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Łódź

THE CRITICISM AND THE SCIENCE OF LITERATURE

ON THE NOVEL ABOUT WRITING NOVEL

A necessary introduction to any considerations on the problematics of the novel about writing a novel will be a review and a reconstruction of the consciousness, both critical and having to do with the theory of literature dealing with the problem of the novel about writing a novel — the self-presentation of the author in literature, with a particular attention paid to the genre of the novel. The fulfillment of such a task would make it possible to grasp the essence of the phenomenon described by so many terms; it will let precisely define the denotators of self-presentation towards the novel — and, at the same time, mark the outlines of the examined subject in the work to follow.

At the very beginning it is necessary to state that however the very phenomenon of self-presentation in literature is, by many critics¹, considered to constitute one of the basic denotators of the changes occurring in the contemporary literature, the statements on this subject are, in the nature, fragmentary and occasional. The reason of such a state of things is, as it seems, the comparatively narrow literary material constituting the starting point and the basis for any theoretical generalizations.

Yielding precedence to Polish literary criticism, one could say that the important considerations on the subject of the appearance of the self-presentation reflections on the "plane" of the literary creation group round a few literary sources: *Pałuba* by Irzykowski, the contemporary Polish novels written after 1956, and the representative novels of French

¹ Cf. M. Czermińska, *Autotematyczność i dystans czasowy w powieściach Parnickiego*, [in:] *O prozie polskiej XX wieku*, Wrocław 1971, p. 311; A. Sandauer, *Rzeczywistość zdegradowana. O ewolucji sztuki narracyjnej XX wieku*, [in:] B. Schultz, *Proza*, Kraków 1964; Z. Żabicki, *O tendencjach rozwojowych współczesnej prozy polskiej*, „Pam. Lit.”, 1964, paper 4, p. 393; S. Żółkiewski, *Polska proza powojenna*, „Pam. Lit.”, 1964, paper 4, p. 329; M. Głowiński, *Powieść a dziennik intymny*, [in:] *O prozie polskiej XX wieku*, p. 573.

literature: *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* — written by Gide, *A la Recherche du Temps perdu* by Proust, and a sequence of the novels from the circle of "nouveau roman". Those works provoke the critics, the theoreticians of literature, and sometimes even their authors, to utter comments on "a novel within the novel", or "the novel about writing a novel". At the same time every one of the researchers uses his own terminology to define those phenomena. Such a state of things causes chaos both in the understanding of the phenomenon of writing the novel about writing a novel, and in the discrepancy in its relation to the historical development of literature, or the concrete literary realizations. The voices of the ones who doubt the value of the relation of the representative novels about writing a novel to the genre of the novel², with the simultaneous appearance of such terms as — the novel on the self-presentation, the novel about writing a novel (implying its genologic character — as typical variants of the novel), evidently point to the need of systematizing the considerations dealing with the issue of self-presentation — the ones which are already existing, as well as, to filling the gaps in that systematics. Those "blank spaces" on the map of problems have to do with the issues of primary importance, which will be seen clearly out of the critical remarks to follow.

Starting with *Pałuba*, which, as it will soon appear, is the earliest novel about writing a novel in the European literature — we would find the first remarks dealing with this problem coming from Irzykowski himself who, conscious of the experimental and unique character of his work says:

I've made up my mind while reworking [the subject] to apply quite a new literary method, the ideal of which has long dawned in my head. It consisted in moving the stress from "the work of art" to the poetic workshop, that is outside the work, to the point where the real source of poetry streams³.

Introducing the heterogenic nature of his work the author divides it systematically into the layers of: 1) facts, 2) sentences, theories about those facts represented by the acting persons, 3) the dialectics of the very facts, 4) the author's opinions related to those three points, 5) the author's philosophical and ethic background enabling the reader the proper understanding of *Pałuba*⁴.

In spite of the evident underlying of the novelty of his work and pointing to the intension of creating a novel, which will teach the critics a lesson of "what they should start to learn when confronted with *Pa-*

² Cf. S. Skwarczyńska, *Wstęp do nauki o literaturze*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1965, p. 137—138.

