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GENOLOGICAL NOTIONS
IN THE RENAISSANCE THEORY OF POETRY¹

Bernard Weinberg who is the author of a monograph on the poetics of the Italian Renaissance², reconstructed three basic trends in the sixteenth-century ideas on poetry. The Horatian stream springing out of the tradition of the *Epistle to Pisones* was to prove both the purest and the most active in the early decades of the Cinquecento; it is the fusion of Horatian ideas with those of Aristotle that marked the beginning of the subsequent decline of the former. The Platonic stream resorting to major Greek theoretical concepts, was to undergo a process of gradual Christianization starting about the middle of the sixteenth century. Finally, the Aristotelian stream which had reached its peak at the same time, was to become a ground-work of the Renaissance theory of poetic art.

The share of genological problems varies in each of the three respective trends. Theoretical reflections remaining under direct influence of Horatian *Epistle* were not far removed from the traditions of the preceding centuries since practically all medieval theory was under the

¹ The present paper resumes the problems attempted in an earlier work: *The Beginnings of Genological Thinking. Antiquity—Middle Ages*, "Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich", vol. XII, fasc. 1, and is actually meant as its sequence. Following the assumptions formulated in that work, our main task here is to reconstruct the principles underlying the division and classification of poetic varieties in the Renaissance theory of poetry.

² B. Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, vol. I-II, Chicago 1961. On the poetics of the same period also cf. J. E. Spingarn, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, New York 1924; W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki (History of Aesthetics)*, vol. III: *Estetyka nowożytna (Modern Aesthetics)*, Wrocław 1967, pp. 191-226. Our present paper, like B. Weinberg's book, deals exclusively with the Italian Renaissance poetics. Our general remarks on the three intellectual strands in the Cinquecento poetics are largely based on B. Weinberg's statements.



spell of Horace, Cicero, and other Roman rhetoricians. This approach did not encourage further inquiries into the problem of division of poetry or working out distinct generic criteria. There are several reasons to account for this, the most obvious ones being the absence of the problems of genre as well as the inadequate and rather single-minded treatment of the question of species in the *Epistle to Pisones*. The text of the *Epistle* (which was hardly a systematic exposition of the theory of poetry) contains only some rather vague and allusive recommendations on certain literary species, referring to their "object" and appropriate type of verse. These limitations have resulted from some broader assumptions underlying Horatian poetics; its object was to mould some general ideas of verbal art which was regarded as an instrument of moral and aesthetic education. This emphasis on the social function of poetry is very close to rhetorical approach and, indeed, the spiritual kinship of the *Epistle* and the rhetoric explains the fact of a simultaneous assimilation of these two streams of thought by critics and theoreticians in the subsequent centuries. For this reason, Weinberg emphatically declares that "Horace's verse epistle may thus be taken — and in fact was so taken by Renaissance critics — as the epitome of an essentially rhetorical approach to the art of poetry"³.

The Horatian trend, let us say it again, gave preference to some rather general aesthetic and moral questions, e.g., that of poetic appropriateness, that of the aims of poetry, etc. This explains the absence of genological problems in such Renaissance treatises as M. H. Vida's *De arte poetica* (1527), obviously Horatian in inspiration. And if, at times, the Renaissance followers of Horace happened to think of poetic genres and species, they did it in the manner that was very close to medieval approach which was based, as we said before, on Platonic tradition in its Diomedean version. Badius Ascensius who has been acclaimed by W. Tatarkiewicz, as the first Renaissance theoretician, provides an obvious example. In his commentary (1500) to the *Epistle to Pisones* Badius Ascensius writes:

"Poematis genera sunt tria. Aut enim activum est, aut imitativum, quod Graeci δραματικὸν item 'dramaticon' vel μιμητικὸν item 'mimeticon' vocant. Aut enarrativum vel enunciativum quod Graeci ἐξηγητικὸν item 'exegeticon' vel ἀπολογητικὸν 'apologeticon' dicunt. Aut commune vel mixtum, quod Graeci κοινὸν 'coinon' vel μικτὸν appellant. 'Dramaticon' vel activum est in quo personae agunt solae sine ulla poetae interlocutione, ut se habent tragicae vel comicae fabulae, et quaedam bucolicae apud Virgilium, ut 'Tytire tu patulae', 'Dic mihi, Dameta, et quo

³ Weinberg, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 72.

et Moeri pedes'. Dramatici autem poematos genera sunt quattuor: apud Graecos — tragica, comica, satyrica, mimica, apud Romanos — 'praetextata', 'tabernaria', 'atellana', 'planipes'. 'Exegeticon' vel enarrativum est, in quo poeta ipse loquitur sine personae ullius interlocutione. Ut se habent tres libri Georgicae apud Virgilium. Et prima pars quarti. Item carmina Lucretiana. Huius autem species sunt tres: angeltice, historice, didascalice. Angeltice est qua sententiae scribuntur, ut est Theognidis liber. Historice, qua narrationes et genealogiae componunt ut Hesiodi Theogonia. Didascalice est, qua comprehendit philosophia, ut libri Varonis, Empedoclis, Lucretii. Item astrologia ut Arati et Ciceronis. 'Coinon' vel commune est in quo poeta ipse loquitur et personae loquentes introducuntur, ut est scripta Ilias et Odyssea tota Homeri et Aeneis Vergilii. Huius species sunt duae: Prima heroica ut Ilias, Aeneis. Secunda lyrica, ut Archilochi et Horatii. Item nunc quoque elegia ut Ovidii Fasti, de quibus omnibus suo loco latium differemus"⁴.

