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## FROM THE EVANGELICAL TEXT TO THE CHISEL: THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS OF THE QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES CHURCH IN LONDRINA

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**Abstract:** In this article we present the results of an investigation carried out on the wooden frames of the Way of the Cross of the Queen of the Apostles Church, in Londrina, Paraná. With the aim of investigating the artistic and linguistic expressions of the paintings present in the Church, for this text, we bring a selection of the results obtained from the analysis of history and the echo between the biblical text and the artistic reproduction of one of these paintings. These paintings were shaped in a gradual creative process with a strong visual and artistic appeal, which requires an analysis that is both precise and comprehensive in search of bringing to light the entire creative movement, with the help of Genetic Criticism. The artistic work of the Via Crucis paintings is taken from the books of the Bible's gospels and the apocryphal tradition, always with great respect for Catholicism. What is cut out by the artist and takes into consideration, the space to be filled by art, will be analyzed here in its creative capacity by making all the inspiration emerge from the chisel, with a backdrop of the sacred texts of religious tradition, linked to the fact of adorning a church in a region marked by immigration, in a demonstration of work, faith, new beginnings and construction. Therefore, this work demonstrates a creative process made of art and history, of how the transmutation of the biblical text occurred in the paintings of the cross.

**Keywords:** Church; Genetic Criticism; Transmutation.

## INTRODUCTION

The Queen of the Apostles church in Londrina is a Catholic religious space, quite old, dating back to 1936, and which presented the city with a true artistic arsenal of the highest level. The temple was built at the height of immigration, in the settlement that would become a major economic center in the South of Brazil, and especially in the

North of Paraná. In the general lines of the research, we studied the relationship between the biblical texts that inspire baroque art with the foundations of Stylistics and Genetic Criticism. by analyzing the creative process, we can arrive at an investigation of the work as a whole and a true exegesis of the arts that adorn the aforementioned church. All the art present in the temple, including the Stations of the Cross, are signed by the German sculptor Bernard Franz Heise. The study of his person and his technique proves to be of great value, being decisive for the present research.

Heise was a very discreet artist with very calm movements, coming to live in Brazil and settling in the city of São Paulo, where he became known and his work became a reference for many churches. The Pallottine Fathers, who had spread throughout the south of the country, knew Heise from Germany. When they learned about his stay in Brazil, with the construction of a semi-public church still in the works to serve the faithful of Londrina, they immediately thought of asking Heise to decorate the entire church. One of Heise's characteristics was his agility and baroque style, which was an attribute for this choice. In addition to the sculptures themselves, Heise expressed his ideas on the temple's facade, when he suggested that the church have a sober facade, which would have an impact on entering the temple's thresholds.

An analysis that considers the creative process of the visual art in question, with the help of Genetic Criticism, will be of great value, in order to demonstrate how the path from the biblical text to the becoming of the art itself took place. Within the scope of this research, we visualize, in the artistic and cultural sphere, the analysis of the construction process, based on the biblical text, of the panels of the Stations of the Cross, a religious heritage of enormous relevance to the city of Londrina.

As a final objective, we analyzed stylistic, textual and genetic aspects that are in the creative process of the Way of the Cross of the Queen of the Apostles Church, with the ultimate aim of offering a historical-critical analysis of such an important heritage. Within the scope of language studies, we offer an analytical approach to the material produced in the design of one of the carved paintings that beautify the interior of the church to which this research refers, adopting, in visual art, the plot of genetic theory, which in principle it refers to textual material, but it can be applied to the creative process of art, based on the text. In the study of the process of construction of forms, we offer material that will enrich the cultural heritage of the city of Londrina, as we bring a study of how the creative process of the text took place in the art of works of art in Londrina.

For this we will use a bibliographic, descriptive and analytical framework that makes it possible to carry out the analysis and constitute the theoretical support of this work. Furthermore, for this text, we bring some results obtained through an interview carried out with a Pallottine priest who at the time of the works was carried out, when he was still a seminarian, that is, he was in the stage before studying to become a priest.

This research is based on a bibliographical, descriptive and analytical framework, in order to analyze the creative process of religious sculptures known by popular piety as Via Sacra. In view of this procedure, a bibliographical survey began to seek theoretical support that supports the thesis in question and guides the view on the assumptions of Genetic Criticism and Stylistics. To this end, the investigation continues at the pace of establishing the preliminary historical path with findings that testify to the path taken by Heise to develop his method and the conception of his work.

## **THEORETICAL ASPECTS**

The initial inspiration for this course was the discipline “Textual construction: the aesthetics of the creative movement”, taught by Professor Edina Panichi. Through studies carried out in the discipline, we realized that artistic creation is an absolute movement of construction and maieutics of Beauty. When we think about art or artistic creation, we think about the rapture that the art of all times provokes in the spirit, which translates and materializes that primordial hunger of man for what is ordered, harmonious, enchanting and that provokes wonder.

