

Anna CHOLEWA-PURGAŁ
Akademia im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie

A GLANCE AT GENRE AND CONTEMPORARY GENRE THEORY

Streszczenie

Odwołując się wybiórczo do opinii teoretyków języka, literatury i kultury od Michaiła Bachtina po współczesnych, autorka artykułu podejmuje próbę rozważenia pojęcia gatunku i rodzaju oraz ich roli w komunikacji i kulturze współczesnej, których szczególnym przejawem jest literatura. Wywiedziony z języka francuskiego, angielski termin *genre*, z racji swej wieloznaczności (rodzaj, gatunek, podgatunek), a także wielości kryteriów definiujących jego istotę, może powodować niejasność interpretacji, jak również zamieszanie w stosowanej powszechnie anglojęzycznej taksonomii. Jego wszechobecność i funkcjonalność, które warunkują komunikację społeczną i artystyczną, są jednak bezsporne.

Rozrost, hybrydyzacja i mutowanie gatunków różnorodnych komunikatów werbalnych i niewerbalnych (gatunków wyrażonych słowem, obrazem, dźwiękiem), zainicjowane już u progu ery nowożytnej i znamienne dla „rozmytej” kultury ponowoczesnej, dążącej do zatarcia granic i negacji wszelkich aksjomatów, mogą wskazywać na anachronizm pojęcia rodzaju i gatunku literackiego. Wiele tekstów, zwłaszcza tych umownie zwanych powieściami, wymyka się niemal całkowicie klasyfikacji i zawiera bardzo niewiele tradycyjnie pojmowanych wyznaczników gatunkowych, jednakże, jak mówi Derrida w „Prawie gatunku” z 1992 r., mimo braku przynależności, teksty te w pewien sposób zawsze „uczestniczą” w jednym lub wielu gatunkach, a nowe gatunki rodzą się z transformacji powszechnie znanych poprzedników.

Artykuł przedstawia bardzo pobieżny ogłęd problemu, którego głębsza analiza teoretyczna, zaopatrzona w studium przypadku ponowoczesnych literackich hybryd gatunkowych, z racji ograniczeń objętości, nie znalazła się w jego treści.

Genre is a universal phenomenon that permeates human lives and determines the ways people use language, read, write and understand texts, and interpret generic actions. Whether conscious or subconscious, genre awareness facilitates communication and cultural exchange, and influences the capacity for discourse. It serves as a ‘template for representing human experience’, and helps language users organ-

ize the material they wish to produce¹. 'A genre is ultimately an abstract conception rather than something that exists empirically in the world', remarks Jane Feuer, and Daniel Chandler adds that 'defining genres may not initially seem particularly problematic but it should already be apparent that it is a theoretical minefield'². An abstraction that may escape rigid definitions though it is, genre helps to acquire and enhance our understanding of the world, and wields power 'through which we shape, are shaped, and through which we sort out information; gain knowledge; and ultimately extrapolate meaning'³.

In his study of genres John Frow demonstrates that we are incessantly making decisions based on genre awareness, not just with reference to literature, for instance when choosing which book to read or which play to see, but also with regard to any discursive media, such as films, music or every-day talks⁴. Any product of man's artistic creativity or daily communication, whether verbal or not, may be approached in terms of its genre, as the French term 'genre' refers in its broadest sense to 'a type, species or class of composition'⁵. When analyzing the genres of language, we can easily differentiate between a sermon and a joke, having formed clear expectations about the genres, and also we are able to understand a joke in a sermon or a sermon in a joke, thanks to our awareness of generic blends and combinations. Genre savvy will permit comprehension of very different messages intended by authors employing similar or even identical pieces of language in various contexts, for instance in an epitaph inscribed on a tombstone and in a slogan placed on a hoarding, even if the wording, punctuation and arrangement of the language in the epitaph and in the slogan are the same. What makes a difference is, as Olivier Burckhardt demonstrates in his review of Frow's *Genre*, the unique 'generic makeup' that conveys the author's intention behind the text and beyond its linguistic level, and the rhetorical situation⁶. 'Situation and genre are so tightly interwoven as to be interlocked,' notes Amy Devitt⁷.

It is often context, rather than text itself, that helps recognize generic distinctions and determines genre, the subject matter being 'the weakest criterion for generic grouping because it fails to take into account how the subject is treated'⁸. Reflecting upon context, David Russell views it as 'an ongoing accomplishment, not

¹ Hopkins, Chris: *Thinking about Texts*. New York: Palgrave 2001. p. 156.

