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**DIFFERENTIATION OF THE NARRATION IN NOVEL-TO-TV  
ADAPTATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE SINNER**

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Differentiation of The Narration In Novel-To-Tv Adaptation: A Case Study of  
The Sinner

Romandan Televizyona Uyarlama Sürecinde Anlatımın Farklılaşması: The Sinner  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis focuses on the TV drama series *The Sinner* (Purple et al., 2017-2021) based on the bestselling psychological thriller by Petra Hammesfahr. Both Hammesfahr's novel by the same name and the series tell the story of Cora Tannetti (Jessica Biel). Tannetti suddenly stabs a stranger in the neck while enjoying a day on the beach, and later on, she pleads guilty in court. While detective Harry (Bill Pullman) is inquiring about the case, he suspects that there might be a traumatic event in Cora's past and she may have committed the murder as a result of this incident, which she does not remember.

Throughout the process of adaptation from literary text to screen, the same plotline is approached in three different ways. The same story told as a novel is different from its adaptation to a script. Likewise, the reflection of the story on the screen will also differ from the scenario. The main reason behind this differentiation is that literary texts, scripts, and TV series are based on different dramatic structures. The thesis highlights how the dramatic structures of a novel and its script adaptation differ from each other while using textual analysis as its main method. It compares the narratives and the narration of the novel and the series and focuses on the techniques of adaptation from one to the other.

**Key Words:** adaptation, narrative, narration, dramatic structure, script, *The Sinner*

## ÖZET

Bu tez, Petra Hammesfahr'ın en çok satanlar listesinde yer alan The Sinner adlı romanının 2017 senesinde yayınlanan aynı isimli televizyon dizisi uyarlamasına odaklanmaktadır. Roman ve televizyon dizisi, Cora isimli genç bir kadının hiç beklenmedik bir anda işlediği cinayeti ve neticesinde başından geçenleri konu alır. Cora Tannetti (Jessica Biel), ailesiyle birlikte sahilde güzel bir günün tadını çıkarırken ani bir dürtüyle tanımadığı bir kişiyi bıçaklayarak öldürür. Cora suçunu kabul edip yargılama sürecinden kaçınır. Ancak, davaya atanan Dedektif Harry (Bill Pullman), olayı araştırırken Cora'nın geçmişte travmatik bir olay yaşadığından, yargılama konusu olayın da bu travmatik geçmişin etkisiyle bilinçdışı ortaya çıkan bir davranış olabileceğinden şüphelenir.

Bir edebi eserin televizyona uyarlanması sürecinde, aynı hikâye üç farklı biçimde ele alınır. Kitapta anlatıldığı şekli senaryodaki yansımasından, senaryosu ise ekran uyarlamasından farklıdır. Bu değişimin sebebi, edebi metinlerin, senaryoların ve televizyon dizilerinin farklı dramatik yapılara dayanmasıdır. Bu tez, ana metot olarak metin analizi yöntemini kullanarak, The Sinner romanı üzerinden roman ve uyarlama senaryonun dramatik yapılarının birbirinden nasıl farklılaştığını mercek altına almaktadır. Tez, romanın anlatı yapısını, dizi uyarlamasının anlatı yapısıyla karşılaştırarak bu yapının adaptasyon sürecindeki değişimini incelemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** adaptasyon, anlatı, anlatım, dramatik yapı, senaryo, The Sinner

## INTRODUCTION

Ira Konigsberg, the writer of *The Complete Film Dictionary*, defines adaptation as “a work in one medium that derives its impulse as well as a varying number of its elements from a work in a different medium.” (1987, as cited in Hafeez, Margoushy, & Youssef, 2019) In other words, adaptation is the transformation of a novel which is a verbal medium to a visual medium, to a film or TV series, through “reducing the pre-existent functions of writing, such as characters, locations, costumes, actions and strings of narrative events.” (Ellis, 1982, as cited in Hafeez, Margoushy, & Youssef, 2019) These functions play a role to form the narration, and therefore, the dramatic structure of a film/TV series.

Narration can be defined as conveying a story through the medium of written or spoken commentary. All written stories have a narration to convey a story to an audience. Similarly, most other storytelling formats such as films or TV shows have a narrative, a story, therefore, have a narration. The specific person or unspecified literary voice that conveys the story is the narrator. The creator of the story develops a narration according to three elements of narrative: narrative point of view, narrative tense, and narrative technique. Thus, narration includes both *who* tells the story and *how* the story is told, and consequently, can be changed in the adaptation process.

The structure of a dramatic work such as a book, play, or film is defined as the dramatic structure. Different writers or scholars from around the world have hypothesized various kinds of dramatic structures. According to one of the most accepted theories suggested by German playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag (1894), the dramatic structure consists of five parts: exposition (introduction), rise, climax, return (fall), and catastrophe (dénouement or resolution). Freytag defines his theory of the five-act dramatic structure, which is known as Freytag's pyramid, in his book *Technique of the Drama* (1894). Since these elements constitute the plot of the story, according to the definition given in the previous paragraph that

adaptation is a transformation process of the pre-existent functions, we can conclude that the adaptation process from a novel to a film or TV series can change the dramatic structure of a dramatic work.

Derek Simonds's police procedural American television series *The Sinner* (Purple et al., 2017-2021) has an adapted script from German writer Petra Hammesfahr's 1999 best-selling novel of the same name, which is about a woman – Cora Tannetti (Cora Bender in the book) – who commits a crime in public when least expected.

On an ordinary Saturday, while Cora, her husband Mason and their baby take an outing to the lake, Cora is triggered by an unknown quantity; she stands up in a rage and stabs a man who plays with his girlfriend to death with a knife she had just used to cut fruit for her child. Although the subject of who and how is clear without any doubt, why remains a puzzle. She says "*I just did it. And I don't know why*", while still covered in blood. Daniel Fienberg of *The Hollywood Reporter* summarizes the plot consummately in his review "It's not a question of who or how, but why..." reads the tag line for *The Sinner*." (2017) It is under the responsibility of a local detective, Harry Ambrose, to reveal the "why" behind this crime. While Detective Ambrose does not know "if the "why" relates to something quasi-religious (seems likely), quasi-supernatural (seems possible) or quasi-psychological (almost certainly)", the theme is established on this uncertainty. (Fienberg, 2017)

This thesis aims to answer the question of how the adaptation process changes the narration and therefore the dramatic structure of the novel while it is adapted to the script through the example of the American TV series *The Sinner*. (Purple et al., 2017-2021) Elements of the novel that contribute to constituting the narration such as characters, locations, and the plot will be examined under the question of how they differ in the novel in comparison with the series by using the textual analysis method.



The first chapter will focus on the interaction between literature and cinema to explain what film adaptation is through the examples of TV adaptations. The thesis will continue discussing the narrative structure and its elements in literature and cinema in the second chapter. Besides, the second chapter will define the dramatic structure and its elements such as exposition, rise, climax, return, and catastrophe. In the last chapter before the conclusion, the example of *The Sinner*, both the novel and the series, will be examined in terms of how its narration and, therefore, its dramatic structure have changed through characters, time, locations, and plot. The findings obtained after the comparison of the novel and the series of *The Sinner* will be discussed in the latest chapter.

## 1. LITERATURE AND CINEMA

Definitions of the terms *art* and *arts* have been discussed among scholars and artists from all around the world. French critic and poet Paul Valéry defines art simply as “the way of doing.” (1964) On the other hand, fine arts, or arts, refers to the modes of expression that require skill or imagination through the creation process of aesthetic objects or experiences.

As the world changes, along with the debates on the definition of art, discussions about what the subdivisions of the arts were have continued. For instance, back in the day, the arts included seven different forms which were called the Liberal Arts: grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. (Walker, 2021) However, today, the seven traditional subdivisions of the arts are considered painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, music, theater (performing arts), and cinema. The artistic traditions have evolved along with the political, cultural, and social shifts that inform art making as well as the shifts in aesthetic conventions that follow. The aesthetic conventions do not categorically correspond to these traditional subdivisions of art. They repeat, albeit with a difference; they travel between different art forms. For example, the aesthetic conventions of the golden ratio repeat themselves in frame composition in painting, photography, and film. Although the same conventions repeat themselves in different art forms, it endows different characteristics according to the specificities of the medium. Likewise, the same is true for the dramatic structure. For example, the idea of the three-act dramatic structure travels from novel to film, it repeats itself but the narration is affected by the specificities of the medium. It is such transformations and similarities that this thesis focuses on.

Cinema is an art form that embodies other arts, like painting and music. For example, when the frame within the frame technique in the film makes use of painting, the painting itself has a meaning-making function in the narrative. However, in addition, the way the painting is used in the film frame, adds another layer of complexity to this meaning-making process. This is why it is called the

seventh art by Ricciotto Canudo, an Italian film theorist and artist. Canudo defined cinema as ‘plastic art in motion’ that represents life and society by integrating the other arts in its narration. This is one aspect that this thesis takes into account in discussing the differences in the dramatic structure in novels, films, and television. As literature is one art form that cinema has relied upon aesthetically and thematically. Cinema borrows stories from literature and it also borrows different ways of storytelling.

The invention of cinema is accepted as marking the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century. (Walker, 2021) Since its emergence, cinema is in very close connection with literature. Though hard to say for sure, the earliest book adaptation for the screen is considered the 45-second short movie *Trilby and Little Billee*, (*Trilby and Little Billee*, 1896), which is adapted from George du Maurier’s 1895 novel *Trilby*. At the beginning, there was a bias against these adaptations. “Critical voices worried about how photography had already encroached on traditional aesthetic terrains and disciplines, recuperating and presumably demeaning pictorial or dramatic subjects by adapting them as mechanical reproductions” (Corrigan, 2007, as cited in Snyder, 2011) However, adapted films such as *Cinderella* in 1900 and *Gulliver’s Travels* in 1902 quickly caught the attention of the audience.

In the spring of 1897, George Melies founded the Star Film Company. One of the most famous films produced by the company was *A Trip to the Moon* (Méliès, 1902), which is considered one of the earliest films that have a narrative structure. The movie is “actually an adaptation of sorts since it is based on Jules Verne’s *From the Earth to the Moon* and H.G. Wells’ *The First Men in the Moon*.” (Du, 2013) That same year, George Méliès directed the first film adaptation of the Daniel Defoe’s popular novel *Robinson Crusoe*. More adaptations of the novel occurred in 1913 (Turner), 1916 (Marion), and 1922 (Hill).

Additionally, Lewis Carroll's children's book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was adapted into the British silent film entitled *Alice in Wonderland* (Hepworth & Stow, 1903), which was the longest film yet produced in Britain. As these examples show, most of the earliest films were adapted from children’s books.

However, the influence of literature on cinema has increased over time, and the adaptations of the other literary genres on cinema began to be seen. This chapter will highlight the connection between literature and cinema, explain what film adaptation is, mention the history of TV adaptations and briefly discuss cinema's influence on literature.

### **1.1. Interaction in Between Literature and Cinema**

One of the aims of this thesis is to explain how literature and cinema mutually affect each other. Although this interaction has existed from the very beginning of the emergence of cinema, “any consensus about the status of film adaptation, its fidelity approach or the influence of film to the text reception” could not be reached. (Zinnatullina, Davletbaeva, & Mukhametshina, 2019) Back in the day, the common idea of critics and writers was that cinema plays a secondary role in this interaction since the literary work was considered the main source which was adapted to the scenario and then to the screen. This opinion came from the fact that literature has been there far before the emergence of cinema. Therefore, the fidelity of a cinematographic work has been a subject of debate by critics. This is why most adaptation theories that focus on the early examples discuss the authenticity of the story in the film.

However, today there are many other theories that discuss this two-way interaction. Besides the traditional model, the idea that the screen version of an adapted scenario can influence the following parts of the literary work started to be considered. For instance, although he denies it, the Game of Thrones series has an influence on the following books of George R. R. Martin. (Hibberd, 2019, as cited in Zinnatullina et al, 2019) Similarly, in the following books of the Harry Potter series written by another iconic writer J.K. Rowling, the influence of the movies can be clearly seen. In the sixth book, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2005), Rowling refers to the third book Prisoner of Azkaban (1999), and writes

“Draco had a look on his face similar to the time Hermione had punched him.” However, in the third book, Hermione actually slapped Draco. She recounts what occurred in the film version of *Prisoner of Azkaban* (Cuarón, 2004), which was released in 2004, when she was writing the sixth book, which was released in July 2005.

In addition to the consideration that a film adaptation can influence the following parts of the literary work, there is also the theory that a literary work can be created based on the original scenario or the movie. Thus, it can be argued that while filmmakers are inspired by literature, in turn, literary works tend to be inspired by cinema.

Brazilian film and literary critic João Batista de Brito states that “In the era of interdisciplinary, nothing is healthier than trying to see the literature’s verballity from the perspective of cinema and the movie iconicity from the perspective of literature.” (2006, as cited in Alqadi, 2015) He argues that since novel and film have the same vocation, using literature to be based on cinema is advisable. After the emergence of cinema in the twentieth century, it "preferred to follow the novel conventional model from the previous century, telling a story with a beginning, middle, and end, and assumed to be three things at the same time: fictional, narrative and representational.” (Brito, 2006, as cited in Gualda, 2011) Brito’s statements emphasize the significance of the mutual interaction of literature and cinema. This interaction is mainly caused by what they have in common: narrative.

Both cinema and literature aim at the same thing, which is essentially to tell a story to its audience or readers. However, their methods differ. While cinema bases its narration on visuality, literature uses words to make the reader imagine the world created by the writer. In other words, literature uses words whereas cinema uses mainly images to tell stories. Thus, the same idea of making people see is shared by both art forms, whether it is a visual or mental perception. “The reader, as well as the viewer, is exposed to stimuli which make them perceive, interpret and assimilate things according to their own reasoning and background.” (Alqadi, 2015) This resemblance presupposes a mutual influence between the two art forms.

Besides their incontestable influence on each other, it can be said that boundaries between these two media are blurred. For instance, readers can see a movie or a painting while reading its description in a book. Dan Brown's book *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) is an example of this since it includes a detailed description of the paintings of Leonardo Da Vinci. English writer John Fowles mentions Marcel Carné's film *Port of Shadows* (1938) in his book *The Magus*. His description of the movie creates the impression that the reader sees the film. This suggests that we should not conceive of this translation from the verbal to the visual as a one-way translation, but as a two-way mutual interaction.

Another side of this interaction is that one can help to draw attention to the other. For instance, after the first novel of Harry Potter, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling, 1997), the book gained immense popularity and commercial success worldwide. While J. K. Rowling continued to write the novel series, after the fourth book *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000), Warner Bros bought the film rights. The first movie *Harry Potter and Philosopher's Stone* (Columbus, 2001) was a huge success as well as the books. Almost every year a book was adapted into a film. Meanwhile, Rowling continued to write the series. While the success of the books led to film adaptations, the movies also increased the interest in the books, and thus the fantasy genre in literature. This influence is rather a commercial aspect of the issue but it raises the question of whether the films could possibly have influenced the way the stories are told in the coming books too.

