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THE BEGINNINGS OF GENOLOGICAL THINKING

ANTIQUITY — MIDDLE AGES

The present paper aims at a reconstruction of some early ideas on the division of poetry and prose into the so-called literary "genres" and "species". It is merely an attempt at a tentative identification of some sections of a vast field which has not as yet been thoroughly penetrated¹ and therefore remains unyielding to a discerning synthesis.

Our interests were initially centred on the criteria of genological classification in the Middle Ages and Renaissance². It turned out, however, that it is impossible to examine them in isolation, apart from the ancient Greek and Roman traditions. Like all medieval poetry and prose, medieval theory of literary genres drew on the ancient thought so much that to treat it as an independent entity would result in a complete misunderstanding of the essence of problems disturbing the minds of medieval critics and theoreticians.

Apparently, the notions we are going to consider here were influenced primarily by the Platonic, Aristotelian and Horatian traditions, and also — this we wish to say emphatically — by the theory of narrative prose, as established by Roman rhetoric³. These ancient sources will constitute the object of our preliminary considerations.

¹ On the same subject of. I. Behrens, *Die Lehre von der Einteilung der Dichtkunst*, Halle/Saale 1940. Beihefte zur "Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie", Heft 92. The problem of ontology of literary genres as conceived by various philosophical systems and trends, starting from Plato, was presented by S. Skwarczyńska in *Wstęp do nauki o literaturze (An Introduction to Literary Scholarship)*, vol. 3, part 5: *A Literary Genre*, (A) General Problems of Genology, Warszawa 1965 (chiefly chap. II: Pre-Genological Difficulties and Decisions, pp. 34—71). Further bibliographical information referring to different authors or problems will be supplied later.

² The present discussion will be continued in the paper on genological notions in the Renaissance theory of poetry, to appear in one of the subsequent issues of "Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich" ("Les Problèmes des Genres Littéraires").

³ It must be stressed that as far as rhetorical theory is concerned we are concentrating on *narratio* alone because it is pertinent to the problems of genological theory; on the other hand, we are leaving out such questions as the ancient theory of rhetorical genres, etc.

Plato's critical views on literature were never systematically expounded in any of his works. What we do know on the subject has been reconstructed from fragmentary pronouncements scattered in many dialogues⁴.

It is in the *Republic*⁵ that we find the exposition of the idea of a tripartite division of poetry — that trichotomy which was to become of crucial importance in the formation of the European genological notions. A free exchange of ideas between Socrates and his interlocutor furnishes the outlines of the linguistic concept of the three general poetic categories, indeed, a rudimentary notion of literary genres.

Plato started by opposing two planes of the poem: that of the "content" (λόγος) and that of the "manner of expressing ideas" (λέξις). After he has lectured on the "content" of literature he proceeds to deal with the lexical aspect:

"So this concludes the topic of tales. That of diction, I take it, is to be considered next. So we shall have completely examined both the matter and the manner of speech"⁶.

The plane of the "manners of speech" or the plane of "how", i. e., the linguistic form of poems provides a further object of his inquiries.

The groundwork of the Platonic trichotomy is to be found in the juxtaposition of two diametrically different (he thought) ways of literary pronouncement: a simple tale (ἀπλή διήγησις) and an imitative tale (μίμησις). A simple tale is identified with the monologue structure speech. Plato makes it clear that this kind of tale is a monologue of the poetic subject, the latter being identical with the author or the poet: "...the poet himself is the speaker and does not even attempt to suggest to us that anyone but himself is speaking"⁷. According to Plato, his monologue structure is characterized by directness and openness of the poetic pronouncement while the poet remains the chief and sole subject of this form of verbal statement. In Plato's view, a simple tale may take the "lyric" form as well as "epic"⁸.

A simple tale has no reference to mimetic function of some poems; it arises without imitation⁹. This reservation becomes more intelligible in the light of Platonic

⁴ A basic source of information is provided in P. Vicaire's book, *Platon — critique littéraire*, Paris 1960.

⁵ Plato, *Republic*, 392—394.

⁶ *Ibidem*, 392 c: "Τὰ μὲν δὴ λόγων περί ἐχέτω τέλος, τὸ δὲ λέξεως, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, μετὰ τοῦτο σκεπτέον, καὶ ἡμῖν ἂ τε λεκτέον καὶ ὡς λεκτέον παντελῶς ἐσκέψεται".

The text of the *Republic* is cited after Paul Shorey's translation: Plato, *The Republic*, London 1953, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press. For philological checking of Greek and Latin quotations I am indebted to Docent Tadeusz Bieńkowski, Ph. D., to whom are due my warm thanks.

⁷ Plato, *Republic*, 393 a: "[...] λέγει τε αὐτὸς ὁ ποιητὴς καὶ οὐδ' ἐπιχειρεῖ ἡμῶν τὴν διάνοιαν ἄλλοσε τρέπειν, ὡς ἄλλος τις ὁ λέγων ἢ αὐτός".

⁸ Witness Plato's statements on the "translation" of a fragment of *Iliad* into a "simple tale" (*Republic*, 393 d—394 a) and his observations upon the relations of dithyrambic poetry and a "simple tale"; for the latter quotation see above.

⁹ Plato, *Republic*, 394 b.

interpretation of the "imitative tale" representing the opposite pole towards which the structure of the verbal plane may tend: "[...] that the opposite of this arises when one removes the words of the poet between and leaves the alternation of speeches"¹⁰.

In this way Plato characterizes a dialogue of many characters belonging to a world represented in a literary work. It is to the dialogue alone that he ascribes mimetic function.

The term *μίμησις* recurs in Plato's works again and again though its connotation varies not only in different works but sometimes even in the same work¹¹. A discussion of the fluctuations in the meaning of Platonic *mimesis*, however cursory, would go beyond the scope of the present paper; important though the problem is in itself, such a discussion would be superfluous here. Pertinent for our purposes, i. e., for the interpretation of Plato's genological concept, is only this connotation which has been included in the tripartite division of poetry. To preclude a misunderstanding, let us cite a fragment of the *Republic* where Socrates speaks to Adeimantus:

"But when he [Homer] delivers a speech as if he were someone else, shall we not say that he then assimilates thereby his own diction as far as possible to that of the person whom he announces as about to speak? [...] And is not likening one's self to another in speech or bodily bearing an imitation of him to whom one likens one's self? — Surely. — In such case then, it appears, he and the other poets effect their narration through imitation. — Certainly. — But if the poet should conceal himself nowhere, then his entire poetizing and narration would have been accomplished without imitation"¹².

The connotation of *μίμησις* in this quotation approximates traditional Greek understanding of imitation in Pre-Platonic aesthetics, i. e., as related to histrionic art, dramatic ballet, mime or music. While examining this understanding of *μίμησις* in connection with Plato's definition of imitation as expounded earlier in *Cratylus*, P. Vicaire who refers to Koller's interpretation, writes: "[...] réaliser une représentation de quelque modèle [...] en développant une activité créatrice"¹³. A similar view

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 394 b: "[...] ὅτι ταύτης αὖ ἐναντία γίνεται, ὅταν τις τὰ τοῦ ποιητοῦ τὰ μεταξὺ τῶν ῥήσεων ἐξαίρων τὰ ἀμοιβαῖα καταλείπη".

