of first-person paratexts, which are always graphically marked: at the beginning, as already mentioned, and also in unilateral dialogues, arranged as footnotes. The perception regarding the narrative parallelism in these parts is gradually built, as the reader gathers information and establishes connections. The initial paratext proves to be extradiegetic, inferred by the reader as a source of inspiration from reality for the creation of the fictional work. The subsequent paratexts appear amid passages from the novel that lead the reader to conclude that they are the voice of other characters in a dialogue with someone whose words are not shown, but who talks about the protagonist.

The fragmentation of the narrative thus occurs within the perspective of the protagonist and outside of it. The third-person narrator, who, however, describes only the protagonist’s actions

¹² “sabe que é seu pai porque ninguém mais mora nessa casa desse sítio em Viamão e porque ao lado direito do homem sentado na poltrona está deitada de cabeça erguida a cadela azulada que o acompanha faz muitos anos”.

¹³ “sua incapacidade de memorizar qualquer rosto humano por mais que alguns minutos”.



and thoughts and everything he sees, mixes objectivity and subjectivity without fully fitting into any established narrative focus, even the most contemporary ones, such as free indirect speech or camera-eye narrative. The narrator's restricted perspective puts the reader in the shoes of the protagonist, whose internal vision of the perceived reality is partially obstructed by his neurological disease. The reader follows the development of the plot seeking, as its main character, a meaning for the lived pages.

4 Aspects of the Novel's Criticism

The innovations of Galera's narrative in *Blood-Drenched Beard* have caught the critics' attention since its release. Despite being a recent work by a young author, the novel provoked a significant amount of criticism in general and received special attention from the academy. Critical-analytical thoughts, however, have been quite diverse. While there is agreement and affinity regarding some factors, others have caused dissent and conflict. Among the first we can highlight that almost all critics have noted that the text has a pronounced visuality (SANTOS, 2012; GRANDO and FURTADO, 2018; ASSIS, 2014; FACHIN, 2015); some of them emphasize a similarity with screenplay (ANA, 2013; CUNHA, 2011; LETOUZÉ, 2019) or cinematographic (FIGUEIREDO, 2012; SCHØLLHAMMER, 2009; LETOUZÉ, 2019) language; and others identify a shift between objectivity and subjectivity in the textual expression (SCHØLLHAMMER, 2012a and 2012b; ASSIS, 2014; ANA, 2013; FACHIN, 2015). As for the conflicting factors pointed out by the critics of the novel, it should be highlighted the perception of conformities and non-conformities with the aesthetics of realism, due to a "strange combination between representation and non-representation" (SCHØLLHAMMER, 2012b, p. 129, our translation¹⁴) or due to the paradox of a literature that manifests an "intimate realism" or "affective realism" (SCHØLLHAMMER, 2012a and 2012b; ASSIS, 2014); the perception of a promised emotional content, which however the work does not deliver (VIGNA, 2012); an excessive use of descriptions that do not feed the fictional universe (ANA, 2013).

Having received praise from the critics and the São Paulo Literature Award in 2013, as "best book of the year", *Blood-Drenched Beard* was also subjected to scathing and contemptuous analytical readings. As is widely recorded in the history of arts or literature, every attempt to create

¹⁴ "estranha combinação entre representação e não representação".