The film trilogy *Lord of the Rings* by Peter Jackson is another example that contributes to the growth in the popularity of the fantasy genre in literature. Under the influence of the trilogy, a huge number of authors wrote in this genre, such as Christopher Paolini, the author of *The Inheritance Cycle* series, and George R.R. Martin in later books of the *Game of Thrones* series. Similarly, the screen version of Fitzgerald's book *Great Gatsby* (Luhmann, 2013) drummed the attention for the literary work up again. The influence of cinema on literature is evident in the use of film posters of adaptations on books' covers.

In conclusion, it is certain that the ties between literature and cinema have become more evident today and the interaction between them is more diverse. For instance, Jane Austen's 1815 novel *Emma* has been adapted into various movies and TV series. The last adaptation, directed by Autumn de Wilde, with Anya Taylor-Joy as Emma, came out in 2020. The story is about 21-year-old Emma Woodhouse, who is a wealthy socialite. Even though she is against the idea of marriage, she takes great pride and pleasure in the art of matchmaking. The novel deals with feelings of love and passion in a Shakespearean way. Therefore, although the story takes place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to its universal and timeless characters and emotions, it can be still adaptable.

Additionally, today, popular digital platforms such as Netflix or Amazon Prime support adaptation productions. For instance, movies such as *The Devil All The Time* (Campos, 2020), *The Irishman* (Scorsese, 2019), and *Rebecca* (Wheatley, 2020) are produced by Netflix and based on literary works. In addition to films, Netflix also supports and produces TV series based on books such as *Bridgerton* (Rhimes et al., 2020-), *The Queen's Gambit* (Frank et al., 2020), and crime writer Harlen Coben's several novels including *The Innocent* (Atienza et al., 2021) and *Stay Close* (Coben et al., 2021).

## **1.2. Adaptations From Literature to Screen**

The emergence of cinema has brought a new perspective to literary texts. Filmmakers have been greatly inspired by literary works. Film adaptations of literary classics confirm this influence. Deborah Cartmell summarizes this interaction in her book: "Since the beginning of cinema, adaptations have been a staple of the business of film. Among the earliest films were adaptations of literary works." (2012) In this regard, literary classics were seen as ready-made materials for the scripts.

For a long time, it was thought that the only possible interaction between literature and cinema was the translation of literary work into cinema. According to this algorithm, first, the book is published, the script is written based on it, and then the film is shot. As seen in this prism, cinema had a secondary role in this interaction. John Ellis in his book *The Literary Adaptation: An Introduction* by John Ellis (1982) defines this interaction, in other words, adaptation, as “a process of reducing a pre-existent piece of writing to a series of functions: characters, locations, costumes, actions and strings of narrative events.” (Hafeez, Margoushy, & Youssef, 2019) To put it another way, adaptation was considered as the transformation of the novel, which is a verbal medium, into a visual medium, a film or TV series.

Though hard to say for sure, one of the earliest book adaptations for the screen was *Trilby and Little Billee*, (*Trilby and Little Billee*, 1896) which was based on George du Maurier’s novel *Trilby* (1894). It was a 45-second scene adapted from a part in the novel. The bestselling novel was published in 1895. It was about a half-Irish girl, Trilby O’Ferrall who lives in Paris and models for artists in the 1850s. In the adapted part for the screen, Trilby sits at a table and eats cake while talking to her friend Little Billee.

After du Maurier’s *Trilby* (1894), English writer Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist* (1837) captured the attention of filmmakers and became one of the most popular adapted novels. Although the novel is about the orphan hero Oliver Twist, for whom the book is named, the first adaptation *The Death of Nancy Sykes*, (*The Death of Nancy Sykes*, 1897) featured the villain Bill Sikes, the street thief, who murders his girlfriend, Nancy. The next adaptation of the novel was *Mr. Bumble the Beadle* (*Mr. Bumble the Beadle*, 1898) which again focused on another villain Mrs. Corney. The following adaptation, *A Modern Oliver Twist* (Blackton, 1906), made the main character Oliver the focus. The latest version of the film adaptation of the novel, which was named after the book itself, was directed by Roman Polanski and came out in 2005. (Nour, 2022)



As mentioned above, as the interaction between literature and cinema has been getting more obvious, the issue of the fidelity of a cinematographic work has become a subject of debate. Some critics such as Geoffrey Wagner and Dudley Andrew argue that a film adaptation is valuable as long as it is true to the original. While evaluating a film that is adapted from a literary work, they consider how similar its script is to the book. Wagner uses how close adaptations are to the literary text to the classification. Theorists such as Seymour Chatman, Keith Cohen, and Stuart McDougal consider film adaptation as a kind of translation; therefore, prioritize the criterion of faithfulness. For instance, Chatman studies how filmmakers transfer the narrative functions of a literary work to the cinema. Similarly, McDougal analyses how narrative elements including point of view, time, structure, plot, and characters are transferred to the cinema. Although “the field is still haunted by the notion that adaptations ought to be faithful to their ostensible source texts” (Leitch, 2008), scholars who oppose this idea such as Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan claim that a film should be considered a work of art separate from the literary work to which it is adapted. Besides, Morris Beja argues against the notion of fidelity and says that adaptation inevitably involves change.

The filmmaker, as well as the writer, narrates the events according to her artistic view. The film adaptation is accepted as a genre of cinema; thus, its creator is the director, who is guided by his perceptions. Therefore, it can be argued that each literary work can be adapted to films in different ways. For instance, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fictional detective character Sherlock Holmes, created in 1887, has been depicted on screen 254 times and rewarded with a world record for the most portrayed literary human character in film and television history by the Guinness Book of World Records. (Guinness World Records News, 2012) Among the worldwide adaptations of films, television series, dramas, and documentaries, over 75 actors such as Sir Christopher Lee, Roger Moore, Benedict Cumberbatch, and Robert Downey Jr have played the role of Sherlock Holmes. The most recent adaptation is the Netflix production film *Enola Holmes* (Bradbeer, 2020) in which Sherlock is portrayed by Henry Cavill. The movie is about Sherlock's younger

sister Enola Holmes (Millie Bobby Brown) and her adventures. While Sherlock is the most portrayed literary human character, the title of the overall most portrayed literary character belongs to Dracula, who has been portrayed in 272 films.

To show how common the film adaptation genre is in cinema, we can look at the list of 2022 Oscar Winners. *Dune: Part One* (Villeneuve, 2021) the most awarded film on the list including cinematography, film editing, music (original score), production design, sound, and visual effects, is adapted from American author Frank Herbert's 1965 epic science fiction novel. The 2021 film, directed by Denis Villeneuve, is the second film adaptation of the *Dune* novel after David Lynch's 1984 film. Besides, the winners of the directing category, which is *The Power of the Dog* (2021) directed by Jane Campion, and the international feature film category, which is the Japanese drama film *Drive My Car* (Hamaguchi, 2021), are movies based on a literary work.

The main goal of the film adaptations is to “transfer the sense of the primary source using film language, which significantly differs from literary.” (Zinnatullina, Davletbaeva, & Mukhametshina, 2019) While both cinema and literature tell stories, in contrast to literary works which use words to create a world that exists only in the reader's mental picturing, cinema provides its audience with a ready-made world, which is created through the director's interpretation. This is a transfer from a written medium to a visual one. Therefore, it can be argued that film adaptations may make an already-read novel easier to understand, due to its alive and tangible characters. To put a finer point on it, literature makes the reader see mentally through the mind and cinematic works allow the viewer to see visually through the eye. However, the idea of “seeing” is shared in both arts. Similar to the cinema, writers also aim to make the reader see. American cinematographer Robert Richardson argues that “literature is also a visual art.” (Alqadi, 2015) In both art forms, the main goal is to supply the reader (the viewer) with various visual details.

Despite the all shared qualities, film adaptations should be considered original work of art, independent of the literary work from which it is adapted. Miguel Delibes says that “*Adapting a novel of normal pagination to the cinema*

*forces inevitably to synthesize it because the image is unable to absorb the wealth of life and tones that the narrator has put in his book.”* (Delibes, n.d., as cited in Martínez, 2005) Even if the story told is the same, the ways in which literature and cinema narrate the story differ. This differentiation adds value to the adaptation. Filmmakers use their perspectives and tools to transfer a literary work into the screen. Therefore, adaptation can be defined as a rewritten version of a story. As the director may only focus on some passages of the story, she may also alter the narrative time of the literary work to another period, while keeping the highlights and main characters of the story. BBC’s modern television adaptation of Sherlock Holmes, (Moffat et al., 2010-2017) which faithfully updates Doyle’s original stories for the 21st century, is a perfect example of this approach.

The interaction and sharing qualities between cinema and literature caused literature to evolve into literary works dramatically presenting events, just like cinema does. Therefore, they can be considered useful materials for filmmakers to inspire from. In addition to film adaptations, today, transferring a literary work to a television series is a very preferred form of cinematic adaptation.

### **1.3. Tv Industry**

The television industry has a more recent history than cinema. While the emergence of cinema dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century, the world's first television stations appeared in America in the late 1920s. These were the experimental days of the television industry. The first known full-length program broadcast in the United States was *The Queen's Messenger* (Alexanderson, 1928) by J. Harley Manners. It was a drama in one act that was aired in 1928 by WRGB station. (History of the Television, n.d.)

Television has undergone a great transformation since its inception. After the mid- twentieth century, it became a critical form of communication found in every household. By the end of the twentieth century, “the television industry had

grown into an economic force generating mass media's greatest revenues, costs, and profits.” (Gomery, 2001)

Until the beginning of the twenty-first century, six networks dominated American television – NBC, CBS, and ABC until the 1980s, and United Paramount, WB, and Fox, which was founded in the 1990s. What the US viewers would watch was controlled by these networks, which were owned by five companies such as Disney and AOL Time Warner that were Hollywood based companies. By 2000, broadcast television was producing all forms of programming.

As the twentieth century ended, cable TV became a more popular choice than broadcast television. More households began to subscribe to cable television since it offered hundreds of channels. The leading companies of broadcast television such as Disney, Fox, and Viacom concentrated to produce desirable programming. Besides, these companies owned “sizable broadcast and cable television production studio properties” in addition to dominating “pay-TV—Viacom’s Showtime and the Movie Channel, and Time Warner’s HBO and Cinemax—as well as the creation and distribution of movies on rented and sold video.” (Gomery, 2001)

While cable television enabled the viewers to reach many different channels and programs, the new TV technologies such as VCR and DVD offered them a new type of freedom. People took charge of their programs to watch their favorite shows.

Until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were two choices: broadcast television that allows to access regularly scheduled programming or cable television that offers hundreds of channels. “The business of television distribution depended on control of these channels, making decisions about what programs would be scheduled when.” (Johnson, 2018) However, the emergence of the internet enabled new forms to produce and distribute television.

In the 2010s, “new distribution platforms that require a reassessment of how we understand the medium of television” have emerged. (Johnson, 2018) Television programs became accessible from any web browser. Amanda Lotz

(2017) defines online services such as Netflix, Hulu, and Disney+ that “collect, curate, and distribute television programming via internet distribution” as portals. These portals may be seen as an online equivalent of the television channels of broadcast or cable television. Rather, they aim to give viewers “choices from vast menus of program offerings via complex interfaces that encourage and personalize on-demand decision-making.” (Johnson, 2018; Lotz 2017).

Digital platforms enable the viewers to control what and when to watch. They empower their users to individualize their viewing experience by selecting, pausing, or restarting whenever they want. Netflix is a prominent example of the digital platforms today. Founded in 1997, the company has been operating as a streaming service since 2007. While Netflix initially provided access to professionally produced series and movies, today it also produces its own series and movies. In addition to Netflix, Hulu, HBO, Disney+, and Amazon Prime are the other best-known digital platforms.

Today, online television and other broadcasting technologies have influenced traditional TV. Besides, it has an impact not only on the television industry but also on cinema.

### **1.3.1. Interaction Between Cinema and TV**

Since there was a considerable time difference between the making of the first movie and the first television show, in the past, the mediums of film and television were considered sharply different. However, the boundaries between these two mediums have blurred today.

Noel Carroll summarized that it was assumed that “TV has an impoverished image (marked by low resolution and scale) versus film’s informationally dense imagery.” (2003; as cited in Nelson, 2007) The two media were compared by their tense arguing that TV is in the present tense, whereas film is in the past tense or by their narration as claiming TV narration is segmented and serial, but film narration

is uninterrupted and closed. As Carroll noted, the common belief was that “the object of attention in TV is the flow of programming, while the object of attention in film is the individual, integrated, closed story.” (2003; as cited in Nelson, 2007)

Although there is a difference in terms of narration, the difference between television and cinema is not as much as thought. TV movies illustrate an example for this. Innovations such as the production of TV movies and technological developments that enable the television apparatus to “approximates to the cinema screen in dimension, aspect ratio, image, and sound quality” has blurred the differentiation between two mediums. (Nelson, 2007, p. 20)

The emergence of digital streaming platforms has completely changed the way television and cinema are viewed. They have brought the television viewing experience as close to the cinema as possible. They have altered not just the distribution process but also have played a significant role in the production, and therefore, textual forms of these mediums. Besides, digital streaming platforms have created an international audience “for long-format TV fictions, expensively made, high-profile mini-series and TV Movies.” (Nelson, 2007, p. 65) This situation has also influenced the content and the way of production and distribution. No matter where they are produced, all TV programs have become internationally available via digital platforms. Therefore, due to the content that appeals to everyone, these platforms have become widespread around the world.

Audience’s new habits have led to the emergence of new genres like miniseries in addition to movies and traditional TV series. Miniseries, which usually last about 8 episodes and can be “binge-watched” since all episodes are broadcast at the same time, are similar to both TV series and movies. These series that combine the structure of movies and TV series are frequently encountered among the most popular productions of the last period.

The binge-watching culture is also a new audience habit that has emerged with digital platforms. Instead of waiting for new episodes for weeks, the audience prefers to watch the entire season uploaded to the platform at once. While this may

seem like it makes television less appealing, it actually isn't. On the contrary, under the influence of television, digital platforms have also started to broadcast the series in the form of weekly episodes. For instance, *She-Hulk* (Gao & Maslany, 2022 - ), which is an American TV series based on the Marvel Comics character of the same name, airs weekly on Disney+.