² Feuer, Jane: 'Genre Study and Television'. In: *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*. Robert C Allen, ed. London: Routledge 1992. p. 144. Chandler, Daniel: 'An Introduction to Genre Theory'. <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/intgenre/intgenre.html>, retrieved 20 June 2011. p. 3.

³ Frow, John: *Genre*. London: Routledge 2006. p. 13.

⁴ Ibid., p.125.

⁵ Baldick, Chris: *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008. p. 140.

⁶ Burckhardt, Olivier: 'Genre beyond the Noun: a Review of John Frow's *Genre*'. In: *Poetry Nation* 33:6 (2007), Manchester: Carcanet Press 2007. pp. 78–80.

⁷ Devitt, Amy J.: *Writing Genres*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP 2004. p. 22.

⁸ Stam, Robert: *Film Theory: an Introduction*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell 2000. p. 12.

[merely] a container for actions or texts;’ an ‘accomplishment’ which decides on whether effective communication is accomplished⁹. Carolyn Miller, in turn, observes that the social and rhetorical context defines genre as ‘typified actions based in recurrent situations’¹⁰. Genre is a ‘nexus of situation, culture and other genres’, and culture influences how the situation is constructed and how it is seen as recurring in genres, says Devitt, who, drawing on Bakhtin’s interpretation of speech genres, adds that ‘one never writes or speaks in a void,’ for ‘what fills that void is not only cultural context (ideological and material baggage surrounding our every action) and situational context (the people, languages, and purposes involved in every action), but also generic context – the existing genres we have read or written’¹¹. Therefore, ‘there is no generic void’¹².

Devitt reiterates, to a considerable extent, Bakhtin’s theory of verbal communication, which he calls metalinguistics, and which focuses on speech, understood in its broadest meaning as human communication – spoken and written, ‘never final’ and never ‘decontextualizable’, reliant on the situation and its antecedents, inherently dialogic and both ‘repeatable and unrepeatable’¹³. Genre is ‘repeatable’, Bakhtin argues, because ‘each text presupposes a generally understood (that is, conventional within a given collective) system of signs, a language (if only the language of art)’; but at the same time, he observes, ‘each text (as an utterance) is individual, unique, and unrepeatable, and herein lies its entire significance (its plan, the purpose for which it was created)’¹⁴. This ‘unrepeatable’ aspect of text and genre is not connected with the system of language, which depends on repeatable elements and signs, but with their ‘special dialogic (and dialectical, when detached from the author) relations with other texts, the texts being unrepeatable’¹⁵.

Emphasizing the ‘unfinalizability’ that governs language and the dialogic context of communication, Bakhtin remarks that

there is neither a first nor last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future). Even past meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) – they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent, future development of the dialogue. At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments of the dialogue’s subse-

⁹ Russell, David: ‘Rethinking Genre in School and Society.’ In: *Written Communication* (1997). vol. 14, pp. 4504–554.

¹⁰ Miller, Carolyn: ‘Genre as Social Action.’ In: *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 70 (1984) pp. 151–167.

¹¹ Devitt, A. J.: *Writing Genres*. pp. 32–33.

¹² Devitt, *ibid.*, p. 27.

¹³ Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich: ‘The Problem of Speech Genres’. In: *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Trans. by Vern W. McGee. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press 1986. pp. 60–102.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁵ Bakhtin, M.: ‘The Problem of Speech Genres’. p. 105.

quent development along the way they are recalled and reinvigorated in renewed form (in a new context). Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival¹⁶.

Forgotten contextual meanings are constantly revived in new contexts, and hence they are in a way refreshed and repeated, remaining at the same time unrepeatable and unique. The same regards separate instances of speech, to which Bakhtin refers as 'utterances' – these are 'links in the chain of speech communication' that are 'not indifferent to one another, are not self-sufficient, [but] are aware of and mutually reflect one another'¹⁷. The relatively stable types of utterances is what Bakhtin calls speech genres¹⁸. According to Bakhtin, the number of speech genres is unlimited, due to the 'various inexhaustible possibilities' of human activity expressed through verbal communication¹⁹. 'Every utterance', he argues, and thus, every typified set of utterances called speech genre, 'must be regarded as primarily a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere. Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies upon the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account... Therefore, each kind of utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication'²⁰.

Before imbuing speech with the speaker's own 'semantic and expressive intentions', before the speaker's appropriation of the speech, 'everything that is said, [written, and, generally,] expressed, is located outside the "soul" of the speaker and does not belong only to him [or her]. The word cannot be assigned to a single speaker. The author (speaker) has his own inalienable right to the word, but the listener has his rights, and those whose voices are heard in the word before the author comes upon it also have their rights (after all, there are no words that belong to no one)²¹. This is so because an utterance, a genre and 'a word (or, in general, any sign) [are] interindividual'²².

