

ZAGADNIENIA RODZAJÓW LITERACKICH
TOM XIX, ZESZYT 1 (36)



ВОПРОСЫ ЛИТЕРАТУРНЫХ ЖАНРОВ
LES PROBLÈMES DES GENRES LITTÉRAIRES

ŁÓDZKIE TOWARZYSTWO NAUKOWE
SOCIETAS SCIENTIARUM ŁODZIENSIS
WYDZIAŁ I SECTIO I

ZAGADNIENIA RODZAJÓW
LITERACKICH

TOM XIX, ZESZYT 1(36)



ŁÓDŹ 1976

Redakcja
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Okladkę projektował Edward Kostka

Wydano z pomocą finansową Polskiej Akademii Nauk



Podr.

P18260/19.1976

Printed in Poland

Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich — Wydawnictwo, Wrocław 1976.
Nakład: 800 egz. Objętość: ark. wyd. 9,60, ark. druk. 7,63, ark. A1 10.
Papier druk. sat. kl. IV, 80 g, 70 × 100. Oddano do składania 31 VII
1975. Podpisano do druku 20 II 1976. Druk ukończono w lutym 1976.
Wrocławska Drukarnia Naukowa. Zam. 2382/76 — A-18. Cena zł 45.—

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TOWARDS A THEORY OF THEORY OF GENRES IN FOLKLORE

1. Practically, works of folklore exist in the memory of the informants, manuscripts of the collectors, files of the archives, and on the densely printed pages of scholarly books. Because this is the pragmatic situation of folklore, no one can deny their existence. The history of folklore research has always studied these various forms of pragmatological folklore¹. Theoretically, the works of folklore exist in variants, types, genres (and motifs, themes, sujets too). Since all of later categories belong to the metalanguage, folklorists, when dealing with the problems of these categories, always had to make definitions or discuss entirely what they meant when they used such notions. It is a well known fact that the theory of variants is a discussion of the term "variant" rather than the examination of the existing variants. I do not doubt even if there are more studies of type indexes than type indexes themselves and the same is true of the situation of genre theory in folklore too.

To give a very simple case: about half a century ago Propp studied a hundred old Russian folktales² and concluded that all those represent one single genre, that is the Russian magic tale (*volšebnaja skazka*). In the last few decades folklorists have quoted his results literally at least a thousand times, so one should have second information about the same genre a thousand times. But it seems to me that folklorists are rather reluctant to study new genres, by inertia they prefer to quote already-made statements about other genres and if they do study a new genre in fact, they usually extend the results gained from other genres instead of doing a new deep research.

In 1926 Bronisław Malinowski wrote a few pages³ about the distinction

¹ For example see *Folklore Research Around the World*, ed. R. M. Dorson, Bloomington 1961 (A Special Issue of the "Journal of American Folklore", vol. 74, No. 294).

² See V. Ja. Propp, *Morfologija skazki*, Moscow 1969.

³ B. Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology*, New York 1926.

between tale, myth and legend. His statements too were very often quoted yet I can add that we do not know much more about the question of myth-tale-legend interrelations since the quotations usually were not combined with new empirical data. I intend rather to say that this is not only because of the failure of folklorists' diligence nonetheless it represents how complex the problem is to deal in the folklore with classificatory categories of metalingual character, and with taxonomy and categories of classification. In the present paper, therefore, I wish only to give some remarks on theories of folklore genres from the point of view of further research possibilities. I think it would be useful to make similar surveys about the concepts of motif, type, function, tradition and so on. These problems all are closely interrelated, because, according to any special genre theory, the system of categories such as variant and type could be of very different character. Nevertheless on the forthcoming pages I try to concentrate only on the problem of genre in folklore. The interrelations between genre theory and theory of folklore in general should be treated at another time.

2. Of the clumsy history of studies of folklore genres there are some good surveys⁴, so it is not necessary to touch on the problem here in a detailed form. Still one cannot help considering and/or reconsidering the main stages of genre theories in folklore research.

As it is well known, classicist (*i. e.* classical) genre theory has not properly said anything worthwhile about the very genres of folklore⁵. The classicist theory of genres used folklore as a storehouse of examples of early stages of art. If you look, for example, into genre theory as expressed in Hegel's *Aesthetics*⁶, you may find very important observations concerning form and value of particular genres (as heroic songs, riddles, fables, tales, *etc.*). Folklorists should be aware of his statements, still Hegel's genre theory does not contain any homogeneous theory or concept of folklore genres.