In addition to new genres, new experiments were conducted on how to broadcast a production. For instance, *Most Dangerous Game* (Santora et al., 2020), which is an American action miniseries, debuted on Quibi on April 6, 2020. The miniseries contains fifteen episodes, each lasting about ten minutes. However, in 2022, when Amazon Prime Video bought the broadcast rights, the miniseries was streamed as a 2-hour 7-minute feature film, which is a compiled version of the episodes.

The influence of audience habits and preferences on these two media cannot be ignored. From time to time, fans can also direct television or cinema content. For instance, one of the most popular movie trilogies of all time *The Lord of the Rings* turned into a series in 2022. The series, produced by Amazon Prime and published on its digital platform, was influenced by the movie, although it was about the time before the story was told in the movie. Another example would be two sequels to *Sex and the City* (King et al., 1998-2004), which was essentially a six-season American TV series. Such audience interventions have also led to the disappearance of the sharp boundaries between television and cinema.

As discussed throughout the thesis, literature can be considered as an element that brings cinema and television closer. The same stories were adapted for both television and cinema, even at the same time sometimes.

### **1.3.2. TV Adaptations**

Data gained from Publishers Marketplace, the marketplace considered publishing's essential daily read for professionals, shows that literary adaptations

for television have been steadily increasing. According to the site's number, since its foundation in 2000, over 4000 film and television deals have been made. ("Publishers Marketplace", 2021, as cited in Manshel, McGrath, and Porter, 2021) In this period, the number of television deals has increased significantly and even, last year, exceeded film adaptations.

The fact that television series have a longer time for narration compared to films makes it easier for the audience to identify with the characters. Another reason that may increase the likelihood of spectator identification is the multi-protagonist structure of the television series in contrast to the films with usually a single protagonist. I contend that this feature of the television series has influenced and shaped modern literary works. The readers, as well as the viewers, may find it interesting to read different main characters whose stories intertwine in surprising ways throughout a single narrative. If we look at a few popular examples of modern literary works and their television adaptations such as *Game of Thrones* (Benioff et al., 2011-2019), *Big Little Lies* (Fienberg et al., 2017-2019), *Little Fires Everywhere* (Danow et al., 2020), and *The Witcher* (Brown et al., 2019-present) we can see that all of them follow the trend of multi protagonist narration.

Another influence of TV adaptations on the literary work, on which it is based, is that they increase the prestige of the book. A TV adaptation can draw attention to the literary work from which it is adapted. For instance, after the Netflix miniseries *Queen's Gambit's* succession, (Aniceto et al., 2020) the novel of the same name, from which the series was adapted, also achieved great attention. Besides the audience interest, the miniseries was awarded Outstanding Limited Series at the 2021 Emmy Awards.

Since television series are more recent productions than movies, there are fewer examples of TV adaptations compared to film adaptations. However, the TV adaptations have been just as successful and popular as the film adaptations. For instance, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the most portrayed literary human character Sherlock Holmes, created in 1887 by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, besides its worldwide adaptations to films, has also been adapted for television many times.



Among these TV adaptations, the most popular one is the BBC's modern Sherlock Holmes adaptation, (Moffat et al., 2010-2017) created by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss and released in 2010. In this 21<sup>st</sup>-century adapted version of the original story, Benedict Cumberbatch plays the character of Sherlock Holmes, while Martin Freeman plays Sherlock's loyal assistant and friend Dr. John Watsons. The most original version of Sherlock adaptations is undoubtedly the Japanese adaptation of Miss Sherlock (Murakami et al., 2018) in which the main characters are female. In this co-production between HBO Asia and Hulu Japan, Yūko Takeuchi played the lead as Sara "Sherlock" Shelly Futaba. This addresses an interesting commonality between film and TV and streaming adaptations. The replacement of the male protagonist with a female protagonist in a different geographical context resonates well with the general trends in streaming platforms such as the increase in the number of female leads, increasing sensitivity towards gender and equality issues and etcetera. Researching this commonality is beyond the confines of this research; however, it is important to highlight this.

The value of the scenarios adapted for television series can be understood by looking at the upcoming productions. Amazon Prime production *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power* (Greene, 2022) is one of the most anticipated productions of 2022. Amazon paid US\$250 million for the television rights for *The Lord of the Rings*. This high-budget series, which focuses on the history of Middle-earth and characters like Galadriel and Elrond, is inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien's works such as "The Silmarillion" and "Unfinished Tales." The TV adaptation, which comes 20 years after the movie adaptations of Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, will be available to watch on Prime Video on September 2.

Another anticipated and high-budget production is *House of the Dragon*, (Condal et al., 2022) which is a prequel to the television series *Game of Thrones* (Benioff et al., 2011–2019). The new series is based on George R.R. Martin's novel *Fire & Blood* (2018). It focuses on the events leading up to the end of House Targaryen and the Targaryen civil war. *House of the Dragon* is scheduled to premiere on August 21.

Although George R.R. Martin denies the allegations, some critics argue that the television series *Game of Thrones* has influenced Martin's novel *Fire & Blood* (2018), and therefore, the script of the new series *House of the Dragon*. Even if George R.R. Martin was not under such influence, it is certain that the interaction between cinema and literature is becoming increasingly mutual. This is also an indicator of the fact that the transfer of stories and characters from the literary to the screen is not a one-way transfer, but a mutual interaction.

#### **1.4. The Influence of Cinema on Literature**

María José Fresnadillo Martínez (2005) defines the function of cinema as the agglutinant of "space and time, image and word, reality and fiction, knowledge and feelings". In this sense, both works of art are based on scripts. In other words, a script can be seen as a manifestation of the connection between cinema and literature.

Both cinema and literature need words to express and a physical space – in the case of literary work, a reference to a physical space. The imagined space in literary work is translated into the cinematic space in film and television. I contend that just like the imagined space in literary work includes the readers' participation in the narrative, the cinematic space in film also extends to the viewers' sense of meaning-making. Furthermore, they undeniably have another commonality: a narrative that "may even be considered as the main transferable element from one to another." (Alqadi, 2015)

Especially after World War I, novelists which were influenced by cinema emerged. American film theorist Robert Stam, inspired by American writers from the Lost Generation, sought an answer to the question of how literature has been influenced by cinema. The Lost Generation refers to "a group of American writers who came of age during World War I and established their literary reputations in the 1920s" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.) such as Ernest Hemingway, Scott

Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, E.E. Cummings, Archibald MacLeish, Hart Crane and so on. The literary works of many authors among them such as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Dos Passos indicated the influence of cinema. This was a period when cinema was accepted as an independent and valuable art form in its own right, and therefore cinematic writing was considered as valuable as literary writing. Stam argued that “cinema has literary qualities so that it is as inspiring and distinguished as literature.” (Alqadi, 2015) In fact, early film theorists have discussed the autonomy of cinema from literary work and whether, if at all, cinema has its distinctive language. To name a few, Alexandre Astruc coined the term camera stylo (camera pen) to refer to the presupposition that a director writes just like an author writes with his pen. (Cartmell, 2012)

In his book “USA”, Dos Passos entitled the chapters, which follow the author's development from a child to a writer, "The Camera Eye". Don Passos is not the only one who was under the influence of cinema. Fitzgerald's works also illustrate examples of the effects of cinema. His past work experience in Hollywood shows itself in his writing, in his techniques, in his way of seeing, and even in his way of structuring a narrative. His knowledge of how to make a movie or write one shapes his literary works. For instance, Roland Berman argues that “some scenes of Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925) are ‘openly cinematic’ and need the audience to be familiar with motion picture techniques and technology.” (Alqadi, 2015)

The movie “*Hiroshima mon amour*” (Resnais, 1959), which is adapted from the novel of the same name by Marguerite Duras, played a crucial role in the interaction of literature and cinema. The critics evaluated the film as a production that renewed the relationship between filmmakers and writers.

20th-century American writer Truman Capote said in an interview “I think most of the younger writers have learned and borrowed from the visual, structural side of movie technique. I have.” (Capote & Inge, 1987) Capote's novel “*Cold Blood*” (1965) is a perfect example to illustrate how he has been influenced by cinema. The structure of the novel, which includes four chapters subdivided into

eighty-six scenes, and its narrative remind of a screenplay without a chapter heading and numbered sections, according to Edward Murray (1973). The story unfolds fluidly thanks to the successions of scenes that have a rapid rhythm. The author consistently uses the method of parallel editing throughout the entire novel. There exist crosscuts between the characters, which show the contrast between their conditions. Capote shifts the perspective, which always remains in an objective manner, between scenes. All of these show the novel's filmic construction.

To sum up, cinema can be seen as a source of inspiration for modern literature. New novelists illustrate examples of cinematic techniques in their writings. The methods of fragmentary story-telling or deliberately omitting some pertinent pieces of information to allow the reader to imagine by herself took place in modern literary works. In conclusion, it is clear that films have had a great influence on the modern novel.

## 2. NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Narrative refers to “any account of a series of related events or experiences”, whether fictional or nonfictional, which “can be presented through a sequence of written or spoken words, still or moving images, or any combination of these.” (Chang, 2022) Almost all storytelling formats, including novels, fairy tales, memoirs, biographies, news reports, documentaries, films, or TV shows, have a narrative, therefore, a narration. Narration can be defined as conveying a story through the medium of written or spoken commentary. The specific person or unspecified literary voice who conveys the story is the narrator.

Gerald Prince (2003) defines narrative as “the representation (as product and process, object and act, structure and structuration) of one or more real or fictive events communicated by one, two or several narrators to one, two or several narrates.” In other words, the narrative is “recounting a series of facts or events and the establishing of some connection between them.” (Childs & Fowler, 2006)

As Gerald Prince discusses in his book (2003), the definition of narrative has been a subject of debate among many narratologists. Traditional narratologists argue that narrative is essentially a mode of verbal presentation. According to them, it “involves the linguistic recounting or telling of events rather than their performance or enactment on stage.” (Prince, 2003) Besides its description, how narrative can be distinguished from mere event description has been discussed by narratologists around the world. Some narratologists claim that to distinguish narrative from the representation of a series of events, “narrative must have a continuous subject and constitute a whole.” (Prince, 2003)

The series of events of a narrative can constitute a structure. This outline of events or situations is called a plot. Prince, while defining the plot, emphasizes the difference between plot and story. He explains the difference with an example: “‘*The king died, and then the queen died.*’ is a story, whereas ‘*The king died, and then the queen died of grief.*’ is a plot.” (Prince, 2003)

The plot, together with the setting, constitute the framework of a narrative structure. Hence, the narrative structure can be defined as the content of a story and the form used to tell the story. In other words, it refers to “the shape of a story’s trajectory.” (Childs & Fowler, 2006)

## **2.1. Cinematic Narration**

Almost all cinematic works, including most documentaries, have a narrative and a narration. Narrative is crucial to determining audiences’ responses to the work. As defined earlier, narrative refers to the story, and narration is the way of telling a story. In other words, the former includes verbally expressing a narrative, telling it in writing, enacting it by a group or a single actor, presenting it with nonverbal pantomime, representing it as a series of visual images, “with or without words, or as a cinematic flow of moving pictures, with or without sounds, speech, music, and written language.” (Scholes, 2009) In a broad sense, the latter is about conveying a series of events either “by verbal telling, or by showing someone something, or by enacting it for them.” (Gaut, 2010)

Although narration occurs in various media, this chapter will focus on only cinematic narration and how it differs from literary narration. On the basis of structural features of narration, which “include the basic agents and properties of narration, such as narrators, implied authors, mediation, point of view, and the relation between plot and story” (Gaut, 2010), the symmetry theorists such as Seymour Chatman (1990) and Jerrold Levinson (1996) claim that narration in literature and film is identical. They argue that the only difference between cinema and literature is the mode of communication. While the cinematic narrative is based on showing, literature uses the words on the page. It is important to note that there can also exist a cinematic element in literary writing. Some authors write in such a way that the reader visualizes the words before h/er eyes. According to Chatman, “all narratives, whether cinematic or literary, must have narrators; and that in the

case of film there is always a (usually implicit) visual narrator, just as in literature there is always an (often implicit) verbal narrator who verbally tells us the story.” (Gaut, 2010; Chatman, 1990) Therefore, since how a story is told does not affect the structural features of narration, it has a secondary role.

On the other hand, the asymmetry theorists such as Gregory Currie (1995) and Kendall Walton (1993) object to this argument. According to the asymmetry theory, since at least one of the structural features of the narrative will be different, cinematic narration differs from literary narration. In contrast to the symmetry view, the asymmetry theorists argue that the mode of communication has an influence on the structural features of narration. However, these theorists have different grounds for the theory. For instance, one may argue that “whereas narrators are ubiquitous in literature, they are hardly ever found in film”, the other may hold that “may hold that cinematic narration is not mediated in the way that literary narration is.” (Gaut, 2010)

Adaptation is defined as the transformation of a verbal medium to a visual medium, through “reducing the pre-existent functions of writing, such as characters, locations, costumes, actions and strings of narrative events.” (Ellis, 1982, as cited in Hafeez, Margoushy, & Youssef, 2019) Hence, in the adaptation process at least one of the structural features of the narrative can change. Therefore, it can be argued that cinematic narration differs from literary narration, as the asymmetry theorists claim.

There exist two distinct formal dimensions to narrative utterances: “a presentational form which is immediate (language, gesture, etc.), and a represented form which is at one remove from the level of performance itself.” (Scholes, 2009) For instance, there is the language of the author and the representation of events and characters in the novel. In the example of a cinematic work, in addition to the language of the author, there are the performance of the actor, the actions of the character, and additionally the effect of the photography such as camera angle, lighting, and focus.

Cinematic narrative, in contrast to literary narrative, enables its audience to perceive certain features of fiction more clearly, since they are included in the film narration while in the literature, they have only been part of the reader's narrativity. The visual quality of a film is the proof of “how much of fictional narrativity involves the supplying of physical details or the translating of verbal signs into images.” (Scholes, 2009) Narrativity, originally from French, means the narrative quality of films. However, its usage here refers to “the process by which a perceiver actively constructs a story from the fictional data provided by any narrative medium.” (Scholes, 2009)

The differences in cinematic and literary narration correspond to the differences in narrativity. While the reader's narrative processes are mainly oriented towards visualization, “the spectator must supply a more categorical and abstract narrativity” in cinematic narrative. (Scholes, 2009) In other words, while a novel needs understanding from its reader, a cinematic work only requires the interpretation of its audience.

Cinema is the closest to reality among all other narrative media due to its visual structure. It is difficult to give the impression of reality in literature because it is only based on the words on a page. As the asymmetry theorists claim, this differentiation of the mode of communication has an influence on the narration, and thus, the narrative structure of both media. Besides, the adaptation process from literature to cinema can diversify the differences between narratives of these works. Consequently, a literary work should be considered separate from its adapted version into a film or a TV series.

