

In the power of fantasy — a discourse around the genre of native readers, creators, publishers, critics and researchers

Summary

In Poland, the description of ‘fantasy’ theory arose in the 1960s, including Celestyn Skołuda, Witold Ostrowski, Ryszard Handke, and Andrzej Zgorzelski. Their work was continued by subsequent generations of researchers interested in literature and popular culture, including fantasy.

Fantasy as a type of popular literature has gradually been gaining popularity in Poland. Katarzyna Kaczor, in her monograph *Z „getta” do mainstreamu. Polskie pole literackie fantasy (1982–2012)* has analysed phenomena related to the phenomenon of popularity of Polish fantasy literature. Its systematic development covers a wide context of processes related to the formation of the Polish publishing market, its creators, critics, publishers, recipients, as well as the type itself. The author analyses the phenomena occurring in the period 1982–2012. The selected time range includes significant changes that have taken place in the Polish publishing market.

Adam Mazurkiewicz
ORCID: 0000-0003-3804-6445
University of Łódź, Poland

Literature from the perspective of interpretative anthropology

<https://doi.org/10.19195/0867-7441.25.33>

Review: Wojciech Józef Burszta, Mariusz Czubaj, *Kryminalna odyseja oraz inne szkice o czytaniu i pisaniu*, Wydawnictwo Oficynka, Gdańsk 2017, 303 pp.

Słowa kluczowe: Mariusz Czubaj, Wojciech Józef Burszta, literatura kryminalna, antropologia, gęsty opis, Clifford Geertz

Keywords: Mariusz Czubaj, Wojciech Józef Burszta, crime fiction, anthropology, thick description, Clifford Geertz

“Anthropological framework of (not only) crime fiction” — such a subtitle could be given to the recently-published volume by Wojciech Józef Burszta and Mariusz Czubaj: *Kryminalna odyseja oraz inne szkice o czytaniu i pisaniu* [Criminal Odyssey and Other Essays on Reading and Writing]. The book consists of articles which the authors have already delivered in the past, which they mention in the attached bibliography (p. 303).

It is not the first book which the authors have written together; let me remind you of *Krwawa setka. 100 najważniejszych powieści kryminalnych* [The Bloody

Hundred. The 100 Most Important Crime Novels] (2007), published over a decade ago. If we add Czubaj's monograph: *Etnolog w Mieście Grzechu. Powieść kryminalna jako świadectwo antropologiczne* [An Ethnologist in the City of Sin. The Crime Novel as an Anthropological Testament] (2010) to the two above-mentioned works, we obtain a thematically consistent series of publications, devoted to the "stories of crime and punishment". The key for their interpretation is Clifford Geertz's concept of interpretative anthropology.¹ His theory constitutes an important point of reference not only for Czubaj, but also for Burszta, the proof being one of his essays in the volume *Różnorodność i tożsamość. Antropologia jako kulturowa refleksyjność* [Diversity and Identity. Anthropology as a Reflection on Culture] (2004) — *Clifford Geertz i myśl ponowoczesna* [Clifford Geertz and Postmodernism] — as well as the dedication, where the anthropologist is referred to as the "Intellectual Master", next to Jerzy Kmita and Zygmunt Bauman.²

Such a key of interpretation influences both the stylistics of dilatation (the plural form used in narration is not a result of the *pluralis maiestatis* mannerism, but of Burszta's and Czubaj's joint authorship), and the conclusions drawn from scientific analysis. This is why the authors of the "Kryminalna odyseja..." do not try to hide the subjective nature of selected literary examples; in the introduction they admit: "Throughout our lives we have been writing about reading and writing. Sometimes we did it more systematically, sometimes less. We truly are enthusiasts of crime fiction".³

However, the subjectivism of selected examples is sometimes so visible that it provokes the reader's reservations. Regarding this issue, especially unsatisfactory seems to be the framework of modern world crime fiction, which was the inspiration for the work's title. It is important to note that reservations do not concern the choice of works and their authors, being a representation for the discussed phenomena in given chapters. It is surprising, however, that the authors did not choose to mention Joanna Chmielewska's novels (which would provide perfect instances for a discussion on Polish crime fiction); or Tess Gerritsen as the author of a new formula in writing medical crime fiction, complementary with Robin Cook's method

¹ Of course, it is not the only possible interpretation; another instance can be Mariusz Kraska's *Prosta sztuka zabijania. Figury czytania kryminału* [The Easy Art of Killing. Figures of Reading Crime Fiction], Gdańsk 2013. Ludic poetics of this work draw attention to the reader as the entity determining the final meaning of the text.

