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Literary Genres. A Double Approach –A Unique Vision

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Calvo, 1992: 14) - within the framework of the theory of literary genres contributes to the construction of flexible instruments out of generic abstractions. These instruments are capable of functioning as points of reference for the study of similarities and differences between the particular works of verbal art and not as rigidly established schemata to which the particular works of verbal art must of necessity correspond in all aspects. A radically inflexible and aprioristic understanding of the theoretical categories proposed by literary genres is incompatible not only with the reality of the concrete works of verbal art, since the majority of these do not completely fit into any category, but also with the evolution of literature, which provides cases of disappearance of consolidated literary forms -such as the epic poem-, cases of emergence of new textual types -such as the novel-, as well as cases of modification of existing literary forms -such as has happened all throughout the literary history of theatre- (García Berrio & Hernández Fernández, 1988: 128). In this sense, Jean M. Schaeffer, like many others, confidently affirms that every text modifies its genre: the generic component of a text is never -save in rare exceptions- the simple reduplication of the generic model built by the class of texts -which supposedly came before it- in which it stands; on the contrary, for every text in gestation, the generic model is a material, along with others, upon which it works (Schaeffer, 1983: 13). It is what Schaeffer has called "l'aspect dynamique de la généricité en tant que fonction textuelle" (Schaeffer, 1983: 13), a dynamic aspect which is also responsible for the importance of the temporal dimension of genericity, its historicity (Schaeffer, 1983: 13).

1.2. We therefore consider the proposition of the complex question of types of literary texts from a perspective which permits and explains their description and explanation within the framework of the literary history to be correct, thus contributing to limit the clear tendency towards abstraction which has always been present in the theory of literary genres (Pozuelo Yucaros, 1988: 70-73). To do so does not mean that one must renounce the study of natural or theoretical genres because of their scarce productivity and their critical-literary inoperativity, as Fernando Lázaro Carreter came to affirm (Lázaro Carreter, 1976: 114), thus justifying the romantic reaction of Benedetto Croce -who denied that they have any type of validity other than being merely didactic (Croce, 1926: 459 f.),- given the unrepeatable singularity and esthetic independence of each one of the concrete works of verbal art (Segre, 1985: 290-292; García Berrio, 1989: 456-457, 468-480; 1993: 46; García Berrio & Huerta Calvo, 1992: 13). If a moment ago we said that the approximation of the natural or theoretical genres and the historical, empirical or real genres is necessary and unavoidable within the framework of the theory of literary genres in order to construct flexible instruments out of generic abstractions which are adapted to the concrete historical-literary reality, now we must add that the consideration of the types of literary texts as historical entities or as conventional schemata -as (human) institutions or as conventions of a social-cultural character (Wellek & Warren, 1942: 271-272; Ehrenpreis, 1945; Levin, 1963; Todorov, 1970; 1978; Guillén, 1971; 1985; Glowinski, 1974; Kayser, 1974; Jameson, 1975;
Viëtor, 1977; Voßkamp, 1977; Hernadi, 1978: 29 f.; Marsch, 1979; Pratt, 1981; Rollin, 1981; Garrido Gallardo, 1982; 2000: 309 f.; Schaeffer, 1983; 1989; Kent, 1985; García Berrio & Hernández Fernández, 1988: 127-134; Pozuelo Yvancos, 1988; García Tejera, 1996; Arenas Cruz, 1999)- cannot remain on the fringe of their relationship with theoretical genres as natural entities (Todorov, 1970; 1978; Fowler, 1971; 1979; 1982; Brooke-Rose, 1976; Rollin, 1981; Schaeffer, 1983; 1989; Rosmarin, 1985; García Berrio, 1989: 455-495; García Berrio & Hernández Fernández, 1988: 129). In this sense, literary genres can and must be conveniently described and explained in terms of universal or natural -theoretical- categories, on the one hand, and in terms of dynamic or conventional -historical- categories, on the other, in a permanent effort to adapt them to the needs of expression and representation of social systems throughout literary history (Martín Jiménez, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c). This is not about a contradictory point of view in and of itself, but rather a simple distinction between the two faces of the same coin, which is analyzed and valued within the socio-historical context in which it is used.

