

The literary heritage of Andrea Camilleri - police inspector Montalbano as a tourist and business product

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Abstract

Camilleri, internationally recognized as the creator of police Inspector Salvo Montalbano, is a multi-dimensional figure in 20th and 21st century Italian literature. This study explores the evolution of his literary identity, the intertextual and cultural influences that shaped his idiosyncratic style, and the cultural, social and geographical significance of his work, both in Italy and internationally. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of the Inspector Montalbano series in the emergence of Sicily as a setting for contemporary detective fiction and as a literary tourism destination. Camilleri's global perspective offers a multicultural narrative rooted in Sicilian everyday life, creating a synthesis of identities that maintains its authenticity while dialoguing with the world; Montalbano himself is presented as a bearer of Sicilian culture and a symbol of moral resistance. Through his language, humor, irony and inner struggle, Camilleri's hero redefines the boundaries of European noir and Italian "giallo", offering a narrative that is at once popular, philosophical and culturally prophetic.

Keywords: Literary heritage; Camilleri - Police Inspector Montalbano; Tourism; Business product

1 Introduction

Camilleri's personal and family history, with its strong anti-fascist orientation, directly influenced his writing career. His family's exile to Sicily in 1935 was not just a biographical event, but shaped the author's consciousness and his gaze towards power structures and social injustice.

Camilleri did not limit himself to literature. His training in directing and his tenure at RAI had a decisive influence on his style. He identified himself as a 'director of narrative', creating polyphonic, almost theatrical narratives. Influences from Pirandello, whom Camilleri considered his spiritual ancestor, and from Shakespeare are evident, particularly in his handling of dialogue and irony. (Manola, 2020; Manola & Tsatambassoglou, 2020)

Camilleri's literary style is characterized by a mixture of narrative fluency, theatrical dynamism and social observation. Influential writers include Curzio Malaparte, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Montesquieu, Dino Buzzati and, of course, Italo Calvino. Camilleri's reference to Calvino in the edited volume 'Who Stole Aunt Julie's Breast?' reveals his deep appreciation of the complexity of fiction and the necessity of creative innovation. (Manola, 2022)

The police Inspector Montalbano series, beyond its acknowledged literary value, is a global phenomenon of cultural consumption. Its success has been enhanced by its television adaptation, its authentic portrayal of Sicilian culture and the gradual transformation of Porto Empedocle into a tourist destination. It is no coincidence that Italy emerged as the country with the highest number of readers per capita, largely due to the popularity of the detective genre.

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2 International influences and multicultural attractions in the work of Andrea Camilleri

Camilleri's work presents an original combination of localism and internationalism. In *The Shape of Water* (1994), two Cuban exiles are characterized by their dignity and their resistance to oppression, representing solidarity and resistance on a global level (Campo, 2022). The coexistence of languages and cultures continues in *Voice of the Violin* (1997), where the love conversation between Sonia and Girondano is interspersed with Spanish words, suggesting cross-cultural exchanges.

The Snack Thief (1996), the narrative travels to Buenos Aires, introducing characters such as a Milanese man in love with Argentina, and Adelina, the owner of an artistically decorated oriental brothel. Here, Camilleri draws on the aesthetic of Argentine tango, described as 'seductive and flamboyant,' a genre that touches Montalbano's senses and heart

The American continent repeatedly plays a role in Camilleri's work. In *The Terracotta Dog* (1996), the inspector dreams of a Peruvian woman named Gaby, a fantasy that projects a nostalgia for the anonymous and a search for a universal erotic experience. Characters from places like New York or Latin America are integrated into the narrative universe with authenticity and depth (Campo, 2022), making Montalbano a medium for international dialogue.

The alternation between Italian, dialects and foreign linguistic elements constitutes a defining element of Camilleri's style. The mixing of Spanish, Sicilian and other idioms reflects the multicultural reality of the Mediterranean and the diaspora. Camilleri's dialogues are a set of timbres and meanings that transcend national borders and create new identities."