The Bakhtinian concept of intergeneric interaction of human speech, of dialogic heteroglossia ('another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way', best seen in the discourse of the novel) and intertextuality of language is what informs the contemporary genre theory²³. Genre is viewed as 'an algorithm used to create new instances' of genres, and also as a 'staged goal-oriented social process', based on 'addressivity', involving a reciprocal exchange between the maker and the interpreter, and influenced, as Bakhtin says,

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 86.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 91.

²¹ Bakhtin, M.: 'The Problem of Speech Genres'. P. 121–122.

²² Ibid., p. 122.

²³ Bakhtin, M.: 'Discourse in the Novel.' In: *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Michael Holquist, ed. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press 1981. Pp. 259–422.

by the 'social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions'²⁴.

Bakhtin does not define genre as 'a form of language, but a typical form of utterance'; adding that 'genres correspond to typical situations of speech communication, typical themes, and, consequently, also to particular contacts between the meanings of words and actual concrete reality under certain typical circumstances'²⁵. His fundamental proposition that genres exist not only in language, but, generally, in communication (which he names speech), concerns a distinction between primary (simple) and secondary (complex or 'ideological') speech genres²⁶. To Bakhtin,

secondary (complex) speech genres – novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary, and so forth – arise in more complex and comparatively highly developed and organized cultural communication (primarily written) that is artistic, scientific, sociopolitical, and so on. During the process of their formation, they absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communion. These primary genres are altered and assume a special character when they enter complex ones. They lose their immediate relation to actual reality and to the real utterances of others. For example, rejoinders of everyday dialogue or letters found in a novel retain their form only on the plane of the novel's content. They enter only actual reality via the novel as a whole, that is, as literary-artistic event and not as everyday life²⁷.

Whether 'primary' or 'secondary', genre unites similar forms of language (Bakhtinian 'utterances') used in a similar context, but also divides them into miscellaneous groups, subgenres, sub-subgenres and meta-genres ('situated language about situated language'), according to more detailed specifications²⁸. Burckhardt defines genre as a 'two way process within a cultural milieu that enables us to shift between the various frameworks or worlds that we co-inhabit', and argues that the cardinal principles of how genre operates in our daily lives are twofold, and can be expressed by means of two simple statements: 'gathering by kind and dividing into groups'²⁹.

The ubiquitous nature of genre, which affects all walks of life and all social contexts, has been the focus of genre theory in various fields of literary, linguistic, rhetorical, philosophical and social studies. A traditional literary definition views genre

²⁴ The first quoted phrase comes from Hunt, Russell A.: 'Speech Genres, Writing Genres, School Genres and Computer Genres.' In: *Learning and Teaching Genre*. Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, eds. Portsmouth: Heinemann 1992, pp. 12-38. The other phrase is taken from Martin, James M.: *English Text: System and Structure*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins 1992. p. 45. Bakhtin's words come from 'Discourse in the Novel', p. 288.

²⁵ Bakhtin, M.: 'The Problem of Speech Genres'. p. 87.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 61-62.

²⁸ Giltrow, Janet: 'Meta-genre'. In: *The Rhetoric and Ideology of Genre: Strategies for Stability and Change*. Richard Coe, Lorelie Lingard and Tatiana Teslenko, eds. Cresskill: Hampton 2002. p. 98.

²⁹ Burckhardt, Olivier: 'Genre beyond the Noun'. p.78.

as 'a classification system deriving from literary and rhetorical criticism than names types of texts according to their forms'; or, in other words, as a 'recognizable and established category of written [or orally delivered] work employing such common conventions as will prevent readers or audiences from mistaking it for another kind'³⁰. The Aristotelian blueprint distinguishing major literary genres (the lyric, epic and drama) according to various manners of imitation, has proliferated through the centuries, and at some point, as Burckhardt says, served as a 'straightjacket of the Romantic triad,' 'constraining and inhibiting authorial creativity'³¹. That was connected with genre's proscriptive nature, its norms and interdictions. 'As soon as the word genre is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one attempts to conceive it,' Derrida notes, 'a limit is drawn'³².

