

C. Cibber, G. Etherege i W. Wycherly. N. P. Miedwiediewa w analizie dramatu O'Neila prowadzi do wniosku o epickim charakterze *Dziwnego Interludium*, w którym dramatyzm jako fenomen estetyczny i element poetyckości ustąpił formom narracyjno-epickim, jako skutek określonych intencji ideowych dramaturga. N. S. Trawuszkina przedstawia analizę genealogiczną trzech utworów: pieśni H. Heinego *Ślasy tkacze* oraz dwóch sztuk — *Thaczy* G. Hauptmanna i *Die Maschinenstürmer* E. Tollera, wskazując na ich wielogatunkową postać, co potwierdza — nienowocześnie — spostrzeżenie — że gatunek nie stanowi niezależnej struktury, ale aktywnie uczestniczy w krystalizacji innych gatunków. W. M. Pawerman rozważa ideowe i estetyczne przyczyny, z powodu których dokumentalny dziennik Anny Frank stał się dramaturgicznym materiałem dla teatralnej adaptacji, która odniosła duży sukces na scenach wielu krajów.

Omawiany tom kończy rozprawa N. L. Libermana zatytułowana *Współczesne literaturoznawstwo obce o historii problematyki genealogicznej*, w której autor relacjonuje dwie — według niego najbardziej znaczące w ciągu ostatnich lat — książki poświęcone teorii i historii gatunków literackich, a mianowicie trzeci tom *Wstępu do nauki o literaturze* (Warszawa 1965) Stefani Skwarczyńskiej, oraz pracę P. Hernadiego *Beyond Genre. New Directions in Literary Classification* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London 1972).

Na zakończenie powinienem podzielić się jedną refleksją: otóż ta kilkudziesięciostrońcowa książka z całą pewnością zasługuje na wnikliwą i szczegółową lekturę (także polemiczną). Recenzja ta, z konieczności skrócona i nader syntetyczna (ale jak na kilku stronach omówić dwanaście rozpraw podejmujących tak różnorodną tematykę?), nie oddaje wszystkich walorów poznawczych i badawczych książki.

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Wiesław Krajka, ANGIELSKA BAŚŃ LITERACKA EPOKI WIKTORIAŃSKIEJ, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa-Łódź 1981, ss. 158.

W. Krajka's study is a thorough and systematic description of all genre variants

of the fairy-story co-existing in the Victorian epoch. The book is particularly interesting since the fairy-story does not usually receive much critical attention. As the author suggests, the Victorian period has been chosen for the detailed observation of the genre because it is the epoch of the folk fairy-tale metamorphosis into a literary fairy-story. For the adequate description of this change the author rightly chooses the dynamic, historical understanding of the genealogical phenomena. A substantial part of the Introduction, which formulates the aims of the book and explains the methodological principles, is devoted to the argumentation for the evolutionary concept of the genre. The whole book, distinguished by lucid composition, is divided into two parts. The first, composed of two chapters, deals with the folk tradition in the Victorian fairy-story. The author distinguishes three main currents: the European Märchen, the tales of the stupid ogre, and the fairy-tale reflecting the beliefs of the English people. The poetics of each of the distinguished types of the genre is discussed in considerable detail: the author not only describes in the terms of V. Propp the personages, events and plot sequences characteristic of the fairy-tale invariant, but also accounts for several other conventions in the sphere of setting and narration. The presence of this triple folk tradition is carefully traced in the Victorian fairy-stories.

The second part, devoted to the novel elements of the genre, consists of three chapters. The first describes the attempts to construct a new fictional world of fairy fantasy. The author discusses the modification of single elements of the convention, the changes of the whole groups of motifs, and finally, the creation of the entire fantastic worlds (dissimilar to that of the traditional fairy-tale) in the fantasy of adventure and in the dream fantasy.

The second chapter is devoted to the didactic tendencies altering the traditional fairy-tale. The author considers the blending of the fairy-tale conventions with those of parable (the genre variant of the fairy-story parable with a moral) and those of allegory (the fairy-story allegorical parable). The above genre variants are discerned within the didactic fairy-story for adults and for children. Although the author states that the distinguish-



hing of the latter types of thy fairy-story is based on the differentiation between the types of addressee, he does not provide any analytical support of this statement.

W. Krajka's discussion of allegory also seems to want precision in some instances. Not all the elements he mentions as allegorical are sufficiently well established in the cultural codes to deserve this name (cf. p. 106). Sometimes generalization of meanings, especially when abstract categories appear in binary oppositions, is identified with allegory without adequate justification. It seems that particular signs may be endowed with abstract meanings due to construction which in such cases acquires para-allegorical functions.

The third chapter concentrates on non-didactic modifications of the Victorian fairy-story. The author distinguishes romantic, metaphysical, and humorous variants of the considered genre. The romantic fairy-story exhibits a tendency towards glorification of feeling and suffering, which is typical of the Romantic period. Krajka's opting for glorification of death as the most outstanding feature of the metaphysical fairy-story does not seem to give full justice to the complexity of the metaphysical problems there. The description of the humorous fairy-story with its tendency towards caricature, mockheroic and parody closes the account of the genological variants of the Victorian fairy-story. In the Conclusions, the author provides a synthetic summary of all the theoretical and literary-historical observations and gives a fascinating outline of the development of the English fairy-story in the twentieth century, making the reader regret that the book is restricted only to the Victorian period. The study also contains a summary in Polish, English and Russian, a bibliography of the Victorian fairy-stories arranged according to the dates of publication, and an index of authors' names and titles of the literary texts.

