

"Neo-fantastic fiction of Jean-Pierre Anderson"

Scientific studies regarding the works of very famous, contemporary writers - living representatives of mass culture surrounded by adoring fans - cause several problems (such as a multitude of texts to analyze, lack of critical sources, difficulties with an objective scientific reception, perception of this type of research as less prestigious than research concerning high culture) and, therefore, are scarce. Aware of these difficulties, I believe, however, that popular culture in all its manifestations, as an authentic *signum temporis*, should be subjected to thorough scientific analysis. Almost unknown to Polish readers, but very well-known in the French-speaking world, Jean-Pierre Andrevon is a true icon of mass culture: called the French Stephen King, the author of more than 170 texts (short stories, novels, novel series), singer, painter, militant ecologist, and an expert on horror cinema. Some of his novels (like *Gandahar*, compared to Star Wars and *Dune*) became the basis for computer games, TV series and cinema adaptations. The literary genre primarily practised by Andrevon is fantastic literature ("*le fantastique*"), although it is a different kind of fantastic literature, deviating from the structures developed by the French writers of the nineteenth century. In my project, I want to examine the specific nature of Andrevon's fantastic literature.

In the first phase of my project, I will focus on the innovative philosophical and ecological aspects, characteristic for his prose. In a very coherent way, Andrevon presents in his oeuvre a special concept of man and the world as a new source of terror. The writer rejects the anthropocentric perspective, dominant in the nineteenth century fantastic literature: Andrevon's man is only one (and not even the most important) of the elements of nature, while the universe amazes the reader with its vastness and power. The character's loneliness and impossibility of understanding the world become the cause of his "cosmic pessimism." The non-ecological attitude of man in the world often leads to an apocalypse: natural disasters, climate change, earthquakes, pandemic, etc., which often causes the fall of the hero, or the extinction of the entire human race. However, Andrevon's post-apocalyptic world without the presence of man is not the end of everything: the universe does not notice the disappearance of the human race, the life cycle goes on, flora and fauna flourish abundantly, safe from the non-ecological actions of man. Similar concerns about the human condition in the world are expressed in some contemporary philosophical trends of the French- and English-speaking world, which the writer uses to create a special variety of philosophical fantastic fiction ("philofiction").

In the second phase of the project, I will focus on the relationships between Andrevon's fantastic literature and other literary genres, as well as with specific literary works. Toying with the habits and expectations of the reader - a fan of fantastic literature - the writer likes creating mosaics by borrowing some themes and writing techniques from other popular genres, such as crime novel, thriller, spy novel, adventure novel, horror, fantasy, science fiction. Thanks to intertextuality, Andrevon engages in a game with the reader, who may find a references to specific texts in the writer's works: for example, to Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, Ian Fleming, H. G. Wells, Stephen King, Ira Levin and many other famous writers. Andrevon does not limit himself only to popular literature. Some of his texts also refer to mainstream literature: the writer parodies French "Nouveau Roman" and is inspired with "Ulysses" by James Joyce, "The Trial" by Franz Kafka, "Animal Farm" by George Orwell, and "Lord of the Flies" by William Golding. The references to other literary works and relationships with other genres, typical to Andrevon's prose, make it surprising, original and unconventional, unlike many products of mass culture. In the quest for an original concept, Andrevon exceeds the limits of literature and is also inspired with cinema. He refers to specific films (for example the *Frankenstein* series by James Whale), some film genres (*gore*) and certain techniques borrowed from horror cinema (*bus effect*, *jump scare*, *found footage*). Exceeding the limits of genres and conventions, Andrevon's fantastic literature is transfictional.

In my opinion, the aforementioned originality of Andrevon's concept of fantastic literature deserves to be scientifically analyzed. Because of the lack of critical scientific studies devoted to the writer's oeuvre, my project would fill the existing gap, initiate the scientific reception of his works and deepen general knowledge of contemporary French fantastic literature, which is very modest at the moment. A project like this would also show an interesting convergence between the vision of man and the world in the fields that would seem so distant from each other: contemporary popular culture and contemporary philosophy. The proposed study would also show the new (transfictional) trends in contemporary French literature, namely the blurring of boundaries between popular genres, popular and high literature, literature and cinema. Reflection on Andrevon's oeuvre, which would culminate with a monograph written in French, would constitute a logical continuation of my earlier research on neo-fantastic literature.