

Cultural Recycling in the Postdigital Age



Miriam Llamas Ubieto /
Johanna Vollmeyer (eds.)



PETER LANG

This volume explores the development towards mass digitisation and datafication and its transforming influence on our way of organising our cultural knowledge and heritage. In this context, cultural recycling plays a crucial role, even if it is in itself not a new phenomenon. However, the quality and quantity of recycling processes have altered profoundly in the postdigital age. The contributions of this volume consider various manifestations of these recycling processes and practices by providing the reader with a wide range of different case studies. Their authors highlight characteristic features of postdigital recycling that differ from the qualities of recycling processes and practices in previous periods. What the case studies show are the different recyclings of canonical texts, folktales, and cultural productions in new postdigital environments, but also what happens to history and memory in today's times and even how self-declared pre-digital authors cannot escape postdigital strategies for cultural recycling.

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Postdigital Remediation and Recycling off the Page: The Collaborative Work *Besmette Stad*¹

Abstract: In his poems *Bezette stad* (*Occupied City*) Flemish poet Paul van Ostaijen views the Great War as essential for the transition from the old world to the new. A century later, the multimedia artistic project “Besmette stad” was inaugurated and can be read as is an artistic recreation of van Ostaijen’s poems in the postdigital age. This contribution aims to detect and classify the types and strategies of recycling which have been used in the re(use) of specific poems in the anthology *Bezette stad*.

Keywords: Great War, pandemic, *Bezette stad*, Paul van Ostaijen, “Besmette stad”, recycling strategies.

1. Introduction

The collection of poems *Bezette stad* (*Occupied City*) ([1921] 2021), by the Flemish poet Paul van Ostaijen, published in 1921, depicts the circumstances before, during and after the occupation by the German Army of the Flemish city of Antwerp during the First World War. Its verses, typography and layout reflect a space of horror, desolation, absence and despair, without giving up dreams of a better society and a different life.

Van Ostaijen viewed the war as essential for the transition from the old world to the new. In Berlin, after the end of the Great War, he began to search for a new humanity, culminating in the creation and publication of his famous avant-garde work.

One hundred years later, the poetic work of Van Ostaijen and the concept of city embodied in it have taken centre stage again as a reference in a completely

1 I would like to thank those responsible for the project “Besmette stad”, Matthijs de Ridder and Willem Bongers-Dek, who have shared their enthusiasm for this chapter; for reviewing the chapter and for their collaboration in granting permission for and facilitating the publication of the illustrations.

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different context: the start of a global pandemic triggered by the COVID-19 virus. Despite the new setting, the comparable elements are substantial: a city once more filled with solitude, emptiness, uncertainty, death and vulnerability. This affinity prompted the historians of literature Willem Bongers-Dek, Director of the Flemish-Dutch cultural centre deBuren and Van Ostaijen's biographer Matthijs de Ridder for a series of podcasts dealing with what they called "Besmette stad" ("Contaminated city").

This initial idea led to individual reading workshops of each poem in Van Ostaijen's collection. From the start of the lockdown in the spring of 2020, the workshops were carried out in a streaming format with an audience loyal to the reading sessions. The sessions are now stored on the website of the Flemish/Dutch cultural centre deBuren.² In conjunction with the readings, De Ridder and Bongers-Dek assigned a poem from *Bezette stad* to each of more than a hundred artists who were part of the livestream audience at the literary workshops, with the main objective that they use the poem assigned to them to give an artistic response to the crisis of the pandemic. While *Bezette stad* can be considered a multi-media work, in which the poet reflects, among others, the films of the time, popular songs (French, Dutch, German and even Spanish), advertising slogans, collage, etc. the idea of the leaders of the macro project "Besmette stad" tended towards a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in the sense that the relation between different arts in the work as a whole would aspire both to the elimination of the barriers that separated them, as well as to the overcoming of the limits of art itself (Bryant 1997, 59). The artists were asked to be aware of their time and space, reflecting the fears and dreams of the present and future of the pandemic and bringing their productions to life in accordance with the *ad-hoc* circumstances and conditions of the 21st Century. The collective work included artists from many different areas of the culture and arts of Flanders and the Netherlands, such as writers, musicians, composers, illustrators, visual artists, etc., who created a variety of productions in the form of poems, songs, performances, stories, interactive drawings, posters, illustrations, documentaries, recitals and exhibitions.

The inauguration of the multimedia artistic project "Besmette stad" took place on 8 June 2020, with the participation of the Ministers for Culture of Flanders (Jan Jambon) and the Netherlands (Ingrid Engelshoven). It featured the public

2 deBuren: *Leesateliers Besmette stad*, 26 June 2020, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://deburen.eu/magazine/2788/leesateliers-besmette-stad>.

performance of artistic projects that were being created based on the poems of Van Ostaijen.³

Additional elements were included on the project website, such as a map of a fictitious city called “Besmette stad”, designed by the illustrator Dieter de Schutter.⁴ The map is characterised by a visual and dynamic language in which the reader moves via the screen from one neighbourhood to another of the city, gaining access in individual files to van Ostaijen’s poems, the individual workshops and the artistic manifestations based on those poems, which were created for the project in multiple media and devices.⁵

In addition, the artist De Schutter designed the poster for the “Street route workshops” *Eén, twee marsj*, which began in autumn 2020 as a follow-up to the reading workshops. In these walking tours, Matthijs de Ridder, sponsored by deBuren, guided the participants walking through the Antwerp of *Bezette stad* via three routes: the city of the war, the ideological city and the city’s night life.⁶ Beginning in 2021, these routes are available to be followed thanks to the mobile app *ErfgoedApp* (FARO 2021).

After a year of plans and further initiatives revolving around *Bezette stad* and the “Besmette stad” project, the Flemish/Dutch centre deBuren and the Paul van Ostaijengenootschap, coordinated by Matthijs de Ridder and Willem Bongers-Dek, jointly organised a 24-hour Paul van Ostaijen event (from 10 p.m. on 21 February to 10 p.m. on 22 February 2021) in commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the poet’s birth and the 100th anniversary of the publication of his collection of poetry. In these 24 hours, the celebrations were broadcast live from the house where Paul van Ostaijen was born (and which is now the home of Matthijs de Ridder). During the event, the studio played host to a few experts in the work and life of Paul van Ostaijen as well as some of the artists who have based their creations on his works. The final hours of this event were broadcast from two emblematic venues: the *Elckerlyc* theatre in Antwerp and

3 deBuren: *Officiële opening Besmette stad*, 04 February 2021, YouTube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2d6vUxs5I8Q>.

4 Verve built the *Besmette stad* website and Dieter de Schutter illustrated it.

5 deBuren: *Kaart Besmette stad*, 2020, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://deburen.eu/besmette-stad>.