³ K. Irzykowski, *Pałuba*, Warszawa 1957, p. 414.

⁴ Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 415.

luba"⁵, Irzykowski did not live long enough to see the proper evaluation of his work. Only very few penetrating interpreters of *Pałuba*: Brzozowski, Lack, or Koniński decided to, first of all, undertake the psychological and philosophical problems of the novel — abandoning the problems which were to be most important for the future development of the genre of the novel.

It was finally K. Wyka who in the introduction to the second edition of *Pałuba* (1949) discussed and made visible its constant values. He simplified the "layery" division introduced by Irzykowski bringing it to three points: 1) the novel as such, 2) *quasi*-novel of the analitic kind, 3) *quasi*-novel about writing a novel⁶. Stressing the value of the author's "self presenting confessions" — Wyka quotes the context of the literary creations analogical to *Pałuba*, giving it, at the same time, a special range of the precursory experiment, being the most consequent. Quoting the titles of the "books whose subject is the very process of creation"⁷ that is Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, Martin du Gard's *Thibault Family*, Rzezacz's *The Edge* — gives the researcher a chance of a sagacious reflection:

The introduction into the construction of a novel of the very process of its creation, but the introduction of a conventional type, as one more multiplication of the plot, gives effective and clever results. But nothing more than that if it is only a trick and not the author's conscious risk. With Rzezacz and Martin du Gard — in spite of their literary mastery — this idea appears as a trick only. While Irzykowski disassembles his presentation technique consciously not simply for multiplying the fiction of the novel"⁸.

In the above remarks we find the first classification of the phenomenon of self-presentation in the novel — with taking considerations of the structural consequences of its appearance for the convention of the genre of the novel: the self-presentation as a trick — was subordinated to the plot layer of the novel, the self-presentation which is consequent — an expression of some definite literary postulates — penetrates and comprehends its whole structure.

With meaningful and important distinction of the different forms of the phenomenon Wyka uses the term "self-presentation" for defining the character of the reflection fashioning a new form of the novel actually realized by the author of *Pałuba*. This same phenomenon is given the name of "authothematics" by A. Sandauer who in his many critical es-

⁵ L.c.

⁶ K. Wyka, Introduction to: K. Irzykowski, *Pałuba*, Kraków 1949.

⁷ Op. cit., p. 6.

⁸ L. c.

says tries to give a sample of its many-sided description⁹. The author of *Liryka i logika* — includes autothematics into the context of the phenomena reoccurring in the contemporary literature, treating it as one of main denotators of the changes there to appear. The systematized opinion represented by Sandauer on the phenomenon of self-presentation determines it in two aspects: 1) genetic — as a stage in the historical evolution of the narrative techniques; 2) descriptive — as an attempt to define the “essence of existence” — of the autothematic works.

The first, genetic treatment — on the level of literature — interprets the phenomenon of self-presentation in the categories of differences and strains between the world of literary fiction and the existing reality. The autothematic technique seems to be another trial on the way of solving this antinomy — the trial aiming at reconciliation of literary fiction with the disposition to the authentic object¹⁰, although the solution it brings is not free from shortcomings and lacks consequence. Those necessary intricacies of autothematics had caused, accordingly to Sandauer, the situation in which this technique does not form a school but forms few experiments only.

The second, “descriptive” treatment brings the definition of the autothematics formulated for the first time in the essay devoted to the poetry of Paul Valéry and defined as “thematics in itself”: “The subject matter of the work [...] is to be its own genesis, it is to be its own history and annotations, a close perfect and self-supporting circle, the perpetuum mobile of the nonentity”¹¹. Such a formula of autothematics has an idealistic character — it describes the very essence of the phenomenon in a perfect and final shape. Sandauer realized that literature does not allow, because of its primary information-presentation function, to have “pure” autothematics, because “[...] the consciousness devoid of its concrete contents, that is not being, according to Husserl, the consciousness of something — is reduced to zero”¹². Sandauer carries on his autothematic literary research on a very wide aesthetic background, finding a convincing analogy in the plastic arts, where the tendency to the total “independence” of matter, its separation from meaning, the negation of its, so far, basic function — that of the sign, led to the creation of abstract art.