The passage cited above repeats the ideas of Diomedes (fourth century A. D.) almost word for word and therefore proves the persistence of the medieval tradition in the Horatian stream of the early-Renaissance poetics⁵.

The Platonic stream, on the other hand, was concerned with some of Plato's general observations on poetry⁶. Here belongs the concept of "divine madness" with its characteristic insistence on the anti-intellectual character of poetic inspiration, and denying that poetry is an art. Another current idea was a defence of the moral and educational value of poetry whose larger portion was (as we know) condemned in the *Republic* and banished from Plato's ideal state. The Renaissance approach to this problem was sharply opposed to the Platonic solution: the cause of poetry was vindicated and its vast possibilities of exercising moral influence upon the audience were reasserted.

Still another much discussed question was that of poetic imitation, Plato's notion of *μίμησις*, as expounded in the *Republic*, being the chief

⁴ Jodocus Badius Ascensius, *In artem poeticam Horatianam familiaris interpretatio*, [in:] Quintus Horatius Flaccus, *De arte poetica, Sermones, Epistolae*, Paris 1511, CXII. The philological checking of Latin and Greek citations adduced in this paper was kindly undertaken by Docent Tadeusz Bieńkowski, Ph.D., to whom are due my sincere thanks.

⁵ Pertinent fragments of Diomedes' text were quoted in our paper on the beginnings of genological thinking (see n. 1 above), pp. 15-16; Badius Ascensius admits (also in CXII) that he drew on Diomedean works many times.

⁶ Cf. Weinberg, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 250-251; a penetrating discussion of the Platonic theory of poetry and its main trends can be found in P. Vicaire, *Platon—critique littéraire*, Paris 1960.

reference. Plato's views there, it is wellknown, are essentially self-contradictory, or, to be more precise, they represent two different approaches to *μίμησις*, one of them identifying imitation with creative verbal representation of the characters' pronouncements, the other coming near the doctrine of passive reproduction of the model⁷.

The notion of *μίμησις* in the first approach was directly related to the problem of poetic genres: according to Platonic tradition, imitation was to be restricted to dramatic forms and also, in part, to epic (mixed ones); imitation then served the purpose of a criterion of division into genres. This approach, like in Plato, led to an ethical grading of poetic varieties. A representative example of this way of dealing with the problem is supplied in F. Patrizi's *De institutione reipublicae* (1494).

A genuine version of Aristotle's *Poetics* was discovered at the close of the fifteenth century⁸, and was immediately opposed to the vitiated Averroist version which had been current in the Middle Ages. In 1498 appeared Valla's edition of *Poetics* to be followed, in 1508, by Aldus' critical edition and by Pazzi's Latin translation in 1536. A real impact of Aristotelian ideas on poetic theory is, however, seen only toward the middle of the century. This was the beginning of a long dominance of the great Peripatetic.

The influence of the Aristotelian ideas was apparent, first and foremost, in numerous commentaries to his *Poetics*, in its paraphrases, and also in independent theoretical systems of the 'fifties'. (The division into commentaries and paraphrases, on the one hand, and independent treatises, on the other, is precarious and rather formal since Robortello's commentary deserves to be placed on a par with most famous treatises, and certainly surpasses many of them by the profundity of its observations as well as its eminent erudition).

In the Aristotelian current, genological problems were considered in all their aspects and copiously discussed, we will therefore concentrate upon that field of the Renaissance theory. Typical for this period is the approach to the questions of poetic genres and species as exemplified in the works of Francesco Robortello (*In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 1548), Antonio Sebastiano Minturno (*De poeta*, 1559), Julius Caesar Scaliger (*Poetici libri septem*, 1561), and J. Antonio Viperano (*De poetica libri tres*, 1579).

Despite the variety of all individual solutions provided by each of these authors, there are some traits which they share and which, we

⁷ This problem was discussed more extensively in the paper on the beginnings of genological thinking, where the bibliography of the subject is also appended.

⁸ Weinberg, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 349 ff.

would say, appear to be characteristic for the trend they represent in poetic theory. The features they have in common are the following: (1) the acceptance of the assumption (which is Aristotelian in inspiration) that mimetic process is universal in poetry, mimesis being understood as an integral property of all works of poetic art; (2) the genological classification is based on the Aristotelian distinction of the "objects", "means", and "manners of imitation"; (3) a deference, more or less conscious, to Platonic tradition and a simultaneous combination of the elements of Plato's theory with those of Aristotle's, the contamination varying slightly with each of the individual writers; (4) in the theory of genres, a subservience to Greek and Roman traditions (Plato—Aristotle—Horace), enriched by some medieval additions.