6 deBuren: *Eén-twee-marsj | Teaser 1: wandel mee!*, 27.11.2020, YouTube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9k8uoTIsho&list=PLgxbksat77le-Kt2S05xOaaIgc2G1yhFb&index=2>; *Eén-twee-marsj | Teaser 1: de kunstenaars*, 27.11.2020, YouTube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdlW6tqEh0U&list=PLgxbksat77le-Kt2S05xOaaIgc2G1yhFb&index=2>.

the Flemish Cultural Centre *De Brakke Grond* in Amsterdam, on whose stage some of the artists participating in the “Besmette stad” project performed live.⁷ This event celebrated on the same day the transfer of the manuscript of *Bezette stad* to the Flemish Community, to be exhibited and digitalised so that it can be available to anyone interested (Vlaanderen.be 2021).⁸ Also announced was the publication of Matthijs de Ridder’s *Boem. Paukeslag. Op strooptocht door Paul van Ostaijens Bezette stad* (Pelckmans 2021), which provides a historical, literary and critical review of the experimental work *Bezette stad*. Additional cause for celebration was the publication of the anthology of the project responding to the coronavirus crisis by De Ridder/Bongers-Dek: *Besmette stad. Vijfenzestig kunstenaars antwoorden op Bezette stad van Paul van Ostaijen* (Pelckmans 2021).

The exhibition “Boem Paukeslag. Bezette stad 100!” was held from 27 March to 27 June 2021 in the House of Letters in Antwerp (Letterenhuis), most of the space being dedicated to *Bezette stad*, but also including some of the artistic manifestations created for the *Besmette stad* project. It is now possible to take a virtual tour of the exhibition.⁹ From March 2021 to November 2022, part of the exhibition (precisely the part dedicated to the new artistic manifestations based on *Bezette stad*) has become a type of travelling exhibition across Belgium and the Netherlands. Five young artists, most of them members of the “Besmette stad” project, were chosen for this multimedia exhibition. As of January 2023, the exhibition is rented to be shown in other cultural spaces.¹⁰

Having served as the starting point for the “Besmette stad” project, *Bezette stad* achieved a resonance and recognition at least comparable to the new project. Thanks to the new project, a collection published one hundred years earlier is now the subject to a (re)discovery of great transcendence, achieved by involving numerous artists who have disseminated it very widely through their joint work.

For example, there has been a re-publication of the facsimile edition of *Bezette stad* (Van Ostaijen 2021) used as a reference for this chapter, with an epilogue by the poet Erik Spinoy, who, after years of research on the work of Paul

7 deBuren: *Finale van de marathonuitzending ‘De 24u van Paul van Ostaijen!’* 23 February 2021, YouTube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRY9bb5IKHs>.

8 The press conference was a part of the marathon.

9 Letterenhuis: *Boem Paukeslag. Bezette stad 100! Afgelopen expo-bezoek digitaal* (n.d.), retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://letterenhuis.be/nl/expo/boem-paukeslag>.

10 Letterenhuis: *Boem Paukeslag: Bezette stad X 5* (n.d.), retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://letterenhuis.be/nl/boem-paukeslag-bezette-stad-x-5>.

van Ostaijen, also created an online project in 2021 dedicated to *Bezette stad*, including its text, cultural and historical references and bibliography.¹¹

Coinciding with the end of the toughest period of the pandemic and being aware that no solution had yet been found for the crisis itself, the coordinators of the “Besmette stad” project wished to close the project’s circle by establishing a connection with the final poem in *Bezette stad*: “De Aftocht” (“The Withdrawal”). The poem represents the withdrawal of the German Army and the departure of Paul van Ostaijen to Berlin. In it can be discerned the liberation of the city of Antwerp at the end of the First World War. At the same time, it displays the widespread despair that this liberation has not brought change and a new reality appears very distant. For this reason, taking with reference the last poem “De Aftocht” in *Bezette stad* – which is very long – those managing the project “Besmette stad” were interested in including artistic manifestations not only from the Netherlands and Flanders, but also from Germany. The artists taking part asked themselves very similar questions to those proposed by Van Ostaijen in his last poem: What are the consequences of the crisis we are experiencing? What awaits us now? A liberation, a revolution? A return to normality or a new abnormality? Can we continue to act as before and during the crisis, or has the time come to determine some lessons and conclusions?

The first episode of the “De Aftocht” Festival took place on 22 February 2022. It was a celebration developed around the final poem, offering live music, poetry and performance in the form of a music-hall by artists in Dutch and German.¹² There was also a launch of the publication *De Aftocht* (Eble et al. 2022), which includes 35 artistic contributions in Dutch and German.

The publication on paper of *Besmette stad* and *De Aftocht* (De Ridder / Bongers-Dek 2021 and Eble et al. 2022) contains 65 and 35 artistic manifestations, respectively, in the form of texts, illustrations and drawings. Certain works were selected for these publications, as those created in audio(visual) format could not be included, although fortunately they are available on the website of deBuren.¹³

11 University of Liège. Faculty of Philosophy and Letters: *Bezette stad*, 2021, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <http://web.philo.ulg.ac.be/bezetestad/>.

12 deBuren: *Slotshow Paul van Ostaijenjaar: De Aftocht*, 22 February 2022, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://deburen.eu/programma/5353/slotshow-paul-van-ostaijenjaar-de-aftocht>; *Final show of the Paul van Ostaijen year: The Withdrawal*, 23 February 2022, YouTube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlbXT-6FNAA&t=1190s>.

13 deBuren: *Besmette stad* (n.d.), retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://deburen.eu/besmette-stad>.

However, a large number of creations are not included either inside or outside the book, such as those presented on a stage in live performance, or those spread through social media, exhibitions, presentations or musical events, etc., which have to be viewed and listened to via other media and devices.

The aim of this chapter is to study some of the special creations that are outside the book of the collective phenomenon of “Besmette stad”, with the premise that “Besmette stad” is an artistic creation of the postdigital age, and with the aim of detecting and classifying the types and strategies of recycling which have been used in the re(use) of specific poems in the anthology *Bezette stad* by Paul Van Ostaijen.

Based on the starting point that there has been a process of postdigital recycling, I have adopted the statement postulated in an article by Florian Cramer, that: “‘Post-digital’ thus refers to a state in which the disruption brought upon by digital information technology has already occurred” (2014, p. 17). So, “postdigital” is in direct opposition to the notion of “new” technological media. Once these new media were diluted with old or previous ones, the analogue disrupting the digital, the notion of new media was superseded (Andersen / Cox / Papadopoulos 2014, p. 5). This process began in the first and second decade of the 21st Century.¹⁴

2. Analysis of the artistic creations in “Besmette stad”

2. 1. General comments

To classify the types and strategies of recycling, a specific nomenclature has been used with the corresponding definitions, as present in the repository and research space “Strategies of cultural and literary recycling in the postdigital era”.¹⁵

Before starting to analyse the recycling of a selection of poems of the collective project “Besmette stad”, I would like to make it clear that a general postdigital collaborative reading strategy of recycling has been used, mainly in the virtual reading workshops (deBuren *Leesateliers Besmette stad* 2020) directed by Matthijs

14 For a definition of the concept, a systematisation of the state of the question and an essential bibliography with commentary about the postdigital condition, see the article published by Llamas Ubieto (2020).

15 Within the REC-LIT project: *Cultural recycling. Transliterations in the postdigital era* (RTI2018-094607-B-100), financed by the ERDF/Ministry of Science and Innovation – State Research Agency. PI: Miriam Llamas. See: Llamas Ubieto / Goicoechea de Jorge (2022): http://repositorios.fdi.ucm.es/REC-LIT/view/paginas/view_paginas.php?id=1.

de Ridder, where the poems of *Bezette stad* were read and interpretations (of the poems) were shared and commented on. This served as an inspiration for the creations of the artists. In addition, the content of these literary meetings gave rise to the work of literary criticism on *Bezette stad* (De Ridder 2021).