² See: W.J. Burszta, "Clifford Geertz i myśl ponowoczesna", [in:] idem, *Różnorodność i tożsamość. Antropologia jako kulturowa refleksyjność*, Poznań 2004, pp. 73–92. It is a unique analysis, where the author focuses on the treated culture — a term created by Krzysztof Wąchal — as a text and, at the same time, the context for this text (see: idem, "Kultura jako tekst i kontekst w antropologii interpretatywnej Clifforda Geertza", *Principia* 53, 2010, pp. 157–175).

³ W.J. Burszta, M. Czubaj, "Wstęp: migotliwość literatury, iskrzenie świata", [in:] idem, *Kryminalna odyseja oraz inne szkice o czytaniu i pisanii*, Gdynia 2017, pp. 13.

of writing.⁴ Moreover, not mentioning the phenomenon of South American crime fiction is not only disturbing, but also cognitively diminishing. Indeed, Mexican crime fiction is an “individual phenomenon” (it was discussed only very briefly in the book); *narcoliterature* also remains distinct, as it is typical not only for Mexico, but also for Colombia. It is so aesthetically and fictionally different that it is hard to classify the novels representing the *narco* genre as crime fiction — the focus being transferred from crime onto the social context.⁵ Together with other essays, these analyses present various aspects of crime fiction — thus, the reader has an opportunity to become acquainted with discussions over Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*’s (2003; Polish ed. 2004) influence on literature combining sensation and crime; the poetics of digression in Raymond Chandler’s and John D. MacDonald’s works; the influence of Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö (authors of the “Roman om ett brott” series 1965–1975 representative for the 20th century crime fiction of the 60s) on the modern Scandinavian “crime and punishment fiction”; and finally, the character of Sherlock Holmes perceived from the perspective of a celebrity.

In opposition to them — thematically, however, and not methodologically — remain other essays devoted to, for example, Kurt Vonnegut, changes in the depiction of love, or Marcin Świetlicki’s songs.⁶ It is the least consistent part of the book, and it seems that the motivation for selecting specific works was the wish to present the possibilities of interpretative anthropology — treated as the key for interpretation, it allows us to discover the cultural subtexts of literary works. It perfectly serves such an aim and provides a fresh look at — some may think already known — literary works.

One could accuse the author of “Kryminalna odyseja...” of inconsistency both in selected texts and in their frameworks. However, it seems that this is done on purpose and in compliance with Geertz’s attitude — a belief that the idea of complete

⁴ An overview of other authors’ names, quite a superficial one, of the sensation fiction literary genre is presented by Paweł Mieczkowski; see: idem, “Thrillery medyczne — Gerritsen, Cook, Palmer, McClure”, *coprzeczytać.pl*, <https://www.coprzeczytac.pl/thrillery-medyczne-gerritsen-cook-palmer-mcclure/> (access: 7.02.2018). It is a shame that the authors of *Kryminalna odyseja...* did not choose to include Polish instances of this genre, that is Błażej Przygodzki’s novel *Z chirurgiczną precyzją* (2013).

⁵ See: A.S. Jastrzębska, “Narconovela colombiana: enfrentamiento de paradigmas culturales”, *Itinerarios. Revista de Estudios Lingüísticos, Literarios, Históricos y Antropológicos* 17, 2013, pp. 51–52. Polish enthusiasts of crime fiction could quite recently get to know a few realisations of the *narconovella*. This genre includes: *The Black Minutes (Los minutos negros*, 2006; Polish ed. 2015) and *Don’t Send Flowers (No manden flores*, 2015; Polish ed. 2016) by Martin Solares, and *El puñal* (2014; Polish ed. 2017) by Jorge Fernández Díaz. A different issue, not mentioned by Czubaj and Burszta, remains the question to what extent can the *narco* genre be treated as an update of American hardboiled fiction (and its cinematic equivalents — film noir and neo-noir).

⁶ It is important to mention the pity that the authors did not seize the opportunity offered by the renewal of Świetlicki’s works and reminded of the poems held in the *noir* notion, included in the following anthologies: *Długie pożeganie. Tribute to Raymond Chandler* (1996) and *Żegnaj laleczko. Wiersze noir* (2010).

elaboration of a given cultural phenomenon is a utopian, per se, project: “Cultural analysis is incomplete at its very nature. And, what is worse, the deeper it reaches the more incomplete it becomes. It is quite a peculiar field of study, where the most significant postulations rely on the very unstable bases; where leading to any conclusions of a given issue means strengthening the suppositions, as much our own as other people’s, that we do not fully understand a given problem properly”.⁷

Paradoxically, at the same time it is this very instability of interpretations that allows the reader his/her own insight into the text; it is also the notion to which the first essay of the book is devoted — *Czytanie* [Reading] (pp. 17–58). It is a “propaedeutics to reading”, complemented with other considerations serving as instances of specific issues. Treated independently, they fit into the framework of case studies, the objective of which are literary phenomena of given authors’ poetics or motifs.

