

PIOTR MICHAŁOWSKI
Szczecin

GENRES AND CONVENTIONS IN POETRY

The fact that such a problem is raised proves that an initial assumption has already been made: because in order to speak of genres one does not have to believe that they really exist in the textual world - yet it is enough to believe that they are useful categories which can help us to describe the world. So our presupposition does not have to be an ontological assumption but rather an accepted convention of discourse, since speaking of genres is also a certain genre of theoretical reflection - paradoxically equally valid as a similar genre which assumes that all text is genreless. This simple choice leads to complicated consequences as it forces us to choose from the cornucopia of theories of literary kinds. Above all, we must choose -

1. Between the Restitution of Form and the Genre of Speech.

It seems necessary to see the problem in a double perspective, not only because contemporary culture signals its secession most vividly in the genre territory. That is how literary genetics stumbled upon certain symptomatic assymetry, aptly described by Edward Balcerzan as "Mass order and elitist chaos"¹.

In poetry, which belongs, though not entirely, to the sphere which used to be called "high culture", forms differentiated according to non-co-ordinate criteria² escape the constantly modified (and growing) classifications. We know that they must be perceived dynamically, that

¹ E. Balcerzan, *W stronę genologii multimedialnej*, "Teksty Drugie" 1999, vol. 6, p. 10.

² H. Markiewicz, *Główne problemy wiedzy o literaturze*, Kraków 1980, p. 162 and following.

they not only undergo metamorphoses but also cross, permeate, combine and dismantle³, which causes us to believe that instead of talking of genres it is safer to speak about "generic multisidedness" or "generic instrumentation"⁴, moving from systematics to the hermeneutics of a given text. The erasure of boundaries, which invalidates genre distinctions, is manifested most powerfully by *silva rerum*, where, however, titles of quasi-generic functions also appear⁵, so genres exist there too, though perversely, against the background of invalidated classification.

Thus a category of "the field of generic references"⁶ seems useful. Various strategies of form are at play within its reach, and those can be classified successfully (they actually have been, by Stanisław Balbus⁷), even though doubts arise here, too, since examples of concrete methods exhibit individualistic "mongrelization" tendencies, escaping precise categories and models. But it is worth to accept the alleged typology of various limits, degrees and methods of restitution of form in spite of the fact that it includes only historical, strictly literary genres.

This perspective is overlapped by another, holistic one, in which genres exist always and everywhere because all models of utterance are genres - not only potentially, as they could be adapted or annexed by literature, but on equal grounds with the grammar of a given language, since any model comes into being as a function of a given utterance and its more or less accurate repetition. It actually means that the rules of a certain genre may be generated by each and every text⁸ because they are its inherent parts - while the question whether a model is a literary genre or might become one in future, or if it fails to find an imitator (more often: oppressor), remains merely a problem of historical poetics.

In Bakhtin's view, of which we are speaking, literary genetics covers the whole textual sphere because every utterance, oral or writ-

³ I. Opacki, *Odwrócona elegia. O przenikaniu się postaci gatunkowych w poezji*, Katowice 1999; see especially his study *Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych jako wyznacznik ewolucji poezji*.

⁴ S. Skwarczyńska, *Struktura rodzajowa „Genezis z ducha” Słowackiego i jej tradycja literacka* (in: *Juliusz Słowacki w pięćdziesięciolecie urodzin. Materiały i szkice*, Warszawa 1959, p. 278).

⁵ R. Nycz, *Sylwy współczesne. Problem konstrukcji tekstu*, Wrocław 1984, p. 28 and following.

⁶ S. Balbus, *Zagłada gatunków*, „Teksty Drugie” 1999, vol. 6, pp. 33-34.

⁷ S. Balbus, *Miedzy stylami*, Kraków 1993, p. 90-94.

⁸ E. Balcerzan, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

ten, is realized solely thanks to the use of "the genre of speech"⁹ and independently of subject's consciousness and intentions, including his efforts to sound original. Paraphrasing a well-known saying, coined by Jacques Derrida: there is nothing but genres.

The category of the speech genre in a way destroys generic distinctions and systematizations - when it tries to replace them. But if it is only imposed on old categories, it may enrich them greatly. It is worthwhile to combine both these notions if we remember that, on the one hand, literary tradition, and on the other, a certain social *usus* exists (necessity, perhaps) which shapes particular acts and later genres of speech that lay at the foundations of every utterance. To these two concepts (the generic/intertextual and the pragmatic/linguistic), one ought to add a third perspective, the intersemiotic one, if one accepts the project of multimedia genetics¹⁰ - although its assimilation within the first two spheres might not be as easy. It would be "chosen kinship"¹¹, an extra-linguistic **analogy**, based on good, neighbourly contact in the world of art, not **genealogy** (or the study of kinds), based on true kinship relations.

The status of a genre may be described in more than one way. A pertinent remark was made on the subject by Jurij Lotman when he conceived his game theory as a particular reconstruction of relations between regular and stochastic processes¹². The author also claims that an important element of artistic behaviour is the fact that man behaves in two different ways simultaneously: he feels emotions which an analogical situation would awaken in him in reality, and at the same time clearly realizes that one should not undertake any action connected with that situation. So artistic behaviour seems a synthesis of practical and fictitious conventional behaviour¹³.

Practical behaviour may be considered to be the realization of an individual need of communication or expression, whereas we might speak of conventions when we reach for a more or less stabilized model of utterance. Thus we have to do with the phenotype and genotype¹⁴ of a work, and most of all - with a compromise.

⁹ M. Bachtin, *Estetyka twórczości słownej*, transl. Danuta Ulicka (in): *Dialog. Język. Literatura*, E. Czaplewicz and E. Kasperski, eds., p. 113-114.

¹⁰ E. Balcerzan, *op. cit.*

¹¹ Phrase used by Jerzy Ziomek (*Powinowactwa literatury*, Warszawa 1980).

¹² J. Lotman: *Struktura tekstu artystycznego*, transl. A. Tanalska, Warszawa 1984, p. 96.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 98.

¹⁴ J. Sławiński, *Dzielo-język-tradycja*, (2nd ed.), Kraków 1998, p. 29 and following.

If we link Lotman's argument with Bakhtin's idea to this binary opposition we must add the third, indirect, layer of relations, assuming that artistic convention means borrowing of some convention of practical utterance. Then the threefold system of relations will look as below:

1. kinds of speech (pragmatic) come first;
2. then - kinds of speech follow as artistic forms, sometimes founded on those practical forms; "sometimes", which means "not always";
3. last comes the individual utterance (parole) which preserves what Lotman described as the double nature of practical and conventional (fictitious) acts that - of course - may become models or inspirations for other utterances, beginning the next cycle of kind-and-genre-creating mechanisms.