Throughout the project there has also been a postdigital recycling strategy of collaborative writing to create a collective artistic product, including what appears both inside and outside the book giving one or more answers to the same poem, often with artistic duos collaborating, or producing diverse artistic creations in a new medium and time, through multiple media.

The original production had to serve, according to the coordinators of the “Besmette stad” project, as an element of inspiration for the creation of an artistic work in a new context. In this respect, Van Ostaijen’s anthology has been recycled, firstly, through a process of decontextualisation, given that it has been removed from the context in which it was created; and, secondly, by recontextualising the poems it contains, which thereby acquire a new meaning.

Finally, this collective work has involved a type of recycling of the reproduction of the original work (Van Ostaijen’s poem). The original work has been interpreted individually by the Flemish theatre actor and director Tom van Bauwel and included on the audio platform Soundcloud.¹⁶ It may, however, be argued that there has been an appropriation of the original poem in his act, since there is not much transformation in his interpretation of the poem.

2.2. “Bedreigde stad” (Paul van Ostaijen) versus “Besmette stad/Bedreigde stad” (Lucky Fonz III)

The poem “Bedreigde stad” (“Threatened city”)¹⁷ portrays the invasion of Belgium on 4 August 1914 by the German Army, and its triumphant entry into Brussels, reproducing the fires and bombardment of Antwerp at the start of October 1914 and the explosion of thousands of bombs dropped from zeppelins. This attack led to the complete destruction of the city: “Visé marsj Luik mortieren” [...] “défilé van één dag en één nacht door Brussel” [...] “het flak kerend land / de verre toren

16 Soundcloud: *Album Bezette stad*, 2021, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://soundcloud.com/search?q=Bezette%20stad>.

17 The poem “Bedreigde stad” by Paul van Ostaijen can be accessed on: Van Ostaijen (2021, n.p.) and in deBuren: *Bedreigde stad* (2020), retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://deburen.eu/besmette-stad/10/bedreigde-stad-paul-van-ostaijen>; and a critical study of the poem in: De Ridder (2021, pp. 95–120). The English translation is of the original work of Paul van Ostaijen (Colmer 2016).

en de laai ende brand” [...] “de débâcle”.¹⁸ The poet uses the occlusive sounds [k], [t], [p], creating the sound of successive explosions, which helps express a world of noise and tumult: “*knal knal kneppert klettert knepperen klettert knallen*”.¹⁹

These days are described as traumatic, full of fear and uncertainty, “Het staPPen van de stad / *de forten zullen houen zullen vallen zullen houen zullen vallen / het staPPen van de stad in angst*”,²⁰ in a stifling landscape of survival. Chaos is represented in verses which are placed randomly on the page and move in different directions, reflecting explosions, flight, the noise of sirens, scattered bodies and limbs everywhere (Figure 1).

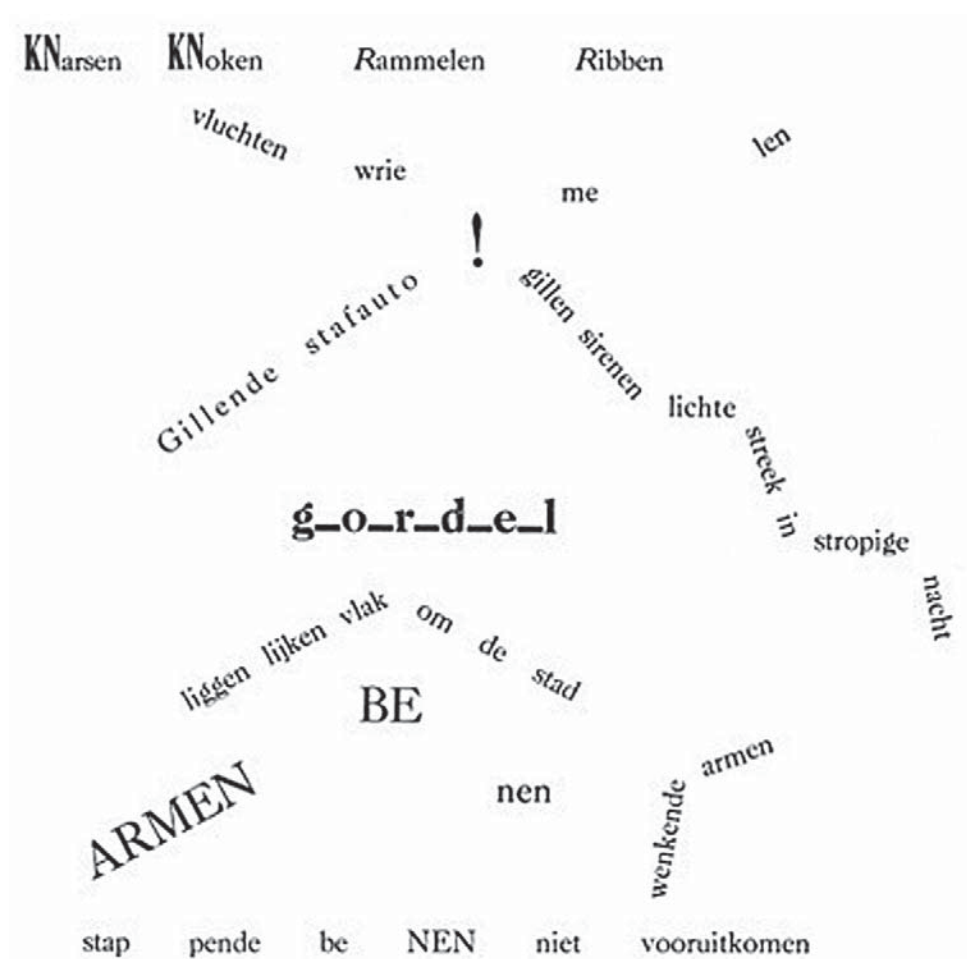


Fig. 1. Fragment of the poem “Bedreigde stad”, in: Van Ostaijen (2021, n.p.; De Ridder 2021, p. 113).

18 “Visé march Liège mortars” [...] “March-past through Brussels all day and all night” [...] “the flickering hoRIzon / the distant tower and blazing FIRE” [...] “the debacle”.

19 “*bang bang crump crackle crumping crackle crash*”.

20 “The paCing City / *the forts will hold they’ll fall they’ll hold they’ll fall / the paCing fearful City*”.

“Bedreigde stad”, as is the case in many of the poems in *Bezette stad*, naturally uses the three languages French, Dutch and German, which were used, read, heard and spoken back then. Popular operettas were also mixed with famous German army songs “Puppchen Du bist mein Augensterne / Puppchen mein liebes Puppchen / Heil Dir im **Siegerkranz**”²¹ (De Ridder 2021, p. 102).