¹¹ Vicaire, *op. cit.*, pp. 213—236; W. J. Verdenius, *Mimesis. Plato's Doctrine of Artistic Imitation and Its Meaning to Us*, Leiden 1962; R. McKeon, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity*, [in:] *Critics and Criticism Ancient and Modern*, Chicago 1952, p. 147ff.

¹² Plato, *Republic*, 393 c — d: "'Ἄλλ' ὅταν γέ τινα λέγῃ ῥῆσιν ὥς τις ἄλλος ὢν, ἄρ' οὐ τότε ὁμοιοῦν αὐτὸν φήσομεν ὅ τι μάλιστα τὴν αὐτοῦ λέξιν ἐκάστω, ὅν ἂν προσείπῃ ὥς ἐροῦντα [...]. Οὐκοῦν τό γε ὁμοιοῦν ἑαυτὸν ἄλλω ἢ κατὰ φωνὴν ἢ κατὰ σχῆμα μιμεῖσθαι ἐστὶν ἐκείνον ὃ ἂν τις ὁμοιοῖ; Τί μὴν; Ἐν δὴ τῷ τοιούτῳ, ὥς ἔοικεν, οὗτός τε καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ποιηταὶ διὰ μιμήσεως τὴν διήγησιν ποιοῦνται. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν. Εἰ δέ γε μηδαμοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἀποκρύπτοιο ὁ ποιητής, πᾶσα ἂν αὐτῷ ἄνευ μιμήσεως ἡ ποιήσις τε καὶ διήγησις γεγонуῖα εἴη".

¹³ Vicaire, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

is voiced by B. Weinberg¹⁴. W. Tatarkiewicz thus describes the archaic understanding of *mimesis*: "[...] while later on it [the term *mimesis*] meant a representation of reality through art, particularly through the theatre, painting, and sculpture, here, in the earliest stages of Greek culture, it was applied to dancing and it stood for something completely different, i. e., an expression of emotions, an utterance or externalizing of experience in gestures, sounds, or words. [...] It meant imitation in the sense of acting, not merely copying"¹⁵.

In Plato's text we have quoted above, poetic imitation was conceived as constructing the utterances of the *personae* represented in the poem in this way so that the utterances should conform to their potential manner of speech, thus revealing their character. Μίμησις was then achieved in between the words actually put in the characters' mouths and those which could possibly have been spoken by the represented characters. On the other hand, the poet's report on the characters' appearance or actions ("epic monologue") or the poet's pronouncements on his own emotions or dispositions ("lyrical monologue") were not imitation. In this context, a "simple tale" was performed without imitation.

On the two basic structures, the monologue and the dialogue, or "simple tale" and "imitation", borders the third or mixed structure where the poet's pronouncements alternate with the characters' speeches: "Do they not proceed either by pure narration or by a narrative that is effected through imitation, or by both?"¹⁶

Plato connected these verbal structures with some specific, actually existing at that time (or even earlier) poetic varieties: "[...] that there is one kind of poetry and tale-telling which works wholly through imitation, as you remarked, tragedy and comedy; and another which employs the recital of the poet himself, best exemplified, I presume, in the dithyramb; and there is again that which employs both, in epic poetry and in many other places [...]"¹⁷.

The following scheme would then result: the dialogue or mimetic structure (including, in some cases, also the monologue pronouncements of the characters represented), is suitable for such varieties as comedy and tragedy: the monologue structure (i. e., a "simple tale" conceived as a monologue of the poetic subject), is appropriate for those like dithyramb as well as tales relating, in prose or connected speech, a course of events¹⁸; the mixed structure is reserved chiefly for Homeric epic.

¹⁴ B. Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, vol. 1, Chicago 1961, p. 251.

¹⁵ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki (History of Aesthetics)*, vol. 1: *Estetyka starożytna (Ancient Aesthetics)*, Wrocław 1960, p. 27.

¹⁶ Plato, *Republic*, 392 d: "Ἄρ' οὐκ οὐχὶ ἤτοι ἀπλῇ διηγήσει ἢ διὰ μιμήσεως γιγνομένη ἢ δι' ἀμφοτέρων περαίνουσιν".

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 394 b — c: "[...] ὅτι τῆς ποιήσεώς τε καὶ μυθολογίας ἡ μὲν διὰ μιμήσεως ὅλη ἐστίν, ὥσπερ συ λέγεις, τραγωδία τε καὶ κωμωδία, ἡ δὲ δι' ἀπαγγελίας αὐτοῦ τοῦ ποιητοῦ. εὖροις δ' ἂν αὐτὴν μάλιστα πού ἐν διθυράμβοις. ἡ δ' αὖ δι' ἀμφοτέρων ἐν τε τῇ τῶν ἐπῶν ποιήσει, πολλὰ τοῦ δὲ καὶ ἄλλοθι [...]"

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 393 d — 394 a.

The interpretation of these poetic forms (and also of those which are not mentioned in the fragment of the *Republic* we have been discussing), which later came to be regarded as poetic species, forms the second current of Plato's genological considerations. This current is absolutely empirical. Plato simply enumerates the current forms thus acknowledging their existence, cites their names (e. g., in *Ion*, 534), and conveys their traditional connotations as developed in the historical process (e. g., *Laws*, 698 A). The criterion of "content" is given priority in Plato's description of poetic varieties, as in the fragment cited below: "[...] one class of song was that of prayers to the gods which bore the name of 'hymns'; contrasted with this was another class, best called 'dirges'; 'peans' formed another; and yet another was the 'dithyramb', named, I fancy, after Dionysus"¹⁹.

We may, therefore, distinguish two orders of classification: one which is based on linguistic and structural criteria, and another which is related to the so-called sphere of "content" (theme, emotional tone, etc.); the order related to the plane *signifiant* and that related to the plane *signifié* of the poem; the order of "genre" and that of "species". According to Plato, these categories were independent from one another both logically and ontologically. And yet they crossed: a poem was genologically determined at the intersection of two spheres, that of "what" and that of "how".

One of the greatest connoisseurs of Aristotle's *Poetics*, Francesco Robortello, wrote in 1548 when discussing the genological concepts of his master: "Haec vero omnia desumpsit Aristoteles ex Platone, nam ille quoque copiose de his imitandi modis poeticis loquitur. Non est autem locus his Platonis praetermittendus, tum ut facilius intelligantur ea, quae sunt ab Aristotele dicta breviter fortasse nimis et obscure; tum ut unusquisque perspiciat, quam ingeniose e scriptis Platonis praeceptoris sui, sicuti alia multa, ita et haec transtulerit"²⁰.

Indeed, Platonic echoes are prominent in Aristotle's views, but they do not constitute the totality of the Stagirite's concepts of classification. The most essential differences seem to spring from a different understanding of poetic imitation²¹.