The author's attitude towards literary genetics may manifest itself within this system in different ways: he may consciously reach only into the first layer (ignoring all relations to artistic genetics), or, on the contrary - he might use some literary genre without being aware of the pragmatic foundations which this particular genre possesses in the genre of speech or setting aside the original functions of the model; finally - and this is the third option - the author plays a game with the two layers of relations, well aware of mutual inspirations and common ground between practical speech and artistic form. It is worthwhile to suspend intertextual thinking for a moment in order to raise the fundamental (and neglected) question which is here - to a larger or lesser degree - visible in an individual utterance, the question of the

2. Provenance of Form.

It includes various sources between which osmosis or interference may occur. Contemporary poetry does make use of them: in turns or syncretically, consciously or unconsciously, fortunately or unfortunately. The strata of this repertory of literary kinds and genres may be singularly illustrated by the poetry of Wisława Szymborska. Why this example? Because the genetic attitude of the authoress of *A Great Number* (*Wielka liczba*) is set somewhere between extremities: the postromantic genetic creativity of Białoszewski and the avant-garde "extragenreness" of Przyboś¹⁵; it seems equally far from the manifestation of seriality of

¹⁵ Classification that differentiates between 3 generic options: "classicist", "postromantic" and "avant-garde" was suggested by Edward Balcerzan (*Sytuacja gatunków*, (in): *Przez znaki. Granice autonomii sztuki poetyckiej. Na materiale polskiej poezji współczesnej*, Poznań 1972).

utterances and the "erection acts of new genres", as well as from demonstrating the novum of form. Moreover, it is a convenient example because the intention of referring to genres may be seen even in the titles of the poems, selected according to this criterion. Naturally, it only "may be seen", as the genre names suggested in the headings only point to certain forms in different degrees, forms often not confirmed by the texts themselves. In the authorial selection of poems called *View with a Grain of Sand* (*Widok z ziarnkiem piasku*) almost one third of the titles points to such relations: *Commemoration* (*Upamiętnienie*), *Travel Elegy* (*Elegia podróżna*), *Colorature* (*Koloratura*), *The Tomb* (*Nagrobek*), *A Poem in Honour* (*Wiersz ku czci*), *The Joy of Writing* (*Radość pisanja*), *Landscape* (*Pejzaż*), *Family Album* (*Album*), *Photograph of a Crowd* (*Fotografia tłumu*), *Wonderment* (*Zdumienie*), *Theater Impressions* (*Wrażenia z teatru*), *Letters of the Dead* (*Listy umartych*), *Advertisement* (*Prospekt*), *A Speech in the Lost-and-Found Office* (*Przemówienie w biurze znalezionych rzeczy*), *Allegro Ma Non Troppo*, *Praise of Dreams* (*Pochwała snów*), *Thanks* (*Podziękowanie*), *Psalm* (*Psalm*), *A Medieval Miniature/A Medieval Illumination* (*Miniatura średniowieczna*), *A Portrait of a Woman* (*Portret kobiety*), *Warning* (*Ostrzeżenie*), *In Praise of Self-Deprecation* (*Pochwała ztego o sobie mniemania*), *Utopia* (*Utopia*), *Discovery* (*Odkrycie*), *A View with a Grain of Sand* (*Widok z ziarnkiem piasku*), *The First Photograph of Hitler* (*Pierwsza fotografia Hitlera*), *Writing One's CV* (*Pisanie życiorysu*), *An Opinion on the Question of Pornography* (*Głos w sprawie pornografii*), *A Started Story* (*Rozpoczęta opowieść*), *Elegiac Calculation* (*Rachunek elegijny*), *A Farewell to a View* (*Pożegnanie widoku*), *Little Comedies* (*Komedyjki*), *A Version of Events* (*Wersja zdarzeń*).

This list ought to be completed with at least a few titles from other sources than the mentioned selection of poems: *A Tale of Love for One's Homeland* (*Gawęda o miłości do ziemi ojczystej*), *Questions One Asks Oneself* (*Pytania zadawane sobie*), *Classified Ads* (*Drobne ogłoszenia*), *Image* (*Wizerunek*), *A Note* (*Notatka*), *A Monologue for Cassandra* (*Monolog dla Kasandry*), *A Review of an Unwritten Poem* (*Recenzja z nienapisanego wiersza*), *Summary* (*Streszczenie*), *Theater Impressions* (*Wrażenia z teatru*), *Stage-Fright* (*Trema*), *A Toast* (*A Toast*) and *A Byzantine Mosaic* (*Mozaika bizantyjska*). Such an automatic enumeration gives the impression of rich diversity, and even certain excess. (*Excess* is, in fact, a title of a poem to which we might ascribe certain genre features). There are genres of different origin in this jungle and they exemplify nearly all the groups listed below. This

diversity is also inflated by different methods of genetic reference, but their "great number" is not equivalent to an even greater number of suggestions contained in the titles. On the one hand the name of a genre mentioned in a headline can turn out to be deceitful, sometimes even misleading, as it may refer only to objective reality, to the presented world, not to its compositional shape. However, no matter whether we find deep references or that our genetic clue was groundless, some genetic impulse arises always, an impulse which determines the reading of the text, if only for a moment. On the other hand, genetic references may appear in the text, not preceded by any clue in the headline.

1. Let us start our review from historical literary genres. This group will be composed of a relatively small number of works, like *A Tale of Love for One's Homeland*, *An Image*, *Travel Elegy*, *The Tomb*, *Psalm*, *Elegiac Calculation* and *Little Comedies*. And - as one might expect - we will not find among them any example of an active continuation of the model; instead, we will notice the representations of other architextual strategies.

The most significant genetic influence in Szymborska's poetry seems to have an elegy; the critics even speak of "an elegiac quality" as a tendency dominating especially in the most recent works of the poet. They point to a serious tone, a complaint almost devoid of irony, a recollection, existential reflection and the theme of death - i.e. they point to an elegy which in its contemporary form is a very capacious genre, which also means that it cannot be defined too precisely. A serious tone may be heard in various poems: *On Death without Exaggeration*, *Turn of the Century*, *Heaven*. The fact that poetic forms grown by Szymborska in the garden of her authorial poetics come close to elegy shows that *Travel Elegy* may be indeed contained in the paradigm - and that it really is an elegy defined very broadly, and that in this case one can even speak of "the proper restitution of form"¹⁶. It is the fleeting impressions of the world that are at stake here: Everything mine, nothing owned, / nothing owned by memory, / but mine while I look. On the other hand, *Elegiac Calculation*, despite its name, also remains an elegy since its "mathematical" nature, more exposed in the headline, refers only to the technique of enumeration used, enumeration with the anaphoric relation of "how much". The poem does not speak of balancing an account which would lead to a conclusive summing-up - the absence

¹⁶ S. Balbus: *Miedzy stylami*, op. cit., p. 90.

of such an analogy makes us situate the "calculation" solely as a secondary rhetorical figure. However, the elegiac motif is developed both in the sequence of main questions, as well as "under the surface" - in the series of parentheses which accompany the questions - where one can speak of a polemic and distanced reminiscence of elegiac style. Thus the crossing of two orders: a literary genre and the genre of speech, which probably takes place in the case of "calculation"¹⁷, does not take place here. The elegiac dominant resolves the problem in this case to such an extent that the more adequate title may be considered: *Calculating Elegy* - even though such a metatextual formula sounds not too serious, and, most of all, is "disloyal" towards the assumptions and immanent poetics of the poem, mocking classical form and rejecting the assumed type of mood from which no discussion with form follows, nor "an elegy upside down"¹⁸.