The form of autothematics approachable for literature is the realiza-

⁹ Cf. A. Sandauer, *O jedności treści i formy*, as well as treatises: *Konstruktywny nihilizm* and *Samobójstwo Mitrydatesa* in the volume *Liryka i logika*, Warszawa 1971; also *Rzeczywistość zdegradowana*.

¹⁰ Cf. Sandauer, *Rzeczywistość zdegradowana*.

¹¹ Sandauer, *Konstruktywny nihilizm*, p. 44.

¹² Sandauer, *Samobójstwo Mitrydatesa*, p. 386.

tion of its elements in a literary work. The beginnings of literature already know some technical games: *carmina figurata*, where the literary work becomes a carrier of some contents and, at the same time, the sign of this contents in its external form (*Syrinx* — by Teocryt), a similar character would also be found in pictography, onomatopoea, or comics — in which every page “draws what it describes, and describes what it draws”.

There appears a special kind of “rotary system” in which both sides of the work — the subject, refer one to the other.

The rotary system turns out to be a specific compression of form and contents. This dependence, the key one for the problem of autothematics, gains a higher stage of organization in the novel, which undertakes, but also makes more perfect and changes in its own way the technical games. Thus appear the works containing [...] direct or indirect allusion to the creative act to which they owe their appearance¹³.

The necessary features for the autothematic work are, according to Sandauer: 1) introducing into the work the character of its creator (Gide, Pirandello) placing him one level with all the other characters of the work (which is interpreted as an attempt to solve the contradiction between fiction and reality), 2) parallelism of the action which splits into the subject and object developments with the terracing of the work resulting from this. The work contains then a number of overlapping “layers” (for instance, *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* — containing in the matter of the novel two layers: object one — that of contents, subject one — the diary written by Edward who is writing a novel *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, and a third layer external in relation to the work — a diary of the “real” creation of the novel).

Sandauer's conception represents evident advantages, which are: a systematized view on the autothematics represented in “genetic” and “descriptive” aspects; linking of the problematics of autothematics with the historical development of the narrative techniques, and placing it in the wide context of the cultural events, a subtle and full of invention interpretation of different aspects of this phenomenon both in poetry and prose, and, finally, pointing to the essential composition denotators of the autothematic work. The fascination with the problem itself (in many sketches the researcher returns to that motif) becomes understandable in the light of the author's programmatic interest in form and giving to it primary function in the examined literary work. The researcher's aim, formulated by Sandauer as “the analysis of form — not for its own sake, but for the ideological interpretation on the way to dis-

¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 391.

cover the writer's philosophy of life" ¹⁴, played the decisive role in the choice and treatment of this problem. The fact that it appears to be still more complex and crosses the researcher's narrowly sketched frames of "a few experiments", does not present the problem as a less important one, giving it a value of an introduction to a detailed systematics and description of a phenomenon, an introduction which inspires and prompts to further considerations.

The two above mentioned voices actually deplete the literature dealing with the problems of self-presentation — autothematics (excluding M. Głowiński to whose formula of "the novel as a methodology of the novel" we shall pay attention separately in due time). In some other critical remarks this problematics appears only accidentally and does not lead to any determinations. D. Danek in her work entitled *Wypowiedzi w dziele o dziele* ¹⁵ poses a thesis supporting the non-historical character of the metaliterary reflections appearing in a literary work. The author suggests that such reflections are not a "XXth century innovation", but are typical of the novel in the whole history of its existence, and could be distinguished in their primitive or conventionalized forms in the ancient rhetoric treated as a tradition of the fictional prose. It would be difficult to polemize with such an attitude, since the examples given by the author prove that we have to do with other, though perhaps related to self-presentation, phenomena. Those reflections are the invocations of the Muses (*Odyssey* — an ancient epos), conventional apostrophes to the listener or the Maecenas (*Methamorphosis* by Apuleus, ancient exordium) resulting from exceptionally marked phatic function, having thus the character of general and formalized phrases with no relation to the act of creation of a particular work. They cannot be eventually included into the circle of self-presentation problems — being an expression of the creator's literary consciousness in relation to the convention.

