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Summary

In: Pospíšil, Ivo. *Genologie a proměny literatury*. Vyd. 1. Brno: Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity, 1998, pp. 150-154

ISBN 8021018720

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/122953>

Access Date: 27. 11. 2024

Version: 20220831

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SUMMARY

The author of the present monograph *Literary Genres and the Modifications of Literature* deals from the analytical and synthetic points of view with the phenomenon of the literary genre in a complex way including both the general reflections concerning the problems of the theory of literary genres, the theoretical constitution of the genre, the genre philosophy, the role of the reader-listener in the genre structure and the concrete analyses on the material of Slavonic literatures. The author's conception is based upon the three basic components of literary communication (the author — the text — the reader); the modifications of the genre structure are manifested on the chronicle and its spatial and temporal models and on its capacity to be associated with other genre forms (chronicle-myth). In the semantic entities (the motifs of madness, genre polyvalence, genre polymorphism and the theme of "the old times") the relations of the theme and the genre as well as the connection of the genre with the complex of national literature and the author's individuality are dealt with.

The theory of literary genres (genology) was initiated in the 1930's by Paul van Tieghem, but its roots went back to ancient Greeks (cosmology, cosmogony, techné, psyché). The analogy of literary kinds with biological species — though its traces can be observed even earlier — was intensified in the second half of the 19th century (Ferdinand Brunetière). The study of literary morphology in the 19th century (the theory of fiction) led to the attempts at the reforms of the genre conception and the genre systematics. The increasing impact of philosophy and its methods opened the artifact in different ways. The literary genres began to be understood and interpreted as the only forms of the existence of literature in which the evolution of literature and the changes of literary form can be realised. Their existence between the static position and the evolutionary dynamism, restructuralisation and transformation make them not only the mere forms of literature, but, above all, the genetic laboratory in which the major processes of stability and lability are concentrated. The 19th-century German and English genre studies dealing with the technique of the narrative (C. Nicolai, J. Dunlop, F. Spielhagen, Ch. Horne, H. Keiter and T. Kellen, B. Lathrop etc.) changed the concept of the genre

theory and led to the intensification of the study of artifacts lying on the boundary of traditional genres (the Polish journal *Zagadnienia rodzajów literackich*, the American periodical *Genre*). The articles published in the above-mentioned journals and other monographs and studies (S. Skwarczyńska, J. Trzynadlowski, U. Margolin, W. Gruber, A. Marino, P. Hernadi) presented the great sensitivity of the genre theory to the modification of literary methodology. The conception of the genre moves between that of the textual reality, of the semantic "skeleton" of a concrete artifact (the genre as a model of a literary work) and of the genre as a formal invitation. The traditional Anglo-American skepticism towards the general genre notions has been weakened under the impact of New Criticism and European structuralism (F. R. Leavis, R. Jakobson, R. Wellek). P. Hernadi's attempt at the reform of genre systematics (the ecumenical, the kinetic and concentric genres) as well as A. Fowlers's brilliant genre terminology (kind — mode — constructional type) and Russian and German conceptions (G. Pospelov, L. Chernets, W. V. Ruttkowski) have not been generally accepted.

The author accentuates the importance of the boundaries between literary genres as well as the necessity to avoid the rigid genre norms typical of neoclassicism. His conception of the genre theory consists in the terms "the genre valence", "the genre affinity" and "the genre inertia". The subject of the theory of literary genres (genology) is — from the point of view of this conception — not only the analysis of the inner structure of the artifact, but also that of the genre range (the genre range, the style range, the author's range, the reader's range etc.); therefore the development of the genre is under various impacts: both the functional and the structural research of a genre must be completed by the historical dimension which has been opened as a complex of mutual processes (the causality, the anticipation, the stability, the lability, the accommodation).

The general genre reflections are closely connected with the philosophical dimension of a genre which is manifested by Bakhtin's concept of the *Erziehungsroman*. The most developed model of the genre (Rabelais, Goethe) in which the biographical time has been integrated into the historical time synthesizes the traditional German terms "Entwicklungsroman", "Bildungsroman" and "Erziehungsroman" though there are also some skeptical views (Sammons) casting doubt on the existence of the genre as a compact and continual phenomenon. The 19th-century literary development manifested rather the inverted structure of the genre (instead of the optimistic vision of the harmony between the individual and the nature and the society it shows man's degradation, degeneration and his disharmonic and tragic relations to the world). Bakhtin's interest in the *Erziehungsroman* is analysed in connection with the nature of the 1930's Russian Soviet literature and with the views of

B. Spinoza, Teilhard de Chardin and with the archetypal patterns of the 1980's Russian literature written on the eve of the great change in the 1990's. The part of the genre structure is not only the author and the text as the expression of the immanent evolution of literature, but also the reader presented as a listener and the addressee of the narrator's remarks. The dialogue initiated by the existence of the fictitious reader in the structure of the artifact functions as the self-reflection of the author as well as the genre creative element revealing the hidden doubts of the author and the crisis of his artistic intention (V. Odoyevski, O. Kuvayev, K. Čapek).