1.2.1. This is very important because, as Antonio García Berrio very adequately argues, the perceptible historical conventionality of a social agreement about the poetic value of literary works or about the system of artistic rules and principles upon which it is founded does not necessarily impose the arbitrary condition of such a cultural system (García Berrio, 1989: 455-456).

Indeed, the traditional generic classification which distinguishes three major genres -epic, lyric and dramatic-, and that both Friedrich Schlegel and Georg W. F. Hegel accepted as a theory of literary genres already tripartite and dialectically organized, constitutes a theoretical construct founded on an expressive-representational linguistic basis -that of the triadic model of the universal modes of expression and dialectical representation of reality assimilated directly from the classical poetic-rhetorical doctrine- which is strictly natural (García Berrio, 1989: 455-468). According to García Berrio, there is nothing more natural than to classify the texts of literary verbal art precisely by the expressive modality which they adopt -the expository, the narrative and the theatrical- and there is nothing less controversial than the dialectic tripartition, when the parameters in combination are two of force: the object -the epic- and the subject -the lyric-, which must of necessity be followed by its synthesis -the dramatic- (García Berrio, 1989: 465-466. Vid. too García Berrio, 1993: 34, 38).

However, since they are exhaustive forms of linguistic expression and representation, literary genres impose rules -the rules of genre- which can be understood only as conditions or initial textual options for the determination of the general physiognomy of the concrete work of verbal art, but not for the determination of its definitive and total textual structure (García Berrio, 1993: 38). Also in agreement on that point with Antonio García Berrio, when one act with cleverness or perhaps by mere accident, one automatically attributes a power of textual determination to the rules of genre which proceed from the primitive expressive classification, a power which these rules did not even claim to have, nor are they able to achieve logically in reality; the decision of
genre determines an option which is only initial, the constitutive rules of which affect the
general physiognomy of the text, but not the text as a total linguistic entity (García
Berrio, 1993: 34-45). One must not confuse, then, within the block of textual
information, the rules which are specifically generic with the totality of the performative
rules of the text; this is so, in the first place, because the real limitation of the specific
rules of genre leaves ample spaces of variation for the other performative-textual rules
independent of those of genre; in the second place, this is so because the expressive rules
of each genre—including also those symbolic-referential conditions which are the least
defined—admit not only the composition of works by successive juxtapositions, but also
many other possibilities of hybridization and contamination (García Berrio, 1993: 34-
45).

1.2.2. Precisely because of that fact, to think that each one of the concrete works of
verbal art possesses an unrepeatable singularity and esthetic independence in its
definitive and total textual structure is as correct and proper as thinking that many
concrete works of verbal art—those which are considered as epic, those which are
considered as lyric or those which are considered as dramatic—from the point of view
of its structural genesis, share the same—or very similar—modes of verbal expression and
referential representation. For García Berrio, once again, the confirmation of the first
extreme is an incentive for the empirical enthusiasm of the proclives to register only that
which is most concrete and clear, while the discovery of the radical generic triad
promotes the conjecture of those who tend to involve themselves in speculations which
are more universal and latent; if we state it in other terms, while excepting all the
distinctions, that which is here opposed is the historicist attitude and the theoretical
viewpoint (García Berrio, 1989: 468-480). And, as Gérard Genette has expressed about
this double perspective—the natural or theoretical and the historical, empirical or real—,
at any level of generality, the generic fact involves inextricably, among others, the
natural fact as well as the cultural; that the proportions and the type of relationship can
vary is, of course, an evidence, but no example is totally determined by nature or by
spirit, just as none is determined completely by history (Genette, 1979: 73).

In this sense, we believe that none of the generic typologies developed from the basis
of the classic tripartition and leading to the differentiation of a distinct number of literary
genres—two in the case of Käte Hamburger’s system (Hamburger, 1957), four in that of
Northrop Frye (Frye, 1957), ...—means at heart the invalidation of the principle of the
universality of the modes of expression and dialectical representation of reality that
provides the foundation for and supports the former (García Berrio, 1993: 38; García
Berrio & Huerta Calvo, 1992: 12-13).