In spite of these essential points of coincidence there are also some intrinsic differences in the views held by the individual authors, especially on the question of genological classification, it therefore seems advisable to discuss each writer separately. Our survey will accordingly begin with the problems of the theory of poetic genres.

The analysis of the Aristotelian assumptions is the starting point of Francesco Robortello: "*Modus imitandi qui constituit differentiam inter poemata triplex est*"⁹. Robortello's further exposition is a glaring instance of combining Aristotelian and Platonic elements. For he presents Aristotle's basic division into epic and drama, and he develops it in the Platonic manner — Aristotelian dichotomy is thus interpreted in terms of Platonic trichotomy.

Robortello names three "manners of imitation" and qualifies them as belonging to two fundamental categories: "*Priores illi duo modi ad epopoeiam in primis, et alias aliquod species poematum pertinent; his postremus ad comoediam et tragoediam fortasse etiam ad aliquod aliud poematis genus*"¹⁰.

The first two "manners" which we have described as epic are further qualified in the following way: "*Primus modus est, cum poeta inducit unius personam narrantis et explicantis alicui res actas, quasi agantur, tunc enim necesse est, ut ille diversorum suscipiat personas, et exacte illorum referat sermonem, et collocationem; atque, uti patet, in primo hoc modo inest una tantum persona subinde se mutans in aliam*"¹¹. In this way Robortello here refers to Platonic monologue structure ἀπλὴ διήγησις understood as "epic monologue", i. e., he follows the interpretation suggested by that fragment of the *Republic* where

⁹ *Francisci Robortelli Utinensis In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, Florentiae 1548, p. 25.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

Plato makes an attempt to illustrate the birth of a "simple tale" on the example of *Iliad* ¹². (Robortello ignores the interpretation tending towards "lyrical monologue".) While discussing this "manner of imitation" the Italian theoretician has introduced a narrator ("unius personam narrantis et explicantis") who relates the events and simultaneously (and herein Robortello deviates from Plato's "simple tale"), whenever need be, he is transformed into the acting *personae* and speaks in their character. Robortello therefore departs from the monologue structure in its pure form for the sake of that which makes concessions in favour of the mixed structure.

"Alter modus est, cum ipse poeta intermiscet paucula quaedam ex sua persona; ut pote, 'Sic ait Aeneas', 'Talia verba refert', 'Sic inquit'. In hoc secundo modo plures insunt personae, et singulae suas, cum decore et venustate exprimunt partes" ¹³. We can recognize here the model of the Platonic mixed structure, displaying, however, a strong admixture of dramatic elements. The underlying tendency is to limit the part of the poetic subject in favour of the acting characters.

The difference between the modes is not merely quantitative. According to Robortello, the difference consists primarily in the structure of the poetic subject: in the first mode the author introduces a *persona* who relates and explains the action — a narrator, we would say, created by the poet as an entity belonging to the represented world and not to be identified with the poet, while in the second mode the narrator's function has become identical with that of the poet; according to Robortello the poet himself is the narrator.

Though we have stressed the impact of Platonic tradition on this division, we cannot overlook the importance of the Aristotelian background. For Robortello resorted to Plato only to elaborate a passage of *Poetics* which is not clear enough. The passage reads: "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 our 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 themselves" ¹⁴. The identification of Robortello's indebtedness

¹² Plato, *Republic*, 393 d — 394 a; on the same subject cf.: Michałowska, *The Beginnings of Genological Thinking*.

¹³ Robortello, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 3. 1448 a 2-3: "καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς, καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ μίμνηται ἔστιν ὅτε μὲν ἀπαγγέλλοντα, ἢ ἕτερόν τι γιγνόμενον, ὥσπερ Ὁμήρος ποιεῖ, ἢ ὡς τὸν αὐτὸν καὶ μὴ μεταβάλλοντα, ἢ πάντας ὡς πράττοντας καὶ ἐνεργοῦντας τοὺς μιμουμένους".

The English quotations in the text are from Aristotle, *The Poetics*..., by W. Hamilton Fyfe in: Aristotle, *"The Poetics"*, Longinus, *"On the Sublime"*,

hardly affects the fact that his standpoint presents a bold and relatively original theoretical statement; it is probably the earliest attempt in the Renaissance poetics to provide a full, penetrating account of the structure and function of the epic subject.

The third "manner of imitation", the one corresponding to the category of drama, has resulted from a direct reference to Platonic dialogue structure: "Tertius modus est, cum poeta prorsus nihil ex sua persona profert, sed exprimit, atque imitatur ipsas personas, non secus, ac si tunc agerent et loquerentur. Hoc vero observant comici et tragici poetae, qui ipsas statim personas inducunt loquentes; ipsi autem nihil proferunt ex se" ¹⁵.