In the second half of the 19th century, when comparative and philological methods in folklore went into the first gear, genre theory was rather a latent one. Only at the end of dominance of these schools were great "summaries" accomplished in genre studies which in most of the cases are still valuable informations about a set of different genres. Here I quote only the best of such generic investigations. After some previous similar studies at the turn of the 20th century A. N. Veselovskij conveyed

⁴ See *e.g.* H. Bausinger, *Formen der "Volks poesie"*, Berlin 1968.

⁵ I. Behrens, *Die Lehre von der Einteilung der Dichtkunst, vornehmlich vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert*, Halle 1940.

⁶ G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik* (in numerous German and English editions).

his enormous comparative history of the development of all genres⁷. In that work he wanted to give us a picture of the history of genres from the Stone Age until recent folklore. The work remained unfinished, and it is no wonder that no one could later deal with such an enormous problem. (When, in the 30's, the Chadwicks wanted to describe the "growth of literature"⁸, they used only selected, but very valuable material from different parts of the world.) The positivists' summaries of genre theories were based on solid evolutionary principles and usually paid attention to the complexity of genres as well. Still, their material, from today's point of view, is very limited and not always authentic enough.

The next step was the appropriate study of individual genres. In the folklore research of course there has always been a trend towards description of the diffusion of folklore elements and in accordance with that, there were always some remarks on style and poetics of the particular genres as well⁹. The functionalist school of British anthropology described the use and forms of traditional genres, although not always on the same high level. And, as it is well known too, the school of Malinowski's functionalism never gave a comparative analysis of genres. The detailed descriptions of different peoples' genres (the number of which is not exciting large!) in fact very often isolated the genres and the respective cultures from each other. For example even Evans-Pritchard could write a five-hundred-page-long monograph¹⁰ on Azande magic without making a definition of *any* folklore genre, without quoting a single narrative *in extenso*, and without any kind of comparison with cultures other than the Azande. Nowadays, when there are so many attempts to compile a literary history of Asia or Africa¹¹, the main problem is that one does not have comparative material from different cultures or tribes and therefore may never know if a particular genre (*e. g.* a riddle, a proverb, an animal tale, a lyrical song, a jest, *etc.*) is not represented in the scholarly collections of folklore, whether these genres do not exist indeed or are neglected by collectors and folklorists only.

The modern folklore research, however, tends to make descriptions of the given genres in a more specific way and gives details of usage,

⁷ See A. N. Veselovskij, *Istoričeskaya poetika*, Leningrad 1940.

⁸ H. M. Chadwick, K. N. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, vol. I—III, Cambridge 1932—1940.

⁹ See K. Krohn, *Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethode*, Oslo 1926, or L. Bødker, *Folk Literature (Germanic)*, Copenhagen 1965.

¹⁰ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, Oxford 1937.

¹¹ See *e.g.* R. M. Dorson, *African Folklore*, Bloomington—London 1972; R. Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa*, Oxford 1970.

use and function of the genres. Consequently there is a hope that in the close future there will be more pertinent material for comparative functional studies of genres as well.

For the last three generations of folklorists an ever growing study of the morphological and structural characteristics of folklore has been established. The results of such studies are similar to the success of King Saul who went to find his lost donkey and found a kingdom. The morphologists first wanted to design a better type or a more valid description of individual works of folklore, and then they have established a structural description of dozens of variants, *i. e.* a structural description of different genres. Their interest was concentrated mostly on folktales, myths, legends, and on some minor genres like proverb and riddle. This type of study continues still, and there have been attempts at comparative evaluation of structural studies of the genres too¹².

We do not yet know much about the universals of structure among the folklore genres. Nevertheless it is obvious that further research will deal very seriously with this much important problem.

In the theory of communication there is a firm place for studies of genres. Genres namely could be very easily studied in terms of special forms of coding, decoding, and message. There have been quite a number of promising studies of this kind. Recently the so-called "ethnography of speaking" or "contextual" folklore research, as well as the whole "new ethnography", deal with problems of folklore genres from this special point of view¹³. As far as their results are concerned, they have given very detailed descriptions of speech situations and have selected the most interesting cases for study, so their material is limited. We are not yet able to judge in general their genre theory because the "new" folklorists have not collected and analyzed enough material for that. No doubt, however, this is again a promising routine for further genre studies. We can stress this aspect, because we are in the position of being able to compare their methods with the method of previous analyzers. If you look at the enquiry of the traditions of the Cuna Indians (by the Scherzers who did perhaps the best study of this kind¹⁴), it is clear that a detailed

¹² See *e.g.* V. Voigt, *Some Problems of Narrative Structure Universals in Folklore*, "Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae", 21/1972, p. 57-72.

