

Summary

Title: Bruegelian atlas of memory. Changes in the perception of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's oeuvre in Belgian francophone literature of the 20th century (Dominique Rolin, Pierre Mertens, Guy Goffette)

The thesis depicts the changes in the perception of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's paintings (c. 1525-1569) in the contemporary Belgian francophone literature. Since the 19th century till today the Bruegel's oeuvre has constituted one of places of memory (*lieu de mémoire*). During subsequent decades writers have adopted his imaginary world to their books. In the first stage of this phenomenon (till the first half of the 20th century) paintings played an important role in constructing the collective identity of Belgian authors, whereas since the second half of the century, the Bruegel's oeuvre has become an element of individual mythologies.

The compilation of the books enables one to create a Brueghelian atlas of memory. Its form, initially pictorial, with time passing oscillates to the more contemporary mediums such as photography, cinema or postcard. In the thesis the term of atlas is understood in the metaphorical way: as a compilation of images and as a kind of a memory map. This theory is inspired by the *Mnemosyne Atlas* (1924-1929) of the German art historian Aby Warburg (1866–1929). The word *Nachleben* ("post-life") used by the scientist, refers (in the case of *Mnemosyne Atlas*) to the revival of ancient forms in the modern culture. When it comes to Belgian culture it could describe the constant re-birth of Brueghelian inspirations in literature. Similarly to the Warburg's oeuvre, each of the books reformulates relations between the word, image and its medium in the given socio-cultural context.

The first chapter presents complex links between literature and visual arts, underlining the specificity of the Belgian milieu. It focuses as well on the dependence between the medium and the way of functioning of images in both, individual and collective memory.

The second chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the Bruegel's oeuvre, which becomes inspiration not only to several generations of visual artists, but also to many Belgian writers.

In the following part of the thesis the Bruegelian presence in literature is analysed. This myth emerges thanks to two parallel phenomena, namely, the myth of the sixteenth century and the myth of writers-heirs of the Flemish painters. In the 19th and the 20th century

the Bruegelian universe inspires Belgian authors to create their own vision of the Golden Ages in the Low Countries (Charles De Coster, Michel de Ghelderode) or constitutes the reference point to describe contemporary social problems (Maurice Maeterlinck, Eugène Demolder, Émile Verhaeren, Camille Lemmonier, Georges Eekhoud, Franz Hellens). In the latter part of the twentieth century writers are inspired by aesthetics of the modern media.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the analysis of Dominique Rolin's (1913-2012) photographic atlas. Its matter comprises three major themes, such as Flemish art, biography and the problematic aspects of the body. The form of the atlas is marked by the influence of photographic aesthetics, which is particularly noticeable in the narrative forms. The author creates a kind of photo-text, constructed of the latent images (M. Michałowska) recalled only by the words.

The next chapter describes the cinematographic atlas of Pierre Mertens (born in 1939). Its content is composed of art, both the visual one and the music, and biographies put in the historical context. Mertens in his writing creates the imitation of film shots. The method of cinematographic montage is visible as much on the microscale (novel's content) as on the macroscale (the way of composing the final version of the work). This part demonstrates how this montage, according to the Gilles Deleuze's theory, reflects the action of the time.

The next section focuses on the analysis of the Bruegelian inspirations in Guy Goffette's oeuvre (born in 1947). The first half of the chapter depicts the leitmotifs of Goffette's atlas (art, landscape, biography), whereas the second one is dedicated to the form chosen by the writer: the postcard. The book *Auden ou l'œil de la baleine* (2005) could be considered a special kind of a postcard in the light of Jacques Derrida's theory ("Postal Principle").

The conclusion sums up and interprets the changes in the perception of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's oeuvre in Belgian francophone literature.

Keywords: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Belgian literature, Guy Goffette, Pierre Mertens, Dominique Rolin