The limits and limitations of genre and the classical rigid generic scheme applied to literature, which, according to Richard Coe, imposed the 'tyranny of genre', eventually turned into an 'infinitely modifiable classification scheme'³³. Imperfect though it can be, the generic divisions that sprouted from the original tripartite division have engendered taxonomy applicable not merely to literature and popular fiction, non-fiction, scientific, legal and daily language use, but also to virtually all forms of communication, outside literary and rhetorical modes, according to the Bakhtinian concept of speech genres³⁴. The genres of extraliterary discursive media, for instance, include today, among others, advertisements, political speeches, small talk, nursery rhymes, laboratory reports, private and business correspondence, papal encyclicals, medical history records, forwarded e-jokes, blog, spam and splog.

Genre is omnipresent in society in both synchronic and diachronic ways and proves to be 'a social action'³⁵. Carolyn Miller, who adopts a socio-cultural and rhetorical perspective on genre, notes that the recurrence of social situations and actions is what predominantly determines genre, for genres are 'an open class with new members evolving, old ones decaying', which serves as a 'key to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community'³⁶. 'The mode of existence of genres is social,' says Frow³⁷. Developing the semiotic approach to genre, as taken by Bakhtin for the 'revelatory' purpose of 'demystifying society', Northrop Frye ob-

³⁰ Devitt, Amy J.: *Writing Genres*. p. 42. (the first definition quoted above). Baldick, Chris, ed.: *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford UP 2008. p. 140. (the other above-mentioned definition).

³¹ Burckhardt, O.: 'Genre beyond the Noun'. p.79.

³² Derrida, Jacques: 'The Law of Genre'. In: *Acts of Literature*. Derek Attridge, ed. London: Routledge 1992. pp. 223–231.

³³ Coe, Richard M.: 'An Arousing and Fulfillment of Desire': The Rhetoric of Genre in the Process Era - and Beyond.' In: *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, eds. London: Taylor & Francis 1994. pp. 181–190. The other quote comes from Devitt, A. J.: *Writing Genres*. P. 40.

³⁴ Burckhardt, O.: 'Genre beyond the Noun'. pp.78–79. Devitt, A. J.: *Writing Genres*. P. 4.

³⁵ Cf. Miller, Carolyn. 'Genre as Social Action.' pp. 151–167.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 165.

³⁷ Frow, J.: *Genre*. p. 69.

serves likewise that 'literary experience is only the visible tip of the verbal iceberg: below it is a subliminal area of rhetorical response, addressed by advertising, social assumptions, and casual conversation'³⁸. 'A genre, whether literary or not,' concludes Tzvetan Todorov, 'is nothing other than the codification of discursive properties' that are inherent to human culture, whose basic mode is communication³⁹. Endorsing a semiotic view of culture, Umberto Eco observes, in turn, that every cultural phenomenon can be studied as communication⁴⁰. Thus, genre is a function of culture, and all 'literary genres originate, quite simply, in human discourse'⁴¹. Genre conditions communication in society, for 'the system of generic expectations amounts to a code, by the use of which (or by departure from which) composition becomes more economical', to the effect that genres serve as a kind of 'shorthand to increase the "efficiency" of communication'⁴².

Genre facilitates classification and categorization, and promotes order; therefore, it reduces complexity and helps construct meaning. As James Martin claims, it is genres that make meaning; as 'they are not simply a set of formal structures into which meaning is poured'⁴³. Genre awareness conditions understanding of modern language use, yet it may not always be easily gained, for the term 'genre' in English embraces both broad and narrow categories of language (and non-verbal expression, as employed by visual arts and music), and is often far from transparent or clear-cut. The confusion surrounding the term reigns in the absence of uniform rules, as the notion of genre is employed simultaneously to mark the basic modes of literary art (lyric, narrative, dramatic), the broad categories of composition (poetry, prose), as well as more specific groups delineated according to various criteria, including: the formal structure of the text (e.g., sonnet, business memo), length (e.g., epigram, advertising slogan), intention (e.g., satire, burlesque), effect (e.g., comedy), origin (e.g. folktale), and subject matter (e.g., pastoral, science fiction, laboratory report)⁴⁴. While some genres follow numerous rules governing subject matter, style and form, others, such as the novel, do not seem to observe any stringent rules⁴⁵.

Thus genre means vast categories of literature (poetry, drama, prose), rather specific forms (e.g., miracle play), loosely defined forms or attitudes (e.g. pastoral, satire) or a capacity to be applied to other generic labels within a period (e.g. Eliza-

³⁸ The quote concerning Bakhtin's theory is by Chandler, Daniel: *Semiotics for Beginners*. London: Routledge 2001. p. 21. The other is by Frye, Northrop: *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton UP 2000. (updated ed.) p. 350.

³⁹ Todorov, Tzvetan: *Genres in Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1990. p. 77.