The diachronic evolution of the genre is manifested in the chronicle vision of the world, the ambivalent chronicle time and the "braking" of time. The analysis of the 20th-century chronicle (often a genre mixture of the modern chronicle and the myth, the convergence of the myth and the chronicle) in which the chronicle functions as a specific genre basis (O. Chiladze, García Márquez, V. Šikula, L. Fuks, P. Jaroš, Ch. Aitmatov) follows. The space of the modern chronicle is only the expression of the temporal dominant: the ambivalent conception of the chronicle time is — paradoxically — the main pre-supposition of its cohesion, its stability as the emblem of the finality and the infinity of existence.

The genre transformations are also analysed in connection with the thematic cluster of madness as a genre catalyzer. A. S. Pushkin has been traditionally regarded as a poet of love, harmony, and the Renaissance understanding of life and its beauties. But the end of his artistic creativity showed him to be more a poet of thought, anxiety and madness. The motifs of madness are very frequent in his poetic works forming even a specific semantic structure (*The Gipsies*, *Poltava*, *The Bronze Horseman*). A new light was thrown on Pushkin's "little tragedies" (*The Covetous Knight*, *The Stone Guest*, *The City of the Plague*, *Mozart and Salieri*) and on some of his short stories (*The Queen of the Spades*). In the works of A. Pogorelsky (*The Double or the Nights in Ukraine*) and N. Leskov (*Unselfish Engineers*) madness represented a split of personality and influenced — as well as in Pushkin — the disintegration of the genre structures; a new structure arises from the original basis (*Poltava* and *The Bronze Horseman* are odes and existential tragedies at the same time), a new structure of the artistic dialogue (*The Double or the Nights in Ukraine*) or the existential fiction of man's career (*Unselfish Engineers*) appear. N. Gogol's short story *The Old-World Landowners* opens the problem of the thematic polyvalence of the genre. The openness of the text is connected with the free semantic valences in its structure and their capability to form new structural bonds and links. The cyclic time of the old Greek myth of Philemon and Baucis which forms the genre basis of the story, is integrated with the linear biographical and the historical time. The cyclic time of the idyll

has been modified into the linear time of history changing the sublime into the ridiculous. The historian Gogol shows his narrator as an element of the historical development and the dynamic history and the static idyll as the projection of the ideal as a man's ambivalent gesture: he longs for inertia and immortality, but at the same time he wants the change as he wants to be the creator of his reality.

Chekhov's prose *The Island Sakhalin* (*Sachalin*, 1893–1894) represents — apart from Gogol's simple, polyvalent short story — the polymorphous, polygeneric prose linked with the cluster of short stories thematically associated with Chekhov's travel to East Siberia and Sakhalin. The genre basis has been formed by the travel story; then some other genre strata have been added, e. g. the satire, statistics, medicine, connected with the works of Chekhov's predecessors (F. Dostoevsky, G. Uspensky, L. Tolstoy) and contemporaries (A. Kuprin) in Russia and America („muckraking“).

The phenomenon of “the old times” mainly occurs in descriptive genre forms as a semantic opposition as part of the triad the old — the nature — the home. While in Leskov the thematic layer of the old times expresses the unity of the beauty and the morals which survives in the enclaves of the past (the German minority in St. Petersburg, the Jews, the raskolniks, the quakers, the just), for the Slovak prose writer Hurban Vajanský “the old times” are linked with the new social role of the Slovak gentry in the national revival of the Slovak nation, and in the Czech avant-garde writer V. Vančura “the old times” — like in Gogol — are understood as the paradoxical connection of the “ridiculous virtues”, as the beauty which often has a grotesque form.

The literary genre — apart from the structural and thematic context — has often been formed by the whole complex of national literature. This phenomenon is analysed in the chapter dealing with Russian antinomies, with the dual character of Russian thought and culture (pagan — Christian, the Western and the Eastern Christianity, the old Russia — the new Russia, Russia — Europe). The philosophy of pragmatism and moral maximalism are dealt with in the chapter analysing K. Čapek's work as part of the Russian — Czech genre spiral (K. Čapek — V. Tendryakov). The specific features of the national literature also form the development of the genre; this aspect is dealt with in the chapter on the genesis of the Russian novel as a paradoxical genre — a result of the unfinished secularisation of Russian culture (the autochthonous and foreign roots of the genre, the grotesque novel structures and titles and subtitles (Pushkin's novel in verse *Eugene Onegin*, Lermontov's prose “folder” *The Hero of Our Time*, Gogol's “poema” *Dead Souls*, Tolstoy's peculiar “novel of novels” *War and Peace*).

The individual mentality and the different creative structure is dealt with in the final chapter. The comparison of Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer* and

Jakub Deml's *Footprints* demonstrates the similarity of the two genres tending towards the expansion beyond the boundaries of traditional genre forms; at the same time, however, it reveals the essential differences connected with their national and artistic traditions and with the evolution of modernism.