On 9 October 1914, the Van Ostaijen family fled the Netherlands, as did many citizens of Antwerp. Amidst the chaos, the German Army moved from Brussels to Antwerp, which became a mecca for prostitutes from the whole country, because as well as fear there was also desire: “Alle hoeren uit het gehele land / en dat marsjeert dat doet de truk / langs de boulevards” [...] “angst en begeerte”.²² Female literary and operatic characters from Puccini, like Manon and Mimi, enter scene; the war has not left them indifferent either: “tul goud zilver voile Mimi Manon pailjetten en tanden / de patronne en grande soirée / men heeft niet de tijd zich om te kleden / de obus valt / zonder / *un client mesdames voyons*”.²³ Van Ostaijen also brings into his poem the iconic character from the mid-19th Century Juliette Récamier (1777–1849), the organiser of a famous literary salon in Paris. There is no money to flee, but if there were, where could she find a couturier to dress her?: “Gaby-Récamier heeft geen poen te vluchten / tailleur te ouderwets trimmen uitgesloten / Ah c’est la merde merde pour les Boches merde pour tout le monde”.²⁴

The end of the poem, located once again in an Antwerp now completely overtaken by the occupiers, demonstrates the counterpoint between the losers and winners, between exodus and victory: “verslagen leger / zegevierend leger” [...] “EKSODE /!SIEG!”²⁵

In the marathon homage to Paul van Ostaijen on 22 February 2021, the actor Tom van Bauwel read, on the stage of the *Elckerlijck* theatre of Antwerp, an extract from “Bedreigde stad” by the Flemish poet.²⁶ Then, as part of the same event,

21 “Puppchen Du bist mein Augensterne / Puppchen mein liebes Puppchen / **Heil Dir im Siegerkranz**”.

22 “All the whores of the whole country / and they do well it does the trick /along the boulevards” [...] “fear and desire”.

23 “tulle gold silver voile Mimi Manon sequins and teeth / the madam up to the nines / no time to change / the shell falls / without / *un client mesdames voyons*”.

24 “Gaby – Recamier no dough to flee / suit way out of style streetwalking impossible / Ah c’est la merde merde pour les Boches merde pour tout le monde”.

25 “defeated army / victorious army” [...] “Exodus /!SIEG!”.

26 deBuren: *Boem Paukeslag!*, 23 February 2021, 2m38s-6m34s, YouTube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRY9bb5IKHs>. It can also be listened to on *Soundcloud*: Van Bouwel “Bedreigde stad” 2021.

Lucky Fonz III, a Dutch singer, composer and performance artist, staged his artistic creation called “Besmette stad / Bedreigde stad”, at “De Brakke Grond”, the centre of Flemish culture in Amsterdam, with a mixture of recital, musical performance and singing.²⁷ In the performance he says he feels caught up in the spirit of experimentation transmitted in the Van Ostaijens’ poem, which inspired his own artistic production. Voice and electric drums helped him reproduce the military sounds and gunshots; these aggressive sounds are, according to him, present in the whole *Bezette stad* collection. The crash of the sounds is already audible at the start of his own poem:²⁸ “Granaten groot groter GROOTST.../ Groot = gevaar / Groter = gevaarlijker / En grootst = gevaarlijkst”.²⁹

Lucky Fonz III created his work at the start of the pandemic. In his piece, he notes that two contrasting associations are already apparent in the first wave of lockdown: it appears that we are on holiday and it appears that we are at war, “Het lijkt wel vakantie” [...] “Het lijkt wel oorlog”.³⁰ In the act of recycling, Lucky Fonz establishes a parallel between the war in the original poem and the idea that the situation of the pandemic suggests that “it’s like a war”. Both situations were new experience for both artists. Like the war, lockdown produced a commotion. It was unexpected and inexplicable; understanding it required new words to explain it, to talk about it, and that is where the new parallel with the work of Paul van Ostaijen was established. Throughout his anthology the Flemish poet uses language associated with war films, as well as highlighting cinematographic techniques to show the war, with a new and explosive language. The artist Lucky Fonz III was struck by this journalistic approach in the work *Bezette stad* by Paul van Ostaijen, so his artistic response creates a record of images of certain places and situations in the city under lockdown which have impacted him. He does so by means of impetuous and energetic poetics, with a story in which cinema also plays an important role, just as it did one hundred years ago in a new art form in the work of Van Ostaijen (Pakhuis de Zwijger 2020, 45m40s-59m19s).

Lucky Fonz observes that, having so much free time during the pandemic and at the same time nothing to do, “Hoe minder je beweegt hoe beter / Zeker

27 deBuren: *Boem Paukeslag!*, 23 February 2021, 7m11s-15m22s, YouTube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRY9bb5IKHs>.

28 The subsequent verses, unless specified otherwise, correspond to the work of Lucky Fonz III “Besmette stad / Bedreigde stad”: De Ridder / Bongers-Dek (2021, pp. 49–53).

29 “Grenades Big Bigger BIGGEST.../ Big = Danger / Bigger = More Dangerous / And Biggest = Most Dangerous”. The translation into English of the Dutch verses of “Besmette stad / Bedreigde stad” (De Ridder / Bongers-Dek 2021, 49–53), is my translation. I would like to give my warmest thanks to Harry Rijnen for revising the translation.

30 “It looks like a holiday” ... “It looks like war”.

als je het al hebt / We verslaan door met z'n allen / Zo min mogelijk / Zo min mogelijk / Zo min mogelijk / Te doen”,³¹ people resume activities that used to be undertaken in the past, like board games, “ik hoorde dat de bordspellen weer populair worden”,³² as if horror and entertainment were reconciled. They are thus recovering a situation in which the analogue world predominated. The language of war is also used by the artist with analogue board games or pre-digital video games of the 1980s or 1990s: Risk and Stratego (games of strategy), video games, both non-violent (PacMan, Tetris) and violent (Fifa, Call of Duty). By using the language of war, like “Granaten”, “afvuren”, “landmijnen”, “dynamiet”, “opgegroeid met oorlogskreten”³³ he portrays a situation of contamination, disease and defencelessness. When the first wave of the pandemic begins to recede, and people begin to return to the streets little by little, he calls on historic moments, referring to the fact that no fighter planes are seen any more: “Er is geen Spitfire ...”, and uses the cinema, mentioning the artificial intelligence aircraft which represent a deadly threat: “... of Stealth meer te zien”.³⁴

Lucky Fonz III worked on his artistic piece by searching for appropriate terms for the situation experienced in the pandemic. He ironically shows how the government uses expressions in English and not Dutch to explain the current situation: “We flattenen the curve / Flattenen the curve / Flattening the curve / Dat kan alleen in het engels”,³⁵ giving free rein to a parody in the style of an advertisement: “Quarantaine! Garçon! Garçon! Quarantaine pour tout le monde!” By turning the government’s words into an advertisement, “RECLAME ...”, he ironically criticises the idea that all together we can defeat the virus; and that money is being paid to those who had failed earlier to manage the arrival of the pandemic: “Samen zullen we dit! En samen zullen we dat! / Samen zullen we ons geld uitgeven / Aan de beste provider / De beste voorziener / Die dit ook niet ook had kunnen voorzien”.³⁶ In the sung verses, which are the chorus of the poem, he says that the robbers no longer rob, and those who cry end their grief, and if you want to be with someone, the best thing is to remain as far away as

31 “The less you move the better / Especially if you’ve already got it / We defeat by all together doing / As little as possible / As little as possible / As little as possible”.

32 “I heard board games are getting popular again”.

33 “Grenades”, “firing”, “land mines”, “dynamite”, “raised with war cries”.

