

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis explores the relationship between melodrama and Antonin Artaud's „theatre of cruelty“. It is based primarily on the conception of „melodramatic imagination“, invented by a renowned literary theorist Peter Brooks: according to his theory, melodrama is neither a lowbrow genre nor only a pop culture phenomenon, but a coherent aesthetic system with a wide-ranging repertoire of expressive features and also a certain mode of thinking and imagining. I aim to prove that the melodramatic imagination as defined by Brooks can be linked with Artaud's vision of theatre whose crucial aesthetic and ideological signs are similar to those of melodrama: I even conclude that the theatre of cruelty is a radical expression of the melodramatic imagination and that it fully realizes its potential. As I try to show, the kinship between those two systems can also be applied to cinema, that is why I analyse Rainer Werner Fassbinder's film *In a Year with 13 Moons* in which this unique affinity takes shape. My thesis is structured into three parts: the first one provides a theoretical framework for the examination of melodrama that is mainly based on two key works from the area, Brooks's book *The Melodramatic Imagination* and an essay by like-minded film theorist Thomas Elsaesser called *Tales of Sound and Fury*, the second is devoted to Artaud's theory of theatre and its relation to the melodramatic imagination and the final chapter offers a case study, the aforementioned analysis of *In a Year with 13 Moons* which demonstrates how the connection between melodrama and the theatre of cruelty manifests itself in film.