¹⁹ Plato, *Laws*, 700 b: "[...] καὶ τι τὴν εἶδος ᾧδῆς εὐχαὶ πρὸς θεούς, ὄνομα δὲ ὕμνοι ἐπεκαλοῦντο. καὶ τούτῳ δὴ τὸ ἐναντίον τὴν ᾧδῆς ἕτερον εἶδος θρήνους δὲ τις ἂν αὐτοὺς μάλιστα ἐκάλεσε. καὶ παῖωνες ἕτερον, καὶ ἄλλο Διονύσου γένεσις, οἶμαι, διθύραμβος λεγόμενος".

Citations from R. G. Bury's edition of *Laws* in *Plato*, vol. 9, London 1952, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

²⁰ Francisci Robortelli Utinensis *In Librum Aristotelis De arte poetica explicationes*, Florentiae 1548, p. 25.

²¹ Some interesting remarks on the Platonic and Aristotelian notions of *μίμησις* can be found in the paper by G. Genette, *Frontières du récit*, "Communications", No. 8, 1966, pp. 152—156. Cf. also McKeon, *op. cit.* It cannot be stressed enough that our discussion, here and in the preceding pages, on the problem of imitation, as understood by Plato, has been founded on the philosopher's earlier views as expounded in *Cratylus* or in the fragments of the *Republic* we have quoted above. We are not taking into account Plato's later concept of *μίμησις* as discussed in the subsequent part of the *Republic* (595ff.), which is closer to Aristotelian standpoint, but differs from the latter in this that Plato describes imitation as a process of passive reproduction of the model.

In more recent commentaries to *Poetics* there are at least two possible interpretations of the term *μίμησις* which is recurrently used in the text. Aristotle left no univocal definition of imitation of his own, hence numerous controversies and polemics among the scholars examining his heritage. The first of the possible interpretations prevailed in the nineteenth-century critical works²², and was also favoured by some later critics like, e.g., K. Svoboda²³. According to this interpretation Aristotelian *μίμησις* was to be understood as reproducing a model or making exact, "photographic" reproductions of extra-artistic reality. The second interpretation became prominent in the last decades, its outstanding spokesman being R. Ingarden²⁴. In the latter view *μίμησις* is the opposite of passive reproduction. The emphasis is laid on creative elements in mimetic process; on the imitative presentation not "fitting" the model; on the fictitious model having equal rights the real one; on the imitative representation being subordinate to the laws of "objective consequence", to principles of "necessity" and "probability" rather than "truth" understood as adequacy in relation to the model. On the other hand, the supporters of both interpretations have no misgivings about the fact that Aristotelian *μίμησις* occurs between a broadly conceived plane of the poem, comprising not only "characters" but also a "plot" (including the characters' actions) and "idea"²⁵, and the extra-artistic reality; Aristotelian *μίμησις* is therefore an attribute of all poetry while with Plato it is appropriate but to one species of poetry.

The notion of *μίμησις* in the system of *Poetics* is of interest to us only in so far as it is related to the complex of Aristotelian genological meditations. It is this set of problems that makes the philosopher's ambivalent attitude towards the question of imitation more apparent. Apart from the approach to *μίμησις* referred to above, there seems to exist in the text of *Poetics* still another, the traditional one which we have met earlier while considering Plato's views.

In the chapter devoted to a discussion of epic forms we can read: "Homer deserves praise for many things and especially for this, that alone of all poets he does not fail to understand what he ought to do himself. The poet should speak as seldom as possible in his own character, since he is not 'representing' the story in that sense. Now the other poets play a part themselves throughout the poem and only occasionally 'represent' a few things dramatically, but Homer after a brief prelude at once brings in a man or a woman or some other character, never without character, but all having character of their own"²⁶.

²² Tatarkiewicz, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 172.

²³ K. Svoboda, *L'Esthétique d'Aristote (Aristotelová estetika)*, Brno 1927, p. 39.

²⁴ R. Ingarden, *Uwagi na marginesie "Poetyki" Arystotelesa (Some Remarks on Aristotle's "Poetics")*, [in:] *Studia z estetyki (Studies on Aesthetics)*, vol. 1. Warszawa 1966, pp. 337—377. Cf. Z. Szmydtowa, *Problemy Poetyki Arystotelesa (The Problems of Aristotle's Poetics)*, and *Problemy Poetyki Arystotelesa ciąg dalszy (Problems of Aristotle's Poetics Continued)*, [in:] *Poeci i poetyka (Poets and Poetics)*, Warszawa 1964, pp. 371—409; McKeon, *op. cit.*, p. 160ff.

²⁵ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6. 1449 b — 1450 a.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 24. 1460 a 13 — 14: "Ὁμηρος δὲ ἄλλα τε πολλὰ ἄξιος ἐπαινεῖσθαι καὶ δὴ

We can easily distinguish here a direct reverberation of the Platonic opposition of the mimetic dialogue structure and the non-imitative monologue structure. In this context *μίμησις* appears to be an attribute of a certain structure of verbal pronouncement. Conforming to tradition created by the fragment of the *Republic* referred to above, *μίμησις* here represents a relation between two pronouncements, one which has actually been realized by the poet and which expresses character, and a potential one.

Such an understanding of *μίμησις* was considered by Aristotle in his theory of division of poetry (Books I-III) even though the theory was in many respects indebted to Platonic tradition. The classification of poetic varieties was based on the notion of imitation; and *μίμησις*, as we know, was regarded as an epistemological attribute of all poetic varieties and forms; moreover, *μίμησις* was also recognized as an attribute of other forms of art, including painting. For that reason ceased to function as a distinctive criterion of division of poetry into genres; the rôle of such criteria was now assumed by some aspects of the mimetic process, namely the "means", "objects" and "manners of imitation"²⁷.

In the category of "means of imitation" are included the rhythm, speech and melody. "Speech" is an essential constituent of poetry; other "means" may just coexist with "speech"²⁸. *Λέξις* then becomes a distinctive characteristic of poetry since it separates poetry from other arts. "But the art which employs words either in bare prose or in metres [...]"²⁹.

The verbal stratum of the poem may be organized by different "manners of imitation": "For in representing the same objects by the same means it is possible to proceed either partly by narrative and partly by assuming a character other than your own — this is Homer's method — or by remaining yourself without any such change, or else to represent the characters as carrying out the whole action the m-selves"³⁰.

In the first type, the *λέξις* of the poem consists of the alternating pronouncements of the author and those of the characters represented in the poem; the second type contains only the characters' pronouncements. We can recognize here the models

καὶ ὅτι μόνος τῶν ποιητῶν οὐκ ἀγνοεῖ ὁ δεῖ ποιεῖν αὐτόν. αὐτὸν γὰρ δεῖ τὸν ποιητὴν ἐλάχιστα λέγειν. οὐ γὰρ ἔστι κατὰ ταῦτα μιμητής. οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι αὐτοὶ μὲν δι' ὅλου ἀγωνίζονται, μιμοῦνται δὲ ὀλίγα καὶ ὀλιγάκις. ὁ δὲ ὀλίγα φρονημασάμενος εὐθύς εἰσάγει ἄνδρα ἢ γυναῖκα ἢ ἄλλο τι [ἢ θος] καὶ οὐδέν' ἀήθη ἄλλ' ἔχοντα ἡθῆ". Here and elsewhere quotations are from W. Hamilton Fyfe's translation of *Poetics* in: Aristotle, "The Poetics"; Longinus, "On the Sublime"; Demetrius, "On Style", London 1953, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

²⁷ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1.1447 a 3—4.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 1.1447 a 5—6.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 1. 1447 a — 1. 1447 b: "ἡ δὲ [ἐποποιία] μόνον τοῖς λόγοις φιλοῖς ἢ τοῖς μέτροις..."