34 “There is no more Spitfire or Stealth to be seen”.

35 “We flattenen the curve / Flattenen the curve / Flattening the curve / That only works in English”.

36 “Together we will do this! “Together we will do this! / Together we will spend our money / With the best provider / The best fore / Who neither couldn’t have foreseen this either”.

possible: “De rovers stoppen met roven / En de huilers met hun verdriet / Wil jij er ook zijn voor iemand? / Wees er nu dan niet”.³⁷

While the performance of the actor Tom van Bauwel of the poem “Bedreigde stad” may be considered a type of ‘remediation’, in which the poem of Van Ostaijen acquires a new significance in a new medium in the postdigital age, the artist Lucky Fonz III uses both remediation and re-creation as a type of recycling in his response to the coronavirus crisis, because by updating the reference poem he is not making a copy. He says explicitly that he uses the poem as an inspiration in its documentary aspect and images, in the warlike language, in the parody, in the clashing noises and contradiction between the fear of war/disease and the desire/pleasure of brothels/games and videogames. From his choice of title it is clear that a parallel is established between the modern-day contaminated city (“Besmette stad”) and the threatened city of one hundred years ago (“Bedreigde stad”). The strategy of recycling which dominates the poem by Lucky Fonz III is transformation, as existing materials have been considered in its creation, but they have been altered, giving rise to a result that is different from the original. His response to Van Ostaijen’s poem is a performance, whose text is now included in the volume *Besmette stad* (De Ridder / Bongers-Dek 2021, 49–53).

2. 3. “Rouwstad” (Paul van Ostaijen) versus “Ragtime Nightmare” (Shamisa Debroey)

The poem “Rouwstad” (“City of grief”) by Paul van Ostaijen³⁸ refers to the aircraft bombings in October 1917 by the English allies; the order is for the lights to be put out. However, there are flashes of lights in homes and cafés; and as if the city residents were on a site where they couldn’t move, the artillery can be heard, “VLIEGERAANVALLEN / Burgers sirenen verwittigd / moeten / 1 2 3 / overall donkerte / Licht in de kamer toontinteling van violet naar **Zwart** / op linnen en papier / kaffees= / onbewegelijke pantersauto’s / licht geschut”.³⁹ From the outside, the glass of the windows reflects the few lights that can be seen outside; and if you

37 “The robbers stop robbing / And the howlers with their grief / Do you want to be there for someone too? / Then don’t be there now”.

38 The poem “Rouwstad” of Paul van Ostaijen can be accessed at: Van Ostaijen (2021); deBuren: *Rouwstad* (2020), retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://deburen.eu/magazine/rouwstad>; the critical study of the poem is available at: De Ridder (2021, pp. 197–202). The English translation is of the original work by Paul van Ostaijen (Colmer 2016).

39 “A E R I A L AT TA C K S / Civilian sirens must be / notified / 1 2 3 / darkness everywhere / Light in the room tints flickering violet to Black / on linen and paper / cafés = / unmoving armoured cars / light artillery”.

enter the café you see through the windows the same image that you see from the outside, but the light is being extinguished and the blue colours are becoming black and dominating the obscurity and the penumbra, “al de vensters zien straat door kleurglasbrillen” [...] “blauw-zwart zinken van gedoofde dingen / Vult / dieper **DONKer de duistere** straat / vallen”.⁴⁰ The poem expresses the cries in the street and the trembling, followed by silence, obscurity and fear in a phantom city: “**Gil** / straat / ik / trem / geruisloos / valt de gil / Spokend straat / Spiegel / me zelf / was ik **bang** / dan zou / **Angst** / niet zijn”.⁴¹ The image of tenuous light, obscurity, penumbra and, again, flickering light appears to indicate what the city looks like wherever gazes or passes the poetic ‘I’. And the silence increases, yet in a misty, dull boom we hear modern music, ragtime; and simultaneously the ear hears and the eye sees the silence that seems to come from a cafe where, on the contrary, popular music can be heard, where the light is warm and there are people who are drinking and listening to music, with the tables adorned with flowers. Outside, however, there is sadness: “hebben scheppen lantaarns fluweel rondom / dansende krans / donkerte om / licht / trems scheppen om zich hun duisternis / meeschuivende duisternis met licht / geruislozer / zinnen simultaan / het oor hoort –het geruisloze– dat / het oog Ziet” [...] “dof echoëren in mist / **RAG** / fluwelen rijtuig / **RAG TIME**” [...] “warm licht / reuk van gitaren / horen van whisky en / verwelkte roos / *je bloem Musette* / is het triestig buiten / *Il fait si doux près de toi* / want / Jaarsma / warmt goed”.⁴²

In Soundcloud: *Rouwstad* (2021) the actor Tom van Bauwel recreates the poem *Rouwstad* by Paul van Ostaijen. The illustrator Shamisa Debroey’s drawing “Ragtime Nightmare” is a graphic response to the poem by Paul van Ostaijen⁴³ (Figure 2).

40 “all windows see street through coloured glass / windows like German professors / blue-black sinking / of extinguished things / Filling / deeper **DARKness dim dismal** street / Falling”.

41 “**Scream** street / ME / tram / noiseless / scream falls / **Spectral Street**/ reflecting / me myself / if I were / **Scared** / **Fear** /would not be”.

42 “streetlamps creating velvet surround / **dancing corona** / darkness surrounds/light / trams creating their darkness around them / darkness sliding along with light / less noise / senses simultaneous / the ear hears – the noiselessness – / the eye Sees”... “muffled echoes in mist / **R A G** /velvet carriage /

R A G T I M E” [...] “warm light / smell of guitars / sound of whisky and / wilted rose / *your flower Musette* / if it’s miserable outside / *it’s lovely near you* / because / Jaarsma / warms well”.

43 deBuren: *Ragtime Nightmare*, 03.06.2020, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://deburen.eu/besmette-stad/33/shamisa-debroey>; De Ridder / Bongers-Dek (2021, pp. 140–141).