The presence of Platonic intellectual heritage in the work of the most outstanding Renaissance Aristotelian scholar, notably in the commentary to *Poetics*, is a remarkable phenomenon. This alliance of the two traditions seems to be characteristic of the Renaissance poetics. Moreover, it appears to have been a conscious alliance, indeed an intended one. An indubitable proof is furnished in Robortello's statement: "Haec vero omnia desumpsit Aristoteles ex Platone, nam ille quoque copiose de his imitandi modis poeticis loquitur. Non est autem locus hic 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" ¹⁶.

The starting point of Antonio Minturno was also Aristotelian. He classified poetry according to three familiar criteria of the "object", "means" and "manners of imitation". However he differs from Aristotle in this that he regarded not only the "manners" but also the "means" as generic criteria. In the text of *De poeta* each of these classification concepts is discussed separately and this seems to have escaped B. Weinberg's attention ¹⁷.

The division of poetry according to the "means of imitation" runs as follows: "Itaque omnis quidem poesis, ut in principio dictum est, in tres summam dividitur partes. Quarum unam epici vendicant, eaque poemata omnia continentur, quibus neque cantu neque saltatione opus sit. Aliam scenici qua et tragoediam et comoediam et satyram com-

Demetrius, "On Style", London 1953. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.

¹⁵ Robortello, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁶ *Ibidem.*

¹⁷ Weinberg (*op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 741 - 742) refers only to the second division and quotes the appropriate fragment of Minturno's text.

plectimur, caeteraque eiusmodi, quae spectanda in theatrum proferuntur. Tertiam melici, quae sine vocum sonorumque concentu constare non potest"¹⁸. Poetry was then divided into three "parts": epic, drama (stage poetry) and lyric (melic poetry). According to Minturno, epic uses exclusively words, drama requires some stage means (gestures, voice, mimicry) in addition to words, and melic poetry depends on voice and musical sounds. Thus the presence of extra-verbal elements became the criterion of classification.

On the other hand, the division according to the "manners of imitation" was presented within the framework of the theory of *narratio*. The *modi narrandi* which have been distinguished here, indicate a direct influence of traditional Platonic trichotomy. The trichotomy was "superimposed" on the division into "parts", referred to above: "Ac si modum narrandi consideremus, triplicem ponemus narrationem. Una est simplex [...] qua dithyrambici, lyricique utuntur, cum ipse poeta sic loquitur, ut personam cuiusquam non sumat. Altera est quaedam imitatio, quae et tragicorum et comicorum est. Cum personam poeta ponit suam, induit vero alienam. Tertia est utroque modo coniuncta. In qua heroici versantur, cum partim per se ipsi, partim per eosdem illos quidem, quos loquentes inducunt, exponunt"¹⁹.

Thus the division of poetry based on the typology of linguistic structures is shown to coincide with the "parts" which had been isolated earlier. The monologue structure is declared to be characteristic of "melic poetry", the dialogue — of drama, and the mixed one — of epic.

Genological problems have been assigned much room in the work of Julius Caesar Scaliger. In Book One, at least chapters 3-57, and in Book Two, chapters 96-127, deal with the question of poetic genres (*modi*) and species (*genera*). Scaliger's standpoint, as projected against the background of genological tradition, turns out to be largely eclectic and not very much independent; it represents a mixture of the Aristotelian, Platonic and medieval, i. e., Diomedean elements²⁰.

¹⁸ Antonii Sebastiani Minturni *De Poeta libri sex*, Venetiis 1559, p. 417.

¹⁹ Minturno, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

²⁰ Weinberg (*op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 743-750) offers a very scanty account of genological questions in Scaliger's work. Cf. I. Behrens, *Die Lehre von der Einteilung der Dichtkunst, vornehmlich vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert*, Halle/Saale 1940, pp. 98-90. Beihefte zur "Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie", Heft 92. In Polish publications on the subject, the paper by E. Sarnowska, *Główne problemy "Poetyki" Juliusza Cezara Skalicera (Principal Problems of Julius Caesar Scaliger's "Poetics")*, [in:] *Studia estetyczne (Aesthetic Studies)*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1966, discusses (pp. 156-161) the problems which are of interest to us. The paper does not, however, contain more profound observations besides being not free from substantial errors.

Scaliger follows Aristotle in his acceptance of the three fundamental criteria of division of poetry. "Differunt autem poemata modis tribus. Hi sunt: quae imitatur, quibus imitatur et quomodo imitatur"²¹. The three bases of classification — *res*, *versus*, and *modus* — cross with one another to produce various solutions. The network of the possible poetic cross-breeds is described by means of the following examples: "Imitatur Medeam eandem Ovidius in *Metamorphosi*, quam Seneca in tragoedia. Res igitur eadem, at versus quibus imitantur, diversi: modus quo imitantur, diversus. [...] Iidem versus in *Aeneide* et in *Tityro*: res et modus, alii. Iidem modus in *Tityro* et in comoediis, res et versus non iidem"²².

