

Astrology Essays

Ciro Discepolo

**THE BETRAYAL AMONG CINEMA
LITERATURE AND SACRED TEXTS**



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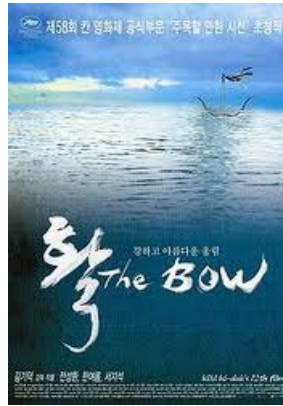
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THE BETRAYAL AMONG CINEMA LITERATURE AND SACRED TEXTS

I have recently enjoyed watching the wonderful masterpiece by South-Korean director Kim Ki-duk, *The Bow* (1). This is a really enchanting and unforgettable movie for all those who love auteur cinema, a cinema full of poetry, drama, feeling, spectacular narrative skills, high-quality photography and first-class cinematographic art. The movie is about an old man who lives alone on a boat. One day he finds and adopts a seven-year old girl. As the girl grows up, when she is sixteen, the man falls in love with her and decides to marry her when she turns seventeen. From that moment on, the old man adds up to his daily cares for that wonderful blossom other, more intimate cares that hide a different kind of interest in the girl, as is the case of the daily rite of bathing in a small tub, with the old man bent on the girl gently washing her body with a sponge. The man sleeps in a bunk over the girl's bed and during the night, partly out of affection, partly out of fear and desire, he lets his hand fall on hers. He thus holds the hand of the almost-child almost-woman who is going to become his wife, while he marks on the calendar the days that separate him from the wedding day.

Wealthy people often visit the boat and pay a small fee to use it for fishing. The old man is calm and confident. When sometimes one of the guests approaches the girl, he is immediately touched lightly by the old man's arrow plunging at a very close distance from the ill-intentioned man.





One day two guests attempt to rape the girl. The old man is tied and neutralized while the two chase the girl. However, she is faster and smarter than the two: she bypasses the chasers, grabs the bow and arrows and, smiling at the old man who is watching her from his position of immobility, she lodges two arrows in the legs of her abusers.

The old sea man feels safe because his queen, his fairy, his muse, lives in isolation from the world on the unnatural fort which is the boat – in the vastness of the sea (but it could as well be a river or a lake), where he is further reassured by the devotion and faithfulness of the girl.

Moreover, the old fisherman is also a “colleague”, a man who makes horoscopes for his clients, albeit quite odd horoscopes, through which he tries to read the future. In fact he thinks he can achieve information about the future of men by throwing his arrows towards the girl, while she swings on a chair hanging beside the boat: the arrows brush her at a very close distance and plunge in a picture of an Oriental god drawn on the boat. With her help, the archer will then interpret the symbols of such divination.

This is repeated, day after day, in a sort of magical and enchanted time beaten by everyday matters and by a string music which is extraordinary in its clarity and fascination. Neither the old man nor the girl speak during the entire film.

Then, one day, the girl falls in love with a young boy who steps on the boat. The looks of the protagonists turn sharp, and their faces are twitched: as one night the girl tries to cheat on him, the old man exposes her betrayal.



The betrayal

This is an extremely interesting topic which would deserve, also from an astrological perspective, a whole heap of books. Here I will limit myself to a few reflections and some general remarks.

Let's start from the definition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* of "betray": 1. (a) to give or show somebody or something to an enemy; 2. to show a lack of loyalty to somebody or something (b) to act in a way that is not worthy of the trust, confidence, etc, placed in one.

It is thus important to set the meaning of "betray" in terms of a fraud or deceit by someone whom we trust.

In this light, moving from the betrayal *par excellence*, Jude's one, and examining those of a more goliardic nature, as in the tales from Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* or in the wonderful movie by Pietro Germi, *The Birds, the Bees and the Italians* (1966), we will later go back to the movie by the great South Korean director.

It is time for reassessments and, while cinema reviewers celebrate the protagonists of movies like *American Pie*, philosophy is trying to

reappraise the figure of Jude. Actually, if we wish to ponder the question carefully, we should ask:

- 1) Was Jude a real traitor?
- 2) Was he the torturer or the victim?