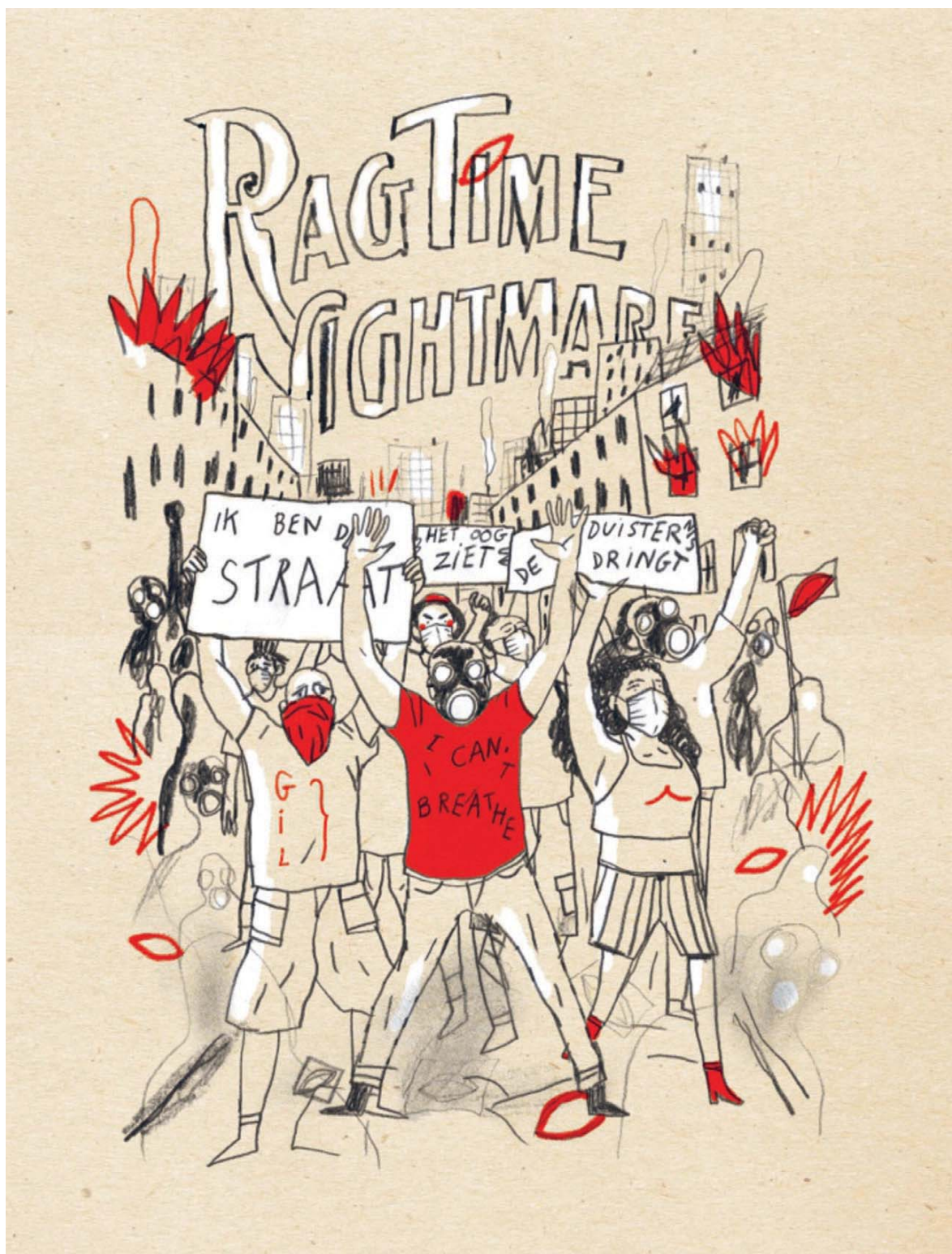


Fig. 2. Shamisa Debroey: “Ragtime Nightmare”. In: De Ridder / Bongers-Dek (2021, pp 141–142).

In the illustration “Ragtime Nightmare”, Shamisa Debroey depicts a protest. She chooses a quote from Van Ostaijen’s poem: “IK / BEN / DE / STRAAT”,⁴⁴ in which the poet wants to become one with what is happening on the street. Debroey uses these words as a text on a protester’s banner, because he wants the street to be heard against injustice, inequality and repression. One of the first things that catches her attention in Van Ostaijen’s poem is the reference made to the musical genre ‘RAG TIME’ and for the artist this evokes the title of the song “Ragtime Nightmare” by Tom Turpin, which lends its name to the title of her drawing. She adds that for a pianist it is very difficult to play this music, which is cyclical, and may lead to confusion because it is played so quickly. Shamisa Debroey relates it to the disasters of war in the poem by Van Ostaijen, and, in the period when she created her work, to the pandemic and the difficulties of emigration, elements that are repeated throughout history. Shamisa Debroey states that when she created this artistic work, she was very affected by the movement *Black Lives Matter*, so she could not ignore the emotion it provoked in her. The central character in the drawing is wearing a T-shirt with the slogan “I CAN’T BREATHE”; this links it not only to the time referred to in the poem “Rouwstad” of being enclosed and unable to breathe and the idea of being isolated, but also establishes a parallel with the death of George Floyd at the hands of the police on 25 May 2020.⁴⁵ In addition, what interests her in Van Ostaijen’s poem is the chaos, the hustle and bustle of the city and the screams. The same word is used both in his poem and the illustration: “Gil”. With “De duisternis dringt” she also makes clear that the darkness is imposed, referring to the poet’s verse saying that in the depths of the penumbra darkness dominates: “Dieper in Duisternis Dringt Donkerte”.⁴⁶ There are also images in the illustration of Debroey which reference the poem of Van Ostaijen in the verses: “masker / O / masker / op / mij /toe /!”,⁴⁷ as if he were a soldier approaching the poetic “I” with a mask of war, one imagines to alleviate the tear gas and other toxic substances. The illustrator relates this giant “o” of Van Ostaijen to the “o” in the word “mond” (mouth) and in “mondmasker” (mask), and in this way portrays the mouths of the demonstrators covered with masks against the virus, and as masks to alleviate political repression. At the same time, she relates having to wear a mask to not being able to breathe, to the closed city

44 “I / AM / THE / STREET”. The translation into English of the Dutch verses of “Ragtime Nightmare” (De Ridder / Bongers-Dek 2021, 140–141), is my translation.

45 deBuren: *Officiële opening Besmette Stad*, 04.02.2021, 03m04s-04m12s Youtube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2d6vUxs5I8Q&t=339s>.

46 “Dark Driving Deeper into Darkness”.

47 “**Mask** / Oh /mask / to / wards / me!”.

with people who look out from the inside and who, despite everything, go out to see what is happening. This gives rise to a drawing where the past and the present coincide, where they have a great deal in common. Her intention is to show how the two contexts correspond and to motivate the public about the reality of inequality and injustice.⁴⁸

A kind of remediation recycling has been applied in Debroey's work, inasmuch as the content of Van Ostaijen's poem is represented in another medium. Quite a few of the characteristics of the old medium have been incorporated into the new, with the use of the verses: "Ik ben de straat", "Het oog ziet", "De duisternis dringt",⁴⁹ for example. These serve the artist's purpose of making her own recreation, that is, the updating of the original work. Similarly, when the drawing is viewed everyone has new experiences and interpretations, which gives a new life to the street, and at the same time appeals to some elements present in Van Ostaijen's poem. In this sense, Debroey's artistic work uses a strategy for transforming the original poem into a different medium with a different meaning, and with the intention that the new material should be manipulated and open to different interpretations and perceptions. Her chosen strategy of decontextualisation uses elements of the original poem to place the recycled element in a new social and historical context, giving the work a new meaning.

2. 4. "Banale dans" (Paul van Ostaijen) versus "Banale dans" (Lisette Ma Neza and Maja-Ajmia Yde Zellama)

The poem "Banale dans" ("Banal dance")⁵⁰ by Paul van Ostaijen shows a city which suffers terrible deterioration, but where there is dancing; a city which is in movement, and however banal it may appear, there is dancing for pleasure: "Leven giert / leven grijpt / en leven / valt / KnAK / dol draperen step / DANS van begeren".⁵¹ However, dancing does not end up producing satisfaction; life has

48 deBuren: From *24u van Paul van Ostaijen*, 22.02.2021, 2h18m30s-2h28m32s YouTube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKn-NyWq8BY&t=8330s>.

49 "Darkness pushes".