In this network, it is the *modus* that constitutes a superior category. The whole subsequent chapter headed *Poematum per modos divisio et eorum ordo*, is devoted to this criterion of classification. A Platonic tri-chotomy of linguistic structures is here seen to step into the Aristotelian scheme — this is the background of Scaliger's concept of the three genres of poetry. The *modi* (to use Scaliger's term) are as follows: "Alius in narratione simplici consistit. Quale est Lucretii poema. [...] Alius est in colloquutionibus positus. Cuiusmodi in comoediis. A Graecis διαλογητικὸν prima et summa ratione. [...] Mixtum autem est in quo et narrat poeta et introducit collocutiones. Graeci μικτὸν recte, κοινόν minus recte. Compositum enim e partibus est, at nemo dicat, compositum esse partibus commune. Ipsae namque partes totum sunt"²³.

This is fundamentally a reflection of the Platonic theory of linguistic structures with its general assumption that poetry can be realized through a "simple tale" (a monologue of the poetic subject), dramatic imitation (a dialogue or sometimes a monologue of the represented *personae*) or in an intermediate manner. Obviously the Platonic theory has been somewhat modified and filtered through later genological reflections. What strikes us here is that Scaliger attacks the Platonic concept of μίμησις recommending (after Aristotle) that imitation should be separated from the dialogue form of pronouncement: "Imitativum hoc item genus non sunt veriti quidam nominare, tametsi iidem universae poeseos finem agnoverint, imitationem"²⁴.

In accordance with Aristotelian tradition and with his own theoretical system, Scaliger attributes the mimetic function to all poetry²⁵. In this

²¹ *Julii Caesaris Scaligeri Poetices libri septem*, Lyon 1561, p. 6.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ That idea underlies Scaliger's concept of poetry. The statements pertaining to the problem repeatedly occur in the text, e. g., on p. 1 of the edition referred to above.

direction accordingly tends his notion of the poetic genre — herein consists Scaliger's concession to Aristotle.

On the other hand, the subordination of poetic species (*genera*) to poetic genres (*modi*), the latter being regarded as a superior category, is a clear evidence of the early-medieval approach of Diomedean provenance. Thus the *modus* based on *narratio simplex* is to be ascribed to philosophical and didactic poetry. *Modus in collocutionibus positus* contains such *genera* as comedy, tragedy and others which resemble them. *Modus mixtus* is associated with epic poetry. Other species were not assigned as definite place in the system. It might, however, be inferred from some further passages, e. g., from those devoted to the question of grading the species according to the degree of "nobility", that epic poetry belongs to the same *modus* as hymns, peans, odes, melic varieties and *scolia*, i. e., those species which were later (and also before Scaliger's time) described as lyrical poetry²⁶.

Whether Scaliger realized it or not, his classification owes a great deal to Diomedean stream of genological thinking — it is enough to recall Diomedes' definition of the genres termed *activum*, *enarrativum* and *mixtum*²⁷. The presence of these traditions in Scaliger's work provides a sufficient evidence to corroborate our earlier statement on the eclecticism of *Poetices libri VII*.

J. A. Viperan's standpoint needs to be included in our survey not because it was original or outstanding in any way, but precisely for the opposite reason: the author's mediocrity and the absence of independent ideas in his views will enable us easily to identify in his system those elements which were typically the produce of the Renaissance theory and were current in the literary consciousness of that period. For Viperan's theoretical ideas reflect some fundamental characteristics of the Renaissance approach to the question of poetic genres and species. His poetics (1579) is a relatively late work — it appeared almost twenty years after Scaliger's and Minturno's. We are, therefore, justified in recognizing in Viperan's views a later stage of development of the Renaissance genological theory; evidently, it is the stage wherein the process of ossification of certain tendencies became quite apparent.

Viperan's starting point (and so it was with the authors we have been surveying) was furnished by the Aristotelian concept of *μίμησις* and the idea of classification of poetry according the "object", "means", and "manners" of imitation. Again, a subsequent division of *modi fingendi*²⁸

²⁶ Scaliger, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

²⁷ Diomedes, *De arte grammatica*, Coloniae 1533, p. 117 v.

²⁸ Viperano uses the term *modus fingendi* instead of *modus imitandi*.

provides a familiar instance of grafting Platonic trichotomy on Aristotelian ground — a common practice with Renaissance critics and theoreticians: "Quod vero ad modum fingendi pertinet, vel poetae solam personam sustinet, sicut lirica poesis et dithyrambica saepe, vel ab usque poetae persona aliorum inducit quemadmodum tragoedia et comoedia, vel cum poetae aliorum personas admittit, non secus atque epopoeia semper, et interdum illae, quae cum carmine usurpant rhythmus et harmoniam. Quibus rebus quidam adducti poesim in tria genera secuerunt, videlicet ἐξηγηματικὸν quod narrativum dicunt, δραματικὸν quod activum vocant ab agentibus personis et a colloquentibus διαλογητικὸν, μικτὸν quod ex utroque est mixtum"²⁹.

Viperan's views seem to be the closest to the tradition initiated by A. Minturno, for it is the author of *De poeta* who compounded the triad out of the lyric, epic and drama.