In this text we intend to present the investigation and record of a piece of the aesthetic movement that led to the creation of the Via Crucis paintings, harmoniously sculpted panels that portray the moments preceding the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Referring to the becoming of the text, Panichi’s observation (2016) also applies to the becoming of art in general. As the intention of this research is to investigate the process of construction in visual art, it must consider the paths indicated by Genetic Criticism to seek to understand the delight that the contemplative rapture of an art with a strong baroque tone imposes on the senses. We agree with Panichi about the becoming of the work of art:

The construction of a work of art is an intriguing question, as the path taken by the artist is of a diverse nature. Observations, research, lived experiences, notes are some of the paths that the work follows until it reaches the reading public (2016, p. 15).

## **AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOURTH SEASON: SIMÃO CYRINEU HELP JESUS**

When we observe an artistic construction, we are invited to questions about the path taken by the artist, which, certainly full of challenges, cannot be passed off as a mere

chronicle detail, but a true path/method of elaborating the creative process. A process in which this work seeks to unveil and which will undergo a careful analysis to understand how the interplay between text and art took place, in a transmutation from written language to artistic language.

By proposing that the path to constructing a work of art is of a diverse nature, with paths that precede it before being delivered to the public, Panichi (2016) puts us in contact with one of the most important assumptions of Genetic Criticism. The author states that, from Genetic Criticism, the text began to be studied as an aesthetic object, not static, but dynamic. This also applies to art in general and, in the present case, in particular. The creative process offers the artistic object a certain autonomy, allowing the artist to manipulate and transform resources.

By diving into the universe of the creative process, the superimposed layers of a mind in creation are slowly revealed and surprisingly understood (SALLES, 2000). A great challenge lies precisely in the analysis of the transmutation of a written language to that which is implied in the works of Heise, the German sculptor who, based in São Paulo, would begin his second major work in Brazil.

In one of her works, Panichi (2016) describes how the creative process took place in Pedro Nava, an important memoirist of Brazilian literature. Nava works a lot with data collection and his works are prepared in a pre-text phase in which he carefully values all the small details and clues that can be used in the final text. It addresses an important aspect: the act of remembering. This plays a fundamental role, as long as it is documented and systematized so that the most important memories are not lost. Each biblical record of Jesus' last moments becomes an omen of a possible creative act in Heise's sculptures:

These different ways of bringing memory

to light show us that Nava well understood the foundation of individual memory and consciously used the possibilities of manifestation of memory to cause a literary effect. (PANICHI, 2016, p. 15)

From the evangelical texts that inspire the Stations of the Cross, as well as the sculptures produced by Heise, we could ask what path he took to achieve the chisel that materialized the great biblical intuitions of Jesus' passion. Biblical texts are naturally present in the affective and religious memories of almost everyone who goes to the temple. Naturally, when seeing a painting of the Way of the Cross in a church, one can elevate one's thoughts to the biblical texts of religious memory that have accompanied the mind since childhood.

Is the act of sculpting, like writing, subject not only to imaginative work, but also to the result of slow and detailed research? In principle, the answer would be yes. One cannot think that such an imposing artistic work does not have a creation process that does not meet the characteristics of sublime works preceded by mature preparation:

Through contact with creation files, one understands the meaning of ceasing to operate solely with the idea of a product and starting to permanently adopt the notion of process. The solutions found must presuppose the ability to integrate and later transfer to proper use, all the elements brought together to construct the poetic project. (PANICHI, 2016, p. 19)

Another issue that deserves to be addressed or revisited is that of the elaboration of the textual discourse of the Way of the Cross, a discourse that is essentially imagery and sensitivity. The religious tradition behind the popular piety of the Way of the Cross is very old and has greatly influenced the religious imagination of the Christian West.

In the creative process of the so-called Stations of the Cross, which would be their division into scenes, an original setting is

present, Jerusalem, a city considered holy by Christians, “the city of the historic Stations of the Cross. She just has this great and tragic privilege. Throughout the Middle Ages, the fascination with holy places aroused the desire to reproduce them in one’s own land” (CHIARA, 2023, p. s/n).

Not only from lands, but from distant times, which culminated and were born the works in Heise’s chisel. Reproducing clippings of Jesus Christ’s path of suffering, in different artistic mediums, is a centuries-old practice of many artists and artisans around the world. And although the Way of the Cross reproduces a part of history so distant, its importance among different peoples has not diminished, on the contrary, in the Catholic tradition, this sequence of sacred images is still reproduced as Chiara (2023) puts it:

To the climate of painful piety towards the mystery of the passion must be added the enthusiasm of the crusaders who had the desire to recover the holy tomb, the revival of pilgrims from the 12th century onwards and the already stable presence of the Franciscan friars in 1233, in the holy places. (CHIARA, 2023)

The path taken by art with and of the Stations of the Cross is long. History is there to witness. And if the calculation takes into consideration, the biblical texts, the so-called passion stories, the jump in regressive time is even greater. The New Testament scripture itself is born from the desire to freeze in time the most important stories of the lives of Christians, stories that narrate the last moments of the historical Jesus.

