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## СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ РОМАНА «КЭЛ» И ЕГО ЭКРАНИЗАЦИИ (1984)

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## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL CAL AND ITS FILM ADAPTATION (1984)

In this research we attempt to look at both the book and its film adaptation, and how distinct are the approaches to storytelling and the ways in which feelings and emotions are conveyed. In one interview, Bernard MacLaverty said, «I think films and novels are two different things. It's an apple and an orange; they are very different objects» [1]. There are typically discrepancies between the original text and the film adaptation of literary works. In order to shed insight on the special opportunities and challenges that come with adaptation, this study aims to examine narrative strategies and the creative decisions made while transferring literature to film through the contrast of these two versions.

### Summary of the novel

The novel *Cal*, written by Bernard MacLaverty in 1983, tells the reader the life story of a young Irish Catholic man involved with the IRA. Cal and his father are Catholics living among Protestants. Every night they go to bed with the fear of being killed and the hope of waking up the next morning. Because of the perpetual threats, they have to be on their guard all the time. At one point, the UVF (the Ulster Volunteer Force) members carried out their threats and burned their house to the ground. The novel focuses heavily on the experiences and attempts of the protagonist to come to terms with his involvement in the murder of a reserve police officer. A situation is complicated by Cal's affair with the murdered man's wife, Marcella. Although Cal did not kill anyone personally, the fact that he was the driver that night does not give him peace of mind. In 1984, Irish director Pat O'Connor's film of the same name was released, vividly depicting the conflict in Northern Ireland and the life of the protagonist. The film adaptation of *Cal*, while successful in its attempt to portray the political conflict in Northern Ireland, cannot do justice to the full intensity of the conflict and of the protagonist's experiences.

### Differences in narrative

One of the first differences that the reader notices in the film is a change in the structure of the narrative. While the novel *Cal* unfolds linearly and allows information to be acquired and mastered in stages, a film may show events in a chaot-

ic order, depending on the director's intent. Thus, the film adaptation of the novel begins with a murder scene of a reserve officer, where the viewer does not yet understand what the murder is, who is killing whom, or what the reason is. The director in this particular case uses non-linear plot development and deviates from the chronology of the novel's narrative. Kyle Meikle, in her article «Rematerializing adaptation theory,» quotes Brian McFarlane from his book *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*: «[n]ovel and film can share the same story, the same 'raw materials,' but are distinguished by means of different plot strategies» [2]. Since a film is limited in time and cannot always tell the story in full detail, it was necessary to highlight the very moment that had the greatest impact on the main character here. This flashback, in fact, reflects Cal's inner feelings at the moment.

As mentioned above, the film has a limited chronology, so many scenes may be cut or altered. For instance, one important episode in Cal's life, telling a story from his school life, was not shown in the film, in contrast to the novel. The story was about someone at school who started distributing pornographic pictures, and at the request of one of the teachers, Crilly, a friend and a former school mat of Cal, and Cal were supposed to deal with it. Violent and rampaging, Crilly happily found the owner of the pictures, confiscated the materials, and beat him up in the school toilet. Cal was there too, but being insecure and quiet, he just watched the violence taking place. This fragment of the novel shows the reader an example of Crilly's cruelty and indifference towards those around him and his desire to outdo others and appear stronger. This situation is also a well-illustrated example of the relationship between Cal and Crilly. Cal is clearly intensely uncomfortable with Crilly, more likely even fearful. «It is Crilly who is directly responsible for the fact that for the past year Cal's stomach has been like a washboard» [3]. Even back then, the protagonist realises that he wants nothing to do with Crilly. This school story plays an important role in shaping the protagonist's views and attitude towards violence. The novel gives the reader a glimpse into the character's past to see how his life unfolded and what influenced him to become the man he is today.

