

TROPES, FIGURES AND GENRES

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When we are talking about genres, we usually mean literary genres. It is well known that in his theory of speech genres, M. Bakhtin defines literary genres as <<secondary>>, based on the <<firstness>> of stable speech genre forms in which every single utterance is formed in relation to the speech will of the speaker, with the specificity of a certain sphere of speech communication. [Bakhtin, M. (1986). "The Problem of Speech Genres." in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 60—62].

Thus there are standard speech-genre forms, among which the speaker makes a choice for utterances in proper themes in typical speech situations. This is the <<grammar>> of standard *traffarete* (Schablon) genre forms of utterances and constrains of typical situations of speech communication about typical themes as a matter of speech. It is interesting to understand in which way typical speech situations are connected with typical themes as matter of speech, or with real life-situations. And, if there are typical themes of speech, are we talking about typical life-situations, or events, by means of standard forms of speech genres (different, for example, from those which are not recognized as events at all, and consequently, nobody is talking about them)?

There are many attempts to make a standard description of human actions, or to answer the question "What is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing?" – Answer the question turns on the fundamental distinction that human make between the motion of objects and the action of humans, on the base of common attribution motives to humans." "For any species of human "actions" at all requires 1/ an act, 2/ undertaken by any agent, 3/ with some scene or context, 4/ through some agency, 5/ for some purpose. [Cf. K. Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 1945].

These 5 (underlined) terms are form dramatic pentad, well known from Aristotle (*Nichomachean Ethics*) and fixed during the Middle Ages as the basic questions of: quis (agent), quid (act), ubi (scene defined as place), quibus auxiliis (agency), cur (purpose), quo modo (manner, 'attitude'), quando (scene, defined temporarily), nowadays, known as the *7 main axes of speech mechanism*: (Cf. Bl. Mavrov foreign languages teaching books): when (scene, defined temporarily), how many (number or quantity), who (agent), what (action), where (scene defined as place), how (in which way) (manner, 'attitude'), why

(purpose). It is very easy to compare those "pentads" with Propp's functions of fairy tales narratives and with Greimas' actants. In supra-generalization, (with un-avoidable supra simplification) we can define typical human action in the simple phrase "Somebody does something" (An agent makes agency).

The phrase is not *pragmatic* action (doing), but *cognitive* (interpretational understanding with evaluation), as was shown by Greimas (in *The Love-Life of the Hippopotamus*). It is representative *prediction* by means of language (syntactic) grammar, or by the core structure of every single sentence, i. e. SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT SOMETHING. This not only covers the attribution of properties to the predicate, but also linguistic (and logical subject-objective) acts of reference to the world situation (in present, past or future time) as well.

This is implicit, usually elliptic missing in utterances (and thoughts), but it can be expressed by the verbs of perception **perceive** and **feel**, by the cognitive verbs **think** and **know**, by the verbs of predication and narration (*verba dicendi*) **say** and **speak**, and by the basic verbs expressing action and event in general, **do** and **happen** (the only nucleus verbs by means of which (through definitions) all the verbs of the language system can be interpreted).

And now the great question arises: *What makes situation from a given event?* (in order to be recognized as a situation or action at all). First of all have to clarify the role of the STAGE as the framing context of every single action. The term <<stage>> (or scene) shows that any single action or event without witness (participant or spectator, who can tell the story about it or comment it), or without stigma-result (to be make a judgment about it) is disappears at the very moment of its completing. The spectator is witness-interpretor of pragmatic action, he can represent this action (in cognitive way) by story and participants can tell a story about or perform by <<mimetic-dramatic>> play. That is why the situation is always in the stage of a given place, time and persons-participants. I. e. it is important to understand the interpretation by means of dialogue (between the witness and situation or between the participants in the role of witnesses also), which is in any case cognitive-interpretative and the narrative <<in-scenire>> <<mise-en-scene>> the life-scene again.

In this way the events obtain ontological status in real existence-like situations via *sign discretization* and *typifying "genre" categorization*.

The connection between tropes, figures and genres may seem to be unusual, but it is rooted in the specificity of the word's iconicity. The main base for such a connection is the objectual image of the word and its linguistic symbolisation. The word's image is created by means of linguistic instruments, i. e. via signs. The essence of the word's image is exposed by the object's wholeness and the <<thickness>> of the image, and it is supported by the balance between the sound-meaning's arbitrariness un-motivation and the objectual-ideatic natural motivation. Such a means of poetry – "to elevate its arbitrary signs to

the degree and power of natural signs” retributes the “unsimilarity of its signs with the similarity of the object designated by any other object” [Lessing, Laokoon].

Another essential specificity of the word’s sign is that it has temporal organization (syntagmatic, as well as paradigmatic) as opposed to the tropeic iconicity of the metaphor - for instance, as a static and paradigmatic one, it can be performed syntagmatically. For example, hero’s figure in low genres (as comedy) is **two-faced** (Tartuf). The comparison between two things, as a basis of the double-parts of an image in metaphor, in the dramatical work of art, where such a basis appears as the dissimilation of one thing, which within the time of the subject’s action is methamorphosed into its contrary. Typically, this methamorphosis is obtained by the hero’s peripetias in tragedy (as high genre).

This genetic and structural unity of subjects (fables, or <<plots>>) and tropes has been mentioned, by the way, by Aristotle in connection with the (re)cognition of the hero. It can be: 1/ on the basis of an exterior stigma – natural or received on the body or outside the body – rings, necklaces and so on. 2/ by letter, 3/ by recalling something, 4/ by means of syllogistic conclusion, 5/ grounded on false conclusion (doxa under enthymeme) [On Poetical art, § 16-18]. The peripathy or turning-around in dramatic action means a crucial turn of the hero’s appearance or putting on or taking off the *mask* or (re)cognition. What follows, is unmasking or heroic triumphal sanction. It is the same in chancing the masks in ritual.

These two specificities of the words’ image – metaphorical or condensation in space and subjectual, or linearity in time are the most essential for the word’ image (as opposed to the images of plastic arts). An ideal example of balanced fusion of metaphoric and subjectiv is the programmatic novel of O. Wilde, “*The portrait of Dorian Gray*”.

In the middle position between tropes and subjects (fables) are figures: *rhetoric question, rhetoric invocation and rhetoric exclamation* are co-related to peripetic methamorphose.

The main problem of the above mentioned specifics of the art image is, that tropes, and figures, and subject peripetias as well, are *speech <<ob-verses>>*. Not only in the sense of etymology, but sense-essential, too. These ob-verses are possible thanks to the symbolic nature of the language sign and its own capacity for incarnations in different types of word meanings.