1.2.3. For these reasons, and paraphrasing now the words of Antonio García Berrio
and Claudio Guillén, methodical essentialism—a theoretical idealistic vocation to
eucidate that which is the same [“lo uno”] (Guillén, 1985)—and empirical culture—a
pragmatic-historicist vocation absorbed in that which is diverse [“lo diverso”] (Guillén,
1985)- are the necessary components of a demanding knowledge -neither fanciful nor pointless- of literature; such is the plan of knowledge and its concrete circumstances to continue maintaining a current theory -while constantly perfecting it- of literary genres (García Berrio, 1993: 43).

2. One conception that, in our judgment, responds clearly to the need to combine the “methodical essentialism” of the “theoretical idealistic vocation” and the “empirical culture” of the “pragmatic-historicist vocation” for the demanding and renewal study of literary genres is that which has been developed by Siegfried J. Schmidt and several of the members of the LUMIS Institute (“Institut für Empirische Literatur- und Medienforschung in Siegen”) since 1986 (Schmidt, 1987b; 1987c; Hauptmeier, 1987a; 1987b; Rusch, 1987a; 1987b). This conception is the result of a theoretical-cognitive and empirical approach to the problem of literary genres in particular and to the problem of types of communication media in general within the framework of the so called “Empirical Science of Literature” (“Empirische Literaturwissenschaft”), as a radically pragmatic literary theory which understands literature as a social system of actions (Schmidt, 1979; 1980; 1981; 1982a; 1982b; 1983a; 1984; 1987a; 1989a; Schmidt (ed.), 1993; Schmidt & Zobel & Popp & Viehoff, 1983; Hintzenberg & Schmidt & Zobel, 1980; Finke, 1982; Groeben, 1982; Hauptmeier & Viehoff, 1983; Hauptmeier & Schmidt, 1985; Rusch (ed.), 1995; Rusch & Schmidt, 1983; Arbeitsgruppe NIKOL, 1986; Chico Rico, 1987; 1991; 1994; 1995; Chico Rico (ed.), 1995; Meutsch, 1987; Iglesias Santos, 1994; Tótösy de Zepetnek & Sywenky (eds.), 1997). The main intention of Schmidt is to achieve a systematic description and explanation of the concept of 'genre' in the bosom of a general science of communication media -within which the Empirical Science of Literature is found- and upon the constructivist epistemological foundations of the cognitive theory developed from different perspectives by Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela (Maturana, 1985; Maturana & Varela, 1980; 1990; Varela, 1981), Heinz von Foerster (von Foerster, 1970; 1974; 1981; 1985), Ernst von Glasersfeld (von Glasersfeld, 1981; 1987) and Siegfried J. Schmidt (Schmidt, 1982c; 1983b; 1994a; Schmidt (ed.), 1987), among others. These constructivist epistemological foundations lead us to define genres in terms of cognitive concepts. In this context, the constructivist study of literary genres has clearly centered on the description and explanation of its functions; it has watched for the development at any moment of a homogeneous argumentation -based on the constructivist theory of cognition-; and it has pursued the establishment of a general theory of the classes of communication media and a particular theory of the schemata of communicative behavior -or genres- which are capable of describing and explaining the functions of these classes of communication media and these schemata of communicative behavior within the framework of the communication media in general (Schmidt & Weischenberg, 1994), instead of focusing, as almost always has been the case in the traditional study of literary genres, on the description and explanation of the types of texts within the literary system with the objective being, above all, that of classification (Schmidt, 1987b: 371-373; 1987c:
2.1. Beginning with the idea of 'schema', which is related closely to those of 'frame', 'script' and 'plan' (Schmidt, 1987b: 377-378; 1987c: 170-171), genres may be defined epistemologically as elements which belong to the class of the cognitive schemata for the construction and the intersubjective establishment of reality (Schmidt, 1987b: 381; 1987c: 175-176). This hypothesis clearly corresponds to the conviction of Siegfried J. Schmidt that genres should be thought of in terms of cognitive phenomena and not in terms of conjunctions of characteristics or abstract features isolated from the products of communication media—for example, texts, films, ...-. And this orientation focuses all its attention, since it could not do so by any other means, on the study of actions, processes, actors and functions, relegating the objects and structures to the second plane of analytical observation, as it has also become customary to do in the field of cognitive psychology (Schmidt, 1987b: 374-376; 1987c: 166-169; László & Viehoff, 1993).