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something new is at first met with both approval and rejection. It is from reading the unusual narrative technique in the novel, and the intriguing criticism about it, that this work's critical-analytical hypothesis emerged: we are facing a kind of literature that behaves as though it belonged to another medium and communication, one written "as if it were" filmic language, absorbing this language's production processes, which include the primacy of the image, the illusion of non-representation, the subjectivity seen and heard, the screenplay and the decoupage. This intermedial filmic reference in literature transcends a mere technical incorporation or a discursive resource used for stylistic purposes, as it constitutes a basis of textual mimesis. Representation in the book is conceived as a verbalization of images seen or mentalized by the protagonist, as if he narrated a film taking place in his head. As a consequence of the protagonist's specific memory impairment, there is a gap between capturing images through vision and their verbalized concatenation that finds in the filmic language the right correspondence between the recording of images by the camera and the process of editing them. The narrative focus is thus perfectly integrated into the fictional universe, justified internally by the character's neurological condition, to which his perspective is attached. The presence of other narrative focuses in the paratexts mentioned above also converges with the neurological condition and the filmic language. Not recognizing people enables the character to move through a parallel reality like that of these texts, alien to the relationship established with people, as if he were part of another context. Jumping from one context to another, from one perspective to another is an expedient made possible by cinema, both through parallel editing, introduced by Griffith, and alternate editing, developed for concurrent events or, also, for decoupage in shot and reverse-shot (BORDWELL; THOMPSON, 2008, p. 235), used to express the contrasting perspectives in the relationships between characters. Regarding the plot development, the book also shows aspects of a contemporary cinematic thinking and an awareness of the reception of that thought. To get into this issue, some theoretical aspects of filmic language need to be discussed.

5 Intermedial perception and subjectivity

As stated by Rajewsky, the intermedial reference can allude to a specific work, to a media subsystem (like a genre) or to other media as a semiotic-communicative system (RAJEWSKY, 2012, p. 25). *Blood-Drenched Beard* falls in the third category for, as explained above, the novel works on different levels and aspects of filmic language. Through the literary element, we access



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not only this system's most tangible technical part, but also its particular conjunction of time and space, identified by Deleuze as image-thought.

According to his reflections, the birth of cinema occurs during a perceptual illusion that the whole can be apprehended, from a self-centered human perspective. Based on Bergson's thoughts – which assert the impossibility of perceiving elements of reality beyond their static spatial manifestation (instantaneous snippets of reality that are processed in a cognitive manner) and deem illusory the existence of perceptions common to all human beings that truly process the totality of movement, due to the figurative inclination of our mental processes –, Deleuze shows the development of cinema as an agent of awareness of perceptual processes (DELEUZE, 1985).

The means used at the dawn of film communication sought to reproduce the illusory modes of totalizing human perception: like a filmed theater, the fixed camera corresponded to the position of an observer who, capturing and processing what was perceived part by part, presupposed the apprehension of movement and the inference of reality as a whole. Although the technical constitution of the film is as partial and illusory as the Bergsonian perception, that is, formed by frames displayed sequentially at a speed higher than that in which our retinas can process them, all the initial communicative effort of the new medium is destined to the maintenance of human perceptual habits. The cinematographer's experience, however, when exposing men to the external and artificial reproduction of their own perceptual processes, reveals and inverts the automatisms of the subject's relationship with reality: “[cinema] cannot be confused with other arts, for these aim at the unreal across the world, while cinema makes the world itself an unreal or a narrative: with cinema, it is the world that becomes its own image, not an image that becomes the world” (DELEUZE, 1985, p. 59, our translation¹⁵).

Due to the simultaneity of the image communication and its natural perceptual dispersion (where to focus? In what order to observe the many signs communicated by an image?), with the addition, in cinema, of the continuous succession of shots and scenes, the work of the camera has gradually changed over the years of cinematic communication and began to cut the visual field to direct the spectators' observation. Then, the cinematographic language has established its own means of articulation – framing, angle of view, choice of actions, and sequencing – that reveal, in an increasingly explicit way, the processes inherent in past or momentary human perception, about which there was not (and still there is not, though less intensely) any formal awareness.

¹⁵ “[o cinema] não se confunde com as outras artes, que visam antes um irreal através do mundo, mas faz do próprio mundo um irreal ou uma narrativa: com o cinema, é o mundo que se torna sua própria imagem, e não uma imagem que se torna o mundo”

The technical reproduction of such processes has also changed the understanding of the dichotomy objectivity *versus* subjectivity. According to Deleuze, human perception, similarly to technical means, cuts reality for attention, defines angles, highlights actions and chooses sequences of factors so that cognition can act on them. These perceptual procedures are responsible for determining subjectivity, operating by subtraction, by excluding everything that does not matter to the subject's perception (DELEUZE, 1983, p. 66). In contrast, objectivity is linked to the absence of such subtractions, that is, to the illusionary perception of the whole, to a supposed possibility of non-choice among the infinite elements of reality to be registered. Subjectivity would thus be linked to the presence of an organizing center that establishes limiting options and ordering, directing the understanding of one image to another. It would also be much more present in fictional narratives (with increasing complexities throughout the history of cinema) than in documentary narratives, in which objectivity is sought for the greatest possible exclusion of subjectivation procedures. As with the perceptual processes, the diffusion of cinema's means of subjectivity has changed the levels of awareness about them.