At the same time, Burszta’s and Czubaj’s work can be considered from the reversed perspective: not as an anthropological reading of literature, but as a literary conceptualisation of anthropology.⁸ Then, Geertz’s notion of “blurred genres” must be mentioned, as it explains how literature stopped being an art of word, and instead became the key to understanding the reality out of art.⁹

Translated by Julia Fiszbak

Bibliography

Texts

- Burszta W., Czubaj M., *Kryminalna odyseja oraz inne szkice o czytaniu i pisaniu*, Wydawnictwo Oficynka, Gdańsk 2017.
- Diaz J.F., *Sztylet (El puñal)*, 2014), transl. G. Ostrowski, J. Ostrowska, Bukowy Las, Wrocław 2017.
- Długie pożegnania. Tribute to Raymond Chandler*, ed. M. Baran, M. Sendecki, M. Świetlicki, Agencja Wydawnicza Zebra, Kraków 1997.
- Przygodzki B., *Z chirurgiczną precyzją*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2013.
- Solares M., *Czarne minuty [Los minutos negros]*, 2006], transl. T. Pindel, Czarne, Wołowiec 2015.

⁷ C. Greetz, “Opis gęsty: w poszukiwaniu interpretatywnej teorii kultury”, [in:] idem, *Interpretacja kultur. Wybrane eseje*, trans. M. Piechaczek, Kraków 2005, pp. 44.

⁸ The key to interpretation of introduced perspective can be the work of Katarzyna Majbroda; see: K. Majbroda, “Wpływ zwrotu interpretatywnego na metody badań jakościowych, czyli remodelowanie antropologicznych praktyk pod wpływem kategorii literaturoznawczych”, *Zeszyty Etnologii Wrocławskiej* 2015, no. 1, pp. 45–68.

⁹ See: C. Geertz, “O gatunkach zmaconych. Nowe konfiguracje myśli społecznej”, trans. Z. Łapiński, *Teksty Drugie* 1990, no. 2, pp. 13–130 (here especially pp. 113–114). It is no accident that scientists declare the bond connecting literary fiction and anthropologists’ findings: “Anthropology, understood as a method of transcribing the world, is connected to literature by a very intimate, however, not easy to verbally define relationship, the source of which is the ability to immigrate” (W.J. Burszta, “Czytanie”, pp. 44).

Solares M., *Nie przysyłajcie kwiatów* [*No manden flores*, 2015], transl. T. Pindel, W.A.B., Warszawa 2016.

Żegnaj, laleczko. *Wiersze noir z dodaniem legendarnej antologii "Długie pożegnanie. Tribute to Raymond Chandler"*, ed. M. Baran, M. Senddecki, M. Świetlicki, Wydawnictwo EMG, Kraków 2010.

Secondary sources

Burszta W.J., "Clifford Geertz i myśl ponowoczesna", [in:] idem, *Różnorodność i tożsamość. Antropologia jako kulturowa refleksyjność*, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 2004, pp. 73–92.

Geertz C., "O gatunkach zmaconych. Nowe konfiguracje myśli społecznej", transl. Z. Łapiński, *Teksty Drugie* 1990, no. 2, pp. 113–130.

Geertz C., "Opis gęsty: w poszukiwaniu interpretatywnej teorii kultury", [in:] idem, *Interpretacja kultur. Wybrane eseje*, transl. M.M. Piechaczek, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2005, pp. 17–47.

Jastrzębska A.S., "Narconovela colombiana: enfrentamiento de paradigmas culturales", *Itinerarios. Revista de Estudios Lingüísticos, Literarios, Históricos y Antropológicos* 17, 2013, pp. 51–52.

Kraska M., *Prosta sztuka zabijania. Figury czytania kryminału*, słowo/obraz terytoria, Gdańsk 2013.

Majbroda K., "Wpływ zwrotu interpretatywnego na metody badań jakościowych, czyli remodelowanie antropologicznych praktyk pod wpływem kategorii literaturoznawczych", *Zeszyty Etnologii Wrocławskiej* 2015, no. 1, pp. 45–68.