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 1. 1448 a 2—3: "καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ μιμεῖσθαι ἔστιν ὅτε μὲν ἀπαγγέλλοντα, ἢ ἑτερόν τι γινόμενον, ὥσπερ "Ὀμηρος ποιεῖ, ἢ ὡς τὸν αὐτὸν καὶ μὴ μεταβάλλοντα, ἢ πάντας ὡς πράττοντας καὶ ἐνεργοῦντας τοὺς μιμουμένους".

of a mixed structure and a dialogue structure, as created by Plato. (The interpretation of this quotation by K. Svoboda who has besides discerned a model of a monologue structure here, seems to be untenable)³¹. Thus Aristotle outlines two general poetic categories which can be described as epic and dramatic since he associates them with Homeric epic and drama. Like in Plato, they are essentially linguistic categories; it is the structure of the λέξις that determines their representative genres.

Apart from these general categories, the *Poetics* offer a fuller (as compared with Plato's account) theory of poetic varieties which are isolated through the application of the criterion of "object of imitation".

"Poetry then split into two kinds according to the poet's nature. For the more serious poets represented fine doings and the doings of fine men, while those of a less exalted nature represented the actions of inferior men, at first writing satire just as the others at first wrote hymns and eulogies"³².

The first specific criterion thus refers to ethical properties of the represented characters. This had also been said before in one of the earlier chapters of *Poetics*: "Since living persons are the objects of representation, these must necessarily be either good men or inferior [...] that is to say either better than ourselves or worse or much what we are. [...] It is just in this respect that tragedy differs from comedy. The latter sets out to represent people as worse than they are today, the former as better"³³.

Ethical criteria combined with the criteria of content do not exhaust the question of classification. "Nature herself discovered the proper metre. The iambic is indeed the most conversational of the metres, and the proof is that in talking to each other we most often use iambic lines but very rarely hexameters and only when we rise above the ordinary pitch of conversation"³⁴.

The definitions of particular poetic species take besides into account such criteria as their function (which had been described as "action" in the preliminary discussion), e. g., in the definition of tragedy whose object is to move pity or fear³⁵, or tone,

³¹ Svoboda, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

³² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 4. 1448 b 8: "δισπάσθη δὲ κατὰ τὰ οἰκεῖα ἥθη ἢ ποιήσεις. οἱ μὲν γὰρ σεμνότεροι τὰς καλὰς ἐμιμοῦντο πράξεις καὶ τὰς τῶν τοιούτων, οἱ δὲ εὐτελέστεροι τὰς τῶν φαύλων, πρῶτον ψόγους ποιοῦντες, ὥσπερ ἕτεροι ὕμνους καὶ ἐγκώμια".

³³ *Ibidem*, 2. 1448 a 1—7: "ἐπεὶ δὲ μιμοῦνται οἱ μιμούμενοι πράττοντας, ἀνάγκη δὲ τούτους ἢ σπουδαίους ἢ φαύλους εἶναι [...] ἥτοι βελτίονας ἢ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἢ χείρονας ἢ καὶ τοιούτους «ποιοῦσιν», ὥσπερ οἱ γραφεῖς. [...] ἐν ταύτῃ δὲ τῇ διαφορᾷ καὶ ἡ τραγωδία πρὸς τὴν κωμωδίαν διέστηκεν. ἡ μὲν γὰρ χείρους ἢ δὲ βελτίους μιμεῖσθαι βούλεται τῶν νῦν".

³⁴ *Ibidem*, 4. 1449 a 18—19: "λέξεως δὲ γενομένης αὐτῇ ἡ φύσις τὸ οἰκεῖον μέτρον εὔρε. μάλιστα γὰρ λεκτικόν τῶν μέτρον τὸ ἱαμβεῖόν ἐστιν. σημεῖον δὲ τούτου, πλεῖστα γὰρ ἱαμβεῖα λέγομεν ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τῇ πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἐξάμετρα δὲ ὀλιγάκις καὶ ἐκβαίνοντες τῆς λεκτικῆς ἀρμονίας".

³⁵ *Ibidem*, 6. 1449 b 1—4.

as in the definition of comedy which should avoid ugliness and expose the ridiculous "without causing pain"³⁶.

The criteria of division into poetic species therefore result from the intersection of the properties of the represented world and the conventions of metrical arrangement of the verbal stratum — the "objects" and "means of imitation"; these criteria then belong to a different order than those determining the division into literary genres. These two planes of genological thinking which obviously follow the spirit of Platonic tradition, are not integrated into a compact, logically consistent system of classification of poetry. They "do not fit" and the failure to "fit" is responsible for leaving some monologue forms (ἀπλή διήγησις — according to Plato), corresponding to some later conceptions of lyric poetry, outside the system of literary genres³⁷.

Apart from the Platonic and Aristotelian trends which have been of fundamental importance for European genological thinking, literary critics and theoreticians of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance assimilated some ideas of the genres, which had been developed in a more or less independent way by the Romans. Two achievements will deserve our special attention: first, the influence of Horace, and, second, the rhetorical concept of the narrative.

Horace's *Epistle to Pisones* proved to have a cogent influence since it fixed in the literary consciousness of the following centuries the concept of a literary species as a peculiar unity of "content" (theme, the quality of the characters, and emotional tone) and of the verbal stratum characterized by an "appropriate" diction and a "proper" meter³⁸. The mutual relations of the poem's represented plane and its verbal plane (style and meter) were balanced by the principle of *decorum*, the latter being a fundamental aesthetic principle of every work of art not merely for Horace but for the majority of art critics of that period. Accordingly, the "codes" of the few poetic species were outlined in terms of the category of propriety of "content" and verbal "form". This was then a revival of the empirical and descriptive current of genological thinking, the one we were trying to trace in the Greek tradition.

The problems of literary genres, in their number the question of classification of poetry in the structural and linguistic plane, were outside the sphere of Horace's interests. It must, however, be emphasized that Horace, in his own peculiar way restored the literary species³⁹ which had been related by Plato to the structure of ἀπλή διήγησις. The re-establishment was of material consequence for the subsequent development of the theory of literary genres. Horace went as far as to recommend:

[...] ne forte pudori

Sit tibi Musa lyrae sollers et cantor Apollo⁴⁰.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, 5. 1449 a 1 — 2.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, 1. 1447 a 2 — 6; 1. 1447 b 7 — 10; 4. 1448 b 8 and elsewhere.

³⁸ Horace, *De arte poetica*, 73ff., 89ff.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 83 — 85.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 406 — 407.

The second formative influence is to be found in the rhetoric of the first century B. C. Unlike the Greek tradition in the theory of elocution which proved indifferent to typological aspects of the narrative, Roman rhetoric offered such an approach to rhetorical *narratio* as was to become the foundation stone of prose fiction. The concepts coined by Cicero and by the anonymous author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and later repeated by Quintilian, were to run through all medieval prose theory (as well as poetics) to reappear again in the Renaissance theoretical thinking.