Zbigniew Żabicki in his considerations over the tendencies of the contemporary Polish prose follows Sandauer in using his term "autothematics" — pointing to the fact of appearance, after the year 1958,

¹⁴ A. Sandauer, *Filozofia Leśmiana*, [in:] *Liryka i logika*, p. 17. The treatises in the volume *Liryka i logika* are formed as a widening sequence of considerations over the problems of autothematics. In the end of the sketch *Samobójstwo Mitrydatesa* (wholly devoted to the problems of autothematics) Sandauer explains the value he ascribes to those considerations: "the author wants this study to constitute an introduction to his critical output, so that everything he has written so far would become a chapter of this sub-book, he wants all the ways to lead here, all the terms to find here their connections" (p. 399).

¹⁵ D. Danek, *Wypowiedzi w dziele o dziele*, „Pam. Lit.", 1968, paper 3.

of the works demonstrating "the consciousness of its own essence, the consciousness of the bordering lines of their creative possibilities"¹⁶. Autothematics has been connected in his approach with the intellectual interests of the creators. The examples of such autothematic, according to the author works would be: *Spizowa brama* by Breza, *Góry nad Czarnym Morzem* by Mach, *Studium* by Bryll, *Krowa*, a collection of short stories, by Rudnicki¹⁷, *Pożegnanie z panną Singilą* by Bocheński. The thesis concerning the renovation of the Polish prose from the years 1958—1963 which is revealed in, among others, the modification of the literary canons, opening the discussion on the goals of literature which in the works themselves was reached through "autothematic reflections", does not arouse any reservation. The reservation appears with the set of titles given as the illustration to the thesis. It seems that the misunderstanding is to be found in a too loose and lacking precision understanding of the term "autothematic", which applies both to the real self-presentation (*Góry nad Czarnym Morzem*) and to the works differing in their form from the realistic canons of the novel or short story and tending towards a literary experiment consisting, in most cases, in breaking the literary fiction with the use of authenticity by means of including into it the journalistic, or essayistic genres, or the discursiving of narration¹⁸.

In the analogous to the above mentioned considerations on the stylistic denotators of the literary research in the Polish prose after 1956, S. Żółkiewski¹⁹ points to the appearance of the autothematic works (*Góry nad Czarnym Morzem* by Mach) tracing their connection with the formal experiments in Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* and the new French novel. Applying of the term used by Sandauer leads Żółkiewski to the thesis connecting the authothematic prose with the domination of the intellectual contents and the formal revision of the traditional structures of the novel formed by the critical realism.

To the already presented views we should like to include an opinion of a theoretician of literature — bringing in new and interesting research ideas. T. Cieślukowska in her treatise on the problematics of the contem-

¹⁶ Żabiński, *O tendencjach rozwojowych...*, p. 399.

¹⁷ „[...] almost every one, of the included into the collection short stories, is at the same time — in one of its succeeding hidden meanings — an autothematic short story” (Żabiński, *op. cit.*, p. 438).

¹⁸ Cf. B. Marczeńska, *O wrastaniu form użytkowych w strukturę dzieła literackiego na przykładzie Spiżowej bramy*, by T. Breza, ŁTN — Report from 1968, R. XXII, 9. The problem of the influence of the literature of fact on the structure of the literary work — is in this case reflected in the identification of the author with the narrator — the identity typical for documental forms.

¹⁹ Żółkiewski, *Polska proza powojenna*.

porary generic changes presents a different, closest to that presented by Sandauer, attitude²⁰. Taking into consideration the stages of the historical changes of the genre of the novel, she systematizes them in a three-grade phase system: 1) the phase of the anecdote (starting from the beginning of this form and going to Stern, Proust, Irzykowski), 2) the phase of the analysis — more precisely, the autho-analysis, a) of the subject in the so-called psychological novel — Mann, Proust, Dostoyevsky; b) of the structure — in the so-called self-presentation, or autothematic novel); 3) the phase of the presentation of the objected subject — the epic made lyrical.