### **2.1.1. TV Narrative**

TV series, like movies, have a narrative, a story, and therefore a narration, which refers to the way that the story is told. While cinematic narrative and TV narrative share some characteristics, like both consist of sequences of moving



images, they differ at certain points. They “share a common visual and aural form”; however, diverge in crucial ways.

Television narrative has undergone dramatic changes in recent years. Some interpret these changes as “television becoming more ‘literary’ or ‘cinematic’”. (Mittell, 2015) What was considered innovative once, such as nonlinear chronology or subjective narration, today accepted as ordinary. On the contrary, narrative forms that were previously thought to be unacceptable are now mainstream. Jason Mittell, who is a television scholar, defines the new mode of television storytelling, which was led from “expectations for how viewers watch television, how producers create stories, and how series are distributed have all shifted” as complex TV. (2015, p. 3)

Mittell argues that although television has been influenced by cinema, the narrative structure of serial television differs from the cinematic narrative because of its ongoing continuity and seriality. Some claim that television narration is influenced by cinema and literature. However, “television’s narrative complexity is predicated on specific facets of storytelling that seem uniquely suited to the television series structure”, and therefore, distinguished from the traditional modes of episodic and serial forms. (Mittell, 2015)

Television series have a long-term narrative that develops over several episodes. The viewer expects an eventual conclusion. In this regard, it may be argued that TV series resemble a film in their narrative style since both are based on the long-term resolution of a single problem.

One element that distinguishes TV narrative from cinematic is environmental factors. While cinema needs the undivided attention of the audience, TV viewers often do not pay their full attention to the screen. Therefore, television programs constitute of segments of about five minutes that together create a longer narrative. Besides, these segments make sense alone. Thus, the viewer can start watching the program at any point. Television news is the perfect example for this usage. Soap operas, where no single storyline dominates in any episode, can be another example.

A movie has a clear beginning and an end where it tells approximately a 2-hour story. Thus, cinematic narratives typically engage the audience's short-term memory. On the other hand, how the literary story is consumed is at the reader's own pace and control. However, "the typical model of television consumption, divided into weekly episodes and annual seasons, constrains producers interested in telling stories that transcend individual installments, as any viewer's memory of previous episodes is quite variable, with a significant number of viewers having missed numerous episodes altogether." (Mittell, 2015, p. 180) Preserving the viewer's memory is a difficult task in a series that is told over months and years. This is an important difference that distinguishes cinematic narrative, literary narrative, and TV narrative.

Despite all their differences, TV narration and cinematic narration share the same narrative elements, which are narrative point of view, narrative time, and narrative technique.

## **2.2. Narrative Elements**

As defined earlier, narration refers to conveying a story to an audience with the use of a written or spoken commentary. The voice, whether a specific person or unspecified literary voice, who conveys the story is called the narrator. To deliver information, tell the plot to the audience is the main aim of the narrator. The narrator, as well as the narration, is developed by the creator of the story. The creator of the story develops a narration according to three elements of narrative: narrative point of view, narrative time, and narrative technique. Therefore, narration includes both who tells the story and how the story is told.

### **2.2.1. Narrative Point of View**

Point of view means narrative voice or the “eye” through which the story is told. In other words, the narrative point of view represents who is telling the story and who sees the story. It refers to a perspective from which the story is filtered and relayed to the audience. The narrator could be a character who is involved in the plot or someone who knows and sees all of the characters and events but is not included in the story. The narrative perspective enables the reader or the audience to understand the characters’ viewpoints throughout the story. How the narrator tells the story is significant because of its effect on the plot, therefore, the reader’s or the audience’s understanding of the story.

There are three primary types of point of view: *first person*, who is one of the characters and tells the story from her point of view, *second person*, which is structured around the “you” pronoun, and *third person*, in which the story is told by someone who is not involved in the story.

In literature, the choice of which pronoun to use determines the relationship between the story’s world and the reader. Daniel Chamberlain, who examines the nature of narrative perspective, explains the effect of the use of different types of narrative point of view in his book *Narrative Perspective in Fiction* (1990): “The use of first person or first 'figuration' (in the broad sense) tends to create a 'you' in the reader. The use of 'you' helps create the standpoint of the 'I.' The use of an 'it' helps create a common standpoint of 'You and I,' that is, we. The choice of pronoun is a choice of figuration that will affect the narrative perspective on all levels.”

As in literature, the director’s use of the camera determines how the audience sees the film’s world and relates to the characters. Determining from which point of view the story is told is one of the director’s most significant contributions to a work. All cinematic works are presented from a certain perspective. Therefore, if this perspective changes, the story may become completely different. Similarly, in literature, the change of perspective alters the story since it affects the reader’s understanding of the plot and characters. For instance, in the example of a story told in the first-person point of view, the reader can relate to the characters more easily; however, s/he cannot be able to aware of

all aspects of the events. On the contrary, a story told in the third-person perspective can enable the reader to know all aspects of the events while s/he may relate less to the characters than to the former example. Similarly, the first-person perspective in cinema may limit the audience's understanding, while the third-person point of view offers the audience a wider perspective. Eventually, the way the reader or the audience reads/watches the story has an influence on their understanding of it.

#### **2.2.1.1. First Person Point of View**

The first-person point of view is the narrative perspective in which the story is told by one of the characters. In literary works, it reveals itself by the "I" sentence construction. The story is written in first-person pronouns, such as "I wrote a letter." or "I went to see a friend." Therefore, it can be concluded that the narrator is either a main character or someone close to the protagonist. The former, in which "the narrator is the protagonist at the heart of the plot", is called first-person central, while the latter is first-person peripheral, in which the narrator is not the protagonist but a witness to the story. One of the most known examples of a first-person central narrator in literature is the 1847 novel *Jane Eyre*, which is written by Charlotte Brontë. In the book, the protagonist Jane Eyre tells her own story. The first-person peripheral narrator is as frequently used as the first-person central narrator. A classic example of a first-person peripheral narrator is Doctor Watson, who is very close to the protagonist in Sherlock Holmes' stories. Additionally, F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925) is written from Nick Carraway's perspective, who is not the main character that gives the story his name but closely observes him.

The use of the first-person narrative can enable the reader to relate to the character. However, it limits the understanding of the reader since the narration is limited by the perceptual abilities of the character. A first-person narrator cannot be able to know all aspects of any situation, therefore, cannot convey the events to the

reader in all its bearings. Additionally, the narrator may suffer from mental or physical challenges which affect his ability to tell the accurate truth of events.

In cinema, the first-person point of view generally refers to a shot that represents the character's viewpoint. In other words, the audience follows and sees only what the character can see. However, in terms of narration, the first-person point of view in cinema refers to narrative language. The most used type of first-person narration is the translation of the narrator's words into scenes. Image and sound are created using the character's words. 1944 American crime film noir *Double Indemnity* (Wilder, 1944) is an example of the use of first-person narration in cinema. Based on the novel of the same name, leading man Walter Neff tells the story through his memories. As he tells, his words are translated into images and sounds which simulate the narration. Mostly, the narrator's voice continues to be heard over the sequence. Hence, the audience is reminded that they are seeing the narrator's words.

This dominant type of first-person narration is usually used in flashback scenes. While a character tells a story about an experience that is past using the simulation of the words in images and sounds, the audience experiences it as present. This feature of the cinema is used in both films and TV series to add versatility to the narrative. For instance, interrogation scenes usually serve this purpose. Therefore, crime series may use this method to diversify the narrative. Popular TV series such as *Big Little Lies* (Fienberg et al., 2017-2019), *Elite* (Betancor et al, 2018-present), or *The Sinner* (Purple et al., 2017-2021) can be given as an example.

#### **2.2.1.2. Second Person Point of View**

Second person point of view is the least used technique of narrative compared to other narrative perspectives. In literature, it is structured around the "you" pronoun. The author includes the reader in the story by speaking directly to

her. Hence, the reader feels like she is a character involved in the story. 1984 novel *Bright Lights, Big City*, written by American author Jay McInerney, is a well-known example of the use of second-person narration.

The most advantageous aspect of using a second-person point of view is that it breaks the fourth wall by including the reader in the narrative with the “you” pronoun. Thus, it creates an interactive literary experience. For instance, some adventure books which make the reader choose their paths and end in many different ways according to the choices use second-person narration.

The cinematic second-person point of view refers to the fourth-wall break. In other words, the second-person perspective is the audience’s perspective. In this perspective, the camera is directly positioned to the character’s face. This position allows the audience to connect with the story, feeling like they are part of the story. The most well-known example of the use of this kind of point of view on television is *Bugs Bunny*. Other characters in *Looney Tunes* and further animated shows also frequently use it. Additionally, the use of the second-person perspective that causes “the fourth wall breakage is common in comedy-based programs.” (Batkin, 2016) For instance, the 2005 American mockumentary sitcom television series *The Office* (Daniels et al., 2005-2013) often breaks the fourth wall through the interview sequences where the characters directly speak to the audience. Similar use can be seen in the romantic comedy-drama television series of the same era *Sex and the City*, (King et al., 1998-2004) in the first season’s interview scenes. Overall the use of the second-person point of view in literature and cinema resonates in such a way to make the reader/viewer feel addressed and participate in the story.

### **2.2.1.3. Third Person Point of View**

The most used narrative point of view is third-person narration. The narrator, who exists outside the story, tells the events of the story by referring to the characters with third-person pronouns “he”, “she”, or “they” such as “She went for

a walk.” In literature, the third-person perspective follows multiple characters and events, just as a camera does in a movie. “The first person refers to the speaker, the second person to the addressee, and the third person to a person or object which is neither the speaker nor addressee.” (Segal et al., 1997)

Third-person narration can be divided into three types: *third-person omniscient*, which refers to an all-knowing narrator, and *third-person limited*, who observes the events and characters without knowing their motivations or thoughts of them. The omniscient narrator observes all events and is aware of all character’s motivations, thoughts, or feelings. Therefore, this narrator influences the reader by giving his own opinions while telling the characters’ opinions. The latter refers to a narrator who still exists outside the events; however, does not know the character’s motivations, thoughts, or feelings. In the third-person limited narration, narration focuses on a single character, and the narrator is only aware of that character’s psyche.

This type of point of view guides the reader's perspective by controlling what information should be given to them. Hence, the narrator manages the suspense and tension of the story. In this respect, the third-person perspective works like a camera. Director’s choice of from which point of view the story is told shapes the narrative and the audience’s understanding of the story and the characters.

As in literature, there are two types of third-person narration in cinema: the third-person omniscient and the third-person limited. In the latter, the events of the story are presented from the perspective of an ideal observer. Hence, the audience only knows a few prominent characters’ feelings, motivations, and thoughts. The third-person limited perspective is the most used narrative style in films and TV shows. Some basic camera shots such as medium shot, long shot, or over-the-shoulder shot can be an example of this kind of point of view. When the narrator enables the audience to know more about the other characters, the film shifts to an omniscient point of view.

The omniscient perspective in cinema refers to a narration that reveals all character's thoughts and feelings. Therefore, it requires the use of different narrative techniques such as voice-over or graphics. The use of the omniscient point of view is not as common as the use of the limited perspective, since cinema relies heavily on empathy with the characters and it is not easy to achieve in this narration. One of the successful uses of this point of view is in the American television series *Desperate Housewives*. (Cherry et al., 2004-2012) In the series, the narrator is a character named Mary Alice Young, who died at the beginning. Thus, as an all-knowing god-like figure, Young is aware of all events of the story and the characters' inner worlds. The omniscient voice over is sometimes used in documentaries where the director wishes to put a distance between the viewer and the character. *The Weather Underground* (Green & Siegel, 2002) can be shown as an example of this kind of usage. The documentary focuses on the rise and fall of the Weathermen, which is a radical organization created in the 1970s to overthrow the US government. The film features interviews with former Weathermen members, as well as archival photos, footage, and FBI documents supported by voice-overs.

### **2.2.2. Narrative Time**

British filmmaker and Britain's first university professor of film Thorold Dickinson argues that "the film, silent or sound, has no past or future tense, only the present." (1971, p.111) However, some scholars such as Seymour Chatman (1978), Alexander Sesonske (1980), and Jonathan Mendilow (1965) object to this argument. According to Sesonske, to understand the narrative time in cinema, first, cinema space should be examined. Sesonske defines the cinema space as "the space we experience when we watch a film." (1980) Besides it being a visual space, it can be seen as a dual space. This means that it presents two aspects, which are screen space and action space. The former refers to "the two-dimensional rectangle on the surface of the screen", and the latter is "the three dimensional space within which



characters live and die... and we can encounter almost any imaginable kind of event.” (Sesonske, 1980)

This duality of the cinema space corresponds to the narrative time in cinema. In cinema, there exist two different levels of time. One is screen-time, which is the duration of the images in screen-space, and the other is action-time, which refers to the time within the world of the film. The former is a natural time, and the latter is created. In a film, the lights and shadows on the surface of the screen change and create movement in the screen space. This pattern of change occurs within the ordinary and continuous flow of natural time. Thus, the flow of screen-time can be described for any movie as accurately as wanted. On the other hand, action-time refers to the time of the events that occurred in the action space of the film. Hence, it differs greatly from the screen time.

Screen time is the time of the ordinary world. Therefore, it is natural time. However, action time is created through the choice of the filmmaker. The filmmaker can control the images in screen time, and hence, the flow of the action time. As Ralph Stephenson and Jean R. Debrix detail in their book “The Cinema as Art” (1965), the audience’s perception of action time can be altered using accelerated, slow, stopped, or reversed motion.

Although the other forms of time in film occur, it is common to accept that time moves forward at its normal pace in film as in life. This obviously depends on how the film narrates the story, in a linear or a non-linear fashion. However, while the screen time of the film is approximately two hours, this duration presents weeks or years in action time. This condensation of time is the normal time form of cinema. Nonetheless, there exist films or TV shows in which the events are transmitted to the audience in real time such as *Cleo from 5 to 7*, (Varda, 1962) *Dog Day Afternoon*, (Lumet, 1975) *12 Angry Men*, (Lumet, 1957) and *24* (Grazer et al., 2001-2010).

Time, including narrative point of view and technique, is one of the elements of narrative to create a narration. As discussed above, cinematic time

divides into screen time and action time. These terms appear in literature as story time and discourse time. Story time is “the duration of the purported events of the narrative” and discourse time refers to “the time it takes to pursue the discourse.” (Chatman, 1978) In other words, the former is the time experienced by the characters in the story world, and the former is the one experienced by readers.

While discussing cinematic time, the term tense should be addressed. Tense includes order, duration, and frequency. It is “a linguistic device to identify the order and relative locations of events within the flow of time.” (Sesonske, 1980) In contrast to cinema which has no built-in tense order, language, and therefore literature, has a tense system. Although a sentence cannot be written without indicating a tense, a film that is composed of several shots can be made without indicating any tense. Roland Barthes defines cinema as a "complex system in which different substances are engaged," in which "the senses are subjected to the concerted action of a collection of images, sounds, and written words." (1964, as cited in Henderson, 1983) In literature, a change in a word-ending is enough to indicate a tense shift. However, it is more complicated in cinema. It is required to switch from one complex conjunction of communication channels to another while providing a reasonable transition between them without an explicit tense system.