¹³ See the evaluation article by D. K. Wilgus, *The Text Is the Thing*, "Journal of American Folklore", vol. 86, No. 341 (July-September 1973), p. 241-252. For representatives of the new school see the works mentioned below in notes 14, 24, 26, 27.

¹⁴ D. Sherzer, J. Sherzer, *Literature in San Blas: Discovering the Cuna Ikala*, "Semiotica", VI/2, 1972, p. 182-199. The authors prepare now a monograph about the Cuna Indians.

description of genres according to situation sets is possible by means of a post-structural and semiotic analysis. This type of study further enables one to combine the investigations of oral traditions with the investigations of folk art and material culture. In fact there is no gap between different spheres in a given culture from the point of view of post-structural methods.

3. Not only from the practical standpoint we have especially to refer to the latest development of folklore genre studies within the framework of international cooperation among the folklorists. If there exist a theoretical problem like that of the genre, solutions may sometimes be combined with practical purposes and tasks in recent folklore studies. Very often indeed meetings, congresses or collective works almost predict which kind of study will be favored by the next generation of scholars. Since the 20's, the ideas of Jolles about "simple forms" (*einfache Formen*)¹⁵, and since the 30's the rigorous classificatory attempts of von Sydow¹⁶ have influenced the contemporary folklorists. But now I would say that it was without major results in proper studies of existing folklore genres. In the 40's and 50's the problem of genre within the folklore seems to be out of context. On the contrary, in the 60's it was suddenly revived. In 1961 there was a special conference in the Soviet Union on the theory of genres¹⁷. They started to put together a manual for genre classifications¹⁸. In 1964 Propp and Čistov organized a conference of the classification of oral genres¹⁹. The result was mainly of a descriptive and cataloguing character, following the needs of archives, resp. of comparative studies. In the later years similar conferences were organized and their material was published²⁰. Yet the importance of generic studies is greater since we may find in these publications perhaps the most coherent and developed system of genres based on social and historical principles of taxonomy and/or description.

¹⁵ A. Jolles, *Einfache Formen*, Halle an der Saale 1929.

¹⁶ C. W. von Sydow, *Selected Papers on Folklore*, Copenhagen 1948.

¹⁷ V. Ja. Propp, *Specifika žanrov russkogo fol'klora. Tezisy dokladov na naučnoj konferencii*, Gorkij 1961.

¹⁸ *Metodičeskaja zapiska po arhivnomu hraneniju i sistematizaciji fol'klornyh materialov*, ed. V. Ja. Propp, Vilnjus 1964.

¹⁹ See V. Ja. Propp: *Principy klassifikacii fol'klorističeskikh žanrov*, "Sovetskaja Etnografiya", 1964, No. 4, p. 147—154; *Žanrovij sostav russkogo fol'klora*, "Russkaya Literatura", 1964, No. 4, p. 58—76. The published material of the Moscow symposium is available in *Simpozium No. 12. Klassifikacija ustno-poetičeskikh žanrov*, ed. V. K. Čistov, [in:] *VII. Meždunarodnyj kongress antropologičeskikh i etnografičeskikh nauk*, vol. VI, Moscow 1969, p. 389—436.

²⁰ *Prozaičeskije žanry fol'klora narodov SSSR. Tezisy dokladov na vsesoyuznoj naučnoj konferencii... 21—23 maja 1974 g.*, Minsk 1974. For recent Soviet genre theory in folklore see works mentioned in notes 35, 36, 37.

On the other hand in 1968 Lauri Honko revived the vital question of genre analysis in folkloristics from a pure theoretical point of view²¹. According to Honko, the old genre theory in folklore should be substituted by a more function-oriented method, and for examples he quotes the anthropological studies of Malinowski, Bascom, Dundes, and others. He proposes furthermore a complex analysis of genres, taking into consideration at least nine criteria: contents, form, style, structure, function, frequency, distribution, age and origin of the genres. Later his proposals were elaborated on by Pentikäinen, Janson and others²², primarily in combination again with the contextual analysis. But, in the meantime the term "context" has gained a very specified meaning²³. Young American folklorists like Abrahams, Babcock-Abrahams, Bauman, Ben-Amos, Hymes, Georges, Kirschenblatt-Gimblett and others²⁴ have studied the interactions of different genres and proposed (according to the social theory of communication) a thorough analysis of speech acts and speech events in the actual performance of the genres. Their collected essays certainly mark a new step towards a theory of folklore genres.

