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Doctor`s thesis

Gdansk Painting, Graphic and Sculpture in Gunter Grass`s and Stefan Chwin`s Prose. Comparative Study.

Summary

The subject matter of this dissertation are literary references of Gunter Grass and Stefan Chwin to works of Gdansk art: painting, graphic and sculpture. The texts which have been researched are chosen Gunter Gass`s prose works: `The Tin Drum`, `Local Anaesthetic`, `The Flounder`, `The Rat`, `The Call of the Toad` and Stefan Chwin`s ones: `Krótka historia pewnego żartu`, `Hanemann`, `Esther`, `Złoty pelikan`, `Kartki z dziennika`, `Żona prezydenta`, `Dolina Radości`, `Puste krzesło przy wigilijnym stole`, `Dziennik dla dorosłych`, `Panna Ferbelin` and `Srebrzysko`. In their writing both writers referred to the elements of Oliwa Cathedral and Gdańsk-Wrzeszcz Church of Holy Heart of Jesus decorations, `The Last Judgement` of Hans Memling, Anton Moller`s paintings, the group of crucifixion on the rainbow log in St. Mary`s Church in Gdansk and Ryszard Stryjec`s graphics.

Separate category are the works of art mentioned in the texts which cannot be confirmed such as foresculpture Niobe described in `The Tin Drum`, angel in `The Call of the Toad`, nudes of Agnieszka Kurbiella in Moller`s paintings or self-portrait of the painter with a pregnant model in Grass`s works and picture of Abraham and Isaac in Chwin`s ones.

The analysis and interpretation both writers` references to Gdansk art are preceded by two chapters which are an attempt of summing up the literature of this subject which became the starting point of further researches in this thesis. The first deals with the characteristic of Gunter Grass`s and Stefan Chwin`s output and it focuses on underlining the most important plots and subjects connected with the subject of the thesis. The latter is an attempt to reconstruct the general idea of fine arts of both writers.

Next four analytic and interpretational chapters are first of all going to show how Grass and Chwin introduce into their works the examples of Gdansk works of art referring to the most important previously mentioned interpretations and contexts of the literature of the subject. Then the interpretation of the parts of the texts in which these art references appear is proposed. At the end it is suggested what consequence the introduction of every painting and sculpture scene has on the work of these writers for understanding not only a single fragment but the whole work or, if it is possible, the whole output of these writers as well. It was proven, for example, that in the work of both writers Gdansk art is not only the way of implanting the plot in a definite space and does not only play the role of setting but is also used for underlining important essence and influences putting Gdansk space into fable and giving it a universal appearance. There were also shown differences between the references to art at both writers. The analysis of particular paintings and sculptures has shown, however, that Grass uses these references to verbalize and show the subjects which interested him and the chosen visual examples let him make the meaning more detailed and stronger. In Chwin`s works the situation looks different. Here the role of art is to help the narrator and the characters learn and understand the surrounding world. The art causes reflection and makes them interpret the reality once again in their own way.

In this work it was also researched what influence Gdańsk art had on Grass`s and Chwin`s

imagination and how much it inspired some of the plots used in their future work.

Two last chapters are the conclusion of the thesis. They show how much the references to Gdansk art inscribe in own Gunter Grass`s and Stefan Chwin`s ideas of art and in literary tradition of references to it against the background of literary genres called ekphrasis and Bildgedicht and the terms referring to such twin arts as representation, paraphrase, interpretation and provocation.