More subtle relations with an archetext may be seen in *Psalm*. In this case the headline (title) is a name of a genre without space for any neutralizing commentary, pointing unambiguously to the highest registers of style and culture, although it says nothing at all about its subject matter. If we are to place this poem in the psalmodic tradition, we must give it the name of a sub-genre, namely the psalm of penance. The lament filling the poem refers to the "leaky borders of human states". However, it is not difficult to see irony in this exaggerated sorrow, a kind of irony that somehow puts the act of communication - meaning human inclination towards artificial typologies and arbitrary classifications (including the classification of poetic genres) - in inverted commas. The world is a continuum, unembraced, inexhaustible, and thus free of the distinctions and categories ascribed to it. So the implied meaning of the poem points to the psalm of appraisal through the affirmation of a world freed from procedures of classification¹⁹.

¹⁷ Anna Wierzbicka does not list this form in her catalogue. A. Wierzbicka: *Genry mowy* (in): *Tekst i zdanie. Zbiór studiów*, T. Dobrzyńska and E. Janus, eds., Wrocław 1983, pp. 125-137.

¹⁸ Even to the degree of Słowacki's poem, as analyzed by Ireneusz Opacki. I. Opacki: *Odwrócona elegia* („Na sprowadzenie prochów Napoleona” Juliusza Słowackiego), (in): *Odwrócona elegia*, op. cit.

¹⁹ Szymborska, speaking out against artistic conventions, reveals the arbitrary nature of selection of the categories and herself represents "the antisystematic orientation in literature". Joanna Grądziel noticed this (*Świat sztuki w poezji Wisławy Szymborskiej*, „Pamiętnik Literacki" 1996, vol. 2, pp. 96, 109).

As far as *The Tomb* goes, the situation is simpler: this is stylized as a parody which serves to create an ironic self-portrait, while *A Poem in Honour* is a title that distinctly, though indirectly, and periphrastically points to an ode, a dithyramb or an epitaph. It is probably the last of those genres that is indeed referred to, although it is also curiously "reversed". *Little Comedies* come next and their title only apparently refers to a genre because this poem is an interpretation of the world from the point of view of angels.

2. Szyborska knows how to cross-breed different forms, she does it readily and often in order to start a discussion with convention - which can be seen even in the syntax of many of the above-mentioned titles that suggest hybrid genres. As far as formal novelty is concerned, we will not find in Szyborska's poetry any neologisms of genre names, while in her immanent poetics one can see a dominating and overall strategy, though never raised by the authoress to the rank of a genre and thus not mentioned in the list of titles: it is the strategy of correction (which in Polish also has the meaning of "proof-reading"). It is the rhetoric figure of correctio which functions also as a speech genre²⁰, stabilized by usage, provides arguments pointing to the conversatory nature of this poetry or to the Bachtinian ubiquity of dialogue (which we will return to in a moment). In authorial poetics this trick was "promoted" and achieved the status of a quasi-genre since it often shapes the whole argument as if correcting it or treating it in the way of exclusion: "that is the way it is, but..."²¹

Not counting the repertory of traditional literary genres and a rather unimpressive group of "formal novelties" we can also find many borrowings here. Among them we can distinguish as many as three different groups:

3. Forms borrowed from non-artistic writings which we will find in the following titles: *Letters of the Dead*, *Writing One's Biography*, *A Note*, *A Summary*, *An Opinion on the Question of Pornography*, *A Version of Events*, *A Review of an Unwritten Poem*, *Classified Ads* (which is a unique example of a serial repetition of form in a collection of poems).

Only the last of those examples may be considered to be a cliché of an applied genre, in concord with the name, as the truly structural quotation. *An Opinion on the Question of Pornography* refers to a certain

²⁰ Though neglected also by A. Wierzbicka, *op. cit.*

²¹ S. Barańczak: *Niezliczone odmiany koloru szarego*, (in): *Przed i po*, London 1988, pp. III-III5.

model of journalistic utterance, like a discussion held in a newspaper or the readers' reaction to a readers' poll. *An Opinion* in that sense, contrary to its name, becomes undoubtedly a form of writing. Other poems do not paraphrase forms but yet again oppose them in different ways, criticize them and refuse to follow their rules and become their obedient realizations. This distance is especially exposed in *Writing One's CV* which is an ironic instruction of how to perform a formal ritual. A *Version of Events* is an interpretation of the history of mankind which polemically refers to historiography and a certain genetic hypothesis. The title *A Summary* points only to metatextuality, without mentioning the original source of the poem which turns out to be the Book of Job. *A Review of an Unwritten Poem* is an example of a genre title which "disengages" itself, as it suggests a metatext devoid of reference, so its pseudo-metatextuality is unmasked in the headline.

4. Next, we have to do with the most numerous speech genres, forms borrowed from colloquial models and forms of uncertain, doubtful status, since they might be considered oral, graphemic or representatives of both types of text. The following titles belong to this group: *Commemoration*, *A Toast*, *A Monologue for Cassandra*, *A Conversation with a Stone*, *Theater Impressions*, *A Speech at the Lost-and-Found Office*, *A Praise of Dreams*, *Thanks*, *In Praise of Self-Deprecation*, *A Farewell to a View* (because of the first part of the title), and *Questions Asked Oneself*.

These forms come closest to speech genres and some of them may be reduced to simple speech acts. The most stable of those seems *A Speech...*, although the latter part of the headline reveals a purposeful misconception or an error of usage: at the Lost-and-Found Office.

Utterances defined by Roger D. Abrahams as conversational genres²² occupy an important place here. They form a part of a presumed conversation, although do not necessarily contain an invocation to the addressee and thus stress their pan-dialogic character that Bachtin wrote about. But we will not find many complete dialogues in Szymborska's poetry, and even fewer titles that would expose this form. There are no typical dialogues among them at all, though there is an exotic dialogue (*A Conversation with a Stone*) and a soliloquy (*Questions Asked Oneself*). However, this last form may also be considered a member of the next group.

²² R. D. Abrahams, *Złożone relacje prostych form*, transl. M.B. Fedewicz, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1992, vol. 2. p. 329-330.

5. Finally, there are mental forms which refer to certain states of mind and reflective situations. This group contains acts of thought as well as moods and emotions; states of consciousness, subconsciousness and unconsciousness, which also means dreams and archetypes. The following titles may be mentioned here: *A Discovery*, *Astonishment*, *Stage-Fright*, *The Joy of Writing* and once again the two *Praises* - this time because of the subject of those poems: *In Praise of Self-Deprecation* and *A Praise of Dreams*. These examples, though few, suffice to justify the introduction of a new category, constructed in the spirit of cognitive sciences: namely, it is a **mental genre**, conceived as a form that precedes language and whose derivative may be (but not necessarily) the genre of speech or writing²³.