Cicero has distinguished forensic speech which accurately renders past events and only at times introduces the elements of the speaker's subjective emotions, from epideictic speech whose aims are rather literary. "Tertium genus est remotum a civilibus causis, quod delectationis causa, non inutili cum exercitatione, dicitur et scribitur"⁴¹.

The latter type of speech is further described:

"Eius partes sunt duae, quarum altera in negotiis, altera in personis maxime versatur. Ea, quae in negotiorum expositione posita est, tres habet partes: fabulam, historiam, argumentum. Fabula est, in qua nec verae nec verisimiles res continentur, cuiusmodi est:

Angues ingentes alites, iuncti iugo...

Historia est gesta res ab aetatis nostrae memoria remota; quod genus: *Appius indixit Carthaginensibus bellum*. Argumentum est ficta res, quae tamen fieri potuit. Huiusmodi apud Terentium:

Nam is postquam excessit ex Ephebis, Sosia...

Illa autem narratio, quae versatur in personis, eiusmodi est, ut in ea simul cum rebus ipsis personarum sermones et animi perspicui possint, hoc modo:

*Venit ad me saepe clamitans: Quid agis Mitio?
Cur perdis adolescentem nobis? Cur amat?
Cur potat? ...*

Hoc in genere narrationis multa inesse debet festivitas, confecta ex rerum varietate animorum dissimilitudine, gravitate, lenitate, spe, metu, suspitione, desiderio, dissimulatione, errore, misericordia, fortunae commutatione, insperato incommodo, subita laetitia, iucundo exitu rerum"⁴².

We are not going to pretend that the fragment cited above contains an explicit exposition of the problem of literary genres in the way that Plato and Aristotle had left to us. We might, however, venture a hypothesis that the problem is implicit in the division of the narrative into that *in personis posita* and that *in negotiis posita*. It would follow from the description of these two types of prose narrative that

⁴¹ M. T. Cicero, *De inventione*, 1, 19.

⁴² *Ibidem*. Views similar to those held by Cicero are found in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (1, 8, 13) and in M. F. Quintilian's *Institutionis oratoriae libri XII* (2, 4, 2).

Cicero was inclined to associate the former with the mixed (or epic) structure, as testified by the passage: "in ea simul cum rebus ipsis personarum sermones et animi perspicui possint [...]", while to the latter he assigned the monologue structure (ἀπλὴ διήγησις) in its "epic" (not lyrical) variety.

A further subdivision was, however, effected according to the criteria of "content". *Narratio in negotiis posita* was subdivided into three varieties termed *fabula*, *argumentum*, and *historia*, each of them characterized by a peculiar relationship of the represented plane and the extra-artistic reality. The relationship of adequacy ("truth") served to establish the variety called *historia*: here the represented plane is supposed to be an exact reproduction of a given section of reality well removed in time from the present. The relationship of analogy (or we might call it "imitation" — in the Aristotelian sense of conformity to the laws of necessity and probability, instead of truth) was a distinctive mark of the variety called *argumentum*. Finally, the variety called *fabula* was characterized by the independence of the represented plane both from the extra-artistic reality and the laws of necessity and probability⁴³.

In the period preceding the rise of mature systems of great medieval poetics, genological ideas found their expression in numerous *artes grammaticae* and *artes rhetoricae*. Eclecticism was their dominant feature — Platonic, Horatian, and Ciceronian elements were mixed to result in various combinations. These formed the background from which a framework of more independent ideas was subsequently to emerge.

Of the early theoreticians of poetry, Diomedes deserves our special attention. He lived in the fourth century A. D., and though practically nothing is known about the man, his writings have been preserved for us. His treatise *De arte grammatica* was universally known and quoted by the later authors and was still published in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries⁴⁴. Diomedes tackled some essential problems of rhetoric, a large portion of his treatise being devoted to the question of classification of poetry. Obviously, Diomedean views were preponderantly influenced by Platonic tradition. Plato's ideas had, however, undergone a substantial transformation — a palpable evidence that the tripartite division of poetry had turned into a rigid, schematic frame.

"Poematis genera sunt tria. Aut enim activum est, vel imitativum, quod Graeci δραματικὸν vel μιμητικὸν. Aut enarrativum vel enunciativum, quod Graeci

⁴³ E. R. Curtius, *La littérature européenne et le Moyen Age latin*, traduit par J. Bréjoux, Paris 1956 (translated from the German original *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, Bern 1954), pp. 87 — 89 and elsewhere. Cf. S. Zabłocki, *Antyczne epicedium i elegia żałobna. Geneza i rozwój (Ancient Epicedium and Elegy. Their Origin and Development)*, Wrocław 1965, especially chaps. VII and VIII.

⁴⁴ Weinberg (*op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 79, 82 and elsewhere) writes of the vitality of Diomedean theory in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century theories of poetry, chiefly in the poetics derived from the Platonic and Horatian traditions.

ἐξηγητικὸν vel ἀναγγελτικὸν dicunt. Aut commune vel mixtum, quod Graeci κοινὸν vel μικτὸν appellant"⁴⁵.

The classification clearly refers to poems, no longer to structures of verbal pronouncement as in Plato, nor to manners of imitation as in Aristotle. Diomedes speaks of three kinds of poems or groups of poetic works sharing, among other things, certain common properties of the linguistic stratum. There follows a rigid classification which reminds us of some later scholastic divisions; the arrangement of groups and subgroups, all of them carefully graded, forms a hierarchy in which every element is related to another through the order of subordination or superiority.

Here is a description of *genus activum*: "Δραματικὸν vel activum est, in quo personae agunt solae, sine ulla poetae interlocutione, ut se habent tragicae vel comicae fabulae [...]. Poematos dramatici vel activi genera sunt quatuor. Apud Graecos: tragica, comica, satyrica, mimica; apud Romanos: 'praetextata', 'tabernaria', 'attellana', 'planipes'"⁴⁶.

In this way the system of subordination operates within dramatic genre.

On the other hand, *genus enarrativum* "in quo poeta ipse loquitur sine personae ullius interlocutione", consists of three species: *angeltice*, *historice*, and *didascalice*. These in turn comprise, first, *sententiae* or moralizing and didactic poems; second, narrative poems which, the author says, "narrationes et genealogiae componuntur, ut est Hesiodi *Theogonia* et similia"⁴⁷, and, finally, philosophical works such as those by Lucretius, astrological works, e. g., *Phaenomena* by Aratus, and other works, like those by Cicero, Virgil's *Georgics*, etc. Or, to use more familiar terms, the genre represents a monologue structure, its content being moral and/or didactic, mythological and/or historical, philosophical and/or scientific.

Genus mixtum, "in quo poeta ipse loquitur et personae loquentes introducuntur", comprehends the following species: "prima et heroica ut *Iliados* et *Aeneidos*, secunda lyrica, ut est Archilochi et Horatii"⁴⁸.