50 The poem "Banale dans" by Paul van Ostaijen can be accessed on: Van Ostaijen 2021, n.p.; also on deBuren: *Banale dans* 2020 retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://deburen.eu/magazine/banale-dans>; the critical study of the poem in De Ridder (2021, pp. 203–204). The English translation is of the original work by Paul van Ostaijen (Colmer 2016).

51 "Life screams / life seizes / and life / falls / Crack / crazed draping one-step / DANCE of desire".

fallen apart and the instruments and music, whether ancient or modern, end up being shattered, with a confirmation of death by cardiac event: “en leven / valt / altijd” [...] “en DANS / valt / leven” [...] “of violen of banjo’s / VERTEERD WORDEN IN onBEKENDE GLOED / BANJO BANJO BANJO zegt KNAK / en de / arts affection Cardiaque”.⁵²

Tom van Bauwel interprets and recreates the poem “Banale dans” by Paul Van Ostaijen on the stage of the *Elckerlijck* theatre in Antwerp.⁵³ At the same event the visual artists Lisete Ma Neza⁵⁴ and Maja-Ajmia Yde Zellama offer an artistic performance based on the same poem by Van Ostaijen⁵⁵ (Figure 3).



Fig. 3. Lisette Ma Neza and Maja-Ajmia Yde Zellama “Banale dans”. In: De Ridder / Bongers-Dek (2021, pp. 144–146).

52 “and life / falls / all ways” [...] “and DANCE / life / falls” [...] “or violins or banjos / CONSUMED IN AN unKNOWN GLOW / “BANJO /BANJO / BANJO / says CRACK / and the / doctor heart attACK”.

53 deBuren: *Boem Paukeslag!*, 23.02.2021, 1h19m01s-01h20m51s, Youtube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRY9bb5IKHs>.

54 First woman writing in Dutch to win the Belgian *Poetry Slam* award.

55 deBuren: *Boem Paukeslag!*, 23.02.2021, 1h21m15s-1h29m30s Youtube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRY9bb5IKHs>; De Ridder / Bongers-Dek (2021, pp. 144–146).

A parallel is established between the world described in the poem by Van Ostaijen and the time in which the artists live. The creators admit that the inspiration for their own work mainly lies in the verses where the Flemish poet describes the dance of grey-haired people and young girls who know nothing of the reality of a collapsed city: “midden in dans vergrijzen haren / staan nog te midden jonge meiden / voortdansen over onze / VAL / Weten niets van werkelijkheid / dromend door straten staan”.⁵⁶ The young girls, say the artists, use the Internet during their lockdown and feel united, using *Tik Tok*, indicating that during the lockdown they did little more than eat, sleep and watch stories on *Instagram*. They share the sadness of losing their fathers, brothers or daughters: “jonge meisjes tiktokken / weten niets van werkelijkheid / verliezen hun vader” [...] “droom over de straten / vergeet dat er ooit toekomst was / eten slapen / eten slapen / eten slapen / *Instagram* / eten slapen” [...] “het verdriet van België zit in Brussel verstoep / 1234 / broeders die ons zijn ontnomen / 5678 / dochters om het leven gekomen / 5678”.⁵⁷ The numbers in the poem establish a parallel between the thousands of deaths in Van Ostaijen’s poem, the deaths of the pandemic and the deaths of the political violence in the United States, connecting it with the case of George Floyd.⁵⁸ The girls also share their joys, dreams, nightmares, dances, distancing and sisterhood. They know much more than we think about the reality that surrounds them and what is happening to their bodies, sharing many taboos: “klimmen op klimaatproblemen / zijn vrouwen nog voordat ze het weten / jonge meisjes hebben geen gender meer / weten alles over kleine dingen”.⁵⁹ In the following verses, the girls dance a ‘banal dance’. Why do they continue to dance? They dance even when they don’t feel well, when they cry, when they are celebrating, when they are together online or offline, because they can’t do anything else or know how to do anything else; because they are young

56 “hair turns grey mid-dance / still standing among young girls / dancing on over our / FALL / Knowing nothing of reality / dreaming through streets standing”.

57 “young girls tiktok / know nothing of reality / lose their father” [...] “dream about the streets / forget there was ever a future / eat sleep / eat sleep / eat sleep / *Instagram* / eat sleep” [...] “Belgium’s sorrow is hidden in Brussels / 1234 / brothers who have been taken from us / 5678 / daughters perished”. The translation into English of the Dutch verses of “Banale dans” (De Ridder 2021, 144–146), is my translation. I would like to give my warmest thanks to Harry Rijnen for revising the translation.

58 deBuren: *Officiële opening Besmette Stad*, 04.02.2021, 4m14s-5m34s Youtube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2d6vUxs5I8Q&t=339s>.

59 “climbing on climate problems / are women even before they know it / young girls no longer have gender / know everything about little things”.

girls, girls who are afraid – because of this, they still dance: “redenen waarom we nog steeds dansen? / omdat we niet anders kunnen / omdat we niets weten / omdat we jonge meisjes zijn” [...] “omdat we niets anders kunnen / omdat we anders zijn / omdat ons angstig voelen / daarom dansen we / dansen we nog”.⁶⁰

The artistic proposal of Lisette Ma Neza and Maja-Ajmia Yde Zellama can be read on paper (De Ridder / Bongers-Dek 2021, pp. 144–146), but it has been created using the app *Tik Tok*.⁶¹ According to Bongers-Dek, it went viral when it was published on the social media app.⁶² Thus, they are inspired by what young people experience when they suffer a situation of pandemic and lockdown at a time when they are beginning to live and enjoy life. The poetic response to the coronavirus crisis is reflected by recycling this image expressed in the poem by Paul van Ostaijen, remediated and recreated in a postdigital era with its fears and hopes, a *Tik Tok* video-poem, where there is dancing and authentic images are used of the authors’ friends and the poem also shows images that criticise political violence. Social media allow the work of Paul van Ostaijen to be transformed and recomposed, and in this way establish new connections and circulate again, spreading to infinity. They show an authentic and modern-day art, fundamentally of young people (although it may be extended to other generations) who depend on social media; or rather, have depended on it during the lockdown, using these media as a source of escape and a means to express their feelings. At any event, the artists admit that what they mainly wanted to reflect was what it means to be a young girl at this stage of the pandemic, how they see this world; and the means through which they express their experience, the social media platform *Tik Tok*, appeared to be the most obvious option for the artists to use.

3. Conclusions

With the premise of reusing the idea or vision of the city in *Bezette stad* by Paul van Ostaijen, those responsible for the macro-project “Besmette stad” gave complete freedom to the chosen artists to create their work, based on a

60 “reasons why we still dance? / because we can’t do otherwise / because we know nothing / because we are young girls” [...] “because unable of anything else / because we are different / because feel anxious / that’s why we dance / we still dance”.

61 deBuren: *Besmette stad/ Banale dans* van Lisette Ma Neza en Maja Ajmia Yde Zellama, 05.06.2020, Youtube, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1U4Cve6cPjE>.