Thus the provenance of form has as many as five sources:
 the repertory of literary genres,
 authorial inventions, added to the genre repertory,
 forms borrowed from extra-literary or quasi-literary texts,
 forms borrowed from colloquial models, i.e.
 from acts of living speech,
 forms borrowed from the patterns of thought processes.

To these five sources we must add the sixth one, from beyond the circle of linguistic phenomena:

6) forms borrowed from another, extra-linguistic semiotic system. The following titles may be considered to refer to those genres: *Colorature*, *Family Album*, *A Photograph of a Crowd*, *The First Photograph of Hitler*, *A Prospect*, *Allegro ma non troppo*, *A Medieval Illumination*, *A Portrait of a Woman*, *A View with a Grain of Sand*, *A Farewell to a View* (this time because of "the view"), and *An Opinion on the Question of Pornography* (because of "pornography", although treated mainly as an iconic, especially photographic genre).

Visual arts certainly dominate here, and among them - painting genres. Landscape refers to artistic convention, sets it against the living matter of the world and questions the constraints of its material, so it

²³ During the discussion about this paper Bożena Witosz accurately suggested that "mental genre" be replaced by a more capacious term: "ideal cognitive model". Indeed, the same thing is at stake, yet I remain with the name which by the law of succession suits generic terminology better, even though from the cognitive point of view it is not precise.

becomes a form of criticism of this plastic genre. Similarly *The Portrait of a Woman*, where the multiplicity and changeability of the presented object must be reduced to a single, if representative, description. (This dilemma is also discussed in *Immobilization*, whose subject is a photograph of Isadora Duncan). The problem of inadequacy of convention is raised in other poems, like *A Photograph of a Crowd* or *A Medieval Illumination* (though the poem itself is not a miniature at all), and a poem which is not on the list, *A Byzantine Mosaic*, which not only is not a mosaic, but was, in fact, called "a forged arche-text"²⁴.

In all the above instances we can hardly speak, however, of borrowing of visual techniques and methods, or of an attempt at inter-semiotic translation of a genre - the form is always only thematized, while the distance towards it, stressed in this way, does not allow us to speak of a generic similarity between a poem, a landscape and a photograph. It would be possible if a clear-cut suggestion of an ekphrasis of a concrete plastic work appeared, exemplifying some kind of equivalence of the rules of form, like replacing a system of colour spots by non-commenting description. We rather have to do with "poems about art" than with poems which imitate art. Sometimes they come close to the form of an essay of "doubled" content which is "a double-layered meta-utterance", since it refers both to the work itself and to a comment, an utterance about it²⁵. Actually, this group of poems is concerned not only with art, but also with models of imagery, and, finally, with history. Especially the *View with a Grain of Sand* does not speak of any open-air painting but of the laws of perception.

Of the titles with intersemiotic references two refer to forms lesser than a genre - and in both cases they are parts of musical works. *Allegro ma non troppo* may be a part of a musical work or refer to its whole as the instruction for the performer. This poem is a highly rhythmic affirmation of life. "With moderate speed" may, but only may, be an adequate description of the almost "folk" meter used here - an octosyllabic verse, stabilized by four accents, or a four-footed verse. Musical analogy seems rather arbitrary. In case of *Colorature*, however, it is a different story: here the sound contour of the text does not imi-

²⁴ S. Balbus, *Między stylami*, op. cit.

²⁵ E. Balcerzan: *Poezja jako semiotyka sztuki* (in): *Kręgi wtajemniczenia. Czytelnik, badacz, tłumacz, pisarz*, Kraków 1982, p. 151; J. Grądział writes about artistic motifs in Szyborska's work, J. Grądział, op.cit., pp. 85-102.

tate the elaborate sound ornamentation but merely describes the performance of a vocalist, singing a song or an aria.

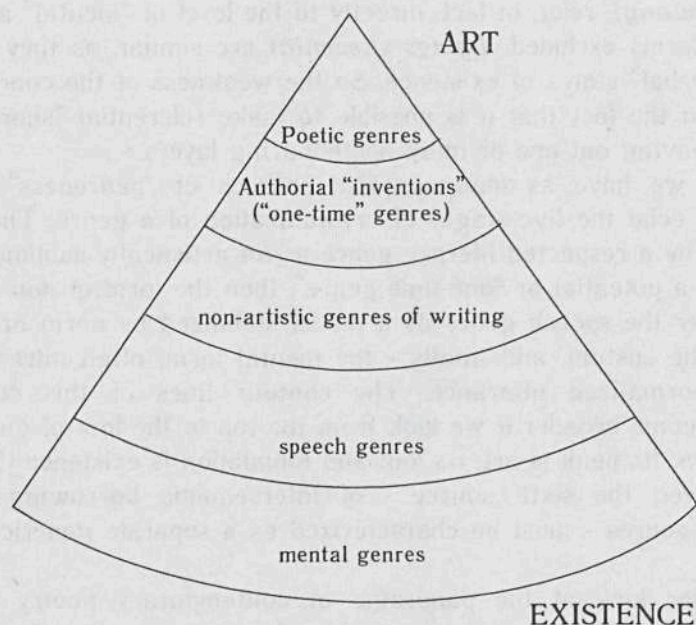
A *Family Album* in this context does not refer to a single photograph but to a family collection, though this multiplicity does not change anything in the strategy of descriptions employed by works devoted to photography. The case of *Advertisement* is different - this poem is a parody of a text of an advertisement, published in the form of a leaflet, which is a syncretic form, at once verbal and visual; however, the references are present only on the level of commercial rhetoric and its slogans, not the accompanying iconography.

The conclusion of this survey seems to point to a more general type of attitude - not only of Szymborska, whose poetry served as the subject of our laboratory experiment, but of contemporary poets in general. This attitude might be called the attitude of **genetic (genre) distance**. The offer of the forms of different provenance seems extremely rich, although acts of their full acceptance and honest usage seem rare. More often we have to do with a polemic, a negation of usefulness of convention, and various shades of irony, including parody. Authorial "inventions" are the only exception, as they are situated beyond the system of genre communication and "invented" within the postromantic multiplication of forms. Following Roland Barthes, one has to accept the broadest notion of arche-textuality, containing not only conscious references, but also accidental similarities²⁶. That is because forms are less often chosen than encountered in the process of thought; most often, in fact, the authors stumble into them. They are an inseparable part of the world of language and culture, and form some discontinuous

3. Genetic (genre) Landscape.

It can be compared to a mountainous sea-landscape: from the ocean of apparent genrelessness cone-shaped islands emerge - higher or lower, rising more or less over the visible surface, others completely flat or even submerged under water. The tips of those cones are sublime poetic genres, while the contour lines, going down to the surface (or under it), mark the consecutive stages of the genre-thinning process.

²⁶ M. Riffaterre, *Semiotyka intertekstualna: interpretant*, transl. K. and J. Falicki, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1988, vol. I, p. 301.