Wąchal K., "Kultura jako tekst i kontekst w antropologii interpretatywnej Clifforda Geertza", *Principia* 53, 2010, pp. 157–175.

Online sources

Mieczkowski P., "Thrillery medyczne — Gerritsen, Cook, Palmer, McClure", [coprzczytac.pl](https://www.coprzczytac.pl/thrillery-medyczne-gerritsen-cook-palmer-mcclure/), <https://www.coprzczytac.pl/thrillery-medyczne-gerritsen-cook-palmer-mcclure/> (access: 7.02.2018).

Literature from the perspective of interpretative anthropology

Summary

Kryminalna odyseja oraz inne szkice o czytaniu i pisaniu [Criminal Odyssey and Other Essays About Reading and Writing] by Wojciech J. Burszta and Mariusz Czubaj is not the first text written together by the two scientists. Their other joint work was, for instance, published over a decade ago in 2007 *Krwawa setka. 100 najważniejszych powieści kryminalnych* [The Bloody Hundred. The 100 Most Important Crime Novels]. What is more, together with the two above-mentioned texts, Czubaj's monography published in 2010, *Etnolog w Mieście Grzechu. Powieść kryminalna jako świadectwo antropologiczne* [An Ethnologist in the City of Sin. The Crime Novel as an Anthropological Testimony], creates a thematically consistent cycle devoted to "the stories of crime and punishment" whose key to interpretation is Clifford Geertz's concept of interpretative anthropology.

The authors of the "Criminal Odyssey..." admit that the choice of the literary examples presented in their work was subjective. Thus, one could accuse the authors of incompleteness resulting from the choice of these particular texts as well as their contexts. However, it seems that the authors did it purposefully, which also complies with Geertz's attitude, as he believed that a complete study of any cultural phenomenon is a utopian project.

Paradoxically, it is the very incompleteness that induces the reader to inquire further, which is the subject of “Czytanie” [Reading] (pp. 17–58), the first essay of the “Criminal Odyssey...”. It serves as an “introduction to reading”, complemented with the following essays which focus on specific problems and which, if examined separately, seem to be subject to the case studies of literary phenomena, poetics of specific writers, or motives.

One could also examine Burszta and Czubaj’s work from another perspective and read it not as an anthropological interpretation of literature, but as a literary conceptualisation of anthropology.

Justyna Rudnicka

ORCID: 0000-0001-7635-2449

Uniwersytet Wrocławski

Muzyka popularna słuchana i czytana

<https://doi.org/10.19195/0867-7441.25.34>

Recenzja: Grzegorz Piotrowski, *Muzyka popularna. Nasłuchy i namysły*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 2016, ss. 170.

Słowa kluczowe: muzyka popularna, muzykologia, antropologia, *popular music studies*

Keywords: popular music, musicology, anthropology, popular music studies

Muzyka popularna jako przedmiot badań wciąż jest w polskim piśmiennictwie naukowym obszarem nowym i niezagospodarowanym¹. Pytanie, jak należy ją badać, stawiane jest przez badaczy różnych dziedzin — socjologów, kulturoznawców, antropologów, wreszcie muzykologów — a odpowiedziom towarzyszą coraz liczniejsze próby naukowej analizy zjawiska dokonywane z rozmaitych perspektyw². Jedną z takich prób jest publikacja *Muzyka popularna. Nasłuchy i namysły* Grzegorza Piotrowskiego, która w 2016 roku ukazała się nakładem Państwowego Instytutu Wydawniczego w serii „Biblioteka Myśli Współczesnej”.

Niewielkiego formatu książka podzielona jest na siedem rozdziałów, z których każdy rozpatruje fenomen muzyki popularnej w innym kontekście. Autor rozpoczyna od kwestii oczywistych dla badaczy kultury popularnej, czyli od wskaza-

¹ Do ważniejszych polskich publikacji, które ukazały się w ciągu ostatnich kilku lat, należą chociażby *Rewolucja rocka. Semiotyczne wymiary elektrycznej ekstazy* (2011) Marcina Rychlewskiego czy *Muzyka popularna jako wehikuł ideologiczny* (2011) oraz *Muzyka popularna i jej odbiorcy w poszukiwaniu autorytetu* (2017) autorstwa Marka Jezińskiego.

² Na temat współczesnych nurtów w badaniu muzyki popularnej zob. P. Gałuszka, *Nowe nurty badawcze w studiach nad muzyką popularną — przegląd wybranych koncepcji*, „Przegląd Socjologiczny” 2015, nr 3, s. 113–129.