How far the change from an old theory of genres towards a new one has gone we can determine by mentioning the fact of the degree to which the International Society for Folk Narrative Research has been occupied with the topic of genres. At its first congress in Kiel and Copenhagen in 1959 only traditional theories of folklore genres (*i. e.* fragments of Jolles or von Sydow) emerged. In 1964 in Athens and five years later in Bucharest the structural methods of folklore have been applied to the ramifi-

²¹ L. Honko, *Genre Analysis in Folkloristics and Comparative Religion*, "Temenos", 3/1968, p. 48–66.

²² J. Pentikäinen, *Depth Research*, „Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae”, 21/1972, p. 127–151; H. Janson, *A Multidimensional Approach to Oral Literature*, "Current Anthropology", 10/1969, No. 4, Part II, p. 413–426.

²³ See V. Voigt, *For "Text – Context" Researches in Folklore*, "Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestinensis de Rolando Eötvös Nominatae", Sectio Linguistica 4 (1973), p. 169–177.

²⁴ See the summarizing works of this trend as *The Ethnography of Communication*, eds. J. J. Gumperz, D. Hymes, special publication of "American Anthropologist", 66/1964, No. 6, Part 2; D. Ben-Amos, *Toward a Componential Model of Folklore Communication*, [in:] *Proceedings of the VIII International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences*, vol. II, Tokyo and Kyoto 1968; *Ethnology*, Tokyo 1970, p. 309–311; *Social Anthropology and Linguistics*, ed. E. Ardener, London 1971; *Directions in Sociolinguistics. The Ethnography of Communication*, ed. J. J. Gumperz, New York 1972; *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore*, eds. A. Paredes, R. Bauman, Austin–London 1972 (Special Issue of the "Journal of American Folklore", vol. 84, No. 331, January–March 1971); *Folklore. Performance and Communication*, eds. D. Ben-Amos, K. Goldstein, The Hague 1973; *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, eds. R. Bauman, J. Scherzer, Cambridge 1974.

cations of genre analysis, primarily for sake of the distinction between folktale, legend and joke. One should then say that there has been material collected towards a new step forward in genre theory, and the breakthrough has namely occurred at the VI Congress of the Society in June 1974 in Helsinki. Judging by the presentations and discussions there, nowadays the folklorists of the world have started to reconsider some of the main tenets of their old research methods. As for traditional means, they tried to reevaluate the diffusionist theory of variants. As for the structural methods, they expressed stronger doubts about the general validity of some principles of structural analysis. If we therefore disregard some positive statement about the study of tradition and informants, we can also say that even in the rigid theory of transmission, the problems of communication theory and contextual studies have markedly appeared.

In general we must state that recently not everyone is quite enthusiastic about the actual level of theory of folklore and they argue for changes in two points. First, the folklorists are not satisfied with the old research methods which are often not exact enough for present standard in cultural, linguistic or social investigations. Secondly, the new methods sometimes show more promise than practical use or application. Consequently, the study of genres is now a very different situation than let us say 10 years ago.

During the Helsinki congress, in a detailed analysis, Robert Austerlitz proposed a multiplex functional scheme of genre interactions²⁵. Dan Ben-Amos viewed the theory of genre from the point of view of literary and linguistic theory²⁶. Roger Abrahams has summarized succinctly the notion of genre focusing on the problem of performance²⁷. Lauri Honko wanted to give a new picture of possibilities of the analysis of genres, but his views concerning the recent tasks of genre theory²⁸ are somewhat different than those of his position some years ago. Now he says that the "new" folkloristics made a promise which has not been fulfilled yet. He does not see real contextual research in the new studies and as a remedy, he recommends a definite return to some of the golden age works of functional school. He praises Herskovits's book on Dahomean narrative²⁹, which, according to Honko "is based on a through knowledge of the entire culture and societies that preserved the narratives, it reflects very adequately the everyday problems of genre classification (that of 'natural'

²⁵ Here and in the subsequent notes I quote the preprint papers to the VIth Congress of the International Society for Folk-Narrative Research, June 16–21, 1974, Helsinki: R. Austerlitz, *Toward the Classification of Folklore Genres* (q.v.).