62 Statement communicated personally at a working meeting.

poem from the collection. However, there were some objectives which had to be furthered by each of them. The purpose of the new creation was, firstly, to provide an artistic response to the original poem; and, secondly, to respond to the crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020. The aim of those managing the project was not for these new works to talk about the Flemish poet, but nevertheless, the title of van Ostaijen's collection features in the name of the project and subsequently in the works published on paper (De Ridder / Bongers-Dek 2021; De Ridder 2021; Eble et al. 2022). Many new works also use the titles of van Ostaijen's poems, adopt an approach similar to his, and moreover apply the concepts of a multimedia work and/or a collective work, with Flemish-Dutch artistic duos very often working together at the request of those responsible for the project. Van Ostaijen worked on his volume in Berlin, with the sculptor Oscar Jespers, who was in Antwerp. The latter was responsible for the reproductions of the woodcuts which appear in the collection and the typography and layout so characteristic of the poetical work.

The poetry of Paul van Ostaijen has been recycled in a variety of art forms, and through different media and social media, in which it is no longer possible to make a distinction between the analogue and the digital. Literature no longer has a single material location, as explained by Brillenburg Wurth (ed.) (2012, p. 1): "Literature no longer has a single material location, and one may wonder if it ever had one". The frontiers of events and meetings between artists, languages and spaces have also become blurred. The whole concept of this macro-project as it has grown has developed so many tentacles, as Matthijs de Ridder says in the preface to *De Aftocht* (Eble et al. 2022, p. 10), that all the creations become one, or form part of the whole. Moreover, the relations of materiality and virtuality have undergone considerable transformations in the last two decades (Brillenburg Wurth 2018, pp. 1–23), which has contributed to the fact that both complement each other, dilute each other and need each other.

In the creations of "Besmette stad", the characteristics of the postdigital are revealed, with a permanent connectivity, requiring interaction, dialogue and participation between artists and the general public. In the new artistic works, there is a multitude of postdigital features: emojis, neologisms inherent to the new technologies, apps, references to social media as agents of the pandemic: "Toen Facebook werd besmet en Twitter zich bemoeide met prognostiek" (Pfeijffer 2021, p. 16).⁶³ There are also apps to take you on a tour around the city of Antwerp,

63 "When Facebook got infected and Twitter meddled with forecasting" (De Ridder / Bongers-Dek 2021).

inspired by the stages of the life and work of Paul van Ostaijen and present in the collection *Bezette stad* exhibitions, concerts and meetings of creators and experts on the poet's life and work in Flanders, the Netherlands and recently in Germany.⁶⁴

There are elements of postdigital recycling in the “Besmette stad” project which can be found in all the artistic works created in this collective work: elements such as collective reading and writing strategies. The result is the creative appropriation of a historical past, as well as a rewriting of both, the poems and the historical past, with the task of separating oneself from the context in which they are based to locate in a new context where a new project can begin. At the same time there is a recreation of the original work in the performance of the poems by the artist and composer Tom van Bauwel.

Often in “Besmette stad” the use of technology makes it possible for the work created to lend itself to repetition and interaction, and therefore to multiple interpretations and readings. Moreover, the use of social media to make artistic creations is very successful in this recycling framework, as it includes many characteristics that are intrinsic to the postdigital age, such as interaction, immediacy, reaching many people at the same time, the value of the authentic, remediation, reproduction, recontextualization and (re)circulation. In this way, the work becomes a dynamic phenomenon, traveling through new circuits of pooling and sharing.

That so many artists are simultaneously talking about something that is current and that can be conceived of holistically an artistic monument in itself, perhaps only possible in the postdigital age in which it is taking place. In general, these artists are in favour of a type of activist art and against artistic autonomy, which is considered exclusive and solipsistic (Ham / Vitse 2019b, p. 5). The desire for relationships and the sharing of artistic experiences through social media is thus a characteristic of making art which works within sociocultural contexts. Moreover, relations and identities are frequently relative and more than ever mediated. This responds to our condition of permanent digital connectivity (Op de Beek / Van Dijk 2019, p. 63).

In many artistic manifestations of the project “Besmette stad”, there is a crossover between different arts and media, which is another characteristic of the postdigital age. This helps ensure that we are in contact with literature, which

64 The homage on 27 and 28 April 2022 to Paul Van Ostaijen in Berlin marks the start of a cultural and artistic tour across different cities of Germany, in *Neerlandistiek*, 24.04.2022, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://neerlandistiek.nl/2022/04/27-28-april-2022-eine-hommage-an-den-flamischen-dichter-paul-van-ostaijen-in-berlin/>.

against all predictions remains alive, entertains and provides enjoyment for us ('t Hooft (2016, pp. 14–18)).

It is no longer so important where this artistic creation is located: whether in a document, a poem, an exhibition or on the facade of a building. Nor is it crucial through which medium we find it. Kila van der Starre, who has for years collected poetry that is outside of books,⁶⁵ concludes that the results of her research tend to show (with minor exceptions) that most poetic manifestations are experienced, used and circulated outside of books. She adds that the dynamism of poetry is not linear but circular, so the recipients, readers or users of poetry adapt it and spread it in different situations and with the aid of different actors (Van der Starre 2021, 448).

The work *Bezette stad* by Paul van Ostaijen cannot be said to have fallen into oblivion in the last 100 years since its publication. Rather, for the average lover of Dutch-language literature, the work of the Flemish poet is linked to verses which have been repeated throughout the last century in different contexts and media and are found in the cultural imaginary of the people of the Netherlands and Flanders. The key phrase “Boem Paukeslag” has appeared on T-shirts, for example; woodcuts of the word “Zeppelin” in the form of a zeppelin, can also be seen on all types of mugs and other utensils. The implementation of the project has led to a rediscovery and recovery of the original work, with different strategies of recycling such as collaborative reading and transformation of the poems located on a map together with new creations, thus establishing a dialogue with the public visiting the website. Moreover, this material, which is accessible and digitally archived, implies that actions are being taken for the (re)circulation of the original text and its spread, and that ways of recovering the cultural memory are being promoted by means of postdigital participation.

This chapter itself also represents a form of (re)circulation of not only the work *Bezette stad*, but also of *Besmette stad*; because all the actors in society, whether artists, critics or receptors, contribute in one way or another, collaboratively, to keep alive, and give a new life to, the poetic art present in both anthologies.

65 Her website “Straatpoëzie”, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://straatpoezie.nl/> aims to create an inventory through *crowdsourcing* of ‘poetry outside the book’, poetry in the public spaces of the Netherlands and Flanders.

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Figures:

Figure 1. Van Ostaijen, Paul: “Bedreigde stad”. In: Ostaijen, Paul van: *Bezette stad* [1921] 2021, n.p.; De Ridder 2021, p. 113.

Figure 2. Debroey, Shamisa: “Ragtime Nightmare”. In: De Ridder, Matthijs / Bongers-Dek, Willem (eds.): *Besmette stad. Vijfenzestig kunstenaars antwoorden op Bezette stad van Paul van Ostaijen*. Pelckmans 2021, pp. 141–142; deBuren: ‘Ragtime Nightmare’, 03.06.2020, retrieved 17.01.2023, from <https://deburen.eu/besmette-stad/33/shamisa-debroey>.

Figure 3. Ma Neza, Lisette / Yde Zellama, Maja-Ajmia: “Banale dans”. In: De Ridder, Matthijs / Bongers-Dek, Willem (eds.): *Besmette stad. Vijfenzestig kunstenaars antwoorden op Bezette stad van Paul van Ostaijen*. Pelckmans 2021, pp. 144–146.