This, of course, is a metaphor - not a model, but rather a presentation of one of the many possible holistic views on the question of genre. Since it contains a hierarchic typology, it may easily be criticized, or at least it may not resist the temptation of modification: the reduction of its elements or their multiplication. The most questionable seems the lowest of the levels mentioned, derived by means of induction from other, more domesticated categories. If genres of speech exist, shaped by the norms of social communication, a similar normalization may shape situations which precede communication - pre-linguistic phenomena, like the mental states pointed to before: reverie, reasoning techniques and the poetics of dreams. It seems that Białoszewski's joyful generic creativity adopts its ideas precisely from this source. This example makes us realize that - without questioning the relations of the author's poetry with the element and genres of speech²⁷ - such series as *Snatch-*

²⁷ K. Rutkowski, *Przeciw (w) literaturze. Esej o „poezji czynnej” Mirona Białoszewskiego i Edwarda Stachury*, Bydgoszcz 1987, pp. 169-170; M. Głowiński: *Białoszewskiego gatunki codzienne*, (in): *Narracje literackie i nieliterackie*, Kraków 1997, p. 174.

es from reveries (*Wyrwy z zamyśleń*) or, to a lesser degree, *Yaaw-nings* (*Ziewanny*), refer, in fact, directly to the level of "mental" activity, verbalized forms excluded. *Lyings* (*Leżenia*) are similar, as they reveal the "extraverbal" states of existence. So the weakness of the cone metaphor lies in the fact that it is possible to make referential "short-cuts", so to say, leaving out one or more neighbouring layers.

Thus we have as many as five sources of "genre-ness" which respectively echo the five stages of crystallization of a genre. The peak is occupied by a respected literary genre as an artistically sublime form, next comes a potential or "one-time genre", then the form of non-artistic writing, later the speech genre as a model stabilized by norm or social and linguistic custom, and finally - the mental form, often intraslatable into any normalized utterance. The contour lines of this common territory become broader if we look from the top to the foot of our conical mountain. Its peak is art, its foot and foundation is existence (being).

However, the sixth source - of intersemiotic borrowings from extraverbal genres - must be characterized as a separate generic archipelago.

Another look at the panorama of contemporary poetry in the search of recurrent phenomena would be, of course, an attempt at some historical synthesis which would group texts not according to the chronology of their coming into being and not according to their authors, since the criterion of this new taxonomy would be only form. Doubtful usefulness of such an endeavour notwithstanding, most discouraging is the lack of purpose of this kind of description: because at first glance a devastated generic landscape is revealed, a landscape in which instead of genres only their spectres wander about. It would be better to distinguish the so-called "theoretical genres" in an old-fashioned way - according to the so-called circle of lyrical types²⁸ or - lyrical strategies, ideologies and styles²⁹.

However, two opposite tendencies may be observed here. The first is an extra-generic (anti-generic would sound too bluntly) homogeni-

²⁸ H. Markiewicz, *Rodzaje i gatunki literackie* (in): *Główne problemy wiedzy o literaturze*, 5th edition, revised and corrected, Kraków 1980, p. 171; Cz. Zgorzelski: *Historycznoliterackie perspektywy genologii w badaniach nad liryką* (in): *Genologia polska. Wybór tekstów*, Warszawa 1983, p. 119.

²⁹ E. Balcerzan, *Poezja polska w latach 1939-1965*, vol. 1: *Strategie liryczne*, Warszawa 1982, vol. 2: *Ideologie artystyczne*, 1988 (this volume was at first to be called: *Style* (*Styles*)).

zation of authorial style, closely resembling the search for a universal method of poetic expression. This tendency includes the poetry of Miłosz, as well as Przyboś, Herbert and Różewicz. Naturally, we are not thinking here of incidental ("island") references to traditional genres, of casual archetextual gestures which may be found easily in the works of all the poets mentioned above *A Poetic Treatise* (*Traktat poetycki*), *An Ode to Turpists* (*Oda do turpistów*), *Fortinbras's Threnody* (*Tren Fortynbrasa*), *A Dithyramb in the Honour of a Mother-in-Law* (*Dytyramb na cześć teściowej*), but we are aiming at a certain artistic programme. The opposite tendency is the postromantic formal creativity, i.e. searching and distinguishing which manifests itself in the series of situational genres. Here an evident, though unique example, is Białoszewski, who, however, not counting his genre innovativeness, experiments with the given repertory of genres, testing the capacity of traditional genres, transferring their features and combining labels with genre-names.

Unfortunately, this simple opposition of unity and diversity of form turns out to be superficial, and even delusive, since it comes down to the naming of genres or their namelessness. But Przyboś's method, based on the demand of escalating formal novelty, and the changeable, varied casualness of Białoszewski's utterances, result from a similar assumption of poetic epistemology, i.e. from an imperative which demands that we search for a subjective truth of the subject's situation. Both Przyboś and Białoszewski may be called for this reason "adventurers", although each of them explores the world in a different register of reality. They both want to be discoverers - what makes them different is, respectively: the sense of the explosive changeability of the world (Przyboś), and the experience of the recurrence of events - while Białoszewski sensed the relative stability of the laws of existence (being), cramming speech into grooves of certain forms of utterance (which are sometimes traps). Thus we have different conclusions drawn from similar adventures, and different attitudes: in Przyboś - an avant-garde sense of the autonomy of poetry, in Białoszewski - a post-avant-garde belief in the unity of everyday life and the art of the word. The first of these poets wants poetry to be closed against the element of speech, the second - to be open to it.

However, transporting these opposing attitudes onto the territory of the study of literary genres as "genrelessness" versus "genreiness" is not fully justifiable. Przyboś does not like to name his forms because he does not want to copy a lyrical situation once discovered, although he sometimes does it, as if against his will. Thus Przyboś is afraid that repeatability, incompatible with his own poetic programme, may be dis-

covered in his work. On the other hand, the author of *Misleading Thrills* (*Mylne wzruszenia*), who creates "genre neologisms"³⁰ with futuristic non-chalance, discovers and names a certain group or class of lyrical situations, giving it the name of a cycle - even though the works of which it consists, their common subject notwithstanding, often reveal great compositional, and - moreover - modal differences that belong to different genres of speech, and often genres of thought or even states of being.

Thus in the first case we only have to do with assumed, alleged genrelessness, while in the second with unrestrained generic creation, i.e. with a pair of opposing attitudes which is a camouflage of their real position in any genre hierarchy or the sphere of speech genres. And if we look at the poetry of these two authors from a more general perspective, from "bird's eye view", it will turn out that the tension between diversity of the forms of expression and the repeatability of the universal authorial method are similar, in which instance the questions of their generic specificity are of no great importance, not counting the fact that through their titles they communicate certain attitudes towards the world of language and the language of the world. As Bakhtin claims, linguistic intentions of the speaker are realized by means of a genre³¹. Such a standpoint turns our attention to a genre as the main controller of modality in any utterance. But it does not always have to be the same. True, a genre may often be intentional, but it is just as often only nominal. In other cases it may even be involuntary.