Thus both lyric poetry with its characteristic monologue structure and the typically mixed (in the Platonic sense) epic were ultimately shuffled into a common bag of *generis mixti*. This is the most convincing evidence that to a medieval critic the type of linguistic structure no longer represents a fundamental criterion of division into literary genres, even though he would plead the testimony of Platonic tradition. For Platonic trichotomy is here translated into the language of an essentially arbitrary division of poetic works into groups whose properties were not defined clearly enough. Plato's classification thus lost its intrinsic meaning — that

⁴⁵ The following edition is here used: Diomedes, *De arte grammatica*, Coloniae 1533; the present citation *ibidem*, 117 v.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ This and the subsequent quotations on *genus enarrativum* are from Diomedes, *op. cit.*, 117 v — 118.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem* the citations on *genus mixtum*.

of a typology of the manner of poetic ordering of the verbal stratum of a literary work.

Platonic threads were extending not only over the field of poetic genology but also penetrated into some views on prose fiction, as expounded within the framework of the rhetorical theory of *narratio*. An obvious example is the standpoint of Fortunatianus (fourth century A. D.) who applied the scheme of Platonic trichotomy in his classification of prosaic tales. Fortunatianus divided rhetorical *narratio* into "dramatic", "narrative", and "mixed"⁴⁹.

For the most part, however, the scholars dealing with theory of elocution tended to preserve traditional rhetorical divisions⁵⁰. The impact of Ciceronian ideas was of considerable importance and it was his classification of the narrative into *fabula*, *argumentum* and *historia* that was the chief model. Hermogenes became another authority, at least for those theoreticians who accepted and reproduced his division of *narratio* into four categories: "imaginary", "probable", "historical" and "forensic"⁵¹. The two classifications, that of Cicero and that of Hermogenes, were not essentially opposed since Cicero also distinguished a forensic narrative from that "quod delectationis causa, non inutile cum exercitatione, dicitur et scribitur"⁵².

The tendency described here was exemplified, among others, in the work of Martianus Capella (fifth century A. D.) and Priscian (fifth — sixth century A. D.). In M. Capella's treatise *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercuri*, in the section devoted to rhetoric, we can read: "Narrationum genera sunt quatuor: historia, fabula, argumentum, negocialis vel iudicialis assertio. Historia est, ut Livii. Fabula neque vera est, neque veresimilis, ut Daphnim in arborem versam. Argumentum est, quod non facta, sed quae fieri potuerunt, continet, ut in comoediis patrem timeri et amari meretricem. Iudicialis autem narratio est rerum gestarum aut verisimilium expositio"⁵³.

The patronage of Cicero and of Roman rhetoric is here apparent both in terminology and in definitions. On the other hand, Priscian appears to follow the tradition of Hermogenes since the views of the latter are reflected in *De praeexercitamentis rhetoricae*: "Narratio est expositio rei factae vel quasi factae. [...] Species autem narrationis quatuor sunt: fabularis, fictilis, historica, civilis. Fabularis est ad fabu-

⁴⁹ C. Chirii Fortunatiani *Artis rhetoricae libri III* (3,9), [in:] *Rhetores latini minores, ex codicibus maximam partem primum adhibitis*, emendabat C. Halm, Lipsiae 1863, p. 126. Cf. H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, vol. 1. München 1960, p. 167.

⁵⁰ We wish to emphasize again that it is only the genological division of prose narrative as expounded within the theory of *narratio* that concerns us here.

⁵¹ Lausberg, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 167.

⁵² Cf. note 41.

⁵³ The citation is from the edition Martiani Minei Capellae *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercuri*, Basileae 1532, pp. 117 — 118. (The same in *De rhetorica*, 46, 550, cf. *Rhetores latini minores*, p. 486).

las supradictas pertinens. Fictilis ad tragoedias, sive comoedias ficta. Historica ad res gestas exponendas. Civilis quae ab oratoribus in exponendis sumitur causis”⁵⁴.

It is worth stressing that the early medieval rhetorical treatises generally evade the Ciceronian “generic” division of the narrative into that about people and that about events; they seem to be content to reproduce the schemes of division we have referred to above, the fundamental criterion being the relationship of the represented plane to extra-artistic reality.

An attempt to trace genological problems in the poetics of the mature Renaissance does not always yield interesting results. Such treatises as *Ars versificatoria* (about 1175) by Matthew of Vendôme or *Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi* and *Poëtria nova* by Geoffrey of Vinsauf (thirteenth century) simply dispense with classifications of poetry into literary genres and species; at best, some species are occasionally mentioned there and their description is quite perfunctory.

Matthew of Vendôme enumerates and personifies tragedy, comedy, satire and elegy, and he includes their brief descriptions in the chapter dealing with problems of style and versification. Of tragedy, e. g., we read:

“Tragoedia proiicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba et pedibus innitens coturnatis, rigida superficiei, minaci supercilio assuetae ferocitatis multifariam intonat conjecturam”⁵⁵.

In this style and in a similar manner the author would speak about other species. Geoffrey of Vinsauf mentions comedy and he postulates a suitable choice of words for comic matter⁵⁶.

For our purpose, the treatise *Poëtria* [...] *De arte prosaica, metrica et rithmica*⁵⁷ by John of Garland (ca. 1180 — after 1252) appears to be of basic importance. The writer intended this work to be a sum-total of the knowledge of verbal art, and he meant to encompass the whole complex of the problems pertaining both prose and verse. In its theoretical foundations *Poëtria* was eclectic in the manner typical of the Middle Ages. Thus it combined some of Platonic views on poetry with some elements of Roman rhetoric, chiefly of the Ciceronian stream, and the echoes of the disquisitions on poetry as expounded in the *Epistle to Pisones* — that invulnerable authority for the medieval poetics.

⁵⁴ The quotation follows the edition Prisciani Grammatici Caesariensis *De praexercitamentis rhetoricae ex Hermogene liber*, [in:] *Libri omnes*, 1954, p. 866. (The same in *Praexercitamina* 2, 10 — 16 (*De narratione*), cf. *Rhetores latini minores*, p. 552).

⁵⁵ Matthew of Vendôme, *Ars versificatoria*, II, 5 (I am quoting after E. Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XII^e et du XIII^e siècle*, Paris 1923, p. 153).

⁵⁶ Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poëtria nova*, 1883. By the same author *Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi*, 163 — 169 (cited after Faral, *op. cit.*, pp. 255 and 317).

⁵⁷ A critical edition of this treatise by G. Mari, *Poëtria magistri Johannis Anglici De arte prosaica, metrica et rithmica*, [in:] *Romanische Forschungen*, vol. 13, 1901, pp. 883 — 965. All subsequent page references are from this edition. For John of Garland see: Faral, *op. cit.*, pp. 40 — 46, 378 — 380; E. De Bruyne, *Études d'esthétique médiévale*, vol. 2, Brugge 1946, pp. 18 — 23; Tatar-kiewicz, *Historia estetyki* (*History of Aesthetics*), vol. 2: *Estetyka średniowieczna* (*Medieval Aesthetics*), pp. 134 — 147 (on medieval poetics in general and also on John of Garland).