2.1.1. In this sense, the first specification that Schmidt proposes for the concept of 'genre' refers to the social domain of acting in which genres carry out their role. The social domain of acting in which genres, when thought of in these terms, fulfill their role is the domain of interactive behavior responsible for constructing and intersubjectively establishing realities through the different existing communication media. For this reason, they too may be considered as schemata of communicative behavior ("media-action-schemata") (Schmidt, 1987b: 382), comprising all the necessary cognitive instruments for the construction of constants or invariants on the part of those who intervene in the processes of communication. In agreement with this position, the hypothesis of Siegfried J. Schmidt about the genesis and function of the schemata of communicative behavior—or genres—can be simply paraphrased as follows: "Contingency necessitates genre as an instrument of the cognitive mastering of reality" (Schmidt, 1987b: 383).

2.1.2. The second specification of the concept of 'genre' is directed towards the special cognitive function that one assigns to the schemata of communicative behavior and that other types of cognitive schemata do not carry out. From this perspective, the schemata of communicative behavior—or genres—intersubjectively relate the communicative actions or activities presupposed in each one of them—including their components and results—and susceptible to being carried out by all the members of a determined social group, with the corresponding socio-historically admissible modes of referring to reality, thus configuring the different degrees of freedom that can be achieved by the socially admissible strategies of production, reception and valuation of the communicative actions or activities and their products (Schmidt, 1987b: 383; 1987c: 177-178).

The members of a society deploy their socio-historical systems of schemata of communicative behavior—or genres—and define the specialty of their uses and functions
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according to the socio-historically admissible modes of referring to reality. This specialty of the uses and functions of the schemata of communicative behavior -or genres- is concerned fundamentally with the thematics of the communicative actions or activities presupposed in each one of them and with the means to realize or perform and present these actions or activities, that Schmidt calls stylistics. From this point of view, the schemata of communicative behavior -or genres- constitute modes of referring to reality, that is, they specify the type of reality -true reality, verisimilar fictional reality or non-verisimilar fictional reality, for example (Albaladejo Mayordomo, 1986; 1992; 1996)- that can or should be assigned to a determined verbal and/or non-verbal behavior within the framework of a concrete schema of communicative behavior -or genre- and the degree of authenticity and/or reliability that can or should be attributed to those who act on the basis of this schema -for example, operators or news commentators on the radio or the television, authors of literary narratives, poets, ...-. According to the corresponding socio-historical conditions, the specification of the modes of referring to reality can be considered "true", "real", "authentic", "credible", "reliable", "trustworthy", etc. or, on the contrary, "false", "unreal", "fictitious", "utopian", "unreliable", "untrustworthy", etc. (Schmidt, 1987b: 383-384; 1987c: 178).

2.1.3. The third specification that Siegfried J. Schmidt proposes for the concept of 'genre' alludes to the effects that the communicative actions or activities can have within the framework of a concrete schema of communicative behavior. The type of reality to which the communicative actions or activities presupposed in a concrete schema of communicative behavior -or genre- make reference, together with the thematics and stylistics jointly attributed to it, can define only one general type of possible effects in the receptor and is not able to establish parallels between concrete schemata of communicative behavior -or genres- and exactly definable effects in a causal or deterministic -linear- way (Schmidt, 1987b: 384; 1987c: 179).

The reason that it is extremely difficult -if not impossible- to predict the specific effects of the communicative actions or activities presupposed in a concrete schema of communicative behavior -or genre- may be found in the self-referential workings of our cognitive system and in our ability to observe ourselves (Schmidt, 1989b; 1994b; 1994c), which turn our behavior into something which is to a larger or smaller extent unpredictable for the others. Both the self-referential workings of our cognitive system and our ability to observe ourselves imply that the human cognition does not function as a machine with inputs and outputs, but rather as a self-organizing system. Consequently, there cannot be a causal or deterministic -linear- relationship between a sensory input and the way in which our brain processes this input activating (potentially the entirety of) the affective-cognitive systems of relation -or schemata-. Besides, the specific effects of the communicative actions or activities presupposed in a concrete schema of communicative behavior -or genre- are extremely difficult to predict because they depend not only on the communicative actions or activities of the socio-historical system of communication media or schemata of communicative behavior -or genres- in which
they are registered, but also on the context of these communicative actions or activities, which incorporate such varied components as the materiality of the communication media used and the different cultural specifications of the symbols that can be employed, upon which the interpretative possibilities of these will depend in the different possible situations of communication (Schmidt, 1987b: 384; 1987c: 179. Vid. too Herrmann, 1985; Schmidt & Groeben, 1986; Meutsch, 1987).