The generic space of contemporary poetry does not demand a more detailed map because using the category of a literary genre, as well as a narrowly conceived notion of what a genre is (genrelessness), we can at best describe single islands, much less frequently archipelagos, lost on a nameless ocean. But beside islands you will find quite large underwater coral reefs, and, finally, the depths of originality and shallows of repetition.

It seems that genres in contemporary poetic practice do not cause emotions or discussions and to a large extent they have become neutral as secondary or outdated problems. The last battle fought about them in the 20th century took place between "barbarians" and the "new classicists". This conflict, however, though it set down new limits of poetics and styles (as confirmed by *Parnas bis* dictionary), anthologies, mani-

³⁰ A. Świrsek discusses them in more detail in the last chapter of her book: *Z gatunkiem czy bez... O twórczości Mirona Białoszewskiego*, Zielona Góra 1997.

³¹ M. Bakhtin, *op.cit.*, s. 113.

festoes and critical syntheses³² - that concentrated rather on revived aesthetic dilemmas (bringing to mind the old discussion about turpitude in literature) - failed to pose the question of genre. Instead, they concentrated on a mimetic - "poetry-reality" - and stylistic - poetry-prose - relation and convention, conceived as a kind of pact between the author and reader (including the moments of surprise and scandalous behaviour). The battle was thus fought between two canons of poetry³³. Naturally, we can nevertheless point to exceptions in this general generic insensibility, or at least to some more general tendencies.

The extrageneric poetic miniature is still in use, though it lost its dominating position. I described it as a certain configuration organized solely according to the rules of "syntactic composition" because it cannot be linked to any specific function of utterance³⁴. The model of the situation of communication, once believed to be the main criterion of generic identification³⁵, abandoned all rules of construction and specific subject matter. Generally speaking, such is the situation of contemporary poetry.

A miniature as an "integrated" form of expression is opposed by a loose, as Zgorzelski called it, "internally confused"³⁶, capacious form, which dominates in poetry today. This phenomenon may be described with the help of the categories of "New Literary Genetics"³⁷: it turns out that in poetry, from the universal triad - distinguished according to the classification of neighbouring genres - a form called "reportage" stands out clearly. Poetry is clearly inclined towards epic features, like description, a pile of overlapping memories, a quasi-document or a short narrative - and speaking in terms of the speech genres catalogue we should add: is seen as a piece of evidence, autobiography or remini-

³² Especially two books: *Macie swoich poetów. Liryka polska urodzona po 1960*. Wypisy, sel. and edit. P. Dunin-Wąsowicz, J. Klejnocki, K. Varga, 2nd edition, revised and corrected, Warszawa 1997; *Parnas bis. Słownik literatury polskiej urodzonej po 1960*, edit. K. Varga and P. Dunin-Wąsowicz, 3rd and latest edition, Warszawa 1998.

³³ M. Głowiński, *Kanony poetyckości i style historyczne*, (in): *Intertekstualność, groteska, parabola. Szkice ogólne i interpretacje*, Kraków 2000, p. 76.

³⁴ P. Michałowski: *Miniatura poetycka*, Szczecin 1999

³⁵ E. Balcerzan, *Sytuacja gatunków* (in): *Przez znaki. Granice autonomii sztuki poetyckiej. Na materiale polskiej poezji współczesnej*, Poznań 1972, pp. 145-147.

³⁶ Cz. Zgorzelski, *Perspektywy genologii w poznawaniu poezji współczesnej*, „Teksty” 1975, vol. I, pp. 18-21.

³⁷ E. Balcerzan, *Nowe formy w pisarstwie i wynikające stąd porozumienia* (in): *Humanistyka przelomu wieków*, J. Koziński, ed., Warszawa 1999.

science³⁸. This phenomenon is best exemplified by the poetry of Kazimierz Brakoniecki and Janusz Szuber. But epic poetry sometimes becomes a collage since also alien, lyrical features, as they are classified in the old-fashioned terminology, are woven into it. In such cases we must speak of an *essayistic reportage* because "the essay" as such is on the brink of extinction in contemporary poetry and when it rarely appears, it usually takes on a form which emulates everyday, casual thought. Great narratives, as great reasonings, comparable, let us say, to Miłosz's "treatises" have long gone. Episodes and fragments prevail. The third group, perhaps not too aptly called "the feuilleton", is definitely disappearing and nearly died out with linguistic poetry and Białoszewski.

Within the reportage especially one form was crystallized, borrowed from the New York school: namely, the enumerative poem which resembles old *enumeration caolica*, but which is linked most of all with "O'Harian" strategy. Long-versed poems expose the "capacity" of the poem and its "unreadiness" as a creative act within a set of accidental events - which explains the use of collage techniques. Such poetry is written by Andrzej Sosnowski, Tadeusz Pióro and Jacek Podsiadło, among others, but this trend was widely popularized as a method and at recognized as the mark of the "barbarians"³⁹.

Furthermore, some preserves remain on which the study of literary genres often calls on when it wishes to prove that it is necessary and useful as it helps to preserve genres or their borrowed addresses in archetextual relations. The content of such an inventory might not be too impressive but it proves beyond doubt that genres are still alive: a limerick, clerihef and perhaps a two-verse epigram. But all of those are ludic genres, local and imported, which became fashionable lately - and belatedly. To this small set of genres we might add an artificially cloned "moskalik"⁴⁰ as a new breed, conceived in an act of individual inspiration but later popularized in a certain community - and let us remember that its authors were well aware of the experimental character of this genre foundation act. We also cannot rule out some hybrid form which may yet come into being and gain acceptance, like, for example, a moskalimerick. These forms are not so much closely protected as they are allowed to multiply in isolation from "serious poetry", separated from

³⁸ A. Wierzbicka lists those forms, *op. cit.*

³⁹ I discuss this problem in my book *Granice poezji i poezja bez granic*, Szczecin 2001, in chapt. 5: *Granice spójności (enumeracja)*.

⁴⁰ E. Balcerzan, *W stronę genologii...*, *op. cit.*

it by what New Literary Genetics called *feuilleton* poetics. They were appointed a singular status as a game played with form, privileged by the convention of communication with the audience in the folk tradition⁴¹. This kind of communication was guaranteed by the strophic system - which is a genre format⁴². Not counting its miniature character, which is an important feature in a literary game, it is also distinguished by the rigours of versification since its aim becomes a performance to show off the authors' comic inventiveness and their poetic capabilities. It is an artificial world of isolated, purely literary convention, bewitched by its literary autonomy and extreme independence. Incidentally, it is also usually considered to be an insignificant margin of poetry.