In a literary work, tenses function to indicate relations of the order of the events. There is no implication of immediacy in literature. The author enables the reader to indirectly know the times of the event. In nonfictional works, a reference point in natural time is specified to allow the reader to understand the order of the events in natural time. However, in fiction, since there is no reference point in natural time, tenses construct an alternative flow of time, in other words, a fictional time within the story’s world. Unless told otherwise, it can be assumed that this created fictional time, in terms of the direction and the flow, exactly works like natural time.

Changing point of view in the narrative can create variations in the construction of a fictional time. For instance, the use of third-person past tense narrative does not imply any later "present" within the story’s world. Therefore, this

kind of narration “functions to create the continuing present time within the work” while “seen with some distance and objectivity.” (Sesonske, 1980) On the contrary, “I” pronoun in the first-person past tense narrative implies that there exists the narrator's present time, which is later than the time of the events described in the story. For this reason, the events are presented from a subjective perspective. To sum up, it can be suggested that the reader’s awareness of the events of the story is mediated by both the words and the narrator’s voice. In other words, “tenses in literature function not merely to indicate temporal relations within the work but also to help create and control the emotional relation of the reader to the work, the degree of felt involvement in the world of the work.” (Sesonske, 1980) In terms of cinema, the events of the story always occur in a continuous present. The order of the events, the relations of before and after can be only indicated by the order of the images in screen time. As in literature, the order of events often is a function of the order of presentation in cinema. However, it does not have to be.

Another difference between cinematic and literary narrative time is their immediacy effects. When watching a film, the audiences tend to perceive that they see the events as they happen. This attitude results from “the unique character of cinema space, which places us within the action-space of the film.” (Sesonske, 1980) For instance, while watching an action movie, the audiences may be startled by action sequences that include gunshots or explosions. However, someone who reads an action novel does not feel the same effect in similar scenes. This situation is caused by the visual and auditory elements of cinema.

Because of the duality of cinema’s formal dimensions, even though an immediate experience of images in screen space occurs, it does not mean that a description of these images refers to the description of events occurred in action space. In literature, there exists a similar situation. As in literature, all events are mediated in the cinematic world. Through screen-space, an effect that is the conclusion of the audience’s experience of events in action-space is produced.

The most popular scene of *The Shining*, which is 1980 psychological horror film produced and directed by Stanley Kubrick and based on Stephen King's 1977

novel of the same name, is the scene where the film's central character Jack Torrance breaks the door with an ax, which is also seen on the movie poster. However, in the novel, Jack chases Wendy into the bathroom with a croquet hammer that isn't as impressive as an ax. Due to the effect that produced through the screen space of this scene, the movie was imprinted on the memories with it.

Location in time is a crucial element of a work in cinema as in literature. While authors have different tenses to identify the past, present, or future, filmmakers have other devices to indicate the relations of before and after between events within the story. Using fades, dissolves, titles, cross-cutting, superimposition, and split-screen may imply shifts in time. However, since 1929, sound has been the major device to establish temporal structure in cinema. (Sesonske, 1980) Synchronous sound, which is heard at the same time as the image, shows its source. Besides, tenses and temporal terms in dialogue enable the filmmaker to locate the events in time.

Due to the multi-channeled textuality of cinema, as distinct from literature, a filmmaker can alter the temporality of a work. By using image, dialogue, voiceover, music, sound effects, and written materials, one can create single, multiple, simultaneous, or contradictory temporalities. (Henderson, 1983) This is a significant difference between literature and cinema. For example, the parallel editing technique which cuts across different scenes allows the viewer to experience multiple events at the same time and establish links between these events. It adds a layer of sophistication to the narrative not just by creating suspense but also by introducing conflicts and contrasts to the reader within the same temporality.

To open a parenthesis, in literature, sometimes, there exist two stories within the same novel. The character within the first story sometimes becomes the narrator in the second story. This works as a way of telling two stories at the same time; however, the reader's experience differs in that the narrator is fixed in a particular temporality to narrate the second story. An analysis of the multiple layers of stories are beyond the confines of this chapter. Yet a resonance between cinema and

literature in terms of multiple story telling in different temporalities is worth mentioning here.

### **2.2.3. Narrative Technique**

For a narrative film, there exists three characteristic features: causality, structure, and narrative techniques. The former means that a story needs a series of cause and effect events to unfold. The sequence of cause-and-effect events constitutes the plot in a film. Structure in a narrative film, in other words, the plot structure or the dramatic structure, refers to how a story is laid out. The least feature is the narrative techniques that are used to develop the story.

Along with the point of view and narrative time, the creator of the story, whether a filmmaker or an author, needs to establish a narrative technique to develop a narration. Narrative technique refers to various other methods, apart from the perspective and time, that help to narrate a story, such as developing characters, establishing a setting, and correspondingly, choosing themes, and structuring the plot.

A narrative technique, also known as a narrative device, is any method that the creator of a narrative uses to craft his or her work and develop a unique style through the use of symbolism, mood, and figurative language. (Orehovec, 2003) In other words, narrative techniques are about how the story is told. Cinematography, direction, sound, tone, themes, and characters are some of the fundamental devices used to develop the narrative.

To begin with, the creator of the story focuses on developing the characters, which refers to giving a character a personality, motivations, and depth. In other words, character development means how a character evolves throughout the story. Creating three-dimensional characters is crucial for the narrative. Chatman emphasizes on this argument in his book by saying: “Characters exist and move in a space which exists abstractly at the deep narrative level, that is, prior to any kind

of materialization, like the two-dimensional movie screen, the three-dimensional proscenium stage, the projected space of the mind's eye.” (1978) Accordingly, each character should have real attributes such as personality, motivations that create conflicts, and backstory. Thus, the reader or the audience can relate with them.

After developing characters, the creator of the story should establish a setting. In other words, the creator should determine the time and location within the narrative. Chatman defines the setting where the character is set off, “the place and collection of objects against which his actions and passions appropriately emerge.” (1978) As a narrative device, setting functions to initiate the world of the story, and thus, to contribute to the narrative mood. Hence, it shapes the relationship between the story’s world and the audience or the reader. Besides, setting can be used to reflect a character’s inner world. Generally, in a classical narrative film, “the opening scenes describe a setting while introducing us to the protagonists of the action.” (Henderson, 1983)

Theme is the element that holds a narrative together. If the theme is clearly set, it ensures that all narrative elements work harmoniously. In cinema, themes are crucial to develop an episodic content, since the filmmaker should maintain the audience’s focus on what is matter in the story throughout each episode. Similar to the theme, the tone sets the atmosphere of the story. On the basis of this atmosphere, the other narrative elements such as setting and structure interoperate.

How a story is laid out is one of the crucial elements of the narrative. The most traditional way is where the events follow a chronological order, which refers to a linear structure. Although “the events in the story plane are related temporally and causally based on their natural order of occurrence, they are often rearranged in the discourse plane intentionally.” (Bae & Young, 2008) Nonlinear storytelling or fragmented narratives such as reverse chronological narrative, real-time narrative, breaking the fourth wall, or framing story have become more popular nowadays. For instance, in cinema, auteur directors such as Christopher Nolan (*Memento*, 2000), David Fincher (*Gone Girl*, 2014), and Gaspar Noé (*Irréversible*, 2002) use nonlinear narratives in their films. Besides, examples of the use of

nonlinear narration also exist in literature. The novel *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell (2004), which was adapted into a movie in 2012, (Tykwer, Wachowski & Wachowski, 2012) has a different structure where the narration alternates between six different narrators each from different time periods.

Additionally, even in a linear structure, the creator of the story can use flashbacks, which provide background information to explain what caused the surprise of the story, or flashforwards, or foreshadowings, which provide a clue about the surprise, to alter the narration. The filmmaker or the author may give “some facts in advance or hide some information until a certain point for a dramatic effect.” (Bae & Young, 2008) Especially some genres such as crime, suspense, and psychological often use flashbacks and foreshadowings. For instance, in the mystery thriller *Gone Girl* (2014), (Fincher, 2014) the director David Fincher often includes flashbacks in the narration. Similarly, while flashbacks are frequently featured in some crime series such as *Big Little Lies* (2017- 2019) (Fienberg et al., 2017-2019) or *The Sinner* (2017-2021) (Purple et al., 2017-2021) others such as *Élite* (2018- ) (Betancor et al, 218-present) and *How to Get Away with Murder* (2014-2020) (Beers et al., 2014-2020) use foreshadowings to give the audience a hint about the hidden truth. This is due to “emotions such as suspense, curiosity, and surprise help the readers focus attention on a story, contributing to the readers’ sense of satisfaction.” (Bae & Young, 2008; Alwitt, 2002; Tan, 1996) Changes in temporal elements of the narrative structure can arouse these emotions. In these examples, two narrative devices that cause changes in temporal order are flashbacks and foreshadowings.

Flashbacks are generally used to describe past events that have an influence on the present. In other words, flashbacks “function to provide backstory in support of a main story line.” (Bae & Young, 2008; Sijll, 2005) For instance, they can depict a character’s recall of the past events, as in the example of the TV series *The Sinner* (Purple et al., 2017-2021). On the other hand, foreshadowings give “hints of what is to come” (Bae & Young, 2008; Chatman, 1978), partial information about future events, as in the example of the TV series *How to Get Away with Murder* (Beers et

al., 2014-2020). In terms of both flashbacks and flashforwards, the given information does not have to be correct, it can be only an outcome of a character's imagination.

Using narrative devices to develop a unique style is crucial for both the author and the filmmaker. While the author uses words to develop characters, establish a setting, and build a structure, the filmmaker creates these with images and sound. This difference affects how they build these elements. For instance, the author has lots of pages to introduce the characters, time, and location, the filmmaker has only a limited time for the introduction. Similarly, the author's freedom of space and time allows her to play with the structure and add flashbacks or flashforwards as she wishes. The example of Petra Hammesfahr's novel *The Sinner* (1999) includes long pages about the childhood of the main character Cora. To indicate time shift, the author changes the narrative from the third-person perspective to the first person. In its TV series adaptation, only some of these memories are shown. Besides, flashback scenes are indicated by the use of different actors or color changes.

### **2.3. Dramatic Structure**

Dramatic structure refers to the structure of a dramatic work such as a book, film, or play. How a story is laid out, including the beginning, middle, and end constitutes the dramatic structure of the story. In other words, it is the framework that allows the plot of a story to unfold.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle was the first person who worked on dramatic theory and examined the structure of a story, in his ancient Greek book *Poetics*. Since then, writers or scholars from around the world have hypothesized a variety of dramatic structures to organize the plots of artworks such as plays, novels, stories, or films.



The dramatic structure has been typically divided into acts, scenes, and plot points. In his 1979 book *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* (Field, 1979), Syd Field proposes the model of the three-act structure, which divides the story into three acts: setup, confrontation, and resolution. Field's theory, besides his book which was considered a filmmaking guide for the screenwriters, has served as a reference point for many filmmakers such as James Cameron, Frank Darabont, and Judd Apatow.

Although scholars approach the dramatic structure as linear and have studied it accordingly, a dramatic structure can be non-linear. A series of events in a story can move forward and back in time through the use of flashbacks and flashforwards. Flashbacks and flashforwards are used to create contrast which highlights the specific points of the story. Additionally, the plot may have a cyclical structure, in which the ending is shown at the beginning.

Traditionally, a plot has a linear structure that uses acts to define particular moments in the story. The most accepted theory of dramatic structure today belongs to German playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag. Freytag, in his book *Die Technik des Dramas* (1894), suggests that the dramatic structure consists of five parts: exposition (introduction), rise, climax, return (fall), and catastrophe (dénouement or resolution). This five-act dramatic structure is known as Freytag's pyramid or Freytag's triangle.

Freytag's analysis is primarily based on Greek and Shakespearean dramas. However, it can be applied in contemporary writings, full-length feature scripts, and even television and film. In his book *Technique of the Drama*, Freytag attempted "to write down the basic rules of drama." (Carlson, 1993, p.257) Besides its effect on literature, it influenced dramatic principles established in cinema. The book can be considered as an "instructive manual intended for the professional creation and production of script." (Dallas, 2000, p.21)

## 2.4. Elements Of Dramatic Structure

As Gerald Prince (2003) defines it, the plot is “the main incidents of a narrative; the outline of situations and events.” In other words, the plot refers to how the story develops, unfolds, and moves in time. Whether it is told, written, or filmed, the plot explains what happens in a story. Stories usually have a linear sequence of events, which includes a clear beginning, middle, and end. In literature, these can be called the introduction, body, and conclusion, respectively.

German playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag (1894) improved the three-act structure model and claimed that the dramatic structure of a plot consists of five parts: exposition (introduction), rise, climax, return (fall), and catastrophe (dénouement or resolution).

A typical dramatic structure has a linear narration. In other words, events in the story occur chronologically. Hence, the elements of the dramatic structure follow the order described in Freytag's pyramid. The first part of a story is named as *introduction or exposition* since it explores background information about the events, characters, or historical context. The following part is *rise or rising action*, in which a series of events that create tension in the narrative occur. The tension that emerges in the rising action part gradually increases in the story and eventually reaches its highest point. This part of the story is called climax. After the climax, the main conflict of the story starts to resolve in *return or fall or falling action*. The part of the story where the events come to a conclusion is *resolution or catastrophe or dénouement*.

### 2.4.1. Exposition (Introduction)

The first part of a story is called exposition or introduction. The introduction is one of the parts that are common in both literature and cinema. The main aim of this act is to expose the background information, which can be about the setting,

main characters, prior events, or historical context. In other words, this act introduces the world the viewer or the reader is about to enter. This is why it is called exposition or introduction. Freytag summarizes the role of the introduction as follows: “Since it is the business of the introduction of the drama to explain the place and time of the action, the nationality and life relations of the hero, it must at once briefly characterize the environment.” (1894, p.37)

Stories, whether literary or cinematic, often have a beginning, middle, and end. The beginning of the story refers to the introduction part. Through a story, each event has a purpose, which can be to give information, indicate a relation, or create conflict. The introduction, more formally the exposition, is the part where the narrator introduces the characters, the setting, and sometimes the main conflict in the story. To know the characters and the world in which the events took place, the exposition is crucially important.

For instance, in the children's story Snow White, the first queen dies soon after giving birth to her daughter Snow White. After the death of the first queen, the king marries the second queen, Snow White's stepmother. The second queen is a vain woman with a magical mirror. She is so jealous of Snow White that she decides to be rid of the girl, once and for all, and sends a huntsman to kill her. Until this conflict, the part where the narrator introduces the story's world and characters is the exposition act.