A considerable portion of *Poëtria* was assigned to genological problems. On the one hand, the treaty offers a general theoretical scheme of division of poetry and prose into *genera* and *species sive partes*; on the other hand, the work contains a description of some poetic species called *carmina*.

John of Garland's views on what a literary work is were fundamentally determined by his belief in a basic opposition of the literary "matter" (i. e., the content, the represented plane, the order *signifié*) and of the so-called *sermo* (verbal enunciation, the linguistic plane, the order *signifiant*). He enlarged upon both the members of the opposition. The theory of *sermo* also dealt with some other essential problems, in their number a generic classification of verbal works.

The author of *Poëtria* enumerates three *genera sermonis*: "Notandum ergo, quod triplex est genus sermonis: primum est 'dramaticon' vel 'dicticon', id est imitativum vel interrogativum. Secundum est 'exagematicon' id est enarrativum quod a quibusdam dicitur 'ermeneticon' id est interpretativum. Tertium est 'micticon' vel 'chelon' id est mixtum vel commune et dicitur 'didascalicon' id est doctrinale, aliquo istorum trium utitur quicumque loquitur"⁵⁸.

Both the terminology of the triad and its assignment to a linguistic plane are indicative of Platonic tradition. Indeed, John of Garland is here presenting the concept of genres in terms of structural and linguistic planes, as it was conceived by the Greek philosopher. This is more noteworthy since the author breaks away from the standpoint prevalent in the early Middle Ages in general, and from Diomedes, the chief theoretician of genres, in particular.

The next division applies to *genus enarrativum*: "Sub secundo cadit narratio"⁵⁹. The term *narratio* occurs in *Poëtria* again and again and its meaning varies. In the adduced case, the function of *narratio* is parallel to that of the later "plot" — it adjoins the represented plane and belongs to the sphere of the "matter".

"Quia vero narratio communis est prosae et metro, dicendum, quod sunt genera narrationum"⁶⁰, runs the introduction. This is followed by an enumeration of the genres: "unum est quod in negotiis positum est, aliud quod in personis"⁶¹.

It is not hard to recognize here the notions and phrasing taken directly from Cicero and the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*; the stream of rhetorical genology had thus forced its way into the bed of Platonic trichotomy.

The narrative about poeple was characterized in the following way: "Illa species narrationis quae consistit in positione personarum ne sit vitiosa sex exquirat proprietates a sex rebus sumptis, quae sunt: fortunae conditio, aetas, sexus, officium, natio, ydyoma [...]"⁶². This description, as we see, goes back to both the Ciceronian

⁵⁸ John of Garland, *Poëtria*, p. 926.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 927.

tradition of *descriptio personae* and, to a lesser extent, to the Horatian concept of the poetic *persona*⁶³.

The narrative about events, on the other hand, traditionally falls into three elements: *fabula*, *argumentum* and *historia*. "[...]tres habet species sive partes, scilicet: fabulam, historiam, argumentum. Fabula est quae nec res veras nec verisimiles continet [...]. Historia est res gesta ab aetatis nostrae memoria remota [...]. Argumentum est res ficta quae tamen fieri potuit, ut contingit in comoediis"⁶⁴. It can easily be seen that this fragment presents a faithful reflection of Cicero's views as well as those held by the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.

The classification of the works of verbal art would therefore ultimately correspond to the basic opposition: *materia* and *sermo*. *Species narrationis* are arranged on the plane of "content", or the represented plane, while *genera sermonis* are assigned to the linguistic plane. Our earlier remark on the eclecticism of *Poëtria* is therefore fully corroborated, for the *species narrationis* are an outcome of the studies of rhetorical theory while *genera sermonis*, as we said before, owe their existence to Platonic tradition.

The classification of poetry and prose does not exhaust the essential problems of *Poëtria*. We can also find there, running almost parallel and as if following their own course, the descriptions of, and even attempts at classification of, the poetic species which are generally referred to as *carmina*. These descriptions and attempted divisions, though apparently dominated by the Horatian tradition, have been involved in the system of concepts which are typically medieval.

Carmina are generally divided into two groups termed *historicum* and *alegoricum*⁶⁵. The former group contains the following species (our enumeration follows the order accepted by John of Garland): *epithalamium*, *epicedium*, *epitaphium*, *apoclesis*, *bucolicum*, *georgicum*, *liricum*, *epodon*, *carmen seculare vel hymnus*, *invektivum*, *reprehensio sive satira*, *tragicum*, *elegiacum*, *comoedia*. The group *alegoricum* is represented by a single example, that of *apologus*.

Such terms as *historia* or *historicum* are repeatedly used in *Poëtria* yet their meaning is not the same throughout. In the passage we have quoted, the term *historicum* was intended to be more or less synonymous to *sensus historicus* so as to suggest a direct and literal meaning of this kind of *carmina* while *alegoricum*, understood as *sensus alegoricus*, was to imply a transferred sense: the represented plane was to be referred to a certain conceptual plane forming a superstructure over the former, but not actually represented⁶⁶. The division into *historicum* and *alegoricum* therefore basically relates to the degree of semantic complexity of "specific" structures.

The passages we have cited from John of Garland are also of interest in so far as they shed the light on the problem of specific criteria. On the whole, the author

⁶³ Cf. Cicero, *De inventione*, I, 24 — 25; Horace, *De arte poetica*, 153 — 178.

⁶⁴ John of Garland, *op. cit.*, p. 926.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 926 — 928.

⁶⁶ Cf. De Bruyne, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 302 — 313.

of *Poëtria* accepted the criteria developed in the past, in some measure by Aristotle and, chiefly, by the Roman tradition, notably Horatian. He assigned priority to the quality of the "matter" which should be appropriate to a given species (the theme, type of plot, type of hero, etc.); next to the "matter" he placed the tone — a basic emotive quality; and last, the attributes of the verbal stratum, from lexis to metrical scheme of the verse. These attributes were related to one another by means of the principle of *decorum*, e. g., the verbal stratum was to be held in close correspondence with both the quality of the matter and the dominant emotional tone.

The importance of the latter criterion may be demonstrated on the example of the definitions of tragedy and comedy: "[...] sed est differentia inter tragoediam et comoediam, quia comoedia est carmen iocosum incipiens a tristitia et terminans in gaudium; tragoedia est carmen gravi stilo compositum incipiens a gaudio et terminans in luctum [...]"⁶⁷, or that of elegy: "[...] elegiacum id est miserabile carmen, quod continet et recitat dolores amantium [...]"⁶⁸.

The criterion of the dominant tone therefore determined some general categories which might be termed "the tragic", "the comic", and "the elegiac". These categories could operate in "generically" different works and they were largely responsible for assigning these works to different species.

To sum up our discussion we might venture a general statement that two distinct trends of genological thinking were already formed in the Greek poetic theory: on the one hand, the meditations on literary *genera* ultimately resulted in a typology of the structural and linguistic solutions of the verbal stratum; on the other hand, descriptions of literary *species* led to their treatment as certain unities bringing some definite properties of the "object of imitation" (the latter representing a dominant element) into harmony with the properties of style, versification, etc. It has become apparent that these two trends were assimilated by the European theory of verbal art, prior to modern era.