But there are also reefs - those rare places where experiment meets with the highest generic tradition and to which contemporary literary genetics devotes most attention. Naturally, I have in mind various well-classified phenomena of archetextuality, from allusion to parody. Some of them seem to be especially significant, and amongst them stands out-

4. A New Wave of Sonnet-Mania.

Such a notion may appear slightly exaggerated since it is difficult to say whether we have to do only with a fad or a marginal tendency, though surely with a rather mysterious phenomenon. Marcin Świetlicki, announcing a poetic competition for the viewers of a cultural TV programme "Pegaz" ("Pegasus"), added that it would be best if the poems sent in had the form of a haiku or a sonnet. It was a meaningful announcement as far as haiku is concerned since it shows that this form is still in fashion - it was especially popular in the last decade of the 20 century. I wrote about it elsewhere, distinguishing three strategies of reference: loose inspirations, a dialogue with a strange culture and imitation⁴³. As far as the sonnet is concerned, the announcement sounded somewhat like a malicious joke because it posed a task considered to be extremely difficult. In fact, it was a little like an ironic comment on the poets' masochism and their bizarre longing for the slavery of form which can be seen even in a very casual review of most recent poetry. That is why this phenomenon demands a more detailed analysis.

⁴¹ R. D. Abrahams, *op. cit.*, pp. 331-333.

⁴² M. Grzędzińska: *Układ wersyfikacyjny a gatunek literacki. (Sprawa miana)*, „Zagadnienie Rodzajów Literackich”, vol. 3 (1960), p. 102.

⁴³ P. Michałowski, *Polskie imitacje haiku*. „Teksty Drugie” 1995, vol. 2, pp. 41-53; the problem is elaborated on in *Miniatura poetycka*, *op. cit.*

It is hard to speak of the revival of the sonnet which has quietly survived all stylistic revolutions and evolutions - it is rather a wave, rhythmically returning in every period and in nearly every tendency. It is, in truth, the background of generic landscape, a phenomenon which rather accompanies the dominating tendencies instead of establishing them but which, in opposition to the ever-changing nature of the world, still carries on living in a way that forces us to reflect on the astonishing ability of this form to regenerate.

Where does this unprecedented career of the genre begin? It seems that two types of motivation are at work here:

- 1) provocative reference to anachronistic convention
- 2) form used as safeguard.

It is a special case in contemporary poetic practice because the use of convention as a safeguard which is evidently, and even purely poetic, is also supposed to be an ostentatious trick, a provocation most vivid as a gesture of rebellion against... - exactly: against what? Probably against free verse which has drifted towards the language of prose. It is a rebellion against lawless freedom, marked by a perverse longing for the return to the most cruel states of enslavement of expression.

But why is this particular model chosen from the traditional offer of the genre system? Probably because it is not rooted in any of the speech genres, although it used to combine two: description and reflection, i.e. interpretation of previously tamed reality. Thus the gesture of quoting an archetext is made in a rather sterile literary space. The sonnet does not belong to occasional utterances like the ode, the paean or the threnody, but it is a universal construction - which means that it is suitable in any kind of contact between the subject and the world, that it may be multi-thematic, and that in its modernist incarnation it allows all kinds of compositional solutions, so only the system of versification lets us distinguish it from other genres. It seems that we have to do with an original version of the idea of "Pure Form".

On the other hand, the sonnet is unsurpassed when it comes to the tightness and limits of structure, even if we take into account its many variations. Thus it may serve as the ideal ground - measuring in Polish 14 verses by 13 (or 11) syllables - for the competition in the mastery of versification. Stanisław Barańczak compares this metaphor to a gymnastic ladder or a tennis net, referring to the well-known metaphor, coined by Robert Frost. Frost said that like a game of tennis, sonnets are written for the pleasure of overcoming difficulties and in order to prove one's superiority over other competitors, but also because

the image of a ladder or a net really has something in common with the ladder of the sonnet's verses and the net of its rhymes⁴⁴.

But not always and not only. There is yet another, even more elementary reason for such references, connected most of all with superficial associations which are but allusions to the model, devoid of all intentions of its realization - or, to use Stanisław Balbus's typology - they are "evocative restitutions of form" or even only "structural reminiscences"⁴⁵ of form. This means that among poetic genres only a sonnet possesses a graphic form which is recognizable at the stage of visual perception, i.e., at first glance. That is why it may be quickly identified, but also why it may effectively mislead the reader and cause him to identify the model incorrectly - as the reader's misconception will be revealed in the act of reading.

We might assume, then, that as one can "play with limericks" or "moskaliks", one can also "play with a sonnet" - for sheer pleasure. Fortunately, such games are marginal and infrequent, since the tradition of the sonnet knows more serious games, like Witold Wirpsza's polemic gestures towards form. We also have instances of parody (Białoszewski), and finally - cases of graphomania which are the result of the assumption that a difficult form justifies shortcomings of content. But reaching into this capacious, because manifold, archetext, one may also point to a certain fragment of the genre's tradition, a certain sphere of historic references - in other words, not to form, but rather a certain group of its prominent users. Such intention may be found in the sonnets of Stanisław Grochowiak.

Let us look for extremes among those many possibilities of using generic tradition. When I analyzed Białoszewski's *The Zawichost Sonnet* (*Sonet zawichostski*)⁴⁶ which reduced the structure of form to rhyme clausulas, I believed it to be the most distant possible reference to the sonnet and assumed that I stood before an extreme example of generic ellipse, conceived as an incomplete repetition of the archetext⁴⁷. But it

⁴⁴ S. Barańczak, *Wstęp. „Nie igraszka czasu”*, (in): *W. Shakespeare: Sonety*, transl. and edit. S. Barańczak, Poznań 1993, p. 21-22.

⁴⁵ S. Balbus, *Między stylami*, *op. cit.*, p. 90-91.

⁴⁶ P. Michałowski, *Gatunki skrócone: „oda-woda” i „Sonet zawichostski”*, „Teksty Drugie” 1994 vol. 4, pp. 93-100; this motif is also discussed in more detail in *Miniatura poetycka*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ L. Jenny, *Strategia formy*, trans. K. and J. Falicki, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1988, vol. 1., p. 287.

turned out that the latest poetic propositions went beyond even this experiment. The example is brand new, although it comes from the previous century:

I fell as if in a film,
I was falling and sitting at the editing table,
it was quite OK, the fall was, icy
stairs and the hero, me, no way out, already iced

and with this vision - luckily, controlled - of five more
metres of icy downstairs, but
still conscious, with my twin-brother at the table
where it turned out we're different and how much

that's how it always was, mainly editing technique, so
I drank immediately and braked, didn't
fall but threw myself on the grass
near the stairs (meanwhile the seasons have
changed) on which the mimosa, as it turned out,
(in Poland, i.e. nowhere) simply shed its flowers.

The above is not an independent whole but the fourth part of a six-part poem by Maciej Niemiec called *Twilight (Zmierzch)*⁴⁸, and this fragment differs from other parts precisely because it resembles the graphic shape of a sonnet. Let me stress this again: it is different only because of its graphic shape, as we will not find in that fragment even a shade of isosyllabism or rhymes; the verse is free and blank. Moreover, like the whole poem, it employs a very sharp kind of enjambement which cuts not only sentences, but also syntagmes. This is a rule of the whole poem, made evident exactly in this quasi-sonnet-like fragment, and plays a special function, intensifying the generic aspect of the work. The enjambement is interstrophic - as if to point to the arbitrary nature of strophic delimitation specific for the alleged poetic model. As a result, a very complex sentence flows over this whole sonnet-like fragment and apparently quite by accident fits into uncomfortable moulds, chosen in advance. Thus we have two parallel streams of text that we perceive separately: individual expression and manifestation of form. The former we read, the latter - only see. Lotman's compromise, recalled at the

⁴⁸ „Tygiel Kultury”, 2000, vol. 10-12, p. 75-79.

beginning of this essay, is ostentatiously transformed into the rule of separation, seemingly in the spirit of the biblical saying "give unto Caesar what's his". The dual nature of reception, which brings to mind figurative or concrete poetry, makes one look for a link between two separated levels: the symbolic and iconic one.