The problems of the Renaissance theory of poetic species can as a rule be reduced to selecting some general criteria of the species and to determining the relationship of the category of *genus* to that of *modus*. These questions were tackled either in conjunction with those of the genre or else they were just inserted into the text of analyses of particular poetic varieties.

There undoubtedly exist some differences in the views on species, held by various authors, the differences resulting from the authors' individual approaches to many specific problems; yet, on the whole, the Renaissance views on species seem to possess a dominant feature common to all of them. The basic attitude invariably underlying their views is a deference to theoretical traditions of Greece and Rome, and, to a lesser extent, to medieval tradition as well. For the Renaissance views on species plainly revolve in the orbit of Aristotelian and Horatian notions which are essentially characterized by a harmonious combination of the "object" and "means of imitation".

The fundamental novelty of the Renaissance approach is connected with the way of understanding of the "object of imitation". The *persona* or the literary hero becomes a centre of interest since it assumes the rôle of a basic typological criterion. The resulting anthropomorphism of the theory of *species* seems to be an outcome, on the one hand, of the theory of *modi* in its medieval version, and, on the other, of the characteristically Renaissance interest in man — the contemporary philosophical anthropology.

Our point will be exemplified on the views of A. Minturno and

²⁹ Joanni Antonii Viperani *De poetica libri tres*, Antverpiae 1579, p. 70.

J. C. Scaliger. We are chiefly interested in the problems of the "object of imitation" since the question of the "means" (metric and stylistic) does not really involve any serious misgivings as far as our present interests and needs are concerned. It is enough to say in general that the prevalent opinion was that metre should be appropriate to, and consistent with, the existing tradition which provided more or less vigorous rules applying to particular literary species. In the case of some poetic varieties, e. g., elegy, the type of metric organization of the verbal stratum constituted one of the fundamental specific criteria³⁰.

Minturno's division of poetry into species has the "object of imitation" or "matter" as its starting point. And in the "matter" itself, the hero, i. e., the literary character classified as "high", "mediocre" or "low", is a basic constituent: "Verum enim [...] triplex est rerum materia, cum aliae sint permagnae, tenues aliae, aliae mediocres [...]. Hominum preterea triplicem varietatem habemus. Inquis alii principem locum, alii medium, alii postremum atque infimum tenent. In singulis autem generibus hac positione utendum est, ut inter summos illos viros, inter eos, qui in quadam mediocritate vivendi versantur, inter eos, qui in fortunae tenuitatem ceciderunt, partim probos, partim improbos dicamus"³¹.

B. Weinberg was right to point out that at the root of these views there was the Aristotelian concept of the ethical classification of heroes into "better than the average", "worse", and "similar to the original"³².

The explanation does not, however, seem sufficiently to account for the sources of Minturno's approach. Aristotle's ethical division was not merely accepted but it came to be modified by the later aesthetics: it was filtered through Ciceronian theory of stylistic *modi* and was subsequently revived in mature Middle Ages on the basis of the sociological criteria. The characters described as "high", "middle", and "low" reflected first and foremost the social division of the people into the estates³³. This way of thinking of literary characters had found numerous continuators among the Renaissance theoreticians. The approach combining the aspects

³⁰ Cf. e.g. Scaliger, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

³¹ Minturno, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

³² Weinberg, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 742.

³³ A classical presentation of that division is contained in the work of John of Garland, *Poetria [...] de arte prosaica, metrica et rithmica* (ed. G. Mari, Romanische Forschungen, vol. 13: 1901, p. 920). On the theory of stylistic *modi* in Middle Ages also cf. E. Faral, *Les Arts poétiques du XII^e et du XIII^e siècle*, Paris 1923, pp. 86-89; E. de Bruyne, *Etudes d'esthétique médiévale*, vol. II, Brugge 1946, pp. 41-46; the problem of division of styles in European Medieval Literature is discussed by E. Auerbach, *Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur*, Bern 1946 (a Polish translation by Z. Żabicki, *Mimesis. Rzeczywistość przedstawiona w literaturze Zachodu*, vol. I, Warszawa 1968).

of the ethical evaluation of characters with the criteria of sociological classification seems to have appealed to Minturno. From our point of view, the most essential thing is that the division of the poetic matter, in which a foremost rank was assigned to a literary hero, became a foundation-stone of the division of poetry into species.

A triadic system of grading as applied to represented characters, makes it possible for Minturno to isolate, within each poetic genre, three varieties (*species*) of different gravity: "Quam ob rem cum triplex id omnino sit, quod sub imitationem cadit, triplex quoque ratio sit imitandi necesse est. Tragica cum praestans personarum genus; comica, qua deterius exprimitur. Tertia, qua tanquam his interiecta, quales sunt hisce temporibus homines, effinguntur, nondum nomen invenit, sed per eos, qui in illa claruerunt, plane cognosci potest"³⁴.