We know from the Gospel that Jesus knew about events before they actually occurred. In this case, was Jude part of a predetermined design in which he had no agency? If so, since his betrayal later triggered the repentance of the apostle that Leonardo da Vinci in *The Last Supper* identified as the eighth (Scorpio) in the act of spilling the salt and who would later hang himself, was he actually a torturer or a victim in this ugly story?

In this light we might also see the figure of the most hated apostle in Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion*, a very violent film which I enjoy watching again from time to time, especially in dark moments, so as to remember one who had suffered atrociously, much more than we mortals do, complaining even for the slightest pain (2).

On a merely astrological level, broadly speaking the betrayal (more related to spy stories than to cheating) is closely associated to the Scorpio, not only for the tendency of the latter to live complex, dark, hidden and secretive atmospheres, but especially for its further vocation for self-injury and torment, as in the case of the Scorpio Mata Hari.

On the other hand, the betrayal in sentimental and sexual terms is definitely not a prerogative belonging to one astrological sign. This is the topic of two giants of human knowledge: the *Decameron* as regards literature, and Pietro Germi's *The Birds, the Bees and the Italians* in cinema.

The entire *Decameron* is full of stories about wives cheating on their husbands, of husbands trying to do the same on their wives and so on. The first tale, told on the third day (do you remember the structure of Boccaccio's masterpiece?), about Masetto da Lamporecchio, can be seen as a valid example of a go-go cheatings: in the tale, a young man who pretends to be dumb introduces himself as a drudge in a nun's convent and "lies with all of them" (3). In this case the betrayal is plural, in every sense: the man betrays the trust of the nuns since he feigns his dumbness, he further betrays every nun when he "lies" with the others, the nuns are disloyal to their vow of chastity, and we could go on, but I think it is important to mark this significant link.

The film by Germi is a true work of art that, in its kind, is no less important than the *Decameron* and, although it has not been awarded ten Oscars, it would certainly deserve them all. The irony, the satire, the good taste and the mastery of the great Italian director are indisputable in this 1965 movie. His portrayal of the Veneto region middle class in the Sixties is at the same time sharp and ironical, entertaining and never excessive; the best example of Italian comedy. Sex and cheating abound here as well, but they are not in the bleak and depressing setting of a soap opera; rather, they are portrayed through a set of realistic Italians. We could argue that in this movie Pietro Germi had wished to de-sacralize cheating while representing it in all its forms, always presenting it as a small fault and, above all, as a slight topic of conversation, but never as an obsession leading to murder or to suicide.

So let us now go back to *The Bow* and to the physical betrayal unconsumed by the girl with the young visitor on the boat. From this moment on, the life of the old fisherman, as well as that of the girl, will be upset. However, I am not going to tell you the end of the film because it is a real masterpiece and you cannot but watch it.

For Kim Ki-duk, in a different way from Boccaccio and Germi, cheating pertains to the sphere of the sacred, whether or not it is also materialized in physical intercourse. For the great South Korean director it is final and totalizing, and it evokes the forms of sacrality that we might also find, in longitudes not too far from the places of this movie, in the absolute feelings of Akira Kurosawa's samurais.

In your opinion, which of the mentioned authors got closer to reality? Obviously, in this case as well as in cases about similar topics, there is no absolute truth and each of you will see it in different terms.



Notes

1) Everything revolves around the bow. With his bow, the protagonist can produce such a fascinating and enchanting music that it can hypnotize his beloved and even put her to sleep. With the bow he threatens his enemies and he is even on the verge of killing. With the bow he shoots a magical arrow that will provide us with an equally magical ending. And the young, beautiful female protagonist at the end of the story will think: “Strength and musicality like a tight bow... I want to live thus, till my last breath.”

2) I do not think it is necessary to be a believer to admire without reserve the example of the life of Jesus.

3) Third day – First story:

Masetto da Lamporecchio, pretending to be dumb, is taken in to be gardener to a convent of nuns: what happens in consequence.