The phase of analysis is connected with the digression novel technique of the type represented by Stern. Its development leads to the breakage of the tissue of the novel in the psychological prose. The anecdote appearing so far²¹, turns out to be replaced by the analysis of the hero's consciousness (object) — forming itself into the model of the analytic epic. The introducing stage would thus be the analysis of not the subject, but of its own structure, its own novel workshop forming the autothematic works (Irzykowski, Unamuno, Gombrowicz). The autothematics of the novel (the structure analysing itself) constitutes, according to Cieřlikowska, the effect of the infiltration of the lyrical elements into the epic: "The interference and the spreading of the lyrical subject in epic — forms its analytic phase".

Such an understanding of the problem corresponds with Sandauer's thesis on the source character of the romantic irony for the technique of autothematics, consisting in the exposing of the consciousness of the lyrical subject, and stressing the distance between the subject and the world of literary fiction created by it. Cieřlikowska's idea systematizes the problem on the genetic level, while the conscious use of the term — autothematics, leads to the description of its structural denotators, and to a considerable, in relation to all other works, widening of the literary context of the phenomenon due to quoting new and indisputable examples of the autothematic works.

Tracing the works defined by critics and researchers as autothematic, or self-presenting, we meet with analogous statements and terms on the plane of the foreign criticism. *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* by Gide, as the best known, and most often critically discussed novel focuses the theoretical reflections on the problems of autothematics in French and English criticism.

²⁰ T. Cieřlikowska, *Z problematyki współczesnych przemian rodzajowych*, Zesz. Nauk. UŁ, S. I, paper 20, Łódź 1961, p. 101—109.

²¹ Anecdote — understood as a happening taking place — see Cieřlikowska, *op. cit.*, p. 101, note 1.

In an extensive monograph presented by Lafille²², focused on the literary creation of Gide and on the book by Raimond: *La Crise du roman*²³ we find a formulation "composition en abyme" — related to the special kind of composition presented in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*. Gide, himself, is the author of that formulation — the idea and the name of which were taken from the heraldic terminology and are to denote the reduced reproduction of the heraldic arms rendered in its middle. Lafille connects composition en abyme — denoting, in literature, the introduction of the writer of the novel into the novel he is writing together with his considerations on his own concept of that very novel — with Gide's particular predispositions defining them as the need for complexity, the manifestation of narcissism, and the inclination to grasp the reality presented in its fullest dimension²⁴. Lafille defines *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* as: "a novel in the novel", giving examples of a similar composition principle in Jacques de Lacretelle's (*Le Pour et le Contre*) writing or in Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point*²⁵.

The novel by Huxley is, in Lafille's opinion, an extreme example of composition en abyme, he says that "reflet du roman dans le roman" (the reflection of a novel in the novel) gets prolonged in this case in its perspectives, which cause the agoraphobia²⁶.

The hero of this book, a writer, Filip Quarles, just like Edward writes a diary and gathers a material for a novel. Considering the possible composition devices he says:

[...] introduce into the novel the character of a writer. It will enable the aesthetic generalization [...] the samples of his works may picture different possible or impossible ways of writing. One may have him tell a part of his own novel and introduce variations on that subject. But why should one be satisfied with introducing only one writer? One may place in his novel another one,

²² P. Lafille, *André Gide — romancier*, Paris 1954.

²³ M. Raimond, *La Crise du roman*, Paris 1966.

²⁴ Lafille, *op. cit.*, p. 113: "Signalons encore l'usage de la composition "en abyme" à laquelle Gide recourt. Elle semble un trait de nature, un procédé de prédilection voire une obsession [...] Gide place encore dans le roman un écrivain qui conçoit lui-même un entre roman, dont le sujet est partiellement celui du livre que l'on a en main".

²⁵ Lafille uses also a term „a game of mirror reflections" to mark the complexity of the planes in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*: „L'auteur prolonge les dimensions de l'univers romanesque par un système de perspectives et de jeux de réflexion qui lui donne de la profondeur et des horizons de fuite, non plus un déroulement dans un plan. L'oeuvre confiée à un double partiel de soi, permet aussi de s'en détacher en une certaine part" (p. 206—207).