²⁶ D. Ben-Amos, *The Concept of Genre in Folklore* (q.v.).

²⁷ R. D. Abrahams, *Genre Theory and Folkloristics* (q.v.).

²⁸ L. Honko, *Genre Theory Revisited* (q.v.).

²⁹ M. J. Herskovits, F. S. Herskovits, *Dahomean Narrative*, Evanston 1958.

as well as well as 'nominal' genres) and above all it links the narratives both with tradition-ecological and cross-cultural problems"³⁰. Because these statements are typical of the present situation of genre studies in folklore, let us briefly confront the opinion of Honko with Herskovits's book. The Dahomean fieldwork was done in 1931, and the book contains 155 stories. We do not learn very much about the story tellers, nor of the distribution of the stories. The presentation is solid and reliable, yet today's folklorists usually give much more detailed and accurate descriptions of narrating events, in contrast with Herskovits, in whose book most of the published texts are unidentifiable from this point of view. We do not learn the contextual situation of the individual stories, but instead of that we gain a detailed description of whole genres and of the system of genres. Unfortunately and still quite understandably nothing has been said in Herskovits's book on the historical development or on international acceptance of the particular narrative items. In the introduction we find general remarks about the genres, which are of importance but still do not present us the whole picture. The authors pay attention to the cultural change and the system of values revealed in narrative forms. But one could ask, it is not common in European or American folklore studies too to keep these questions in mind? I am satisfied with Honko's dissatisfaction with recent theories of genres in folklore, but I find his suggestions to return to that old type of functional analysis even if not a reactionary but anyway a backward step. The problem of genres in folklore cannot be solved by simple adaptation of main ideas of functional anthropology, without a specific folklore theory of genres.

4. We are now at the turning point in the history of genre theory in folklore. We had better not to reject the previous results, rather we should try to sum up the firm results and to continue the best traditions in genre research. Since in the previous paragraphs of my paper I tried always to give a short historical summary of research problems, now I shall but give a comprehensive picture of results and further possibilities according to the very nature of folklore generic studies.

Perhaps one of the most difficult problems in genre studies is how to arrange the different levels of the pertinent investigations. From that point of view, the system I present here shall be a provisional one, because, as far as I can know, nobody has ever seriously studied the inter-commitment of different levels in generic investigations. Still, I think there is some use of summing up the different means and aims of genre studies, because by this way we can see what has been done and what has not been done in previous enquiries. In the forthcoming notes I do

³⁰ Honko, *Genre Theory...*, p. 8.

not refer in details to any specific culture because I think genre studies must be a cross-cultural enterprise. It is obvious that every people or culture has different genres and systems of genres too, and it is evident that in descriptive studies we have to prefer to refer to each particular difference. But as for theory, I would rather propose to have a general, universal scheme of generic studies.

5. In studying genres the following "levels" could be enumerated.

5.1. General terminology of genres (according to the German genre³¹ studies this is one main part of "nominalistic" genre researches). This is the enumeration of terms generally used for designating groups of works of art in folklore (for example: song, tale, myth, *etc.*). From a taxonomical point of view there is a concept of a system of genres behind the terms (for that see below 5.5). However, the individual terms do not always form a logical set of notions. For example, in one culture song and ballad are two entirely different terms, while in another culture ballad is a mere subgroup of a song. This level of investigations more or less is solidly based on the scholarly research tradition. For this statement we may easily give fitting examples. The same types of stories according to the mythological school were termed myth, according to the morphological school they were called memorates, and according to the new structural investigations they are sometimes labeled narratives. Practically everybody who studies genres is biased by the previous terminology on this "nominalistic" level and we should be aware of that fact.

5.2. "Native" terminology of genres (*i. e.* "universalia in rebus" problem of genres). This level represents the "natural" names for genres which are usually presented in works which deal with culture other than that of the investigator. This position is quite natural because in such case the investigator very easily understands that the genres are very different in different cultures. We should assume that if the folk does know a genre it has a "name" for it, so the native terms just demonstrate the existence of the genres. But still there are many unsolved problems here. On one hand very many of the "native" terms are borrowed from the learned culture or even from another culture. For example, the non-generic Latin term *adventure* is the origin of the French *aventure* 'fiction, adventure story' or further of the Danish-Norwegian *eventyr* 'folktale'. The Latin term *versus* is the origin of the Finnish *virsi* 'psalm, song', whileas the Latin *psalter[ium]* is the origin of the Hungarian *zsoltár* 'psalm', *etc.* On the other hand, a native terminology is not very often systematic in character. If you look into the different forms of dances, you find