Thus, according to Minturno, the "stage" (or dramatic) genre would be divided into tragedy, comedy, and Satyr drama³⁵. A similar stratification applies to epic: "Neque enim non epici quique nudos versus conscribunt, in hac variete versantur. Quippe Virgilius in rebus heroicis tragicam maiestatem, in pastorum moribus effingendis, comicam quodam modo tenuitatem adhibuit"³⁶.

Having presented the general scheme of classification of poetry Minturno offers a searching and ample analysis of such species as epic, tragedy, comedy, certain lyrical forms, satire, etc. In his analysis he carefully considers their constituent elements which he had distinguished after Aristotle's famous model. In *De poeta* he calls them: *fabula*, *mores*, *verba*, *sententia*, *apparatus*, *cantus* (the last two elements being ascribed to tragedy alone).

Generally speaking, Minturno's approach is marked by a resolute tendency to establish a coherent system based on precisely stated criteria. He was trying to prove that literary species are subordinated to genres. In his system, the genre was conceived as a superior category comprising a definite number of poetic varieties termed *genera*. The concept of *modus* referred to both "manners" and "means of imitation" while that of *genus* was reserved chiefly for the "object" i.e., the poetic "matter".

J. C. Scaliger's approach was slightly different. In his system it was the last of the three Aristotelian principles of division of poetry, i.e., the "manner of imitation" that served as a groundwork for erecting a trichotomous concept of literary genre while the remaining two members of the Aristotelian triad were applied as criteria of literary species.

³⁴ Minturno, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 108.

Scaliger's analyses of such species as epic, tragedy, comedy, satire, mime, elegy, etc., furnish a convincing proof that the criterion of "content" or the *res* of the represented world, came to the forefront of the author's genological consciousness. By way of illustration let us quote a passage from the chapter *Tragoedia, comoedia, mimus*, devoted to a comparison of several species: "Tragoedia, quanquam huic epicae similis est, eo tamen differt, quod raro admittit personas viliores: cuiusmodi sunt nuncii, mercatores, nautae et eiusmodi. Contra cum in comoedia: nunquam reges nisi in paucis [...]. Satyrarum personae ludicae, bibaces, iocosae, hilares, dicaces. Mimi, fullones, calcearii, lanii, sartores, salsamentarii, olitores [...]. Res tragicae grandes, atroces, iussa regum, caedes, desperationes, suspendia, exilia, orbitates, parricidia, incestus, incendia, pugnae, occaecationes, fletus, ululatus, conquestiones, funera, epitaphia, epicedia. In comoedia lusus, commessiones, nuptiae, repotia, servorum astus, ebrietates, senes decepti, emuncti argento. Satyrarum materia: saltationes, convivia, patationes, dicacitates. Mimorum: mercaturae, plebeiae, ignobiles, doli, astus rustici, productiones, lenocinia, ioci, lusus, imposturae"³⁷.

Literary hero, as we have observed before, plays an important part in Scaliger's description of content. It is the hero that determines the general tone and atmosphere of the poem, the remaining elements being selected with the object of properly matching the hero. The relative importance of the hero, the kind of actions he undertakes, the way he is being presented by the author — all these are brought to the centre of attention and regarded as the attributes which directly determine the species of the poem³⁸. It might be added, too, that these properties are kept within the bounds of strict rules established by tradition. In fact all that is being done here is to elaborate or to describe more accurately and in greater detail, the "codes" of individual species, which had been developed in antiquity and persistently survived until modern times.

The anthropological approach is also at the bottom of the peculiar hierarchy of literary species which have been graded according to the degree of "nobility": "Ac nobilissimi quidem hymni et paeanes, secundo loco mele et odae et scolia, quae in virorum fortium laudibus versabantur, tertio loco epica; in quibus et heroes sunt et alii minutiores. Quem ordinem consequentur etiam tragoedia simul cum comoedia. Comoedia tamen seorsum quartam sedem obtinebit. Inde satyrae, post exodia, lusus, hymenaei, elegia, monodia, cantationes, epigrammata"³⁹.

³⁷ Scaliger, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

³⁸ Much attention is devoted to the problem of the literary hero in: Scaliger, *op. cit.*, book III.

³⁹ Scaliger, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

The materials outlined here will, it is believed, suffice to justify the following generalizations:

(1) The Renaissance theory of literary genres and species was being developed in close touch with the intellectual tradition of antiquity. The works of Plato, Aristotle, and Horace provided the fundamentals of genological concepts. The share of the Renaissance critics and theoreticians consisted chiefly in elaborating and developing the ideas of their great predecessors as well as making these ideas operative in the general system of the Renaissance literary aesthetics.

(2) In the theory of literary genres, the dominant view was that of the poetic *modi* being determined by their linguistic and structural properties. Platonic typology was as a rule combined with Aristotelian varieties of the "manners of imitation".

(3) The theory of literary species rested upon the combination of the criteria of the "object" and those of the "means of imitation", the latter being understood primarily as the type of factors of versification. In this combination the most conspicuous position was held by the "object", and the structure of the "object" itself was dominated by literary character.