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 462 and further: „Le procédé du 'blason' et la construction 'en abyme' se développent bien au-delà de ce que lui-même avait imaginé ou réalisé".

and still another one in the novel written by second. With the tenth repetition I may introduce a writer who is writing my novel with the use of symbols from algebra, or with the use of variants on the subject of blood pressure, pulse, hormones, and the quickness of reactions ²⁷.

Actually, the perspective inside the work gets prolonged. The "terracing" system of layers would exceed in realization Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* several times, but Lafille seems to forget, that the *Point Counter Point* itself appears to be much simpler, not to say trivial, and Quarles' promising considerations do not go out behind the name of ironic projects.

The methaphoric formulation "construction en abyme", or its equivalent "a novel in the novel", are used by Lafille as a helping element in grasping the compositional principle of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* and its description — not being followed with more profound considerations on the subject of that phenomenon, or the structural consequences of its appearance for the shape of the novel. Michel Raimond in the chapter entitled "Les Romans du roman" poses a thesis that the turn of the novel towards the problems of the literary art is the sign of the crisis in the classic-realistic form of the genre:

C'est bien un trait essentiel de la crise du roman que les romanciers s'intéressent aux problèmes de leur art, et prennent le goût d'en débattre dans les romans qu'ils écrivent. On en voit qui critiquent, dans leurs ouvrages de fiction, la notion même de roman; d'autres, passionnés de roman, au contraire, abandonnent un instant leur récit pour faire la théorie du roman et dessiner l'idéal qu'ils en ont conçu ²⁸.

The example here — just *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, *The Dungeons of Vatican*, Proust's cycle, or Gide's contemporaries: Lacretelle (*Journal de Colère*), Léon Bopp (*Jacques Arnaut ou La Somme romanesque*) and Huxley's *Point Counter Point*.

Looking for the sources of the self-presentation interests in the novel Raimond (introducing a classification similar to that done by K. Wyka) speaks of three stages of the constituting of this novel: the first — the novel about novel writers (Balzac, Daudet) treated as social types engaged in the conflicts with the outer world rather than displaying creative labours (cf. Wyka's — self-presentation as a trick). The second stage is the original achievements of the XXth century consisting in the change of the novel about the novel writers into "a novel in the novel" originated with *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*. Thibaudet gives a similar description of Gide's work:

²⁷ A. Huxley, *Kontrapunkt*, Warszawa 1957, transl. by M. Godlewska, p. 420.

²⁸ Raimond, *La Crise du roman*, p. 244.

Son roman devient pour Gide le roman des romans [my underlining, B. M.], [...] ou plutôt le roman des difficultés qu'en homme [...] d'esprit aussi critique éprouvé à faire un roman²⁹.

Similar in construction to *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* works of Gide's contemporaries, remain in the relation of pastiche: for instance *Le Pour et le Contre*, by Lacretelle, in which novel the characters discuss about a novel which is to be written and which is given the same title.

"A novel in the novel" turns in the third stage into "the journal of the novel", which will never see the day light. The illustration of this kind of work would be Lacretelle's *Journal de Colère*, which stops on the problem of the genesis of the work, considering in details the stages of the formulation of the concept, without giving a presentation of its material shape. We find the similar situation in Léon Bopp's books. In his novels *Jacques Arnaut ou La Somme romanesque* and *L'Esquisse d'un Traité du Roman*, he makes use *ad extremum* of the idea found in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, though in a way which differs from that used by Huxley. "Treatise" is just a systematic list of intrigues, topics, and styles which could serve as a source for some fictitious work. Finally Raimond comes back to the term "mise en abyme" (which corresponds with Sandauer's "terracing composition") pointing to the possibility of solving this principle with the use of the description of the crossing view-points. He is satisfied, however, with his position of an observer — without supplying the problems of self-presentation with any deepening considerations.

Lynes jr. in his sketch with a promising title *André Gide and the Problem of Form in the Novel* is not satisfied with a simple translation of the French terms, forming his own ones, the "critical novel", and the "critique of the novel". Following the frequented paths of the interpretation of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* — with the use of the suitable quotations from *Journal*, by Gide, Lynes repeats the phrase about a writer writing a novel:

Gide places within *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* a novelist who is writing a novel with the same title as Gide's and who, in turn, plans to place a novelist in his story. This doubling of the subject is one of the elements in the solution which Gide gives to the problem of the point of view in his fiction³⁰.