Montalbano himself, although deeply rooted in Sicilian culture, embodies the anti-hero of globalization. Tasteful, sensual and emotionally complex, he interacts with the global and the local without losing his identity. His body becomes a site of resistance and pleasure, with his food choices, such as culinary delights and 'compensatory' drinks of thistle and lemon, being a metaphor for managing pleasure and guilt. (Montanari, 2006; Pezzotti, 2009; Richards, 2020; Sims, 2009)

The tourism development of the sites associated with Inspector Montalbano is an excellent example of the successful integration of fiction into the tourism industry, boosting the local economy and providing authentic experiences for visitors. Andrea Camilleri's series of novels, with Inspector Montalbano as the central character, has created a unique cultural landscape, which today is an attraction for tourists wishing to visit the areas of Sicily depicted in the TV series and books. Tour operators such as the 'Tour of Detective Montalbano's Sicily' (GetYourGuide, 2025), 'Inspector Montalbano Full-Day Tour' (Guides of Italia, 2025) and 'Commissario Montalbano Day Tour' (Viator, 2025) offer personalized experiences, in which guests explore authentic locations such as the city of Ragusa, Monteca, and picturesque Pozzallo, while combining history with fiction. These tours reinforce the connection between fantasy and reality, creating a dynamic tourism industry that contributes to the economic development of the region, providing new opportunities for the local market and businesses.

3 Andrea Camilleri's lecturer Montalbano: A literary portrait

Salvo Montalbano was born in Sicily, a region that is often presented literarily as an intermediate space between East and West, tradition and modernity (Baranski & West, 2001). Camilleri used Montalbano as a vehicle to explore the contradictions of contemporary Italy - state corruption, bureaucracy, moral ambiguity - through a hero of high personal integrity but intense inner doubt.

Montalbano's internal morality is inextricably tied to his geographical and cultural space: the Vigata and Montelusa - fictional cities with clear references to Ispica and Agrigento. The Sicilian landscape functions as a dramatic context and at the same time as an allegory for the human psyche (Rovatti, 2015). Camilleri creates a hero 'local' but with universal resonance, as he highlights his conflicts through everyday life rather than through superheroic acts.

Montalbano enjoys Sicilian cuisine, siesta, and the sea - his body becomes a field of cultural resistance to the imperatives of productivity and the mechanization of life. This corporeality is linked to a radically anti-technocratic worldview (Scalettari, 2013), where pleasure is not a weakness but a choice. (Manola & Koufadakakis, 2020; Montanari, 2006; Pezzotti, 2009; Stivers, 2021; Stavrianoudakis, 2019; Vlassas 2019,2021)

The use of the local dialect is a feature of the character and the author. Camilleri, consciously, introduces words and phrases in Sicilian into the text, creating a narrative level that goes beyond mere realism (Pugliese, 2008). This reinforces the literary autonomy of the work and emphasizes the cultural plurality of the region.

Montalbano is not a simple crime solver. He acts on the basis of a personal morality that often clashes with the institutional one. His relationship with the state is marginal: he recognizes the necessity of the legal order, but maintains a cautious and often ironic attitude towards the mechanisms of power. (Serkowska, 2006)

4 The supporting characters in the Police Inspector Montalbano series

Mimì Augello, deputy chief of the police department, and Giuseppe Fazio, Montalbano's loyal and often overly meticulous assistant, appear as steady pillars of the inspector's professional life. The dynamic between them and Montalbano forms a tripartite relationship of mutual complementarity: Mimì embodies impulsiveness and frivolity, Fazio represents precision and cool-headedness, while Montalbano balances reason and intuition (Rovatti, 2015).

However, as noted (Ben-Ghiat, 2015), these characters undergo minimal development throughout the series. Although present in nearly every episode, they remain almost static — a trait reminiscent of the typology found in classic 20th-century detective series (Knight, 2004).

Livia is the most persistent and stable relationship in Montalbano's life — and at the same time the least developed. From the beginning, she is portrayed as a counterpart: emotionally demanding, geographically distant (she lives in Genoa), and often a source of stress and guilt for Montalbano. Their relationship, although recurring, shows no real progress or maturation (Campo, 2022). Livia is used as a dramaturgical device, an "alibi" to avoid Montalbano's emotional fulfillment — thus reinforcing his profile as a solitary hero.