2.1.4. In the summary of his argumentation, Schmidt specifies the concept of 'genre', defined epistemologically as a cognitive schema, in the following manner: "1. the domain of acting with these schemata has been confined to activities in or by media, 2. the function of action with these schemata has been characterized as an instantiation of the modes of socially admissible referring to reality(-constructs), and 3. this mode (including the thematics and stylistics of actions) allows only a rather general prediction of the effects of applying a certain media-action-schema. Media-action-schemata (genres) instantiate socially expected epistemic relations (= socially admissible references to reality) between the model of reality consensual in a social group, a social system or a society, on the one hand, and the constructs of reality by means of specific media-activities in the framework of this reality, on the other" (Schmidt, 1987b: 385).

2.2. The dynamics of social systems of actions, between which is the literary one, and, therefore, the dynamics of genres -or schemata of communicative behavior- can be described and explained, according to Siegfried J. Schmidt, within the framework of a constructivist theory of social change such as that which was conceived and developed by Peter M. Hejl (Hejl, 1982; 1985; 1988; 1989). Social change, from this perspective, may be the consequence of the co-evolution of the different components of a determined social system of actions, of the alteration of those components or of a possibly intentional modification of the construct of reality of this system (Schmidt, 1987b: 385-391; 1987c: 180-188).

Normally, those who act in a determined socio-historical system of communication media or schemata of communicative behavior -or genres- also act in other social systems of actions. In this sense, they can operate with constructs of reality to a greater or lesser extent distanced or divergent among themselves, which in some way they must draw near or equate in the realm of their cognitive domain. Since the mode of making reference to the constructs of reality by means of the schemata of communicative behavior -or genres- is completely influenced by the affective-cognitive and the valuation of the relevancy of a communicative action or activity for the life of the one who realize it, any change in the affective-cognitive and the valuation of the relevancy of a communicative action or activity within other social systems of actions can influence the structure and function of a determined schema of communicative behavior -or genre-. Individuals, social groups, social systems or societies will preserve a determined schema of communicative behavior -or genre- intact when it contributes to the satisfaction, according to the so called "Lust-Unlust-Prinzip" (Schmidt, 1987b: 391; 1987c: 188) -the
"pleasure/displeasure" or "like/dislike" principle that governs the psychological tendency to obtain cognitive consistency, of its particular intentions or communicative needs. On the contrary, individuals, social groups, social systems or societies will modify a determined schema of communicative behavior -or genre-, trying to adapt it structurally and/or functionally to its particular intentions or communicative needs, or will abandon its use when it does not work (Schmidt, 1987b: 391-392; 1987c: 188-189). One must remember in this respect, for example, the substitution of the schema of the epic poem for that of the novel, and the substitution of the schema of the classic tragedy for that of the drama, understood as a theatrical sub-genre with a theme and a tone less than grandiose but with a tragic outcome.

In this sense, the schemata of communicative behavior -or genres- always function in agreement with the social expectations, and in this way they preserve their character or consideration, more than natural or universal, constant or invariant in the cognitive domain of individuals (Schmidt, 1987b: 392). For Schmidt, if literary genres are not accepted as universals but as conventionalized constants or invariants that must be acquired by individuals throughout their literary socialization, the intersubjective validity of a literary genre and its possible historical change can be described and explained in the same way: as constants or invariants, the schemata of communicative behavior -or genres- govern the cognitive operations of individuals as if they were universals (Schmidt, 1987b: 392; 1987c: 189-190).