The book gives rise to many questions, which in itself is a proof of its value. For instance, the author's summaries often suggest the presence of the motifs of music, dance and poetry in several fairy-stories (p. 76, 121, 122). These motifs seem to epitomize artistic means of ordering the world model. Perhaps as references to fine arts, they are connected with

increasing creative consciousness of the writers? The narrative situations in which they suggest that they are mainly autothematic. One may also enquire about the functions of humour, caricature and parody, seen by W. Krajka as the determinants of the humorous fairy-story. The presence of such motifs may on the one hand signal the canonical status of the hitherto fairy-tale conventions, and on the other hand constitute an attempt to redynamize the petrified structures.

Still other questions arise when the author discusses the modification of the fairy-tale by the motif of the journey, by the motif of dream, and by the appearance of the fantastic element (its presence is suggested in the description of the addressee's and the character's surprise, p. 85). What happens to the fairy-tale that the presentation of the fairy-land demands additional motivations: journey or dream? Why should the description of the fairy-land evoke surprise of those visiting it? The presence of the fantastic elements would presuppose the introduction of the mimetic world model in which the journey starts and the dreaming takes place. Hence, the above motifs may perhaps function as devices enhancing verisimilitude, the mimetic model making the fairy world more believable. The heterogeneity of the fictional reality in the Victorian fairy-story, which could be attributed to the influence of the main literary currents of the epoch, seems to signal the transitional stage of the genre — a metamorphosis from the folk fairy-tale (with a unified fictional world) to the literary fairy-story. It could perhaps be argued that the next more stabilized stage of its development is reached by the fairy-story in the twentieth century with the renewed establishing of the unified model of the fictional reality.

These random hypotheses are only haphazard endeavours to propose some functions for the phenomena the author describes. The lack of functional view appears to be the major limitation of the otherwise coherent and conscientious study by W. Krajka. The limitation seems to affect not only the literary-historical observations but also the accepted concept of the genre.

The author intends his book as an illustration of the dynamic and evolutionary understanding of the genre. However, the concept



of the genre as it emerges from W. Krajka's study is typological rather than dynamic. The author constructs several paradigms to build up invariants of some groups of texts. The paradigms, however, do not seem to catch the inherent dynamism of either the individual texts or of the considered genre structures, the resulting picture of the genre consisting then of relatively isolated sets of features. Discovering traditional elements in one set and novel elements in another is still insufficient for proving the dynamic nature of the changes. Dynamism seems to be connected with the appearance of new functions rather than with mere presence of new and old elements. Because of the lack of functional perspective, the dynamic concept of the genre seems to find but a spare reflection in the analytical procedure of the author, retaining the status of a theoretical postulate only.

The typological treatment of the genre restricts also the amount of attention devoted to the literary and cultural contexts. In discussing the metaphysical fairy-story, for instance, the author disregards a more general tendency toward metaphysical problems exhibited mainly in this tradition of the Victorian literature which is indicated by the word „romance” in the title of MacDonal's *Phantastes*. Although the blending of various genre features in the fairy-story is carefully observed, the literary and cultural mechanisms beyond the inherent laws of the genre are left, practically speaking, unconsidered. This limitation seems to be another aspect of the non-functional treatment of genological phenomena.

The author's criteria for distinguishing genre variants are not always entirely clear, even though he carefully outlines the genological theory he accepts. Perhaps the differentiation of a genre variant should be based on a discovery of a new function of a certain genological structure. The author does not suggest any functions of the genre variants he distinguishes. Yet, at least three of them seem to acquire new functions in the Victorian spectrum of the „fantastic” genres, which can be inferred from the very names: fairy-fantasy, didactic fairy-story, and humorous fairy-story. The correct differentiation of these genre variants is confirmed by the systematic description of the respective genre structures. Whereas in the case of romantic and meta-

physical variants of the fairy-story, the discussion not only fails to signal any functions of the described genres but also concentrates on isolated, though original features without providing a convincing account of the whole genre structure.

The same non-functional approach seems to generate some compositional deficiencies of the study. Perhaps the differentiation of functions could in many places facilitate the consistent ordering of the distinguished elements. Similarly, the use of interpretative technique instead of descriptive strategy may have resulted in diminishing the excessive number of summaries in the observations on the build-up of the fictional universe. As it is, the study does not seem to operate with precise theoretical categories for the analysis of the world model.

In spite of its deficiencies, or even partly because of them, the book remains a stimulating contribution to the study of Victorian literature and a reliable source of information for both the literary scholars and ethnographers.

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Karl Malkoff: *ESCAPE FROM THE SELF. A STUDY IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY AND POETICS*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1977, ss. XI + 181.

Wiosną 1981 roku zmarł w Toronto jeden z najciekawszych filozofów i socjologów kultury drugiej połowy XX w., Marshall McLuhan. W latach 60-tych jego refleksja humanistyczna dążąca do syntetycznego ujęcia problematyki współczesnej kultury wywołała burzliwą reakcję zarówno w kręgach naukowych, jak i w kulturalnej publicystyce i wśród działaczy. McLuhan był autorem oryginalnych teorii, w których szczególną rolę w rozwoju współczesnej kultury przypisał informacji, a zwłaszcza środkom masowego przekazu, które zmieniają i kształtują układy i zależności w stosunkach między jednostkami i grupami społecznymi. Środki przekazu i ich formy specyfikują poszczególne stadia kultury, np. wynalazek druku przez Gutenberga ce-