5 The themes in the works of Andrea Camilleri

The themes of Andrea Camilleri's works, centered on the Inspector Salvo Montalbano series, combine elements of detective plot, social observation and cultural reflection. Behind the engaging language, humor and irony, a complex network of themes emerges, including the separation between appearance and reality, the nostalgic loss of cultural innocence, the tensions between justice and morality, and the complex relationship between identity and Sicilian society.

One of the dominant themes in Camilleri's literature is the distinction between the phenomenal and the essential. As Rovatti (2015) notes, nothing in Montalbano's world is what it seems. 'Appearance' obscures 'being', and police investigation functions as a tool for deconstructing social pretense. Montalbano himself constantly questions official versions of events, acting as a "sensor of truth" in a society full of corruption and decay. Camilleri's ironic detachment, which recalls G. K. Chesterton through Padre Brown, is combined with the empirical logic of Sherlock Holmes and the deep psychography of Maigret.

The contrast between the legal and the moral is a fundamental theme in the Montalbano series. The notion of justice appears not as the application of institutional rules, but as a moral act of choice, deeply personal and sometimes extra-institutional (Scalettari, 2013). As Todaro et al. (2021) argue, Camilleri's narrative does not serve to restore formal order, but an internal restoration of balance, often at the expense of 'legality'. Camilleri, like Leonardo Sciascia and Friedrich Dürrenmatt, seeks truth in the dark liminal space between ideology and self-interest, making morality not something given, but a puzzle to be uncovered (Sturli, 2020).

Nostalgia for lost Sicily - not as geography but as a way of life - permeates the entire series. Montalbano often describes changes in Vigàta after his brief absences, with a sense of irreparable decay (Campo, 2022). Camilleri draws not only the setting but also the intellectual apparatus of the narrative from his place, with references to ancient civilizations that have left their imprint on the stones and souls of the people. (Manola et al., 2022). This nostalgia, however, is always critical because it acknowledges the pathologies of the past. Violence, familism and the role of the mafia are treated as components of Sicilian psychography, not just criminal phenomena (Ben-Ghiat, 2015).

Sicily is not only a setting but a character in Camilleri's works. The Sicilian temperament, with its contradictions - absolute hospitality and violence, emotional warmth and social suspicion - gives the author's works an existential tension (Pugliese, 2008). As Baranski (2001) notes, Camilleri gives voice to a culture that is often misunderstood or underestimated in Italy's national discourse.

Irony is the narrative mechanism through which Camilleri strips away powers and structures. His success, especially on television, has not prevented him from remaining critical. As Scarpti (1998) wrote, the "Camillerian System" is a cultural phenomenon that combines high literature with mass appeal without sacrificing its aesthetic and ideological density.

6 Police Inspector Montalbano as a tourist and business product

The literary and television success of the Police Inspector Montalbano series has gradually but steadily become a large-scale tourist phenomenon, making Andrea Camilleri's work not only a cultural asset but also an exportable high-value tourist product. Sicily, and in particular its south-eastern region - centered on the towns of Ragusa, Scicli, Modica and Punta Secca - acquired a new tourist identity thanks to the popularity of Montalbano. (Tsatalmpasoglou et al.,2025)

The locations where the TV series was filmed have become pilgrimages for fans, both Italian and international. Montalbano's house in Punta Secca (known as "Casa di Montalbano") has been converted into a guesthouse, and themed tours of the filming locations are organized daily. This trend has led to the economic revitalization of areas that were previously not major tourist destinations. (Manola, 2024; Manola & Koltsikoglou,2021; Manola & Vouglanis,2024) '

Montalbano does not only sell storytelling. It sells culture, landscape, gastronomy and identity. Visitors follow 'the hero's footsteps', dine in local restaurants where scenes were filmed, taste the iconic Sicilian dishes that Montalbano loves, and immerse themselves in the silent, light-bathed atmosphere of Vigàta, the fictional town at the heart of the series. (Tsatalbassoglou & Karagianni ,2020).

