This paper examines messages of Russian political cartoons which were cued in visual and verbal modes. These cartoons recontextualise (Bounegru and Forceville 2011) iconic images and adapt them for evaluation of recent events in a dramatic form. Cartoonists often modify famous artistic works, i.e. monuments and pictures, through their trivialisation, exaggeration, blending and twists (cf. Schilperoord, 2013). The parodies have not being used for denigrating the masterpieces but for building novel meanings. The interpretation of such cartoons requires the acquaintance with the history of cultural products. Five Russian political cartoons from the bestselling newspaper “Argumenty I fakty” provided the empirical base of this study.

A single drawing can accommodate several fragments of different origins altogether with different experiential inputs. Each visual unit, as an identifiable object, may evoke analogies which are to be assembled into a coherent narrative by a viewer (see Šorm and Steen, 2013).

This investigation looks at ideas introduced by recontextualised masterpieces, such as the figure of Liberty from Delacroix painting “The Liberty leading the people”, “Bronze horseman” monument by Falconet in St Petersburg, the fountain of People’s Friendship by Topuridze in Moscow, the monument to Bogdan Khmelnitsky by Mikeshin in Kyiv. The paper seeks to explain how recontextualisation of iconic images alters the symbolic meaning of these masterpieces.

References