### **Ways of conveying information**

This is not the only modification concerning the story. Film and book are two completely different media formats that convey information, and each has its own rules and features. In order to convey the main idea of the book, and to try to show the feelings and experiences of the characters in the film, filmmakers have to alter the structure of the narrative, remove or shorten certain episodes or, on the other hand, add new ones. MacLaverty says: «It would be difficult to finish the film in the way the book finishes. You can't do that. I found in writing a screenplay that everything that is word based has to disappear. You can't rely on words at all in a screenplay» [1]. The author of the novel gives the example of the novel's ending, saying that «that doesn't work in a film» [1]. The novel ends with the protagonist appearing to the reader standing in a room, waiting to finally be arrested and beaten. Whereas in the film, the viewer can watch the tension created by the musical effects, the actual beating of the protagonist, and his arrest. Indeed, it is impossible

to convey the depth of Cal's feelings and emotions by displaying him simply standing in a room and still holding the viewer's attention. The use of sound and visual techniques and acting give the film some advantage: the images created with their help can be permanently fixed in memory along with the music, and the artist can convey some of the originality of the hero thanks to his game, the spirit of the time, the place, and the work itself as a whole. Moreover, after a dramatic and violent arrest scene, the viewer sees an added moment where Marcella, Cal's lover, watches as he is dragged into a police car and taken away, leaving her in contemplation. The novel gives more food for thought and ideas of what it might have looked like. The reader does not find the scene with Marcella because it is not present in the novel; one can only guess what happened next.

The novel also portrays Cal's attempts to cope with his experiences of the wide conflict in Northern Ireland. The tense situation on the streets and in society, the daily threats, the attacks — all this affects Cal's state of mind and his attempts to sort himself out. The author conveys this condition using descriptive techniques and the main character's dialogues with himself and those around him. Unlike the text, the movie is unable to portray every detail or the main character's ideas in their entirety. In order to show the destruction and tension in the environment, the film uses visual elements. In this way, the viewer can see destroyed buildings, graffiti on walls, and other signs of conflict. Put together, they recreate a more realistic and tense atmosphere for the film.

The novel gives the reader the opportunity to imagine, fantasise, and draw their own pictures in their heads, while the film limits the imagination and represents the final product — the director's work and vision. Furthermore, the novel allows for a fuller exploration of the protagonist's inner world. Through reading *Cal*, the reader can experience the same feelings and emotions as the main character, as the narrative is in the first person, whereas in the film, it is only possible to observe Cal from the outside and we are not allowed glimpses into the character's inner monologue. The novel conveys feelings and sensations through words, describing all the little bits and pieces in detail.

Cal closed his eyes. It was her. In the hot dishwater his nails had become soft and he trailed them across the metal bottom of the basin to find the last spoon. Oh Jesus. He dried it and put it in the drawer. In some way he didn't know how. he would have to make it up to her [Marcella]. He cleared the tapes of the black puddings from the hole in the sink. They were limp and slimy and he shuddered as he threw them in the bucket. The water was like grey soup with tiny yellow grease circles. He poured it with a rush down the sink. A last teaspoon rattled out. [3]

Such emotional details are tough to capture in a film, and that scene where Cal does the dishes would not have any subtext and would not reflect the character's inner states of mind. What might take several pages in a text can be shown in a film in a couple of seconds. Nevertheless, although the film's lack of verbal commentary prevents you from delving into the protagonist's inner world, the sound effects and visual techniques used help to convey the emotional state and overall atmosphere. While in the novel, at every point, we know what Cal feels and thinks, in

the movie, we can only guess from his reactions and actions. The novel is lived out by the individual; the film is simply watched.

In a comparative analysis of the film and the novel *Cal*, one can see how complex the world of the book is. Despite the advances in modern technology, no special effects have yet captured the fullness and complexity of the writer's reflections in the timeline of a single film. The novel consists not only of the present but also of the past of the protagonist. For example, in the film, the viewer only sees the moment of the murder from the past, while the hero's school years remain on paper. Moreover, the viewer sees a ready-made director's point of view on a certain problem without any other reflections. The characters' emotional states, the music selection, and the skilfully done visuals all hold the viewer's interest and make it simpler to comprehend the plot of the movie. In a book, however, much depends on the reader's imagination and horizons, on how they perceive this or that situation based on their life experience.

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