It is not an accident that the motif of film editing appears only in this fragment of the poem, because it serves as a means of interpretation: if we remember the metaphor which describes the artist as an editing table⁴⁹, then the material nature of the limited graphic space is a frame that establishes the text. Furthermore, we have to do with the dissolution of the external and internal perspective of the subject: the "editor" and the protagonist, i.e. of the epic and lyrical parts in the classical sonnet. An autobiographical episode told in this way - the subject of the whole poem is a personal conflict of "seeing" and "experiencing", in other words, of internalized feelings - is crystallized precisely in the contour of the sonnet, though the genre itself is not realized. Form is here the sign of abandoned possibility. And also - an allusion, explaining the poem from the perspective of historical poetics and stressing its lyrical fragmentation, like a distant echo of the breakthrough achieved by Mickiewicz in *Crimean Sonnets* (*Sonety krymskie*), where he fragmented the form of a descriptive poem⁵⁰.

Here form plays a different role from "instructive communication", visible especially in mass culture⁵¹: it communicates something entirely different and seems to be an example of negative allegation⁵². It is the contrast that is exposed here - contrast between free expression and constraining form. Any form, we might add, because the sonnet seems to represent form in general.

The above example is not unique since similar pseudo-sonnets⁵³ almost simultaneously appeared in literary magazines, but as self-contained, independent works which were not a part of a larger whole. The references were realized in a similar way - without rhymes, in asyllabic

⁴⁹ L. Jenny, *op.cit.*, p. 281.

⁵⁰ I. Opacki, *Z zagadnień cyklu sonetowego w polskim romantyzmie* (in): *Odwrocona elegia*, *op. cit.*, p. 97-98.

⁵¹ Edward Balcerzan, *Nowe formy...*, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

⁵² S. Balbus, *Intertekstualność a proces historycznoliteracki*, Kraków 1990, p. 109; the problem is elaborated on in the author's *Miedzy stylami*, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-125.

⁵³ For instance, Radosław Kobierski: *Historie, V i ostatnia ewangelia; sen. „Kresy”* 1999, vol. I, p. 102-103.

verse and with distinct interstrophic enjambement. Perhaps such situations, taking place within the frame of "evocative restitution", could be accurately described by the notion of **graphic mimetism**. Finally, we might make the problem more universal and pose the question of

5. The usefulness of form.

The typology of archetextual strategies may be constructed according to the hitherto established propositions of the typology of quotations⁵⁴ - since we also have to do with quotation here, be it a quotation of structure. Thus we can speak of:

1. the loyally accepted model which realizes form without modification,

2. a broadening and adaptive model,

3. a critical and polemic model.

Naturally, such a sharp distinction of types of archetextual references is blurred in practice, which leads to transitory and dubious situations as one often does not know where the boundaries of an invariant lay - whether they are established by the genre's history or pure potentiality of certain acceptable solutions. The decision what is still only a repetition and what has already become a modification - and, furthermore, what is still only an adaptive modification and what has already become a breakthrough or an act of rebellion in the face of obligations imposed by the model - depends solely on the adopted perspective. What is more, even our understanding of the very term "model" depends on it itself.

However, a more elementary distinction must be placed over this threefold classification - a distinction based on the criteria of the intention to quote a certain form, like the dominating inclination towards the utterance itself or the dominating archetextual gesture whose extreme instances are pastiche and parody.

Every realization of a genre may come into being in two ways: as an inevitable "by-product" of the inventor's efforts against repetition, or as the effect of imitating form, i.e. his conscious efforts to repeat it. In the first instance innovative thinking dominates (unintentionally creating a "one-time" genre), in the second - "genre thinking" dominates. These

⁵⁴ As proposed by S. Morawski (*O cytacie bez cytatów*, „Nurt” 1966, vol. 8, pp. 38-46) and modified by S. Balbus (*Miedzy stylami*, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-95, 101). On their basis I put forward my own proposition (*Granice poezji...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-180).

are opposing attitudes, but their results may be quite similar. Let me give an extreme (and thus a not entirely trusty) example: a poem by Przyboś and its pastiche. The problem is that intentions can rarely be translated into the features of immanent poetics, and that the "genre-ness" of the text does not exist in it but rather in its two contexts: in its origin and its reading. As Jonathan Culler observed, the convention of a genre marks an agreement between the author and the reader, an agreement based on setting a certain system of expectations in motion⁵⁵. Thus it appears that in many instances a genre not only is not a substance but it does not even have to be the aspect of a concrete text. It is an extra-textual process of approaching and recognizing a single layer in the palimpsest.

⁵⁵ J. Culler, *Konwencja i oswojenie*, trans. I. Sieradzki (in): *Znak, styl, konwencja*, select. and introduct. M. Głowiński, Warszawa.

GATUNKI I KONWENCJE W POEZJI

Streszczenie

W artykule została podjęta próba opisu dwudziestowiecznej poezji w aspekcie gatunkowym poprzez zintegrowanie różnych ujęć i perspektyw: tradycyjnej genologii, intersemiotyczności, koncepcji Bachtina i kognitywizmu. Powstał „pejzaż genologiczny” z modelem hierarchicznego stożka (zilustrowany poezją W. Szymborskiej), obrazującym różne stopnie „ugatunkowienia” utworu w zależności od prowieniacji formy, która obejmuje:

- 1) repertuar gatunków literackich,
- 2) rozszerzenie tego repertuaru poprzez wynalazki autorskie,
- 3) formy przejęte ze wzorów piśmiennictwa nieartystycznego,
- 4) formy przejęte ze wzorców kolokwialnych oraz
- 5) formy odpowiadające pewnym schematom myślenia.

Odrębny problem stanowią odwołania do pozajęzykowych systemów semiotycznych (malarstwa, muzyki). Inna próba opisu nawiązuje do „nowej genologii” E. Balcerzana, wyróżniającej w poezji 3 gatunki: „reportaż”, „esej” i „felieton”. Jako zjawisko znaczące w latach 90. omówiona została fala sonetomanii i sonet służący za znak tradycji genologicznej oraz medium prowadzonej z nią gry.

Artykuł kończy refleksja o użyteczności formy i różnych powodach nawiązań gatunkowych, o ich ubocznym charakterze oraz pozatekstowej ontologii: gatunek istnieje przede wszystkim w kontekstach komunikacji literackiej: tradycji i konwencji, a więc - świadomości nadawcy i odbiorcy, często pozostawiając nikiłe ślady w tekście, przeważnie w tytule, który ukierunkowuje lekturę.