It is entirely in the hands of the narrator how much information she will give about the past, the setting, or the characters. The narrator may prefer to give all information in chronological order and not to hide anything from the reader or the viewer. Likewise, the narrator may provide only the bare minimum of information to allow the reader or the viewer to discover what is hidden through the story.

#### **2.4.2. Rising Action (Rise)**

After the narrator or filmmaker introduces the setting, main characters, and prior events, the tension in the narrative increases through a series of events. According to Freytag's pyramid (1894), this act is called rise or rising action. In each story, even if the story has an unconventional structure, there is a section that can be considered as the rising action.

At the end of the first act, an inciting incident that creates a problem or conflict occurs. The inciting may be either an actual event or information, which creates tension or suspense. After this incident, after the action is started, "mood, passion, involution receive an impulse in a given direction." (Freytag, 1894) The main character, the protagonist, enters a new world in which the protagonist faces obstacles and trials. While the protagonist moves toward a goal, both the tension and the action rise and the plot leads up to the climax.

For example, as examined in the previous part, in the story of Snow White, the rising action includes everything that takes place after the second queen sends a huntsman to kill Snow White up to the moment Snow White eats the poisoned apple. In between these incidents, the huntsman catches Snow White but spares her life. At the huntsman's suggestion, she goes to the woods to hide from the evil queen. In the woods, she meets the 7 dwarfs, who help her to survive. As seen in the example, the rising action act usually covers most of the story.

In literary works, the rising action takes place in the body section along with the climax and falling action. Like cinematic works, literary texts use rising action to build the narrative. Both cinema and literature use the rising act to serve similar purposes such as building suspense and increasing tension. Moving the plot forward, to enable the story to reach a climax and after a resolution, is another aim of the rising action section. In the rising action, essential information about the characters is revealed through their reactions when they face with a problem or conflict. Knowing the characters with all their aspects makes them more relatable and lifelike.

The rising action ends with a climax. The tension and suspense gradually increased through rising action and are dispelled by the climax.

### **2.4.3. Climax**

The part of the story where the tension and suspense increase in rising action reaches its highest point is the climax. In between the rise and fall, the story has a turning point, a climax. In the climax, the main character faces the main conflict or the villain of the story. For instance, the climax in a traditional good vs evil story is the moment when the protagonist confronts the antagonist. It is usually seen as the most suspenseful and exciting part of the story. The hallmark of climax is that “it is almost always the crowning point of a great, amplified scene, enclosed by the smaller connecting scenes of the rising, and of the falling action.” (Freytag, 1894, p.40)

In the example of the children’s story Snow White, the evil queen disguises herself as an old woman who is selling apples and tricks Snow White to buy one. When Snow White eats the apple, she gets poisoned. The queen thought that she had finally achieved victory over Snow White. This is a turning point in the plot. In other words, this part is the climax of the story.

Lots of narrative works, including the poetry of nonfiction, have a climax. However, the climax is not an easy part to find in a plot. Authors can leave the location of the climax open to the reader's interpretation. To identify the climax part of the story, the key defining features of the climax should be known. As mentioned earlier, the climax is the height of the story's action. It dispels much of the tension that arises during the rising action. Besides, the story's primary question is often answered in the climax. For instance, in a superhero story, the climax answers whether the hero wins. Therefore, it indicates the beginning of the falling action part. Although the audience or readers feel like that climax gives them the resolution, the story usually does not end immediately after the climax. Climax goes

forward with the falling action part where answers to other important questions are provided and the loose ends of the plot are tied up.

#### **2.4.4. Falling Action (Return)**

After the tension and suspense of the story reach their highest, it begins to fall. This part where the main conflict starts to resolve is called return or falling action. The falling action is the opposite act of rising action. Immediately following the climax, the tension and suspense are further dispelled and the main conflict is de-escalated in falling action. Falling action enables the story to move toward its conclusion.

For instance, after Snow White gets poisoned by the evil Queen, when the Seven Dwarfs come home from work, they find Snow White lying on the floor and the evil Queen beside her, laughing. The Seven Dwarfs chase the evil Queen up to the very top of a mountain. Because of the storm, The Queen falls off a cliff and dies. The Seven Dwarfs puts Snow White, who is in a deep sleep, into a glass coffin and keeps watching over her. All these actions are all part of falling action.

In literature, falling action is a part of the body. However, since Freytag's five-act pyramid can be used to analyze the plots of various kinds of stories including novels, films, and TV series, falling action has a similar role in both cinema and literature. During the falling action, the main conflict begins to resolve and changes in the characters might be seen. In a traditional superhero story, either a literary or cinematic work, the story does not end when the protagonist defeats the antagonist. Rather, the story continues with the hero's journey of regulating the new order and returning home. These actions take place in falling action.

The falling action begins right after the climax. Although the story's prior question is answered in the climax, all conflicts might not be resolved in it. Further questions may occur after the climax. Falling action seeks answers and resolution to following questions and conflicts. Therefore, the falling action cannot begin until

after the climax. According to Freytag, in this act, “the spectator must always perceive the downward compelling force of what has preceded.” (1894, p.42)

Although falling action is where the story’s main conflict is de-escalated, sometimes, the writer or filmmaker introduces a plot twist or a new conflict in this part. For instance, in a superhero story, when the hero sets out to return home after his win, he may face new problems, but smaller ones as against the main conflict. Besides, the protagonist may deal with new obstacles differently than he did before, thus, the growth of the protagonist can be shown in falling action.

The tension stemming from the story's central conflict begins to decrease in falling action. It dispels some of the built-up tension. Therefore, falling action is considered as the opposite act of rising action. The characters, who strain throughout the story, relax a little in this part. The falling action ends with a resolution where the story is drawing to an end.

#### **2.4.5. Dénouement (Resolution)**

The plot begins with an introduction of the setting, characters, and prior events. The main conflict introduced in the first part creates tension and suspense. The tension gradually increases through rising action and reaches its highest point in the climax. Immediately following the climax, the main conflict starts to resolve in falling action. The tension and suspense decrease and the characters, as well as the audience or the readers, relax a little. In the end, the story comes to a conclusion. The part where the plot is concluded, loose ends are tied up and all questions are answered is called dénouement or resolution. Freytag summarizes this act as the part where “the embarrassment of the chief characters is relieved through a great deed.” (1894, p.42)

The dénouement is the final section of a story's plot. In this fifth and last act, a sense of resolution is achieved. Many traditional stories end with " And they lived

happily ever after." This is the shortest and most well-known example of dénouement. However, stories usually need a longer conclusion.

At the end of the children's story Snow White, while Snow White lying in a glass coffin, the Prince, who is searching for her ever since he learned that Snow White is missing, happens to pass through. The Prince pulls open the glass coffin and kisses her. The love's first kiss breaks the Queen's spell and Snow White comes back to life. They return to the kingdom and live happily ever after.

The word dénouement, which is originally a French word and can be translated as resolution or finale, is about representing the outcomes of the story's main events. The audience, as well as the reader, feels the need to reach a conclusion. Therefore, the dénouement act is of great importance for both cinema and literature.

The dénouement part of a story has a beginning and end in itself. While the tension of the plot decreases in falling action, the story starts to unravel. However, all questions that arose during the rising action generally are not answered in the falling action. The plot needs a dénouement section to reach a conclusion. There are some examples where the dénouement does not answer all the unanswered questions. For these examples, by the time the dénouement is over, it is clear that the remaining questions will remain unanswered.

How the characters were changed by the story can be given in the dénouement. The audience or the reader may feel the need to know what the future will hold for the characters. The story usually uses a leap forward in time, for instance, "*5 years later...*" Sometimes, the main conflict may not be solved or how the story of the characters will continue is not shown. Therefore, some may feel like the story is not over yet. However, it should be known that "no resolution" is a type of resolution in itself. Besides, when the dénouement section ends, even if it does not give all answers, the story ends.



### 3. A CASE STUDY OF *THE SINNER*

As defined earlier, adaptation from a literary work to a cinematic work refers to “a process of reducing a pre-existent piece of writing to a series of functions: characters, locations, costumes, actions and strings of narrative events.” (Hafeez, Margoushy, & Youssef, 2019) Due to the alteration of narrative elements, a literary work should be considered separate from its adapted version into a film or a TV series.

The asymmetry theorists including Gregory Currie and Kendall Walton support this argument. They claim that cinematic narration differs from literary narration since at least one of the structural features of the narrative will be different. Narration refers to conveying a story through the medium of written or spoken commentary. Moreover, it includes both *who* tells the story and *how* the story is told. Therefore, it can be argued that the adaptation process has an influence on the narration. To put it differently, from the literary text to the screen and from the screen to the film, two mediators are involved. One is the scriptwriter, the second is the director.

This thesis aims to clarify how the adaptation process changes the narration, and correspondingly, the dramatic structure of a novel while it is adapted to a script. To do that, it will use the example of the American TV series *The Sinner* (Purple et al., 2017-2021). In this chapter, the novel version of *The Sinner* and its TV adaptation will be compared in terms of narrative elements such as characters, time, and dramatic structure.

#### 3.1. *The Sinner*: A Book

*The Sinner* is a psychological thriller written by German crime writer Petra Hammesfahr. Hammesfahr's this 1999 novel which surrounds an unexplained

murder has been an international success. The Guardian defined the novel that received full marks from the critics as “hauntingly insightful and sensitive.”

After her breakthrough novel, *The Sinner*, the writer Petra Hammesfahr has become one of the internationally bestselling authors today. She has written over twenty crime and suspense novels. Besides, she writes scripts for both television and film. She has gained several literary prizes, including the worldwide prestigious Crime Prize of Wiesbaden and the Rhineland Literary Prize.

The *Sinner* novel, which brought great success to Petra Hammesfahr, is about a woman, Cora Bender, who commits a crime in public when least expected. On an ordinary Saturday, while Cora, her husband Gereon, and their son take an outing to the lake, Cora is triggered by an unknown quantity; she stands up in a rage and stabs a man who plays with his girlfriend to death with a knife she had just used to cut fruit for her child. Although the subject of who and how is clear without any doubt, revealing the reason underlying this act is under the responsibility of a local detective, Rudolf Grovian. Since Cora confesses and pleads guilty, it is considered as an open-and-shut case. However, police commissioner Grovian maintains his own investigation. The interrogations of Cora, which lead her to think about the past, slowly unravel the hidden truths. The narrator enlightens the secrets buried within the past by moving back in time through the use of flashbacks.

The author Petra Hammesfahr uses the third-person omniscient point of view throughout the novel, except for the flashback scenes. This usage enables the author to control the reader’s understanding of the characters and events. The omniscient narrator can observe all events; therefore, can be aware of all character’s motivations, thoughts, or feelings. Thus, this narrator has an influence on the reader. In the novel, Hammesfahr guides the reader’s perspective by using this type of point of view.

Although Cora Bender is the main character of the story, the author also focuses on police commissioner Grovian. As an all-knowing narrator, Hammesfahr portrays these characters in detail with their motivations, thoughts, and feelings. In

this way, the author allows the reader to easily identify with the characters. Besides, by controlling what information should be given to the reader, the author manages the suspense and tension of the story. This makes the story even more gripping.

The only parts of the story where the third-person omniscient point of view is not used are the flashbacks. The author prefers to tell Cora's childhood memories in her own words. While using the omniscient perspective allows the reader to identify with the characters, the first-person narration further strengthens this identification. However, since Cora's memories do not show all aspects of the past, this narration limits the understanding and knowledge of the reader.

As discussed earlier in this thesis, changing the point of view in the narrative can create variations in the construction of a fictional time. Sesonke (1980) argues that the use of third-person past tense narration "functions to create the continuing present time within the work." By using this kind of narration, Hammesfahr creates a continuous flow through the fictional time of the novel. The author changes the perspective from third-person to first-person in the flashbacks to indicate that there exist two stories within the novel. While Cora is portrayed as a character in the first story, she becomes the narrator in the second story, where she tells her childhood memories.

Besides creating variations in time, changing perspective adds depth to the main character Cora. "Characters exist and move in a space which exists abstractly at the deep narrative level, that is, prior to any kind of materialization." (Chatman, 1978) Therefore, it is crucial for the narrative to create three-dimensional characters. Hammesfahr's narration depicts all the characters in three dimensions, especially Cora. Since she has real attributes such as personality, motivations that create conflicts, and backstory, the reader can relate to her.

As emphasized several times before, flashback scenes form an important part of the story. Flashbacks can be used to provide background information to explain what caused the surprise of the story. This kind of usage can alter the narration. They usually "function to provide backstory in support of a main story

line.” (Bae & Young, 2008; Sijll, 2005) In *The Sinner*, flashbacks are used to depict Cora’s recall of the past events that have an influence on the present. Besides, changing temporal order by using flashbacks arouses suspense and curiosity in the story that help the reader focuses attention on it.

Although the novel follows a linear structure including flashbacks, it conforms to the five-act structure known as Freytag’s pyramid. The dramatic structure of the main story that focuses on the murder committed by Cora consists of five parts: exposition (introduction), rise, climax, return (fall), and catastrophe (dénouement or resolution). Flashbacks about Cora's childhood usually contribute to the exposition part. After the author introduces Cora, her life, her relationship with her husband Gereon and his family, her work life, and her psyche; the rising action part of the story begins with the murder sequence. It includes police commissioner Grovian’s investigation of the murder. Throughout this act, a lot of information is revealed about Cora's childhood, family, and their neighbor Grit Adigar. Besides, the author introduces the other protagonist, police chief Rudolf Grovian in the rising action. This act continues until where Grovian questions Ute Frankenberg, Frankie’s wife, and learns the identities of those involved in that night from some old photographs, including one photograph of Cora’s sister, Magdalena. Her photograph enables Grovian to solve what happened that night. Therefore, it can be considered the climax point of the novel.

After Grovian finds out what happened the night Magdalena died and Cora was raped, more details about the night emerge in the falling action. Between pages 357 and 368, the night is told by Cora in the first-person narration. The novel ends with all the past exposed, and therefore, Cora's judgment falls. Since her husband leaves her right after the murder, she makes a fresh start with Grovian's help. This flow of events fits perfectly into Freytag’s pyramid.

Thanks to author Petra Hammesfahr's compelling narration, *The Sinner* attains major critical and commercial success internationally. After its release, it had been on the bestseller list for over fifteen months. Its success attracts

filmmakers' attention. Consequently, it is adapted for television as a limited series starring Jessica Biel as Cora Bender and Bill Pullman as Rudolf Grovian.