There are many people, fair ladies, so simple as to imagine, that, after a young lady has put on the white veil, and the black hood, she ceases to have the feelings and passions of a woman, as if by becoming a nun she was converted into stone. If these people hear anything contrary to this opinion, they are as much offended as though some very heinous and unnatural crime was committed; never thinking of themselves, who cannot be satisfied, although they have the liberty of doing as they will; nor considering the prevalency of leisure and solitude. In like manner, there are others who think that the spade and pick-axe, with hard labour and gross feeding, quench all lustful appetites, depriving the people of all sense and understanding; but how much they are both mistaken, I shall, at the queen’s command, now show you, keeping close to the subject which she has given us.

There was formerly in our neighbourhood (and may be still) a convent of nuns, famous for their sanctity. In this convent (which shall be nameless, because I would not lessen the characters of its pious inmates), there were only eight young ladies, with an abbess; there was also a gardener to look after their fine garden, who, not being satisfied with his salary,

made up his accounts with their steward, and returned to Lamporecchio, whence he came. Amongst many others who came to welcome him home, was a fine strapping young fellow named Masetto, who inquired of him where he had been to all that time? The honest man (whose name was Nuto) told him. The other inquired again in what capacity he served the convent? "I had care of the garden," he replied, "and used to go to the wood for faggots; I drew water for them also, with such-like services; but my wages were so small that they would scarcely find me shoes; and besides they are all so young and giddy, that I could do nothing to please them; for when I have been in the garden, one would cry do this, and another do that, and another would take the spade out of my hand, and tell me that thing is in a wrong place, and they have given me so much trouble altogether, that I have left them. The steward desired, at my departure, if I met with a proper person, to send him; but hang me if I do any such thing."

When Masetto heard this, he had a great desire to get among those nuns, guessing from what Nuto had said, that he might be able to gain his ends. But lest his purpose should be defeated, if he let the other into the secret, he said to him, "You did very right to come away: what has a man to do among so many women? He might as well be with as many devils: for it is not once in ten times they know what they would be at." After they had done talking together, Masetto began to contrive what method he should take to get introduced; and being assured that he could do all the work that Nuto had mentioned, he had no fears upon that account: all the danger seemed rather to be in his youth and person: whether he might not be rejected. After much reflection, he reasoned thus with himself: "I live far enough off and nobody knows me: suppose I feign myself dumb, they will certainly receive me then."

Resolved on this, without saying a word to any one about where he was going, he took an axe on his shoulder, and went like a poor man to the convent; and finding the steward in the court-yard, he made signs like a dumb person for a little bread, and that he would cleave wood if they had any occasion. The steward gave him something to eat, and afterwards shewed him divers pieces of wood, which Nuto was not able to rend, but which Masetto, in a little time (being very strong), split all to pieces. The steward, having occasion to go to the wood, took him with him;

where he made him fell several trees, load the ass with them, and drive it home before him: this Masetto did very well; and the steward wanting him for other things, he continued there for several days, till at length the abbess saw him, and asked the steward what the man did there? "Madam," he replied, "this is a poor man, deaf and dumb, who came the other day to ask charity, which I gave him, and he has done many things for us since: I believe, if he knows anything of gardening and could be prevailed upon to stay, that he might be of good service; for we want such a person, and he is strong, and will do what work we please: besides, there will be no fear of his seducing any of the young ladies." — "Why, truly," quoth the abbess, you say right: see if he knows bow to work, and if so, try to keep him; make much of him, give him a pair of shoes, and an old coat, and let him have his fill of victuals." This the steward promised to do. Masetto, who was at no great distance, but seemed busy in sweeping the court, heard all this, and said merrily to himself, "Yes, if you let me stay here, I'll do your business as it never was done before." The steward, who was aware that he knew how to work, now inquired of him by signs whether he was willing to stay: and Masetto having made signs that he was, the steward took him into the garden, shewed him what he wished to have done, and left him there.

