

## Summary

This work describes the genre of the personal documentaries comics (a term taken from the works of Roman Zimand), from its beginning in the late 1960s in the USA to the year 2012, when autobiographical comics became an important element of Polish comic market.

Tomasz Pstrągowski begins by describing the state of research on autobiography. In the first chapter he explains the concept of the autobiographical pact introduced by Philippe Lejeune - a key concept in contemporary research on autobiography. Then, supporting his reasoning with the texts of Jerzy Lis, Regina Lubas-Bartoszyńska and Serge Doubrovsky, he tries to sort the genres of the personal documentaries comics. Pstrągowski also explains the concept of the autobiographical triangle described in the works of Małgorzata Czermińska and the definition of paratexts, introduced by Gérard Genette. In further part of this chapter, the author explains the difference between authenticity and credibility (formulated by Beata Przymuszała), and describes various techniques used by the authors of the personal documentaries comics for authenticating their testimonies (this part is based on Elisabeth El Refaie's book *Autobiographical Comics: Life Writing in Pictures*).

The following chapters of the dissertation are devoted to the description of the birth and development of the personal documentaries comics.

Pstrągowski states that the first autobiographical comics were made by Robert Crumb, who was leading the revolt against the self censoring Comic Code Authority in 1960's United States. Crumb was also a founder of influential "Zap! Comix" magazine, and soon was followed by such underground artists as Justin Green, Aline Kominsky-Crumb, Phoebe Gloeckner and Art Spiegelman. At the same time, apart from the underground movement, the autobiographical themes were risen by Harvey Pekar (who developed an ongoing comic series about his life), Will Eisner (who popularized the term "graphic novel") and Joe Sacco (the creator of the first comic reportages).

Citing opinions of Joseph Witek and Arie Kalpan, Pstrągowski claims that the breakthrough title for the autobiographical genre was the Pulitzer's winning *Maus* by

Art Spiegelman. This comic book also marks the end of the first wave of North American autobiographical comics.

The second wave of North American autobiographical comics is defined by Pstrągowski based on an article by Bart Beaty. Pstrągowski mentions Seth, Chester Brown and Joe Matt among the most important representatives of this movement. Gathered around the publishing house Drawn & Quarterly those three often quoted each others' works in their comics, creating an original autobiographical comic book universe and thus making their testimony even more credible. Next to them, the most important representatives of the second wave were Daniel Clowes, Lynda Barry, James Kochalka and Julie Doucet.

Reflections on the second wave are concluded by Pstrągowski using two titles - *Stuck Rubber Baby* by Howard Cruse and *Brooklyn Dreams* by J. M. DeMatteis and Glenn Barr. Although those are not strictly autobiographical comics, they are credible enough to be considered as ones. Published by the DC Comics owned Paradox Press, they were important, because of introducing a personal documentaries comics to the mainstream American readers.

Next, the author proceeds to the development of the autobiographical genre in European comic. He starts with describing Briton Eddie Campbell who created the *Alec* series. Pstrągowski also draws readers' attention to the special importance of two French publishing houses - *L'Association* and *Ego Comme X* - whose most important representatives were Lewis Trondheim, David B., Guy Delisle and Frédéric Boilet.

Just as *Maus*'s artistic and commercial success turned out to be a breakthrough point in the America, in Europe it is impossible not to appreciate the success of *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi. Pstrągowski claims that it was the release of this graphic novel that led to the opening of European market to autobiographical themes. He proves this by describing a number of high-profile comic books published between 2001 and 2012 and classifying them by the most popular subgenres. Pstrągowski marks eight such subgenres: stories of puberty; tales of confronting one's parents; stories about trauma; stories about sickness; comic journals; testimony tales; comic reportages; and autobiographical curiosities.

Next, the author focuses on Japanese market. He looks for the sources of the autobiographical topics in so-called mangaka manga - popular series telling the tales of lives and work conditions of manga artists. Among the most important comic book autobiographers from Japan, Pstrągowski mentions, among others, Keiji Nakazawa, Yoshiharu Tsuge, Jirō Taniguchi, Yoshihiro Tatsumi and Hideo Azuma.

The last chapter of his dissertation Pstrągowski devotes to the development of a personal documentaries comics genre in Poland. As the first Polish autobiographical comic, he points out - after Krzysztof Lichtblau - *Dzieje 2-ego Korpusu... inaczej!* by Mieczysław Kuczyński, published just after World War II.

Next he jumps to the end of the millennium, to describe the works of Wilhelm Sasnal, Michał Śledziński, Mateusz Skutnik and Agata Nowicka - pioneers of contemporary Polish autobiographical comics. Thanks to their works the genre begins to gain popularity, and other Polish artists decide to join the wave. Those are, among others: Pola Dwurnik, Marzena Sowa, Daniel Chmielewski, Paweł and Jarosław Płóciennik, Michał Misztal and Paweł Gierczak. Pstrągowski ends his dissertation describing *Rozmówki polsko-angielskie* by Agata Wawryniuk and *Ciemna strona księżycy* by Olga Wróbel, both written in 2012. According to Pstrągowski, the publicity accompanying the premiere of these comics, their sales success and their perception by the mainstream media, led to a similar opening on the Polish market as was previously observed in US and Europe after the successes of *Maus* and *Persepolis*.