Daniel Galera's image narrative in *Blood-Drenched Beard*, by absorbing the filmic means as an intermedial reference, operates on the character's (within the fictional universe) and the readers' (outside of it) perception modes. The protagonist's neurological problem, used as a source of verisimilitude, makes it acceptable to use a novelistic narrative focus that, like in cinema, exhibits modes of human perception explicitly, cutting out and picking elements of reality with the purpose of leading the reading through the subjectivity of this unnamed character. Like in a film – in which a protagonist is not the one holding the camera, but the one focused by the camera –, choosing frames and angles that best convey their subjectivity, in Galera's novel, the character whose trajectory we follow does not take the floor to narrate. The cinematographic perception and subjectivity, nowadays converted into audiovisual perception and subjectivity, and present in digitally converged media, when practiced in the literary medium with its inherent expressive resources – such as third-person narrative –, turn the reading into a confounding experience that can explain the critical-analytical contrasts already mentioned. Excerpts like the one that opens the novel engage metafictionally with the intermedial film reference when juxtaposing images that the character registers, but does not process, as if they were frames observed on a celluloid tape, or takes filed in digital recording that still need montage and other film editing processes. This task of articulating images is temporarily given to the reader, anticipating the connections of meaning that the narrative will establish later. As in the sequence from the opening fragment, in which the

juxtaposition of disconnected images gains articulation and meaning through the recognition of the dog and, consequently, the father, the same process occurs in the sequence below:

He looks for the curly hair, the tallest waitress. He should have asked her her name. There are lots of curls here. In his memory, her face is now an almost abstract caricature of watery brushstrokes. But he recognizes her from her posture. [...] He thought she was beautiful the first time around, and this fact remains, but the content of her beauty was lost and is now recovered. He gazes at her as if for the first time. (GALERA, 2012, p. 48, our translation¹⁶)

After the initial perceptual disorientation, an element of cohesion – posture – allows the perceived fragments to be connected. Then, the narrator shows us the damage caused by his impairment to his subjectivity: the lost image of the girl had also erased his understanding, his opinion. The character will have to start appreciating that which is perceived again.

Throughout the novel, the reader is faced with disconnected perceptions that can be explained later. This way of arranging elements as the narrative develops offers a certain expectation to understand what happens to the character in specific situations. As the character's impairment affects his perceptive choices and deductions, his subjectivity is internally and externally compromised, that is, it becomes blurred for the character himself – who is lost in his opinions, feelings and decisions – and for the reader – who does not know which path will be taken in a story whose parts are disconnected by the protagonist's disorientation. This fragmented subjectivity ends up giving a good dose of suspense to the work as a whole.

6 Narrating with images

The aforementioned Deleuze's studies on the language of cinema belong to *Imagem-Movimento*, from 1983. Deepening his critical analysis, two years later, the same author published the book *Imagem-tempo* (1985), in which he affirms that the maturation of this medium and its cultural relevance, in addition to new technical inputs, has caused a change in the very representative function of its language. If, in the past, the perception and subjectivity of a film, being similar to human perception and subjectivity in general, only made them explicit, according to

¹⁶ “Procura os cabelos crespos, a garçõete de maior estatura. Devia ter perguntado seu nome. Há cabelos crespos de sobra por aí. Em sua lembrança, agora, o rosto dela é uma caricatura quase abstrata de pinceladas aguadas. Mas ele a reconhece pela postura. [...] Tinha achado ela bonita, esse fato permanece, mas o conteúdo da beleza tinha se perdido e agora é recuperado. É como se a visse pela primeira vez.”