Now the nuns used to come every day to tease and laugh at the deaf and dumb gardener, and would say the naughtiest words in the world before him, imagining that he did not hear them: whilst the abbess took no notice of all this, thinking perhaps that as the man could not wag his tongue, he was equally harmless in other respects. One day when he had lain down to rest himself, two nuns, who were walking in the garden, came to the place where he pretended to be asleep: and as they stood looking at him, one, who was a little more forward than the other said, "Could I be assured of your secrecy, I would tell you of a thought I have often had in my head, which might be of service to yourself." "You may speak safely," said the other, "for I will never disclose it." Then said the first nun: "We are kept here in strict confinement, and not a man suffered to come near us, but our steward, who is old, and this dumb man. Now I have many and many a time heard from ladies who have come to see us, that all the other delights in the world are nothing to what a woman enjoys in a man's arms. I have often therefore had it in my mind to try the experiment with this dumb fellow, since no other is to be had; besides he is the fittest in the world for our purpose, being such an idiot, that he

cannot expose us if he would; what is your opinion? — “Alas!” quoth the other, “what is that you say? Do not you know that we have promised our virginity to God?” “Oh! but sister,” she replied, “how many things do we promise every day, which we never perform? If we have promised, there will be others found that shall be more punctual.” — “But, if we should be with child, what would become of us then?” — “You think of the worst before it happens: it will be time enough to talk of that when it comes: there are a thousand ways of managing in such a case, that nobody will ever be the wiser unless we ourselves make the discovery.” — “Well, then,” said the second nun, who was even more curious than her friend to know what sort of an animal a man might be; “how shall we contrive this matter?” — “You see,” replied the other, “it is about midday, and I believe our sisters are all asleep; let us look round the garden, and if nobody be in it, what have we to do, but for one of us to lead him into yonder arbour, whilst the other keeps watch. He is such a fool that we can do what we like with him.”

Masetto heard all this, and was quite ready to gratify the ladies, but waited until one of them should come and rouse him from his pretended sleep. The two nuns having assured themselves that nobody could see them, she who had been the first to move in the affair went and shook the gardener. He got up; the nun playfully took him by the hand, and led him, grinning and laughing like an idiot, to the arbour, where without giving her much trouble to explain her wishes he did what she wanted. Her curiosity having been satisfied, she made way for her companion, to whom Masetto, fool as he seemed, behaved equally well. Before they left him, each of them repeated the experiment once more, and they agreed in declaring that the result surpassed all that they could have imagined. After this it may easily be guessed how frequent were their visits to the arbour, and how punctually they availed themselves of the fitting hours to take their diversion with the good natured mute.

It chanced, however, one day that their proceedings were observed by one of the sisterhood, who immediately brought two others to witness them. At first the trio were for informing the lady abbess, but afterwards they changed their minds, entered into an arrangement with the detected pair, and became jointly interested with them in Masetto’s services. There now remained but three nuns who were not privy to the secret; but in course of time they too came in various ways to share in it with the rest.

Finally the Abbess, who as yet had no notion of these doings, was taking a walk all alone in the garden one very sultry day, and found Masetto stripped to his shirt and asleep on the broad of his back, under an almond tree, having, it seems, not much to do that day, because he had been hard at work all the night before. Just then the wind fluttered the loose end of his single garment, and the Abbess saw what immediately gave her a fit of the complaint then prevalent in the convent. Waking up Masetto she took him to her chamber, where she kept him close for some days, to the great mortification of the nuns, who complained loudly that the gardener did not come to his daily labour. She let him go at last, but often had him back again, and altogether engrossed more than her fair share of his attendance. Masetto began to find it no easy task to please so many mistresses, and was strongly of opinion that things would come to a bad pass with him if he continued dumb much longer. One night then, when he was with the abbess, his tongue was suddenly untied, and said he, "I have often heard say, madam, that one cock can do very well for ten hens, but that ten men can hardly with their best endeavours satisfy one woman, whereas I have to serve nine. I can't stand it any longer. I'm fairly worn out with what I have done already; so please either to let me go my way in God's name, or put this matter to rights somehow."

The abbess was astounded to hear him speak. "Why, how is this?" she said, "I thought you were dumb." — "So I was, madam, but not by nature. I had a long disorder which deprived me of my speech; and it was only this very night, thanks be to God, that I felt it come back to me."

