

## Theme 5 : Beyond text

### 7. M. Winkler ( Amsterdam / Utrecht)

#### *Reading as Game ? - Changing Modes of Communication*

In his lecture “In de ban van het boek: het boek in de ban?” (2009) Paul Schnabel, director of the Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, presents the figures of a large inquiry held among the Dutch population. The inquiry focuses on the way people spend their free time, and more specific on the position of the book as a product for recreation within Dutch society. The figures confirm a tendency that is visible since the proliferation of new media: “het lezen van een boek is steeds minder vanzelfsprekend.” One can debate about the future of the book (or whether there is a future at all, as Schnabel proclaims), but what is interesting about the topic is the way in which the changing status of the book offers new perspectives on the book as social medium. It draws the attention to technical and economical aspects that define the book in relation to other media.

This paper wants to examine the influence of new media on the older medium of the book, by taking as a case study the work of the Dutch author K. Schippers. In the 1960s he and his colleagues adopted the commercial and technical means of that moment in order to make literature. How does the author deal with the competition of new media? How does he anticipate and/or take advantage of these developments? By looking further into these questions this paper wishes to offer a concrete example of the way in which new modes of communication can change awareness of older media performances.

Until recently the adaptation of commercialism by the Dutch authors in the 1960s was not believed to be of major relevance, moreover it was considered to be a (literary) mode that soon lost its charm. But as we look at a survey like that of Schnabel, it becomes apparent that commercial and technical developments play a major role when positioning the medium of the book.

When we follow Schnabel's line of argumentation the book has lost its position of main bearer of information due to *technological* developments: it has to compete with computer, telephone and television. On the other hand, *economical* developments have made the book a relatively expensive object, while it can be used only once. Additionally there is a *social* aspect to it: reading a book is an individual activity, this in contrast to playing computer games or watching television that almost instantly creates a feeling of communal interaction.

Similar situations occurred in the 1960s when television and cheap reproduction techniques were introduced. Remarkable is however, that writers as K. Schippers en J. Bernlef embraced the possibilities of new media and adapted the aspects that Schnabel appoints to the new media. They do so by using the *technique* of stencilling or amateur photography and incorporating *commercial* material, such as adverts and B-movies. The *social* aspect is covered by the very accessibility of the work: the reader is literally invited to participate – the work is often presented as a riddle or a game.

Recent insights have opened up perspectives, especially on this notion of adaptation, see for example Bolter & Grushin 1999, Hayles 2008, or in relation to the case study Vaessens 2006. Therefore the work of K. Schippers in the 1960s offers an interesting historical case study to examine the practise of this adaption and the influence of new media on older media.

## **8. A. Fawcett ( University of East Anglia )**

### ***Translating the form: ways into communicating canonical Dutch poetry***

Many of the major Dutch poets of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century continued to use poetic forms which to the foreign reader may, at first sight, seem to be conservative and even outmoded. This paper will briefly examine the reputations of two such major poets, Martinus and Gerrit Achterberg, outside the Dutch-speaking world and

question whether issues of form, that is, of metre, rhyme and other formal effects, have stood in the way of a mode of translation which adequately conveys the greatness of these writers to readers unfamiliar with Dutch language and culture.

Drawing on work carried out in the first stages of a process-based doctoral study into translating some of the oeuvre of these two poets, the paper will seek to show that solutions to the problems of translating the form in both cases are not trivial. It will be argued that formal aspects play a large part in creating an emotional impact in the reader, and that the translation of form is an important aspect of communicating the importance of these writers to a readership outside own cultural milieu.

Examples of experimental approaches to the translation of rhythm and breath-determined phrasing will be discussed, and suggestions will be offered as to how the resulting translations might best be presented so as to locate these poets in vibrant and meaningful contexts which would appeal to a new readership.

Effective translation strategies, therefore, may be the ground for creating true impact on the reader, whilst new forms of communication might open up possibilities of extending the readership well beyond that previously available through print-culture.

## **Theme 5: ( continued) Beyond text**

### **9. J. Vermeulen (Kortrijk-Bellegem)**

#### ***Hugo Claus Reconstructing the Old Masters.***

Hugo Claus is not only Flanders' most prominent writer, he also excelled as a talented painter working closely together with his COBRA-colleagues and with eminent Flemish artists such as R. Raveel, J. Burssens, J. Cox and J. Vanriet. In his own poetry he sometimes explicitly refers to Memling and Patinir. More important is his fascination with Bosch and Brueghel who contributed to the creation of an infernal world in which the themes of vice, seduction, temptation, guilt, judgment,

punishment and penance were closely connected. Although a number of prominent critics (J. Weisgerber, P. Claes, G. Wildemeersch) identified some underlying crossovers between image and text, the predominant impact of the Flemish masters on the poet's oeuvre has often been underestimated. In our presentation we shall analyse a number of poems illustrating how Claus deconstructed / reconstructed this visual world integrating it in a highly personal literary style. The poet's early work shows a remarkable parallel with the baroque surrealism of some of these paintings. Our approach focuses on the selection and specific clustering of visual data, the reframing of iconographic components and the reinterpretation of symbols. These transformations all lead to the creation of specific lexical registers, authentic semantic fields and morphosyntactic patterns attributing a genuine profile to his poetry.