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Deleuze, in the middle of the 20th century, cinematographic productions paved the road for new ways of apprehending and feeling. The first cinema, aware of its inevitable essential ruptures (frames, decoupage and montage), was concerned with establishing links that would create the illusion of continuity and wholeness, similar to what traditional literature does through verbal language, sewing aspects of reality with the characters' action. Thus, it can be said that literary intermedial references were in use when the language of cinema was first developed. Having achieved semiotic-communicative autonomy, cinema's expanded possibilities of expression began to be of interest to literature, which started to employ intermedial film references.¹⁷ Expressive cinematographic novelties gradually established themselves, but were inevitably highlighted with the emergence of pure optical situations, that is, devoid of means guiding the spectator's look, which direct the look or indicate connections between the contemplated images through actions that promote continuity and the illusion of totality centered on the acting subject. The spectator, in the early years of cinema, identifying with the character-subject, followed their work of sewing or cohesion and confirmed his totalizing illusion of reality. Now, however,

[...] the character became a kind of spectator. No matter how much he moves, runs, shakes, the situation in which he is overflows, from all sides, his motor skills, and makes him see and hear what is no longer liable, in principle, to having a response or action. He registers more than he reacts. He is given to a vision [...] (DELEUZE, 2005, p. 11, our translation¹⁸).

According to Deleuze, a purely visual cinema, as proposed by the Italian neorealism and widely practiced by the European cinema, was no longer intended as a means of producing or perfecting illusion, as a factory of dreams, to reiterate our yearnings for wholeness and human protagonism. This cinema brought a new way of thinking that articulated, in time, visualities without means of connection. For each image displayed autonomously (outside of an evidenced significant chain), it was necessary to evoke, in the interpretative gap (for lack of connection), a virtual image made of memory, the result of the stored experience that the thought rescues (as a souvenir of the cognitive repertoire and, specifically, as a reminder of the preceding images of a film). It is known that a golden rule of creation for cinema is to write a screenplay always in the present tense

¹⁷ The historical relations between cinema and literature were analyzed in another paper: MATTOS, Cristine Fickelscherer de. Film narrative in contemporary literature: an Argentinian example. *Revista todas as letras* (MACKENZIE. Online), São Paulo, v. 19, no 1, p. 1-11, 2017.

¹⁸ “[...] a personagem tornou-se uma espécie de espectador. Por mais que se mexa, corra, agite, a situação em que está extravasa, de todos os lados, suas capacidades motoras, e lhe faz ver e ouvir o que não é mais passível, em princípio, de uma resposta ou ação. Ele registra, mais que reage. Está entregue a uma visão [...]”.



because film expression cannot occur except through the act of witnessing scenes. Visuality is, therefore, always present, but this present always changes, being successively replaced by another present. Thus, each moment has its current face as a present perception and its virtual face as a remembrance (DELEUZE, 2005). The evocative rescue of preceding images from the film is necessarily subjective to both the character and the spectator. The more intense the subjectivity is, the more autonomous the image is, that is, the more it is out of context. As audiovisual language manuals teach, the closest frames give the image a greater subjective charge, due to the absence of contextual elements: the image of a face, from medium close-up to extreme close-up of some part of that face, demands greater interpretive effort from the character, who eventually interacts with the person who owns that face, and also from the viewer, who needs to mentally create space-time connections with the film's previous images.

In *Blood-Drenched Beard*, the protagonist's prosopagnosia creates narrative opportunities for the production of pure optical situations, in which both the character and the reader need to rescue virtual images for the interpretive processing of the images. Being an intermedial reference in a literary field and not an actual visuality, the text relies on the neurological impairment as a resource, from the character, and on the absence of narrative records, from the reader, since, in the same way as in the opening passage, other fragments in which the narrator describes the disconnected visualities of faces perceived by the protagonist also lack previous information, because they start a section or introduce a new situation. Due to the inherent communicative limitations in literary language, the narrative shows pure visualities, but knows that verbal connections are needed to compensate for the impossibility of full reproductions of the image by the word. Such is the reason for the relationships of meaning to be revealed by the narrator after the moments that imitate pure visuality, as mentioned.