With the acceptance of the constant or invariant character or consideration of the schemata of communicative behavior -or genres-, Siegfried J. Schmidt resolves the problem of the existing relationships between natural or theoretical genres, understood as general and abstract textual units, and concrete works of verbal art, understood as particular textual units corresponding to them, by means of the definition of their relationships not in terms of the assignment of constructs to that which is observable (Šaumjan, 1964: 155; Heilmann & Rigotti, 1975: 208; Albaladejo Mayordomo, 1978: 363-365), but in terms of the assignment of conventionalized schemata of communicative behavior -normally operating as constants or invariants- to cognitive results of individuals (Schmidt, 1987b: 392; 1987c: 190). This argument, therefore, resolves the old controversy within the framework of the theory of literary genres about the reconciliation of the universality or naturalness -theoricity- belonging to literary genres, exactly as it has been understood since its origins in the theoretical-literary tradition of essentialistic bias, with its dynamicity or conventionality -historicity-.

3. If we situate ourselves once again within the framework of the traditional theoretical-literary thought, we can say that this has always -especially before the esthetic rupture caused by Romanticism- defended the idea that certain themes -types of reality- require appropriate modes of expression or forms -schemata of communicative behavior or genres-. Let us remember, for example, the verses 305-312 of Lope de Vega's *El arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* (Lope de Vega, 1609), which deal with the necessary utilization of specific metric-strophic forms to improve the construction of this
dramatic sub-genre\textsuperscript{2}, an ideal that contributes to make enduring the proposals of the classical poetic-rhetorical precepts about the principles that provide the foundation for and support the \textit{decorum -accomodatum} or \textit{aptum-} as a concept of proportionality (Lausberg, 1960: §§ 258, 1055-1062; Albaladejo Mayordomo, 1989: 52-53, 62; Albaladejo Mayordomo & Chico Rico, 1998; García Berrio, 1989: 66-69, 76; López Eire, 1996: 115). At the macro-structural levels of the text, the concrete relationship which exists between the thematic-semantic component and the formal-syntactic component of the work of verbal art is proposed by Antonio García Berrio in the following terms: "Podemos comenzar adelantando que la pregunta capital, entonces como ahora, podría simplificarse en los términos de una disyuntiva: ¿Es la estructura formal, apriorística, de género la que selecciona un tipo de acontecimientos de la realidad, excluyendo numerosas parcelas de la misma como inasimilables dentro de la obra literaria [...]? O por el contrario: ¿Es la distinta fisonomía o naturaleza de los acontecimientos de la realidad extraliteraria, filtrados peculiarmente a través de la óptica del narrador-registrador de los mismos, la que especializó históricamente unas estructuras formales determinadas?" (García Berrio, 1977: 81)\textsuperscript{3}. The solution to this dilemma is found in the relationship of interdependence which exists between both dimensions, as García Berrio goes on to explain: "En cualquier caso, la favorable respuesta a los dos extremos de la disyuntiva que históricamente se ha registrado, viene a abundar en el hecho de que un importante polo en la dialéctica realidad objetiva -realidad literariamente incorporada- atraviesa fatalmente la médula del "género". Así se explican hechos de sentido tan variado como que el descubrimiento de una nueva estructura formal haya permitido "ganar" a la literatura una dimensión histórica de la realidad hasta entonces ajena al peculiar universo de la misma; e inversamente, como se ha sugerido y explotado especialmente en desarrollos modernos del arte literario, que una forma inesperada o nueva de la vida histórica fuerce al artista a la creación de una también nueva estructura formal que, por su parte, pueda dar cuenta adecuada de su asimilación al universo artístico" (García Berrio, 1977: 81-82)\textsuperscript{4}.

Because of this connection between the formal-syntactic component and the thematic-semantic component of the work of verbal art, between the structure of the literary text and the referential organization expressed by it, which Siegfried J. Schmidt has referred to from a different perspective -as a connection between communicative actions or activities and socio-historically admissible modes of referrals to reality-, there has historically been a generic specialization based on the mutual adequacy of the mode of imitation and the form, on the one hand, and the content, on the other, a specialization that reaches not only the three literary genres definitively established by Georg W. F. Hegel and the essayistic-argumentative genre speaking of its differentiation, but also the divisions that exist within each of them (Martín Jiménez, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c; Rodríguez Pequéño, 1995). Thus, for example, the mode of imitation and the form of the "\textit{chanson de geste}" are clearly connected to the content of the texts which belong to this discursive type, and the tale is distinguished from the novel since both narrative types possess different formal-syntactic and thematic-semantic organizations (Albaladejo