The abbess believed this tale, or feigned to do so, and asked him what he meant by saying that he had nine women to satisfy. Masetto explained the whole case to her; and she, like a discreet abbess, instead of sending him away, resolved to come to an understanding with her nuns, and devise with them how they might keep such a good gardener without incurring any scandal. A full and unreserved explanation soon took place between all parties, and the old steward happening to die very opportunely, Masetto was, with his own consent, unanimously chosen to fill the vacant place, and his duties were so apportioned that he could discharge them without inordinate fatigue. At the same time the people of

the neighbourhood were made to believe that through the prayers of the sisterhood, and through the merits of the saint to whom the convent was dedicated, the man who had been so long dumb had been recovered his speech. Under the Bew steward's management the convent became a little nursery for the propagation of the monastic order, but everything was so quietly done that there never was any talk about it until after the death of the abbess, when Masetto, being now in years and wealthy, was desirous of returning home. His desire was readily complied with: and thus, taking no care for his children, but bequeathing them to the place where they were bred and born, he returned a wealthy man to his native place, which he had quitted with nothing but an axe over his shoulder, having had the wit to employ the season of his youth to good purpose.

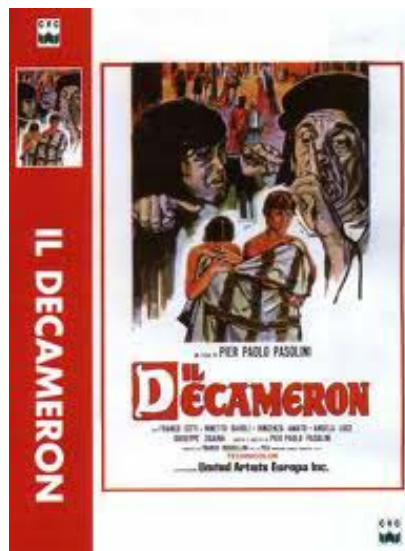
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Ciro Discepolo

Some years ago...







An astrologer, journalist and writer, **Ciro Discepolo** was born in Naples in 1948 (on the 17th of July, at 5:40 am). He worked for twenty years for the most popular daily of Naples, *Il Mattino*, writing articles on science, medicine, informatics, literature and astrology. He has always refused to cast the so-called 'horoscopes of the solar signs' for that newspaper, as well as for any other newspaper or magazine. He worked (at the age of 20) for five years at the *CNR (National Research Council)* as Research Helper and, for two years, as Electronic Measures Laboratory's head in the *Istituto Motori* of Naples, *CNR*. He has been dealing with astrology since 1970. He has written over 70 books, most of them best-sellers in Italy as well as abroad (France, the United States of America, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia and Russia) and he has published over 1,000 astrological lessons on *YouTube* and about 250 short *Astrology Essays* on *Google Books*. In 1990 he founded the quarterly *Ricerca '90*, which he has been editing and publishing since then. He has been doing statistical researches from the very beginning of his interest in astrology. During the early '90s, he obtained brilliant results with researches on astral heredity on a sample of over 75,000 subjects, in different years and always under the control of different experts of statistics among which also teachers of the University of Naples. The astrological rules #1 and #2, published in his *Transits and Solar Returns* but already described decades earlier in other publications of his, have been statistically demonstrated by **Didier Castille** – the greatest astrological statistic researcher in the world – on the entire French population, and this is probably the most convincing evidence in Astrology of the possibility to statistically demonstrate some astrological items. These rules were also demonstrated in over 40 years of studies by some researchers of Zurich University and they are the only statements of an astrologer, of every time, demonstrated by Official Science. He has been holding seminars, courses and lectures in different universities and cultural centres in Italy and abroad. He particularly deals with Predictive Astrology, Aimed Solar Returns and Aimed Lunar Returns. According to many colleagues, he may be considered the greatest living expert of this area of study. Not only has he written many texts on this specific segment of the art of Urania – he can also rely on the experience of more than 25,000 aimed birthdays (covering the years 1970 to 2012). The outcomes of these aimed birthdays have been recorded and analyzed by his consultants and himself at the end of each year after the consultant's departure for the aimed birthday. He has developed extremely advanced software packages for the study of Predictive Astrology, also projecting an innovative algorithm which is particularly useful for the dating of events within one year, for individuals or groups of people. He is deeply interested in informatics. Astrologically speaking, he followed the school of **André Barbault**. He founded the school of the *Active Astrology*.