It is no wonder that the Bible is the ultimate source of inspiration for the literary, performing and material arts. What we have before our eyes are very ancient texts that portray the drama of existence in an original way and, in some moments, even reinterpreting even older scriptural traditions:

The Bible is the great code of Western culture.

Writers have drawn from this enormous source for centuries and have modeled themselves on the style and composition of biblical writings. The reader and literary critic must be very familiar with the Bible if they want to make some contemporary literary texts comprehensible. (WEREN, 2011, p. 235, our translation)

There is no doubt that Heise’s art is completely intoxicated with a biblical event that is based on faith. But it is of great interest to the reader and the researcher in Genetic Criticism to reveal some facts, that is, to know how this passage came about from Heise’s experience: what technical and artistic resources, how the pre-conception of the material occurred and whether Heise would have reproduced any existing work from its own collection. The record time of its creation, according to witness reports, suggests an already established skill:

The work of art was in principle always reproducible. It has always been possible to imitate what was done by people. This copying procedure was also carried out by students as training in the art, by masters to disseminate their works and finally by greedy third parties. (BENJAMIN, 2022, p. 54)

As Benjamin (2022) presents, the work of art is reproducible. Within the accounts of Christ’s passion, which are in the writings called gospels, all artistic inspiration is in potential, containing all the art that would come later. In music, poetry, theater, painting and sculpture, in different types of art, the production of materials on this theme is evident. This production occurred with greater intensity during the crusade movement, which was not only a violent escalation of Christians to repossess the holy places, but was also a cultural and political movement that will forever influence Western culture.

Heise worked very spontaneously. With great skill, he tried to be very practical to meet



the demands assigned to him.

The testimony of a Pallottine priest, Father Fiori, tells us that carrying out the work in the Queen of the Apostles church in Londrina was, for the artist, an honor, since these priests were his compatriots. What's more, "Heise's skill was such that when he saw, or just described the space to be decorated, he was already thinking about works of art and began to implement what was already in his mind" (Father Fiori).

Another perception to be valued is the relevance of visual language. Think, for example, about the beginning of immigration in Londrina (PR), and the desire of religious missionaries from Germany, trained in German schools and with high levels of culture, to offer the art of Heise to the simple and hard-working people, as a development perspective:

Visual language in its theoretical proposals helps in the learning process to recognize the environment where experiences, experiences and reactions are part of this mediation. Visual information reaches us at all times, directly or indirectly, for the development of individual or collective interpretation. (TODA, 2022, p. 185)

As we know, the visual language of art has always been an important ally in the catechesis and evangelization of Christianity. Christianity has long taught through and with art. At a certain period, it was practically the only means of cultural access for the population.

When starting the artistic ornamentation of the church, we obtained the information that Heise set up the central altar: the crucified man, the mother and the disciple John, according to Father Fiori. As we said above, the Way of the Cross is made up of stations, and in this text, we chose to analyze the Fifth station, one of the fourteen that make up the whole.

After creating the sculptures for the central

altar, Heise begins the stage of the other sculptures that make up the church, including the Stations of the Cross. In artistic pedagogy we can say that the central altar is connected to the stations. The center leads to the seasons and the seasons lead to the center in a harmonious way, in a truly mystagogical sense, that is, the work as a whole lead to contemplation or mystery, as the author observes:

Creative potential is elaborated on the multiple levels of man's sensitive-cultural-conscious being, and is present in the multiple paths in which man seeks to capture, understand and configure the realities of life. Paths can crystallize and experiences can be integrated into forms of communication, into completed arrangements, but creativity as a power is always renewed. Man's productivity, instead of being exhausted, freeing itself, increases. (OSTROWER, 1988, p. 27)

The aforementioned author contributes to our understanding of this approach that Heise makes, of course, following an already established path. Heise is not original due to the arrangement of the paintings or the choice of themes. In the Catholic tradition this is already given, as in the imposition of a script. In search of the original, we look for the outline, the movement within the cut in the station scene, which is what he does.

In the fifth station of the Cross, expressed in the fifth panel, as an example, it is possible to see how the transmutation of languages takes place. In the representation of the scene, in the center is Jesus of Nazareth and a man called Simon. The biblical text reports this scene as follows: "to carry their cross they requested a passerby who came from the countryside, Simon of Cyrene, Father of Alexander and of Rufus" (Mc 16,21).