³¹ Here and thereafter the German terminology is quoted mostly after K. W. Hempfer, *Gattungstheorie*, München 1973.

a very elaborate system of naming. But the types concerning the texts or musical forms do not have the same elaborated terminology. Folklore collectors very often face that the obviously different genres have no difference in name, while different names are sometimes used in reference to the same genre. If you look at the terminology of the three very related genres, "fabula", "fable" and "tale" which intersect in nearly all the European languages, I think you see the point.

5.3. Function and use of native terminology (*i.e.* the "realistic positions" of genre terminology). To this level belongs all the material concerning the pragmatic aspects of native terminology. All experts of folk literature should quote examples which show how often the genre terms are used in a connotative, symbolic or transformed usage. The *tale* very often has two meanings: 'story' and 'lie'. The term *legend* has in many European languages a double meaning, namely 'Saint's legend' and 'historical or belief story'. In Russian, however, for 'legend' there are at least four different names (*skaz*, *predanie*, *skazanie*, *legenda*), and this circumstance makes the terminology of Russian folk narrative research very curious, as everyone knows. In south-eastern Europe there is a tradition of naming the genres according to their metrical forms and/or ethnic origins. This method sometimes creates a strange coincidence of terms. For example in Hungarian the 'ballad' is called a "long song" but there is nothing which has the name of "short song". In Serbo-Croatian the 'more-than-10-syllables-verse' is called *bugarstica* (perhaps 'Bulgarian form'), while the corresponding 'shorter verse' has the name *deseterac* 'decasyllable'. Philologists have studied the various forms of a metrical system generally called *alexandrine*, which most usually has the meaning 'twelve-syllable-verse', but originally meant simply 'the metrical form of a poem about Alexander the Great'. If somebody investigates the history of folklore genres terminology from this point of view, should always be prepared for meeting the most strange semantic developments. Since there is an established term for a given genre, it can always be applied in a connotative usage. Therefore everything in folklore which has something to do with miracles and extraordinary events should have the name "tale" or "legend". Heinrich Heine says in the title of his poem about the political situation of 19th century Germany a "Wintermärchen", which is an allusion to Shakespeare's "winter tale" — and none of the works is a 'tale' indeed. Victor Hugo speaks about "légendes des siècles", and the work is a novel. Sholem Alejchem entitled his play as *Song of the songs* (which is again, as it is well known, an eponymic usage of the Biblical term, *sir ha sirim*, and means 'a perfect song', hence 'the quintessence of the songs').

5.4. Historical development of genres as reflected in termi-

nology (in German "models of evolution" of genres). It is a well known fact that the genres develop according to social and artistic formations of a given culture. The ballad once meant 'dance song'. The German *Märchen* comes from the word *Mär* 'news', and means originally 'little news'. The English *carol* has an immediate French origin, with the original meaning 'a special form of dance'. *Polka* or *polska* in their international wide usage may still maintain their first meaning, viz. 'Polish dance' or 'Polish song'. In one word, one should but say that all genre terms are historically developed and if we give a synchronical description of them, it will be immediately necessary to extend by a diachronic analysis.

5.5. The synchronic system of genres in terminology. As we know, genres do not exist isolated from each other, but within a complex interrelationship. We can most easily see this phenomenon when the system of genres is changing (see below 5.6). The synchronic system of genres is, by its very nature, a taxonomic set with all the characteristics of taxonomy. The names for genres usually directly reflect their relations. Very often there are oppositions among the genres and in some cases, the system of the genres can be described as a hierarchy. The problem of the hierarchy of genres³² has appeared latently in folklore research many times, but consciously and as an independent subject of studies, has been mentioned quite recently. Starting with the multi-functional description of genres, some of the genre matrices are presented in a two-dimensional chart. In some other cases, the binary oppositions among the genres are figured out by the so-called "semantic tree" diagrams. Yet, according to the results of the ethnographical semantic and ethnoscience, there are other possibilities too for describing the coherence of genres. This field of folklore research is quite a new one indeed, so we reckon only provisional statements, and yet, there is no doubt that all the taxonomic and semantic problems which are present in any system of names and classification are valid and important for generic taxonomies too. It has been said many times that the "native" terminology for genres is often an incongruent one. I think that if we study this problem according to the regularities of folk taxonomies, we find the best way to understand the genre terms of the people. *E. g.* the general Finnish term for 'mocking names' is *köllä*. But there is a lot of similar or affiliated names like *kollinimi*, *köttinimi*, *keltti*, *liikanimi*, *mainesana*, *haukkumanimi*, *korkonimi*; in Ingermanland they use the name *narrinimi* and in Estonian *sõimunimi*, which all have nearly the same meaning, but are somewhat different in semantics and intention. The jungle of "native" terminology often