#### **10. D. Pring (Goldsmiths College London)**

##### **The Negotiation of Musical Meaning in Dutch Still-Life Painting**

It has been estimated that some 10-15 per cent of paintings from the Dutch Golden Age contain some kind of musical motif. Even a brief overview of the genres of still-life and vanitas paintings suggests that in these categories the penetration is deeper still. However, despite the large body of critical theory on these two well-known types of art, the way in which music is used within them is still widely misunderstood. Theories applied to Italian, French or English painting, literature and music are too readily taken to apply to Holland also, an assumption which cannot always be made. And the temptation to stereotype Dutch music and art of the period is never far away. This paper will discuss some of the generalisations inherent in the study of musical content in Dutch art with specific reference to still-life and *vanitas* painting.

## **11. S. Human ( University of the Free State, Bloemfontein)**

### **Picaresque translations between “Africa” and “Europe”:**

#### **Johannes Phokela and the iconic energy of ruptures**

The work of the black South African painter Johannes Phokela (born in Soweto in 1966) who studied in London, exposes ideological undercurrents in seventeenth century Dutch art (by e.g. Jakob Jordaens and Jakob de Gheyn) and South African culture by drawing attention to openings, orifices, proscenium arches, cartouches, picture frames, drawn and opened curtains and pierced canvasses, all becoming metaphors for social structures and the crossing of the dividing boundaries between self and others. The artist conjures up a picaresque imaginary world and he mischievously plays a game of hide-and-seek with spectators.

In this paper it is argued that objects of art suggest rhetorical possibilities for their interpretation. In recognizing the effect of the ‘power of images’ on scholars selecting and analysing them, it is also acknowledged that the ‘power of images’ surpass the intentions of artists who quote them. Taking a cue from Phokela’s art, it is interpreted as part of a centuries old Western picaresque tradition and a corresponding art historiographical stance is assumed. By subjecting his work to a picaresque mode of interpretation avenues for the renewed scrutiny of art historical translations between “Africa” and “Europe” are suggested. In art history the grotesque has been a category and part of a nomenclature through which “Africa” has become digestible and by means of which Europeans have translated “primitive” art into European experience. By rekindling associations of Africa, wildness and grotesque exaggeration, Phokela not only subversively tricks the spectator in repeating the stereotype, but ironically recognizes and exploits commensurate traditions in Western art. By “playing the fool” in a mutual act of interpretation new inter-cultural interpretative possibilities are explored.

## 12. L. King ( Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dun Laoghaire )

### **' Through Dutch eyes ' – the Aer Lingus Travel Poster (1951-1961)**

Ireland of the 1950s was brutally scarred by the effects of mass emigration and high unemployment. However, in spite of the cultural and economic realities of the period the decade witnessed a significant growth in the country's graphic design professions. Similar to the experience of other countries, the emergence of graphic design in Ireland was firmly tied **to the evolution of advertising. However, while other countries witnessed a growth in advertising as a direct link to industrialisation, Ireland's agrarian status ensured that the country's state-sponsored companies were often the main source for creative employment opportunities.**

**Aer Lingus - founded in 1936 - was particularly influential in fostering indigenous design expertise. Initially conceived as a potent symbol of Irish independence and a pragmatic means of connecting the Republic of Ireland to both Continental Europe and the U.S., by the 1950s it had become evident that Aer Lingus also had strategic importance for tourism development. Against this backdrop the airline embarked on an ambitious advertising plan led by Dublin-based *Sun Advertising*, who took the unprecedented decision to recruit Dutch design expertise directly through KLM, the Dutch flag-carrier and pioneer of aviation identity systems.**

As the decade progressed, Sun's decision to employ Dutch designers had a significant effect on the emergent graphic design field in Ireland. The first of these designers arrived in Dublin in 1951, followed by a steady stream of other Dutch design practitioners throughout the decade, most of whom chose to stay in Ireland and make their home. The legacy of these individuals had far reaching effects; as many also worked for other semi-states such as Bord Fáilte (the Irish Tourist Board) and tourism related companies like John Hinde Postcards, they became instrumental in visualising ideas of Irish identity for export abroad, constructing and reaffirming images of Ireland that are still in use today.

This paper focuses on the travel bureaux posters produced by these émigrés between 1951 and 1961 and considers their impact on and legacy for Irish graphic design practice.

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