In the center of the panel, Jesus and the emblematic figure of Simon Cyrineus appear. In the background, there is also a Roman soldier with a face that evokes evil, sarcasm and

violence. In the original text of the Bible this soldier is not mentioned alongside Cyrineus. The soldier is part of the effect that Heise seeks to cause, completing the scene to make it even more impactful and surreal. We know from the Bible that those who accompany the condemned are the soldiers. The spears and points of Roman standards bear the acronym SPQR (Senatus Populus Que Romanus), which means the Senate and the Roman People, a symbol of the power of the Republic of Rome. What we see in the sculpture, along with the figure of Jesus and Cyrene, is the fruit of Heise's creative imagination. There is also the presence of two executioners who help the condemned person not to faint, a practice among those who followed the condemned person's journey to crucifixion, two poorly dressed men who hold the tree at each end. Above, right in the center is a representation of a Jewish religious authority: represented in art and literature with the same features (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Simon Cyrineus helps Jesus

Source: Fellepe Lima (2023).

Salles (2006) presents important guidelines that corroborate our understanding of what is established by Genetic Criticism. There is a mutual attraction between the elements, a kind of connection between coming and going, each movement is linked to another and so on:

A drawing, if seen in isolation, loses its heuristic value and stops pointing to discoveries about the creative act, period. Every document, in general, is inevitably related to another and has meaning only when connections are established. (SALLES, 2006, p. 117).

We conclude that Heise values the traits of his characters. Its figures appear as if in fragments, in blocks, obeying a development plan followed in all the Via Sacra paintings, works that will serve as a basis to illustrate the axes of analysis that this study intends to address and demonstrate the translational movement that is taking place in its creation.

In his experience with Pedro Nava's manuscripts, Panichi (2016) makes pertinent observations that can be applied to the study of the work in question, such as, for example, how the data storage process used by Heise took place. There is, as we know, a natural draft, already present in the biblical scripture, which could be a facilitator of the pre-work stage. There is also a permanent record in religious memory that Heise certainly brought with him because he was Catholic and because he came from a country in which, despite the advance of rampant secularism, he still maintained a certain Christian visibility among Catholics and Lutherans:

Bringing back a set of images means producing a conjugation between language and thought, in an attitude of recovery. The procedure of storing information through drawings and notes proves the effectiveness of recording images as a memory resource, especially as a mapping prior to a writing movement. (PANICHI, 2016, p. 30).

Thus, this entire visual proposal takes shape in the author's imagination, while you can follow the artist testing his images. To create, Heise visited memories that accompany him and that are renewed as the painting is sculpted, revealing that life and memory are gathered there in that sculpture, in that game of perspectives, lights and images. In this intersemiotic game, Heise activates the spectator's perception and registers different sensations, making him visualize the scenes from different perspectives.

In his sculptures, the German artist included picturesque details, which attract the attention of the faithful. The scenes seem divided into different perspectives, with the most important scene appearing in the foreground, and a juxtaposition of details that take on the appropriate proportions in the scenes that make up the background. The Via Crucis paintings effectively illustrate the axis of intersemiotic translation in which verbal text is transmuted into visual stimuli, fulfilling the author's desire.

A priori we analyzed only one of the panels that make up the Way of the Cross, and the analysis results we present here refer to this part of the work. And the results obtained demonstrate the applicability of Genetic Criticism to the issue of the creative process that precedes an art that, unlike a text, materializes in raw material that was previously raw and formless. With this we close this stage that brings partial results of the analysis if we consider the thesis as a whole.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis of the biblical text provides us with arguments in favor of the viability of the research in question, that is, the transmutation of forms. We attempt to demonstrate the applicability of Genetic Criticism to the issue of the creative process that precedes an art that, unlike a text, materializes in raw and

formless raw material. The analysis presented above demonstrates this applicability.

Regarding transmutation, we must first consider that the biblical text is quite poor and does not provide us with everything that is expressed in the artistic picture. It is necessary to consider parallel elements incorporated by Heise and which begin to harmoniously form the artistic completion presented by him. In other words, its final version.

In the analyzed table, for example, we have the spear with the acronym of the Roman Empire. They are not considered in the text, but are clearly implied, since from historical information we know that Palestine was under the rule of the Romans. And capital executions were the responsibility of the Romans. The biblical text itself notes the issue: "Then Pilate said, take him away from here and judge him according to your law. To which the Jews replied: It is not lawful for us to kill anyone." (John 18:31-32).

Without a doubt, Heise builds his sculptures by adding many elements that fall short of the biblical text, some perhaps slightly supposed, which certainly arise in this composition from the vast culture that the sculptor possessed, a German with training in schools

This research contributes to the formation of a collection of analysis of the city's historical heritage. A city or a community cannot be without memories and without unfolding its own history, realizing how it is shaped and how the final result has a lot of influence on people from a spiritual to an aesthetic point of view.



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