The Italian National Tourist Authority (ENIT) and local organizations took advantage of the television success to promote Sicily as a cultural tourism destination, while the inclusion of the series on the global distribution map through RAI International, BBC Four, France 2 and other channels boosted Italy's tourist image internationally.

Montalbano tourism is therefore a hybrid form of tourism, which unites the cultural with the cinematic, the literary with the gastronomic, and nostalgia with experience. It represents a sustainable and authentic development model, based not on artificial constructions but on natural cultural heritage and the symbolic power of storytelling. (Maniou et al.,2024; Maniou et al., 2024a)

Camilleri's work, then, did not just shape a hero; it set up a cultural mechanism for transforming imagination into experience, and experience into a brand. And in this context, Inspector Montalbano emerges as the most successful example of contemporary Italian cultural diplomacy through tourism.

Beyond being a literary and television phenomenon, police Inspector Montalbano has become a model of a cultural economy business product, strategically exploiting the dynamics of storytelling as a marketable commodity. Andrea Camilleri's work and the success of the RAI television adaptation have shaped a branded narrative universe, with a solid commercial value and multiple ramifications in a variety of business sectors. (Maniou et al.,2024c; Maniou et al., 2024d; Maniou et al., 2022)

Police Inspector Montalbano is an iconic example of converting cultural capital into business value. Through strategic use of content, synergies across different sectors and consistent identity building, Camilleri's work transcends the boundaries of art, fits into the contemporary cultural economy and demonstrates how literature can evolve into a sustainable and profitable business model. (Maniou et al., 2025; Maniou & Mitoula,2025; Maniou et al.,2025a ; Michopoulou et al.,2021)

In conclusion, we highlight the importance of digital technologies within the education sector and for training in cultural entrepreneurship. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) facilitate education for all, introduce innovative approaches for effective teacher training, enhance knowledge retention, promote collaboration, increase transparency, foster learner-centered methodologies, create novel teaching strategies, and expedite knowledge acquisition. Additionally, they offer new means for knowledge representation and support educational activities and techniques through mobility, virtualization, artificial intelligence, and new learning environments. Specifically, in entrepreneurship training, ICTs have proven to be highly effective, improving assessment, interventions, and educational processes via mobile devices [47-48], which enable educational activities to take place anywhere, as well as through various ICT applications [49], that are fundamental to education. The utilization of AI, STEM, and robotics [50-51], elevates educational processes to new heights of adaptability, innovation, and effectiveness, while gaming transforms education into a multisensory, engaging, and enjoyable experience. Furthermore, the integration and enhancement of ICTs with theories and frameworks of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation, and emotional intelligence development [53-59], bring mental capabilities to the forefront of educational processes and policies,

thereby further enhancing educational practices and outcomes, particularly in business and training for new entrepreneurs [60-66].

7 Conclusion

The television adaptation of the Inspector Montalbano series, directed by Alberto Sironi and produced by RAI, was not only a successful illustration of Andrea Camilleri's literary fiction; it was undoubtedly a cultural phenomenon of international importance. The transition from the written word to the visual language managed not only to convey, but in many cases to expand and enhance the philosophical, moral and sociological complexity of the themes running through the author's work. Through the directorial eye, musical composition, dramatic organization and, above all, acting expressiveness, the series acquired new aesthetic and emotional levels that transformed the visual narrative into an equal and complementary carrier of meaning.

Camilleri's literary universe is not limited to the detective plot. It functions as a framework for existential and moral reflection, with the nature of truth, justice, the decay of society and human morality as its central themes. These themes are woven in an ingenious way so that they are approached simultaneously on philosophical, political, social and psychological levels. Sicily, in Camilleri's world, is not just a place; it is an allegorical geography, a small universe full of contrasts - from nostalgia to brute violence, from beauty to social decay - that reflects the universal human condition.

Compliance with ethical standards

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The Authors proclaim no conflict of interest.

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