(4) A close integration was achieved of the linguistic categories of literary genre with some definite types of poetry (e. g., a dialogue structure was attributed to drama, and the monologue to lyric poetry, as in Minturno's work, while a mixed structure was linked to epic, as in Robortello's); the types of poetry were further subdivided into varieties and consequently a rather neat scheme of division of poetry into *modi* and *genera* was effected. In this field, a progressing schematization of the mutual relationships of the "genre" and the "species" was a continuation of the process we have witnessed before in medieval theory.

Translated by Maria Gottwald

KONCEPCJE GENOLOGICZNE W RENESANSOWEJ TEORII POEZJI

STRESZCZENIE

Udział problematyki genologicznej we włoskiej renesansowej teorii poezji był niejednakowy. W nurcie horacjańskim i platońskim zagadnienia te leżały w zasadzie poza centrum zainteresowań; jeśli je poruszano, to raczej ubocznie, nie wykraczając przy tym poza tradycję średniowieczną, głównie diomedejską.

W arystotelesowskim nurcie poetyki problematyce rodzaju i gatunku literackiego poświęcano natomiast bardzo wiele uwagi. Kwestie te zostały rozpatrzone w artykule na przykładzie Robortella (*In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica expli-*

cationes, 1548), A. S. Minturna (*De poeta*, 1559), J. C. Scaligera (*Poetices libri septem*, 1561) oraz J. A. Viperana (*De poetica libri tres*, 1579).

Mimo różnorodności indywidualnych rozwiązań w postawie tych autorów dają się spostrzec pewne wspólne rysy, charakterystyczne, jak się wydaje, dla całego reprezentowanego przez nich nurtu teorii poezji. Wspólnota ta wynikała przede wszystkim z przyjęcia arystotelesowskiego założenia o powszechności procesu mimetycznego w poezji. „Naśladowanie”, w tym ujęciu, było rozumiane jako integralna właściwość epistemologiczna dzieł sztuki poetyckiej. Klasyfikację genologiczną opierano następnie na przeprowadzonym przez Arystotelesa rozróżnieniu „przedmiotów”, „środków” i „sposobów” naśladowania.

Podstawową właściwością, wybijającą się na plan pierwszy, było wiązanie — w dziedzinie teorii rodzaju — myśli arystotelesowskiej z platońską tradycją. W zasadzie przyjmowano dychotomiczny podział Arystotelesa, równocześnie jednak „nakładano” nań trychotomicznie rozumiane struktury λέξις, wprowadzone do teorii poezji przez Platona. W wypadku niektórych teoretyków (np. Robortella) dawało to asumpt do formułowania wielu nowych spostrzeżeń. W ten sposób właśnie Robortello doszedł do nader interesujących wniosków związanych ze strukturą i funkcją podmiotu epickiego w dziele.

A. Minturno, dzieląc z jednej strony poezję według „środków naśladowania” na epikę, poezję sceniczną i melikę, z drugiej zaś strony wykorzystując platońską trychotomię, zaproponował podział na trzy rodzaje: dramat, epikę i lirykę, funkcjonujący w świadomości literackiej do czasów najnowszych.

Najmniej interesująco zarysował się na tym tle, uważany powszechnie za głównego teoretyka renesansowego, J. C. Scaliger. W swej teorii rodzaju dokonał on po prostu mało płodnej i niezbyt konsekwentnej kontaminacji myśli platońskiej, arystotelesowskiej i diomedejskiej. Nowych wątków nie wprowadził także A. Viperano.

Scaliger zabłysnął natomiast w dziedzinie teorii gatunku. Wyrażając poglądy typowe dla wielu renesansowych arystotelików, a mające związek z odległą tradycją myślenia o trzech „modusach” stylistycznych, dokonał swoistej „antropologizacji” gatunku. Jeśli główną podstawą podziału poezji na gatunki była od dawna sfera „przedmiotów naśladowania”, to Scaliger dokonał selekcji elementów planu przedstawionego dzieła, wysuwając zdecydowanie na pierwsze miejsce postać bohatera. Ciężar gatunkowy występujących w utworze postaci, rodzaj podejmowanych przez nie działań, sposób ich ujęcia przez poetę — wszystko to znalazło się w centrum uwagi teoretyka, jako elementy decydujące, jego zdaniem, o gatunkowości utworu.

W zakresie stosunków wiążących kategorie rodzajowe z gatunkowymi teoretycy renesansowi dokonali dalszego kroku zmierzającego do schematycznego ujęcia „dramatycznej” genologicznej. Zespólnono ściśle językowe *modi* z pewnymi istniejącymi odmiannymi poezji (*genera*), np. strukturę monologową („proste opowiadanie”) z gatunkami liryki, dialogową — z komedią lub tragedią, mieszaną — z wszelkimi typami epiki, w wyniku czego zarysował się dość zwarty i formalistyczny plan podziału poezji. W tej dziedzinie schematyzacja wzajemnych związków „rodzaju” i „gatunku” stanowiła kontynuację procesu, który można prześledzić w średniowieczu, a nawet jeszcze wcześniej: w epoce hellenistycznej.

Teresa Michałowska