Medieval thinking on *genus* was dominated by Platonic tradition in the theory of poetry while the theory of prose was predominantly Ciceronian. Both these traditions are welded in a very significant manner in the work of John of Garland who had included in his treatise both *ars prosaica* and *ars metrica*.

Medieval ideas on literary *species* display a combination of the Platonic, Aristotelian and Horatian traditions (all of them equally valid because essentially they are not contradictory) in poetry, and a predominance of the Ciceronian tradition in prose.

A fundamental change, as compared with the Greek original, was effected during the Middle Ages in the manner of associating the "generic" with the "specific" categories. In antiquity their ties were loose; they were conceived as distinct planes

⁶⁷ John of Garland, *op. cit.*, p. 918.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 926.

partly overlapping or intersecting but basically autonomous. The categories of *genus* and *species* provided two different ways of approach to, and characterization of, poetry — one according to the “manner”, the other according to the “object” and “means of imitation”, to use Aristotelian terminology.

In the Middle Ages these two categories were firmly linked to produce a graded system of poetic varieties, a hierarchy where “species” were rigorously subordinated to *genera*, the latter being regarded as superior units. *Genera* were “divided” into *species*. Characteristically enough, this process of rigid subordination was begun still in the Hellenistic period in the realm of rhetorical theory; Ciceronian disquisition on prose narrative provides a significant evidence of this phenomenon.

Translated by *Maria Gottwald*

U POCZĄTKÓW REFLEKSJI GENOLOGICZNEJ. ANTYK — ŚREDNIOWIECZE STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest dokonanie rekonstrukcji pojęcia „rodzaju” i „gatunku” literackiego w antycznej i średniowiecznej teorii poezji i prozy, na przykładzie wybranych autorów: Platona, Arystotelesa, Horacego, retorów rzymskich (głównie Cicerona), wczesnośredniowiecznych twórców *artes grammaticae* i *artes rhetoricae* (Diomedesa, Fortunatianusa, Priscianusa, Martianusa Capelli) oraz teoretyków dojrzałego średniowiecza (Jana z Garlandii, Mateusza z Vendôme, Godfryda z Vinsauf).

Źródłem trychotomicznej koncepcji rodzajów literackich, przyjętej powszechnie w europejskim myśleniu genologicznym, był pogląd Platona wyłożony w *Rzeczypospolitej*. Platon spostrzegł, że warstwa językowa utworów poetyckich (λῆξις) może układać się w trzy rozmaite struktury: „proste opowiadanie” — stanowiące monologową wypowiedź podmiotu poetyckiego („samego poety” — według sformułowania filozofa), „opowiadanie naśladowcze” — polegające wyłącznie na przytaczaniu wypowiedzi postaci przedstawionych utworu (w ich odmianie dialogowej lub monologicznej), oraz „opowiadanie mieszane” — łączące obie scharakteryzowane wyżej struktury. Funkcja „naśladowania” (μίμησις) miała być związana z drugą z wymienionych struktur oraz częściowo z trzecią. Typologię tę skojarzył Platon z niektórymi, istniejącymi ówczesnie odmianami poetyckimi: „proste opowiadanie” miało być najbliższe dytyrambowi, „opowiadanie naśladowcze” — dramatowi (komedii i tragedii), zaś „opowiadanie mieszane” — eposowi homeryckiemu.

Do poglądów Platona nawiązał Arystoteles, wprowadzając jednak do jego trychotomicznego ujęcia istotne zmiany. Przede wszystkim uznał on naśladowanie za właściwość epistemologiczną całej poezji, a nie, jak Platon, jednej tylko jej odmiany. Zredukował następnie podział platoński do opozycji dwóch tylko „sposobów naśladowania”: dramatycznego i epickiego, nie zacierając przy tym lingwistycznej treści tych pojęć.

W artykule próbuje się następnie dowieść, że Cycerońska klasyfikacja retorycznej *narratio* została nasycona refleksami platońskiej koncepcji rodzaju; wywarła ona w późniejszych wiekach przemożny wpływ na sposób myślenia genologicznego o literackiej prozie narracyjnej.

Genologia wczesnego średniowiecza pozostawała w kręgu oddziaływania koncepcji Platońskiej (w teorii poezji) oraz Cycerońskiej i Hermogenesowskiej (w teorii prozy). W dziejach poetyki istotną, choć niezbyt chlubną rolę odegrał Diomedes (IV w. n. e.), który dokonał swoistego przekształcenia platońskiej trychotomii. Sprawił on, że tradycyjna klasyfikacja poezji utraciła swą treść lingwistyczną, stając się załącznikiem schematycznego, sztywnego podziału sztuki słowa na trzy „grupy utworów”, podzielonych następnie arbitralnie na podgrupy „gatunki” (*genera* i *species*). Diome-

dejski sposób myślenia o rodzaju, gatunku i ich związkach, polegających na ścisłym, hierarchicznym podporządkowaniu, zaciążył nad genologią wielu następnych stuleci. *Artes rhetoricae* natomiast syciły się tradycją retoryki rzymskiej, powtarzając w nieskończoność schematyczne podziały *narratio*.

Spośród teoretyków dojrzałego średniowiecza najwięcej uwagi problematyce genologicznej poświęcił Jan z Garlandii. Niezależnie od tradycji Diomedeskiej, nawiązał on do trychotomicznej koncepcji Platona. Wychodząc od podstawowej opozycji poetyckiej *materii* i *sermo* dokonał podziału poezji i prozy na trzy rodzaje: *genus imitativum*, *genus enarrativum* i *genus mixtum*, rozumiane jako trzy różne typy strukturalnego ukształtowania językowej płaszczyzny utworu.

Jeśli teoria rodzaju obracała się w sferze pojęć związanych ze słowną płaszczyzną utworu poetyckiego („sposobów naśladowania” — według terminologii Arystotelesowskiej), to teoria gatunku nawiązywała, mówiąc najogólniej, do sfery „przedmiotów” i „środków naśladowania”. Począwszy od Platona i Arystotelesa, rozumiano gatunek jako harmonijną całość, której dominantę stanowił „przedmiot” (treść, temat). Dominancie tej były podporządkowane takie elementy, jak metryczna organizacja warstwy słownej, styl itp. Jan z Garlandii akcentował istotną rolę tonacji emocjonalnej utworu jako kryterium gatunkowego. Ważne miejsce w dziejach teorii gatunku przypada Horacemu, który, wychodząc z estetycznej zasady *decorum*, ugruntował w późniejszej świadomości literackiej rozumienie gatunku jako całości, w której pewien typ przedmiotu znajduje stosowny wyraz w odpowiadających mu środkach metrycznych i stylistycznych.

W stosunku do tradycji antycznej w średniowieczu zasadniczej przemianie uległ sposób kojarzenia kategorii „rodzajowej” i „gatunkowej”. W starożytności wiązano je luźno, widząc w nich płaszczyzny krzyżujące się z sobą w pewnym stopniu, ale w gruncie rzeczy autonomiczne. W średniowieczu kategorie te sprzęgły się z sobą niewzruszenie, dając w rezultacie hierarchiczny układ odmian poezji, w którym „gatunki” zostały kategorycznie podporządkowane „rodzajom”.

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