³² V. Voigt, *Position d'un problème. La hiérarchie des genres dans le folklore*, "Semiotica", VII/2, 1973, p. 135-141.

has puzzled the unprepared folklorists, but I think, on the other hand, that it is a very interesting field for studying folk taxonomy in general by description of the genre terms.

5.6. The diachronic system of genres in terminology. It represents the development and changes of the genres in the form of development and changes of generic terms (in German genre theory the diachrony is often considered as a synonym to historic-descriptive study of genres). Without any exception, the folklore genres are social phenomena and consequently, they change according to the changes in society. Yet there is no direct influence of every social change upon all changes in generic terminology. Ties between society and genres are complex and multiplex. And while never one single genre changes, but whole bunches of genres, we have always to explain those phenomena in all their complexity. *E. g.* it has been a well known fact, that from the 14th century, the development of the pair-dances, in substitution of round (circle) dances, was a kinesic revolution. Nearly the whole metrical system of (strophic) lyrics changed at the same time. This textual revolution has considerable impact on folk customs (such as wedding songs and amusement lyrics). Very often the media of folklore communication develop or change, and according to that, the whole system of genres may be different. With the invention of the printing machine a whole series of new genres appeared, such as *broadside*, *broadsheet*, *chap-book*, *popular book*, *comics*, *Volksbuch*, *Trivialliteratur*, *Bänkelgesang*, the Russian *lubok*, or even the *tarot* (printed fortune telling cards). It is a pity that folklorists have not yet studied these changes in necessary proportion to the importance of such an interesting phenomenon of the history of culture. We may mention that in the last few years Robert Mandrou and other French scholars have studied³³ the great change between the 16th and 18th centuries' popular culture, Rudolf Schenda and others have studied the interrelation between printed and oral genres³⁴ from that particular point of view. Concerning the great impact of widespread literacy in early Russian literature, D. S. Lihačev wrote, in his interesting papers³⁵, of the change of legends, chronicles and other narrative forms. According to his in-

³³ See *e.g.* R. Mandrou, *De la culture populaire aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* Paris 1964; *Introduction à la France moderne*, Paris 1974.

³⁴ R. Schenda, *Volk ohne Buch. Studien zur Sozialgeschichte der populären Lesestoffe 1770—1910*, Frankfurt am Main 1970.

³⁵ See *e.g.* D. S. Lihačev, *Sistema literaturnykh žanrov Drevnej Rusi*, [in:] *Slavjanskije literatury. Doklady soverskoj delegacii — V. Meždunarodnyj s'ezd slavistov*, Moscow 1963, p. 47—70; *Drevneslavjanskije literatury kak sistema*, [in:] *Slavjanskije literatury. Doklady soverskoj delegacii — VI. Meždunarodnyj s'ezd slavistov*, Moscow 1968, p. 5—48; *Poetika drevnerusskoj literatury*, Leningrad 1971, especially p. 24—94.

vestigations, the whole system of presentation of ethical and aesthetic ideas changed in early Russian literature, when they shifted from orally transmitted genres to manuscript forms. The previous genres were collectively created and transmitted. In the newer forms the individual features became much more prevalent. Of course, in folklore we do not find such clear cut examples of changing of the media, but the phenomenon is the same and folklorists should investigate it thoroughly. Sometimes, in "culture change" or "acculturation" studies we find the first steps toward such investigations. But we are not very satisfied with the results of such studies, because the first kind of research deals with changes of elements in material or social culture, and it is not the proper study the more complex problem of generic transformations.