Making use of the possibilities of the point of view technique (P. Lubbock and H. James) in looking for a construction formula of *Les Faux-*

²⁹ Thibaudet, *André Gide*, „Revue de Paris”, 15 VIII 1927. Quotation after Raimond, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

³⁰ C. Lynes jr., *André Gide and the Problem of Form in the Novel*, [in:] *Forms of Modern Fiction*, ed. by W. van O'Connor, Bloomington 1961, p. 173.

-*Monnayeurs*, Lynes adds to the already existing terms of: complexity, terracing, and multi-layer structure, another one — that of the overlapping points of view (like in Raimond). Treating Gide's work in this aspect, he places it between the extremities of the method of the point of view, that is between the first person direct narration and the rigorously dramatic presentation.

In the pronouncements of the critics from the west (France, England, America) there appears a distinct regularity. Without going outside the description and the surface ordering of the problem, they group their interests around the composition of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* and its genetic and psychological motivations (a constant considering of the problem to what degree Edward represents the personality of Gide himself).

French critics value the concepts of self-presentation in the optics of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* and Gide's pronouncements subordinating to them all the other literary attempts. The researcher from the regions of the English language go under their native theory of literature concepts — dealing with the problems of "a novel in the novel" in the aspect of the point of view technique (*The Novel in Our Time*; C. Lynes; F. Hoffman, *Aldous Huxley and the Novel of Ideas*³¹) and solving the problems of the composition and structure of the *Point Counter Point* in those categories.

Only with Hoffman was it possible to notice the unformulated statement of the relation of the causal type between the self-presentation type of the novel and breaking of the literary fiction through the generic instrumentation³² in the *Point Counter Point* by Huxley.

A different and very interesting approach is presented by Wellek and Warren — who place the "novel about writing a novel" in Sterne tradition, in opposition to the method of the point of view. The basis form such a differentiation is to be found in a different attitude of the narrator-creator to the world created by him.

The conscious stress on the literary character of fiction — in Sterne, Gide or Huxley — is placed on the opposite pole to the "objective" presentation of reality as represented by Flaubert, James, or Maupassant³³.

Summing up the above review of the critical and theory of literature attitudes — the considerations of the problems of autothematics could

³¹ Those sketches are included into the above quoted collection — *Forms of Modern Fiction*.

³² The term invented by Skwarczyńska, *Wstęp do nauki o literaturze*, vol. 3, p. 198. As to the *Point Counter Point* we would use this instrumentation in case of such an essay the generic form of which could be distinguished from "generic matter of the novel".

³³ R. Wellek, A. Warren, *Teoria literatury*, Warszawa 1970, p. 301–302.

be presented in two aspects: 1) genetic — consisting in looking for the tradition for those problems in the historical development of literature and in changes of the narrative technique in the novel. Two contradictory points of view can be seen here: one of them connects the autothematics in the novel with the defined historical moment (Cieślakowska, Żółkiewski, Żabicki, Lafille, Hoffman, Raimond), the other one points to the appearance of the self-presentation reflections in prose — in the whole history of literature (Danek, Błoński). This incongruity is evidently connected (in the second case) with the tendency of widening of the meaning range of the term itself and spreading it onto the works “including the meditations on the work of art, its meaning, its truth and necessity”³⁴; 2) the “descriptive” aspect enables to put together a certain number of the denotators of composition and structure of the self-presentation novel, bringing about a rich register of different definitions and terms having to do with the phenomenon of autothematics. We find here different and creative classifications of the problems connecting them with the searched formal devices of varied character, pointing to several sources with which they are connected: the digression technique and the influence of the romantic irony, the press of the authentic object on the literary fiction modeling the novel in a double sense: in the categories of the narrator-creator, and narration, the influence of the extra-literary genres. This path of the critical considerations stops on the more or less “outer” description of the authothematic work, deriving from the contents, or from the compositional principle even its definitions. There is a lack, on the other hand, of the solution of the most important problems, that is the definition of the function of those specific contents in the work itself, and pointing to the structural consequences of self-presentation for the traditional generic convention of the novel. The appearance of the autothematic reflection in a novel modifies and changes its structure on all the planes. It is the grasping of the essence and the direction of those changes — supported with the conclusive literary material — that lets us formulate the full systematics of the self-presentation novel together with the set of its characteristic features. The importance of the problem itself confirmed in the voices of the re-