### **3.2. The Sinner: A Tv Series**

German writer Petra Hammesfahr's 1999 best-selling novel *The Sinner* was adapted into an American television series of the same name in 2017. The TV series was developed by Derek Simonds for USA Network, which is an American basic cable channel. It was originally conceived as an eight-episode miniseries based on Hammesfahr's novel of the same name. However, due to its international success, the series continues as an anthology series.

The main difference between miniseries and TV series is the length of the show. A miniseries has a limited number of episodes with a definite beginning, middle, and end. It focuses on one single encompassing story. Therefore, it allows for a more faithful adaptation of a book as it has more time to narrate the events as opposed to a feature film. On the other hand, TV series are not meant to end. They are planned to continue for several seasons with ongoing characters and ever-changing storylines. Events in a series follow on after the other and are connected to each other. Hence, it does not have a definite end. While the miniseries has a certain narrative structure, this structure is intertwined between the seasons in the TV series. Anthology limited series refers to a collection of miniseries that includes a different storyline and new characters each season. In this sense, *The Sinner* can be defined as an anthology series.

Both the novel and the TV series tell the same story of a woman who commits a crime in public when least expected. However, in contrast to the novel where the story takes place in Germany, the TV series was shot in America. This difference caused the other elements of the story, which was adapted from the novel to the TV series, to change. For instance, the female lead is named Cora Tannetti, whereas it was Cora Bender in the book. Moreover, the German police chief Rudolf

Grovian, who investigates the underlying reason for this crime, appears in the TV series as American local detective Harry Ambrose.

In the limited drama series, American actress Jessica Biel stars as Cora Tannetti. For this role, she received nominations for a Golden Globe Award and a Primetime Emmy Award in the “Outstanding Lead Actress in a Limited Series or Movie” category. Besides, the first season of the series was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Best Miniseries or Television Film. Additionally, Jessica Biel is the executive producer of the series. As the producer, she expresses her thoughts on the story as follows: “As I read [the novel], I kept going, ‘I know where this is going—there’s no way this could be interesting.’ And then it would just take a completely different direction.”

American actor Bill Pullman plays the male lead role, the local detective Harry Ambrose. Although the TV series was originally intended as a miniseries, its international success led to the producers turning it into an anthology series. Currently, the series has four seasons. Only Pullman’s character Detective Ambrose appears in every season, while the rest of the cast changes in each season in conjunction with the plot. However, this thesis examines only the first season, which is based on the novel of the same name.

### **3.3. Comparison of Book vs Tv Series**

As defined in the first chapter that focuses on film adaptations, adaptation refers to the transformation of a literary work, which is a verbal medium, into a visual medium, a film, or a TV series. In this transformation process, pre-existent elements of a literary work such as characters, locations, time, and strings of narrative events change. Therefore, an adapted film is considered an original work of art.

In addition to altered elements that affect the narration, the fact that the filmmakers add their perspectives while transferring the story to the screen changes

the narrative. Thus, although both the literary work and the film that is adapted from it tell the same story, how they narrate it differs. This differentiation in narrative depends on some elements such as point of view, time, and narrative techniques which includes character development, settings, theme, and structure.

To examine how the narrative changes in the adaptation process, Petra Hammesfahr's novel *The Sinner* (1999) and its American TV series adaptation (Purple et al., 2017-2021) of the same name will be compared in terms of character development, time and locations, which includes settings, theme, and tone, and finally, dramatic structure. While Petra Hammesfahr's novel is about a German woman, the TV series takes place in Dorchester, New York, and focuses on an American woman. Besides this alteration in the adaptation process, adding the scriptwriter and the filmmaker's perspectives change other narrative elements. This chapter will discuss these changes caused by the adaptation process from the novel to TV series.

### **3.3.1. Character Development**

The story is about an investigation of a crime committed in public when least expected. While the subject of who and how is clear, the investigation focuses on revealing the reason underlying this crime. In the story, there exists two protagonists: Cora and the police detective. The research of the police detective and the interrogations of Cora slowly unravel the hidden truths.

The book takes Cora Bender at its center, who is a twenty-five years old German woman. In the novel, she makes an impression of a depressed and suicidal woman. She has frequent mental breakdowns, which influence her relationship with her husband Gereon. The narrator mentions a melody that she frequently hears as the cause of these mental breakdowns. In contrast to the novel, in the American TV series, Cora Tannetti – she takes an American name – is an extroverted and more cheerful character. Despite minor conflicts, she has a good relationship with his

husband, Mason – also an American name. Since “cinema narrates by showing, literature narrates by verbal telling” (Gaut, 2010), the music that Cora hears in the novel leaves its place to a wallpaper image in the series. The image appears frequently in Cora's dreams.

Similarly, the other protagonist, the police detective in the novel differs from its representation in the series. In the novel, the detective – his name is Rudolf Grovian – is portrayed as a devoted character to both his work and his family. Compared to Cora, he is kind of a supporting character, especially in the first half of the book. His only purpose is to reveal the reason behind Cora's act. However, in the TV series, the main protagonist becomes the detective – Harry Ambrose here. In contrast to his description in the novel, he is portrayed as a troubled character with his addiction to pain and his fragmented family. To escape his problems, he devotes himself to Cora's crime. While trying to solve the mystery, he also deals with his problems.

As emphasized on earlier, a character should be three-dimensional. “Characters exist and move in a space which exists abstractly at the deep narrative level.” (Chatman, 1978) Therefore, each should have real attributes such as personality, motivations that create conflicts, and backstory. In this regard, portraying the detective as a troubled character affects his relationship with Cora. While in the novel, Cora refuses the detective Grovian's help and deceives him by lying, Cora's attitude is quite different in the series. Although at first she again resists the detective Ambrose's help, later in the series, they help each other to reveal the hidden truths.

Besides two protagonists Cora and the detective, how other characters are portrayed in the novel differs from their image in the series. For instance, in the novel, Cora's husband Gereon leaves Cora right after the incident. Under the influence of his parents, who do not love Cora, he takes custody of their child and files for divorce. She faces all the outcomes alone. On the contrary, in the series, Mason is a supporting husband, who stands by Cora throughout the investigation and prosecution process.



Another character that is crucial for the story and is different in both media is Cora's sister, Magdalena in the book and Phoebe in the series. Chatman (1978) quotes from William F. Thrall and Addison Hibbard (1936): "Characterization" refers to "the depicting, in writing, of clear images of a person, his actions and manners of thought and life. A man's nature, environment, habits, emotions, desires, instincts: all these go to make people what they are..." In the novel, Magdalena meets all these requirements. Starting from her childhood, the author describes her fatal disease, her relationships with her family, and her inner world in detail. The only person Magdalena loves is her sister, Cora. However, their relationship is built on jealousy. She is the one responsible for the beginning of all the events that end in murder. In the TV series, although her role in the events is the same, there is no detailed information about her as in the book. She exists only through Cora's memories.

In addition to Gereon and Magdalena, or Mason and Phoebe, the other characters that have an influence on the story in the novel however not in the series are Cora's aunt Margret, her neighbor Grit Adigar, and her lawyer Eberhard Brauning. While Margret appears in only two scenes in the series and does not have a major role, Grit Adigar and Eberhard Brauning are not in the series at all. Margret and Grit have a crucial role in both Cora's childhood and the investigation process. The character Eberhard Brauning enters the story in the final pages. He helps Detective Grovian to reveal some information that Cora hides. Due to these characters, the literary narrative differs from the cinematic narrative. Therefore, it can be argued that since the story is changed through the adaptation process, the novel and the TV series can be considered as two separate works.

### **3.3.2. Time and Locations**

Another narrative feature that is altered in the adaptation process is the time. As Sesonske defines, narrative time in cinema divides into two: screen time and action time, which appear in literature as story time and discourse time. Besides,

another temporal element that should be discussed is tense. In literature, tenses function to indicate relations of the order of the event. However, in cinema, which has no built-in tense order, it is more complicated.

In the example of *The Sinner*, the most distinct temporal difference between the novel and the TV series is that they take place in different time periods. While Petra Hammesfahr's best-selling novel was written in 1999, the series was released in 2017. Besides, the location in the novel differs from the series. The series of events take place in Germany in the novel; however, the TV series was shot in the USA. In addition to these differences, the fact that the mode of communication has an influence on structural features of narration is considered, it can be concluded that the narration of the novel differs from that of the series.

Narrative point of view is another device that can create variations in the construction of a fictional time. For instance, in the novel, the series of events that begin with the murder are told in the third-person past tense narrative. This use does not imply any later "present" within the story's world; however, "functions to create the continuing present time within the work" while "seen with some distance and objectivity." (Sesonske, 1980) On the other hand, Cora's childhood memories are narrated from her perspective with the "I" pronoun. First-person past tense narrative adds a subjectivity in the narration and implies that there exists the narrator's present time, which is later than the time of the events described in the story.

In contrast to the novel, in the TV series adaptation of *The Sinner* (Purple et al., 2017-2021), the events always occur in a continuous present, since the order of the events can be only indicated by the order of the images in screen time. These events are presented from the perspective of an ideal observer, in other words, from the third-person limited perspective. Hence, the audiences are aware of only a few prominent characters' such as Cora and Grovian feelings, motivations, and thoughts. As in the novel, only Cora's memories are presented from the first-person point of view, which refers to a shot that represents the character's viewpoint. As she thinks and talks about the past, her memories and words are translated into images and sounds which simulate the narration. As this example shows, first-

person narration in cinema is usually used in flashback scenes. To transfer the words about a past experience into images and sounds cause that the audience experiences it as present. This usage enables the filmmaker to add versatility to the narrative. In the series, Cora's interrogation scenes are usually followed by a flashback scene.

As empirical studies have shown, "emotions such as suspense, curiosity, and surprise help the readers focus attention on a story." (Bae & Young, 2008; Alwitt, 2002; Tan, 1996) Moreover, manipulation of temporal elements in narrative structure can arouse these emotions. (Bae & Young, 2008; Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981; 1982) Therefore, both the author Petra Hammesfahr and the director Antonio Campos often included flashbacks in the narrative.

In a narrative that includes temporal changes, location in time is a crucial element. Authors have different tenses to identify the past, present or future. As explained earlier, Hammesfahr uses the third-person past tense narrative to identify the "present" events and the first-person past tense narrative to show Cora's childhood. On the contrary, filmmakers have other devices to indicate temporal shifts such as using fades, dissolves, titles, cross-cutting, super-imposition, and split-screen. Besides, since 1929, sound and dialogue that includes tenses and temporal terms has been the major device to indicate temporal shifts in cinema. (Sesonske, 1980) In the TV series of *The Sinner* (Purple et al., 2017-2021), the director often uses the music that triggers Cora in the flashback scenes.

As shown in the example of *The Sinner's* novel and its TV adaptation, unlike the author, a filmmaker can alter the temporality of a work by using image, dialogue, voiceover, music, sound effects, and written material. (Henderson, 1983) In this regard, due to its alterable nature, cinematic narrative and literary narrative are different even in the adaptation of the same story.

### **3.3.3. Dramatic Structure**

How a story is laid out refers to the dramatic structure of the story. In other words, the dramatic structure is defined as the framework that allows the plot of a story to unfold. According to traditional acceptance, a plot has a linear structure that uses acts to define particular moments in the story. German playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag (1894) suggests that the dramatic structure consists of five parts: exposition (introduction), rise, climax, return (fall), and catastrophe (dénouement or resolution). This five-act dramatic structure is known as Freytag's pyramid or Freytag's triangle.

Throughout the adaptation process of a novel into a script, the filmmaker can change the structure of the plot. Hereby, the narration of the adapted work shows differences in contrast with the narration of the literary work. In the example of *The Sinner*, by comparing the book and the series, these differences can be seen clearly.

According to Freytag's pyramid, the first act of the dramatic structure is exposition, or introduction. The novel of *The Sinner* focuses on Cora in the exposition part, since it considers her as the main character. The first sentence of the book is "*It was a hot day at the beginning of July when Cora Bender decided to die.*" The author emphasizes on the suicidal character of the protagonist. It continues with describing her life, her relationship with her husband Gereon and his family, her work life, and her psyche. The events take place in the "present" time of the story's world. The first 28 pages of the 387 pages book can be considered exposition part of the story.

In contrast to the linear temporal structure of the novel, the TV series starts with a few seconds long foreshadowing followed by again a few seconds' long flashback. In the opening sequence, before the intro of the series starts, first a naked woman, Cora, who swims in a lake appears. While the image changes into a steamy image of a small child these words are heard from the voice of the child: "*...and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God... pray for us sinners now, and the hour of our death. Amen.*" Then, the image changes again into an image of a blonde woman walking through a door saying "*Are you coming?*"

These three images give the audience crucial hints about the story. After the series' intro enters, as in the novel, the story continues in the present. The main character Cora, her life, her work, and her relationships with her husband Mason and his family are presented approximately in the first twelve minutes of the first episode (Campos, 2017). At the 9th minute and 45th second of the first episode (Campos, 2017), the image of Cora swimming in the lake in the opening scene reappears. After this scene, the tension in the narrative begins to rise.

After the setting, main characters, and prior events are introduced, the tension in the narrative increases through a series of events. This act is called rise or rising action. The first turning point of the story, the event that starts the rising action act is the murder sequence. This sequence is not completely changed when adapting it in a script. While Cora is cutting fruit for her child, a group of teenagers sitting on the beach catches her attention. A song that one of the teenagers playing, Huggin and Kissin (Bates, 2013), triggers Cora. She jumps up and runs towards them. While she stabs the boy, Frankie, to the death, she screams: *"Stop it. Get off her! Get off!"* The only difference in this sequence is that in the novel, after her husband Gereon calms Cora down, Cora approaches Frankie's girlfriend and says, *"Don't be afraid. He won't hit you. Come on, come away. Let's go. We shouldn't have come here. Can you get up by yourself, or shall I help you?"* Through this dialogue, the author gives a clue about what happened in the past to the readers. However, everything is left more ambiguous in the series.

After the lake sequence that is the beginning of rising action, the book takes its reader to the past, to Cora's childhood memories. For pages, she talks about her childhood, her family and their neighbor Grit Adigar, who is a crucial character in the novel, in first person narration. On the contrary, the series continues with the other protagonist, detective Harry Ambrose. The director introduces him to the audiences (Campos, 2017). In the book, not much information is given about the detective until almost the first quarter. This difference shows that while the detective is seen as a second protagonist in the series, he has a supporting role in the book.

The rising action part of the TV series continues until the end of the sixth episode. Similarly, it covers most of the book. Although the story is generally the same, how they narrate it differs. While events of the story are temporally and causally related based on their natural order of occurrence, “they are often rearranged in the discourse plane intentionally.” (Bae & Young, 2008) In this regard, the narration of the novel and the series differs from each other. In the example of *The Sinner*, both the author and the director follow a linear structure that includes flashback scenes in the narration. However, their frequency of use and purposes are different.