The rudiments of this formal-syntactic and thematic-semantic explanation of literary genres are closely linked to the conception of the elements res -or content- and verba -or form- mutually related and, all in all, to the association of significant and signifier in a joint esthetic functioning within the privileged linguistic sign that is the work of verbal art (García Berrio, 1977: 90). On the other hand, this explanation has contributed to the creation of a theoretical-literary and critical-literary tradition from which a poetic thought of a normative nature has appropriately been configured for literary genres. In this framework, one must situate the proposal of José M. Pozuelo Yvancos of connecting the formal-syntactic or structural dimension of literary genres with its thematic-semantic or referential dimension through the normative nature of classifications: "En la mayor parte de los tratados [Pozuelo Yvancos writes] se entiende el género literario desde dos dimensiones: bien como forma exterior (metro o estructura específicos), bien como forma interior (actitud, tono, tema o universo representado). Como Wellek y Warren [...] señalaban, el problema crítico será encontrar la tercera dimensión que complete el diagrama. Desde mi punto de vista, esa otra dimensión sólo puede ser el encargo que históricamente marca la convención estética o normativa; dicho de otro modo: la de la literatura como tradición que asimila y sanciona unas formas vinculadas a unos tonos, una estructura como engaste de una temática" (Pozuelo Yvancos, 1988: 73-74). The proposal of Siegfried I. Schmidt -and, by extension, of the LUMIS Institute- to describe and explain literary genres as elements which belong to the class of the cognitive schemata for the construction and the intersubjective establishment of reality, of a constant or invariant nature, and, therefore, normative, clearly abounds -and from a different perspective, as we said before- in the importance of finding and studying this third dimension which completes the diagram made up partially of the formal-syntactic or structural dimension and the thematic-semantic or referential dimension of literary genres: the dimension corresponding to the existing relationship between the communicative actions or activities presupposed in the schemata of communicative behavior -or genres- and the socio-historically admissible modes of referring to reality.

Notes

1. "[...] the dynamic aspect of genericity as textual function" (Schaeffer, 1983: 13).

2 "Acomode los versos con prudencia / a los sujetos de que va tratando: / las décimas son buenas para quejas; / el soneto está bien en los que aguardan; / las relaciones piden los romances, / aunque en otavas lucen por extremo; / son los tercetos para cosas graves, / y para las de amor, las redondillas" (Lope de Vega, 1609: 305-312).

3 "We can begin by advancing that the capital question, then as now, could be simplified in the terms of a dilemma: Is the formal, aprioristic structure of genre that which chooses one type of events from reality, excluding others as unassimilable within the literary work [...]? Or on the other hand: Is the distinct physiognomy or nature of the events from the extraliterary reality, peculiarly filtered through the vision of the narrator-recorder of the same, that which specified
historically certain determined formal structures?” (García Berrio, 1977: 81).

4 “In any case, the favorable answer to the two extremes of the dilemma that has historically been registered stresses the fact that an important role in the dialectical objective reality-reality artistically incorporated—fatally pierces the marrow of “genre”. In this way one can explain that the discovery of a new formal structure has allowed literature to “obtain” a historical dimension of reality which before that point was distant from that particular universe; and inversely, as has been suggested and exploited specially in modern developments of literary art, that an unexpected or new form of historical life should force the artist to create a too new formal structure as well, that on its own, can provide adequate explanation of its assimilation to the artistic universe” (García Berrio, 1977: 81-82).

5 “In the majority of the treatises literary genre is understood from two dimensions: either as exterior form (specific metre or structure), or as interior form (attitude, tone, theme or represented universe). Like Wellek and Warren [...] pointed out, the critical problem will be to find the third dimension to complete the diagram. From my point of view, this other dimension can only be the setting which has historically marked the esthetic or normative convention; in other words, that of literature as tradition which assimilates and sanctions certain forms connected to specific tones, a structure as the setting of a thematic” (Pozuelo Yvacnos, 1988: 73-74).

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