³⁴ J. Błoński, *Widzieć jasno w zachwyceniu*, Warszawa 1965, p. 25. Błoński evidently claims for the widening of the range of Sandauer's notion of „autothematics”, regarding the works such as *Ulysses*, *Doctor Faustus*, and Broch's *The Death of Virgil* to have the same character. He starts his reflections from Proust and asking questions about the subject matter of this work of art answers it with: “one may daringly say that the subject matter of this cycle is just the writing of the cycle [...] round this subject there were placed in the fan-like way all the episodes and parts of the novel” (l.c.); also pp. 24, 26, 155—157.

asercchers as well as in the appearance of still new self-presentation works — is undeniable. Treating the above — as the main goal of the research work — we find the best support in the pronouncements of Skwarczyńska, precisely characterizing the specificity of the object of the research. The consciousness of the exceptional originality of the structure of the self-presentation work in relation to the novel leads here to doubting in its character of the generic variant³⁵. Talking about the problem of the self-presentation novel in the structural categories, Skwarczyńska says:

Drawing attention of the speaking subject towards the matters of art, understood as some task of the intellectually-technical nature, has a strong influence on the field of the treatment of the object, and in particular on the field of presentation and expression causing this field to be particularly exposed, and it intrudes the object standing in its centre [...]

[...] If the speaking subject, identified with the person of the author, turns out to be exposed not through the fulness of its psychological life and life's fluency, but through its attitude towards the creation act of a given work, the input of the intellectual effort, and the sense of organization, the freedom of the creative games and the artistic decisions — there appears a new generic structure, called most frequently the self-presentation novel³⁶.

Skwarczyńska's concept constitutes the most precise definition of the essence of the self-presentation novel, and resulting from this her statement, in the context of the numerous critical and theoretical descriptions quoted here, reflects the character of a summing up for this work — it shall be the basis for the perspicuous starting point.

KRYTYKA I NAUKA O LITERATURZE O POWIEŚCI WARSZTATOWEJ

STRESZCZENIE

Przegląd stanowisk krytycznych i literaturoznawczych dotyczących problematyki refleksji warsztatowej, metaliterackiej, występującej w dziele literackim, wykazuje chaos problemowy i terminologiczny panujący na tym odcinku w świadomości teoretycznej. Źródłem takiego stanu rzeczy jest brak ustalonego zakresu znaczenia pojęć: warsztatowość i autotematyzm, oraz mnożenie terminów opisowych i metaforycznych ujmujących samo zjawisko w różnych aspektach: krytycznych, historyczno-literackich, teoretycznych, interpretacyjnych. Uporządkowanie wypowiedzi literaturoznawców w aspekcie „opisowym” prowadzi do zestawienia źródeł zjawiska warsztatowości w powieści: technika dygresyjna i wpływ ironii romantycznej, nacisk autentyku na fikcję literacką, wpływ i przenikanie do powieści gatunków

³⁵ Cf. Skwarczyńska, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 137, 262.

pozaliterackich. Brak jednak rozstrzygnięcia problematyki decydującej: określenia funkcji owych specyficznych (warsztatowych, metaliterackich) treści w samym dziele i wskazania strukturalnych konsekwencji występowania tych treści dla tradycyjnej (realistycznej) formuły powieści.

Punktem wyjścia sformułowania pełnej systematyki powieści warsztatowej¹ poza uporządkowaną krytycznie literaturą przedmiotową staje się twierdzenie S. Skwarczyńskiej charakteryzujące specyfikę powieści warsztatowej i wskazujące na szczególną oryginalność jej struktury. Twierdzenie to otwiera perspektywę na sklasyfikowanie i opis powieści warsztatowej jako samodzielnego przedmiotu genologicznego w „randze” odmiany gatunkowej.

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¹ Praca ta jest częścią większej całości.