The events of the story in the TV series mostly take place in the “present” time of the story’s world - except the seventh episode (Campos, 2017). There are fewer flashback scenes compared to the book. These scenes function to provide background information to explain what caused the surprise of the story. Besides, they usually depict Cora’s recall of the past events. On the contrary, the novel often features flashback scenes from Cora’s childhood, even though they do not provide backstory in support of a main story line. For instance, most of her childhood memories are about her father and how close they are. She says: *“We were alone together for a long time after that. Those six months were the best time I’d ever had.”* Nevertheless, her father does not have a crucial role that affects the narrative either in the novel or in the book.

Additional factor that alters the narrative, and therefore, the narration in the rising action part is Cora’s awareness of the past events. In contrast to Cora Tannetti, the TV series character who has no idea what happened to her in the past, Cora Bender is aware of some past events. Consequently, while the former wants to get any help to reveal the hidden truths, the latter consistently refuses both the police chief Grovian’s and her lawyer Eberhard Brauning’s help. Therefore, the novel clearly states some information that is used as a surprise element in the TV series.

In the last sequence of the sixth episode (Campos, 2017), Detective Ambrose takes Cora to The Beverwcky Club, which is a men’s club for privileged classes. Seeing the club and hearing the bells remind Cora what happened that night.

While she found the basement in the stone house behind the mansion, she says: *"That's it. It happened down there. I remember now"* This point, where Cora remembers her past and faces what happened, is the climax act of the story. The tension and suspense reach its highest point is the climax. In between the rise and fall, the story has a turning point where the main character faces the main conflict.

There is no distinctive conflict act in the book as much as in the series. However, while detective Grovian questioning Ute Frankenberg, Frankie's wife, he learns the identities of those involved in that night from some old photos that Ute showed him. Besides, Ute identifies Frankie's car, which Cora describes in her interrogations. At the end of the chapter, Ute identifies Magdalena, Cora's sister in a photo. (Hammesfahr, 1999, p.331) This information enables Grovian to solve what happened that night. Hereby, this chapter can be considered the climax act of the novel.

Immediately following the climax, the tension and suspense of the story begins to fall. The main conflict starts to resolve, and thus, the story moves toward its conclusion. This part is called return or falling action. For the series, it is the whole of the seventh episode and the first half of the eighth episode (Campos, 2017). Episode seven (Campos, 2017) takes place entirely in the past, on the night of the events. Starting with Phoebe's, Cora's sister, nineteenth birthday, the series of events that ends with the death of Phoebe, and therefore, causes that Cora murders Frankie are narrated. At the last episode of the series, before the story concludes, in addition to the reason behind the murder, what happened after Phoebe's death is revealed. Cora faces Frankie's father, Dr. Belmont, who held her captive and drugged her until she forgot what happened that night.

The events that take place in the falling action part in the novel are parallel to the series. There are only two distinct differences. The first one is that while in the series J.D. is Cora's boyfriend, in the novel she meets him that night. This difference affects Cora's motivation about the night. In the TV series, she is making plans to run off with J.D. On the contrary, she is just a teenage girl who wants to go

out for a night in the book. What happened during the night is the same in both media.

The more distinctive difference for the narrative is that while Cora is not aware of what happened to her after that night in the series, in the novel, she knows that she has been in the care of a doctor for a while. Throughout the book, she repeats this information several times. Finally, she says "*He was so kind to me, and I killed his only son. Frankie hadn't done me any harm.*" (Hammesfahr, 1999, p.350) On the contrary, since Dr. Belmont was wearing a mask while he drugged Cora, she doesn't know who he is. Only after she sees the wallpaper, she understands everything. When facing him, she says: "*It was you. I remember your eyes.*" The distinction of Cora's attitudes in the book and in the series proves that while Cora Tannetti wants to know what happened to her in the past, Cora Bender, although aware of some things that have happened to her, does not want everything to be revealed. This differentiation of the motivation of the protagonist has an influence on the narrative, since it changes the flow of the events.

In the end, the story comes to a conclusion; a sense of resolution is achieved. This part where the plot is concluded, loose ends are tied up and all questions are answered is dénouement or resolution. The TV series ends with a court sequence. As a punishment, it is decided that Cora should be admitted to a mental hospital and that she should not be released when she is not able to harm herself or anyone else by being checked every two years. In contrast to the novel, when it's all over, Cora has undergone a change; stronger than before, she has the motivation to move on with life. However, in the novel, she is asked to go to therapy for an indefinite period of time. Since Gereon leaves her right after the murder, she moves to the Margret's apartment. The last sentences of the book are: "*But she could never forget it all, not now. Only the ultimate sin of suicide could bring oblivion. She would have to see. If she couldn't bear it any longer... A day clinic. And the nights in Margret's apartment. Margret was often on night duty, and she always kept plenty of pills in the little cupboard beside her bed.*" These sentences show that she is still in the same psyche as at the beginning of the story. While in the series Cora completes a



cycle of change, she remains almost the same in the novel. Additionally, the last scene of the series ends with the detective. This suggests that the detective will be the protagonist in the following seasons.

In conclusion, although both the novel and the TV series narrate the same story, since they have completely different structures that allow the plot of the story to unfold, they leave their audiences and readers the feeling that they are watching or reading two completely different works.

## CONCLUSION

Today, cinema is considered the seventh form of art along with painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, music, and theater (performing arts). Italian film theorist and artist Ricciotto Canudo defines cinema as ‘plastic art in motion’ that represents life and society by integrating the other arts in its narration. Literature is one of the art forms that cinema has relied upon aesthetically and thematically. This thesis began by emphasizing the interaction between literature and cinema. In the first chapter, the two-way mutual interaction of literature and cinema is discussed on the basis of the adaptation theory. Adaptation can be defined as “a process of reducing a pre-existent piece of writing to a series of functions: characters, locations, costumes, actions, and strings of narrative events.” (Hafeez, Margoushy, & Youssef, 2019; Ellis, 1982) In other words, adaptation is transferring of a written medium to a visual one.

Though hard to say for sure, the earliest book adaptations for the screen were seen at the end of the 19th century. These were just a few minutes of shots. The influence of literature on cinema has increased since then. Besides, the interaction between them is more diverse today. For instance, Jane Austen's 1815 novel *Emma*, which includes universal and timeless characters and emotions, has been adapted into various movies and TV series. Additionally, there are lots of film or series adaptations produced by digital platforms such as Netflix or Amazon Prime. Movies such as *The Devil All The Time* (Campos, 2020) and *The Irishman* (Scorsese, 2019) and series such as *Bridgerton* (Rhimes et al., 2020-) and *The Queen’s Gambit* (Frank et al., 2020) are examples of adaptations produced by Netflix. Moreover, the list of 2022 Oscar Winners shows how common film adaptations are in cinema. Award winners include films based on a book such as *Dune: Part One* (Villeneuve, 2021), *The Power of the Dog* (Campion, 2021), and *Drive My Car* (Hamaguchi, 2021).

Another point that the first chapter of the thesis focuses on how television has changed as an industry. While the emergence of cinema dates back to the

beginning of the twentieth century, the experimental days of the television industry began in America in the late 1920s. However, it has undergone a more rapid transformation than cinema. Although a short time has passed since its emergence, by the end of the twentieth century, “the television industry had grown into an economic force generating mass media’s greatest revenues, costs, and profits.” (Gomery, 2001)

The industry, which started with broadcast television, moved to a different dimension with the invention of cable television at the end of the 20th century. Until the 21st century, “the business of television distribution depended on control of these channels, making decisions about what programs would be scheduled when.” (Johnson, 2018) However, digital streaming platforms have taken broadcasting to a whole new level. These platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, or Disney+ give their users the freedom to choose what to watch. Additionally, they have influenced both traditional television and cinema.

As Noel Carroll has summarized, the two media were considered quite different because their narratives, times, structures, and some other qualities were different. (2003) However, new genres like TV movies and technological developments that enable the television apparatus to “approximates to the cinema screen in dimension, aspect ratio, image, and sound quality” has blurred the differentiation between these mediums. (Nelson, 2007, p. 20)

The emergence of digital streaming platforms has changed audience habits, and therefore, brought the television viewing experience closer to the cinema. Today, a TV series can be watched by viewers all over the world whenever they want. For instance, the American TV series *The Sinner*, which is also the subject of this thesis, was broadcast on USA Network, which is a cable channel. However, people were able to watch the series on Netflix. While those watching the series on TV were waiting for weekly new episodes, those watching on Netflix were able to finish the mini-series by binge-watching as if they were watching an 8-hour movie.

Another claim put forward by the first part is literature can be considered an element that brings cinema and television closer. The same stories have been adapted for both television and cinema, even at the same time sometimes. As exemplified earlier in the thesis, while the British television series based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes detective stories *Sherlock* continued, Robert Downey Jr.'s films in which he gave life to the same character were released.

Traditionally, it is thought that the interaction between literature and cinema refers to the translation of literary work into cinema. However, especially after World War I, novelists that were influenced by cinema such as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Dos Passos have occurred. For instance, Roland Berman argues that “some scenes of Fitzgerald’s novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925) are ‘openly cinematic’ and need the audience to be familiar with motion picture techniques and technology.” (Alqadi, 2015) New novelists illustrate examples of cinematic techniques in their writings. Correspondingly, cinema can be seen as a source of inspiration for modern literature.

As discussed in detail in the first chapter, both cinema and literature tell stories; however, how they narrate them differs. In contrast to literary works that use words to create a world that exists only in the reader's mental picturing, cinema provides its audience with a ready-made world, created through the director’s interpretation. The second chapter of the thesis focuses on the alteration of the narration between these two media. Almost all storytelling formats, including novels, biographies, news reports, documentaries, films, or TV shows, have a narrative, therefore, a narration. According to the asymmetry theorists such as Gregory Currie (1995) and Kendall Walton (1993), cinematic narration differs from the literary narration, since at least one of the structural features of narration, such as “narrators, implied authors, mediation, point of view, and the relation between plot and story” (Gaut, 2010) will be different.

TV narrative, like cinematic narrative, consist of sequences of moving images. However, they diverge in crucial ways. Some interprets the changes that

TV narrative has undergone in recent years as “television becoming more ‘literary’ or ‘cinematic’”. (Mittell, 2015) Although there exists an influence, “television’s narrative complexity is predicated on specific facets of storytelling that seem uniquely suited to the television series structure.” (Mittell, 2015)

As in a literary book or a film, the viewer expects an eventual conclusion when watching a TV series. One of the most important reasons of binge-watching is the desire to reach this conclusion as soon as possible. For this reason, those who watch *The Sinner* on Netflix watch all episodes from the digital platform at once instead of watching on cable TV.

Despite all their differences, TV narration and cinematic narration share the same narrative elements. In the second chapter, these narrative elements, which are the narrative point of view, time, and technique, are explained by considering the similarities and differences between these two media.

The narrative point of view refers to the “eye” through which the story is told. It enables the reader or the audience to understand the characters’ viewpoints throughout the story; therefore, it has an influence on the narration. There are three primary types of point of view: first person, who is one of the characters and tells the story from her point of view, second person, which is structured around the “you” pronoun, and third person, in which the story is told by someone who is not involved in the story. The choice of narrative perspective determines the relationship between the story’s world and the reader or the audience.

While the use of the pronoun in literature reveals the perspective, the director’s use of the camera in cinema reflects the point of view. If perspective changes, the story may be altered since it affects the reader’s understanding of the plot and characters. For instance, in the example of the novel *The Sinner*, the flashbacks including Cora’s memories are told in first-person point of view. This usage enables the readers to relate with the characters more easily; however, they are not aware of all aspects of the events. On the other hand, both the author Petra Hammesfahr and the director Antonio Campos use the third-person omniscient

point of view throughout the novel and the series. This narration offers the readers and the audiences a wider perspective, which enables them to know all aspects of the events of the story.

Changing the point of view in the narrative not only affects the understanding of the reader/audience but can also make difference in the construction of a fictional time. It sometimes indicates that there are two stories within the novel. In the example of Hammesfahr's novel, the author changes the perspective from third-person to first-person in the flashbacks. While the main story focuses on the reason behind the murder committed by Cora, flashbacks reveal Cora's childhood, which can be considered a second story. This situation is also seen in the TV series adaptation of the novel. However, in contrast to the novel that makes temporal changes with the use of language and tenses, the director of *The Sinner* creates these changes by using images, dialogues, music, and sound effects. Besides, he uses the parallel editing technique that cuts across different scenes to allow the audience to experience multiple events at the same time and establish links between these events.

Additionally, both the author and the director use flashbacks as a crucial narrative device. Flashbacks are used to provide background information about Cora to explain what caused the murder. Besides, this kind of change in temporal elements of the narrative structure can arouse emotions such as suspense, curiosity, and surprise. (Bae and Young, 2008) This allows the reader/audience to focus attention on the story.

Another contribution of the use of flashbacks to the story is that it adds depth to the characters. Since flashbacks provide background information about the main character, they reveal more about the character's feelings, motivations, and thoughts. Knowing Cora's past, the events that brought her to the present make the character more realistic, and thus, enables the reader/audience to identify with her more easily.

All these narrative elements shape the structure of the story. Dramatic structure, which refers to the framework that allows the plot of a story to unfold, is one of the elements that have an influence on the narration. The second chapter of the thesis continues by focusing on five elements of dramatic structure. According to German playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag (1894), the dramatic structure consists of five parts: exposition (introduction), rise, climax, return (fall), and catastrophe (dénouement or resolution). This five-act dramatic structure is known as Freytag's pyramid or Freytag's triangle.

Although Freytag's analysis is primarily based on Greek and Shakespearean dramas, it can be applied to contemporary scripts, television shows, and films. The book in which he defines Freytag's pyramid is seen as an "instructive manual intended for the professional creation and production of script." (Dallas, 2000, p.21) The last chapter of the thesis analyzes the structure of both the novel and the TV series through Freytag's pyramid. As a result of this analysis, it can be seen that although the flow of the events in the series is different from the book, they fit the five-act structure.

A narrative can change depending on how a story is laid out. Beginning with textual analysis, a prevalent method of literary and film studies, the last chapter discusses similarities and differences between German crime writer Petra Hammesfahr's 1999 novel *The Sinner* and its American TV series adaptation developed by Derek Simonds in terms of the narration, including character development, time, locations, and dramatic structure.

At the beginning of the thesis, I hypothesized that the same story told as a novel is different from its adaptation, since literary texts, scripts, and TV series are based on different dramatic structures. After examining all the arguments presented by the thesis, it can be concluded that since the narrative elements that constitute the dramatic structure of either a literary or a cinematic work can be changed in the adaptation process, consequently, the narration of an adapted work is different from

the narration of its adapted version. Hence, it can be argued that cinematic narration differs from literary narration.



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