Narrating with pure optical situations leads to what Deleuze calls image-time, understood as thought providing meaning to images through its articulation in time, which decodes the image present in the temporal flow by evoking past images, to which it adheres and resignifies by reshaping them. Throughout the book, the protagonist's visual impressions are seen here and there, randomly linked to subparts of the plot. Employing the intermedial referencing of the semiotic-communicative system present in filmic media – concerning its pictorial part –, Galera's novel simulates the image-time articulation of European cinema in the 20th century by gathering these protagonist's visual impressions. As a montage challenging the reader's interpretive skills, the novel presents different realities marked by strongly imaginary moments: the protagonist's relationship

with the father in love with his dog; the search for the quarrelsome and invincible grandfather, the hermit days, lost in the forest; the difficult and traumatic relationship with women. All of these subplots are evoked and reframed by the image that is highlighted in the title and that appears in the narrative near the end: “He places his hand around his chin and runs it all the way down to the tip of his blood-drenched beard, which drips into a small puddle on the white paving stones” (GALERA, 2012, p. 389, our translation¹⁹). The sequence of closer shots (*medium to close shot frames* BORDWELL; THOMPSON, 2008, p. 191) – “the hand around his chin”, “the squeezing of the beard”, “the running blood stream”, “the blood pooled in the tile” – form a set of images that, although having a sequential connection with one another, are isolated from the scene in which the protagonist was inserted: a bar fight over the dog dispute. It is as though the plot pauses in its sequence of actions (in its images-movement) to give way to the image-time that will evoke and resignify the subplots’ images transformed into the reader’s image memory and the character’s affective memory. The blood-drenched beard will be superimposed on the memory of the father’s beard and his passion for the dog that now provokes his son’s fight; on the evocation of the violent and quarrelsome grandfather’s beard, hidden in the forest, which now coincides with the grandson’s attitude; on the reminiscence of the days when his beard grew because he was lost in the forest, now resignified as a transformative existential retreat; on Dália’s presence in the fight scene, since she is the one who takes him to the hospital and the element that refers to the character’s relationship with the women who complain about the beard (his mother, his girlfriend). Simulating, in literature, the communicative modes of filmic language, the novel articulates the image-time through this main optical situation highlighted by the title and in other less relevant specific passages.

Final remarks

As it was demonstrated, the interest in the means of cinematographic language, which was turned into a subject in Galera’s previous novel *Mãos de cavalo* (*The Shape of Bones*) – “He himself operated the camera, left the scene, crossed the membrane between reality and imagination and chose a chair in the empty audience of a dark cinema” (GALERA, 2016, p 139-40) –, goes from

¹⁹ “Põe a mão em volta do queixo e espreme a barba ensopada de sangue de cima a baixo, até a ponta, fazendo escorrer um filete rubro que forma uma pequena poça nas lajotas brancas do pavimento”.



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commentary to execution in *Blood-Drenched Beard* through intermedial filmic referencing, taken as a semiotic-communicative system. The novel, by using perceptual and cognitive modes typical of film language, shows awareness of the importance of such language for today's culture and for contemporary literary creative processes. More than an innovative stylistic resource, the presence of intermedial filmic elements in *Blood-Drenched Beard* is the expression of a cinematic thought that shapes communication in a world dominated by moving images in the most banal acts of everyday life; it is also an expression of the subjectivity of those who, in this world, contemplate images and see themselves as images. If thought has already been said to be verbal, why can't it be visual?

Unlike those who have pointed out flaws in the novel, I see innovations and virtues. As history goes by, the literature of the present also evokes the literature of the past, but it can do so to re-signify the past instead of, by contrast and nostalgia, disparaging the present. The literature of the past was more of a source of references for cinema than a follower of its communicative procedures. From the mid-twentieth century, the vector has partially inverted (since the adaptation of films to literature is still incipient) and literature has been drinking from audiovisual sources in order to translate, through filmic referencing, the spirit of our time into verbal art.

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