5.7. The evaluation of genres, *i. e.* the aesthetic character of genres. If we accept, as everyone must do, that folklore is a special form of creative art, the genres are then aesthetic categories. They represent aesthetic values, which are based on social and/or ethical values of a given society. To study these problems is one of the most important tasks of folklore research. In this paper, however, we do not enter into the discussion of the problem in details, because it deserves special treatment. Nevertheless, here I have to emphasize one particular problem because of its utmost importance: why and how in the folklore namely the genres concentrate the aesthetic values. In the last few years when the personal art of story-tellers has been carefully studied, folklorists paid major attention to the aesthetical evaluation of the variants. Nobody could in fact neglect this aspect, but still we should know that even the most excentric story-teller has to follow the principles of the genres, otherwise his product are out of the context of folklore. From the morphological and structural analysis of fairy tales, J. M. Meletinskij and his colleagues have concluded³⁶ that the magic tale represents an "alternation of binary blocks" where the $e\ l$, $\bar{e}\ \bar{l}$, $E\ L$ and $\bar{E}\ \bar{L}$ elements follow each other. According to them e always denotes a special kind of action, while l denotes a special kind of value. But if we have in the folktale a structural system of binary units like $- - + + - - + + \dots$, where the first "block" is always negative and the last one is always positive, then it is clearly an aesthetic system as well. Magic tales always end with a double positive block (with a positive action and with existing positive values), *i. e.* most usually with a wedding of the hero. That means that any individual story-teller, as long

³⁶ E. M. Meletinskij, S. Ju. Nekljudov, E. S. Novik, D. M. Segal, *Problemy strukturnogo opisaniya volšebnoj skazki*, "Trudy po znakovym sistemam", 4/1969, p. 86-135; idem; *Ešče raz o probleme strukturnogo opisaniya volšebnoj skazki*, "Trudy po znakovym sistemam", 5/1971, p. 63-91.

sa he follows the regularities of the genre, has some space for his personal innovations, but only within this structural or aesthetic framework. There is no reason for supposing that the aesthetic values of folktales are of any different character. The aesthetic values in the magic tale (and, similarly, in all works of art in folklore) are not content free but content sensitive. The structural regularities determine the form and the style. This is one of the basic laws in genetic aesthetics of folk lore³⁷.

KU TEORII
RÓŻNYCH TEORII GATUNKÓW W FOLKLORZE

STRESZCZENIE

W teorii folklorystyki nie brak cennych przeglądów prac genologicznych, ale dotychczas brak jest zwarteo podsumowania w zakresie teorii gatunków w folklorze. Niniejsza rozprawa streszcza wcześniejsze próby tych teorii (klasyicyzyczną, filologiczną, funkcjonalistyczną, morfologiczno-strukturalną, także badania nad komunikacją oraz praktyczne i teoretyczne badania gatunków folklorystycznych aż do chwili obecnej); następnie wysuwa ona propozycję pewnej płaszczyzny badań genologicznych (terminologia gatunków, „rodzima” terminologia gatunków, funkcja i stosowanie „rodzimej” terminologii, historyczny rozwój gatunków w odbiciu terminologii, synchroniczny system gatunków w terminologii, diachroniczny system gatunków w terminologii, wartościowanie i estetyczna charakterystyka gatunków). W ten sposób autor rozprawy pragnie ukazać wyniki i przyszłe zadania teoretycznych badań nad gatunkami w folklorze, głównie w dziedzinie literatury ludowej.

Przełożyła *Stefania Skwarczyńska*

³⁷ In this paper I could not deal with problems expressed in other valuable articles devoted to genre problems in folklore. I owe special reference to the following publications, and hope, once I can evaluate their suggestions in genre theory of folklore. See I. C. Chițimia, *Genre et art littéraires surtout dans la création folklorique*, „Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich”, 1967, vol. X, No. 1/18, p. 5–14, *Symposium on Folk Genres*, ed. D. Ben-Amos, „Genre”, vol. II (June 1969), No. 2, and II (September 1969), No. 3; B. Ničev, *K probleme o žanrah v literature i fol'klore*, [in:] *Poetyka i stylistyka słowiańska*, ed. S. Skwarczyńska, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk 1973, p. 27–36; V. N. Toporov, *K probleme žanrov v fol'klore*, [in:] *Materialy vsesojuznogo simpoziuma po vtoričnym modelirujuščim sistemam*, I/5], Tartu 1974, p. 5–16; B. N. Putilov, *Principy istoriko-tipologičeskogo izučenija žanrovih sistem v fol'klore*, Paper presented to Helsinki congress (cf. note 25). In my books *A folklór esztétikájához* (Budapest 1972, p. 212–351) and *A folklór alkotások elemzése* (Budapest 1972, p. 37–134) I could deal with some of the empirical problems of genre theory.