⁴⁰ Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics (Advances in Semiotics)*. Bloomington: Indiana UP 1976. p. ix.

⁴¹ Todorov, T.: *Genres in Discourse*. p. 69.

⁴² Fowler, Alastair: 'Genre.' In: *International Encyclopedia of Communications*. Vol. 2. Erik Barnouw, ed. Oxford: Oxford UP 1989. p. 215.

Chandler, Daniel: 'An Introduction to Genre Theory'. p. 2.

⁴³ Martin, James R.: *English Text: System and Structure*. p. 40.

⁴⁴ Baldick, C., ed.: *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. p.140.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.140.

bethan tragi-comedy)⁴⁶. As Hopkins explains, 'the complexity of genre stems precisely from the fact that genre is not actually a single unified system, (...) and that genres convey information of several sorts about texts, formal features, inherent features, probable features, length of lineage, membership of a classic form, hybridity, content, mass culture or high culture, continuities and differences, place in literary history, characteristics at a general level, characteristics at a very specific level'⁴⁷. Some troubling dichotomies that result from the splits between form and content, text and context, process and product, individual and society, only add to the possible confusion⁴⁸. To illustrate genre's translucence and 'to show how genre ambiguously mediates and defines the inner and outer boundary' of text, Frow suggests a model of a picture-frame. Accordingly, genre serves as a frame that demarcates a particular piece of verbal (or non-verbal) information, and delineates its limits from among open-ended realm of language (music or arts), leaving at the same time much room for the choice of content, style, technique and the author's other personal idiosyncrasies⁴⁹.

Burckhardt, in turn, develops a more complex and dynamic metaphor, namely that of a window-frame, which, 'with its added dimension of depth, brings the possibility of multiple perspectives'⁵⁰. Justifying the validity of this metaphor, Burckhardt explains that regardless of the position of the viewer, who can be standing inside or outside and may look at different angles, various elements will be brought into view through the frame; 'thus although a window is static, what is framed depends on where we stand in relation to it'⁵¹. The same is true of genre, Burckhardt argues: its limits seem to impose some rigid ramification, yet, on closer inspection, the generic frame appears arbitrary, multilayered or loosely codified, and sometimes escapes hard and fast rules⁵². 'It is not any classification system *per se* that is important,' he concludes, 'but the structure of relationship and dynamic interrelationships' that make a given piece of language 'resonate with one or several strands of a tradition and simultaneously alter our perception of that tradition', whereby the notion of genre can be shaped⁵³.

Genre awareness imposes some natural limitations on constructing meaning of a text, and raises expectations which, when confronted with a text, can be disappointed and confounded. Hence, as some critics claim, genre might appear as an 'agent of ideological closure' and a restraint which affects the 'meaning-potential of a given text', impairing rather than enhancing text interpretation and author-

⁴⁶ Hopkins, C.: *Thinking about Texts*. p.155.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.155.

⁴⁸ Devitt, A.: *Writing Genres*. p. 9.

⁴⁹ Frow, J.: *Genre*. p. 32.

⁵⁰ Burckhardt, O.: 'Genre beyond the Noun'. p. 78.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 78.

⁵² Burckhardt, O. 'Genre beyond the Noun'. pp. 78–79.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 78-79.

recipient communication⁵⁴. Much criticism has been centred on genre artificiality and its formulaic prescriptiveness, as well as its depreciation of authorial creativity. The methodic nature of genre may indeed seem an encumbrance, yet, at the same time, it often catalyzes communication, providing a common denominator that enhances linguistic, social and cultural interaction between the author and the recipient or user of the text.

Confusing and artificial though it may appear, genre functions as a 'typical form of text which links kinds of producer, consumer, topic, medium, manner and occasion', and which 'controls the behaviour of producers of such texts, and the expectations of potential consumers'⁵⁵. It conditions 'constituting a tacit contract between authors and readers'⁵⁶. Thus, on the one hand, genre facilitates communication and introduces order; on the other hand, however, due to its considerable conceptual multidimensionality and capacity and no great consistency, it may create misperception. 'When readers and writers match genre and situation differently – confusion is likely to occur – not because the reader is not able to label the genre but because the reader is not sure of the writer's purpose or the reader's role – hence the reader is not sure of the situation'⁵⁷.

What is more, complications arise from the fact that generic labels refer to very different information about texts, whose categories may overlap or contradict one another. For instance, it can be hard to classify Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* along with Lev Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* or J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, all three texts having been labelled by some critics eponymous epic novels. Similarly, it seems a foolhardy task to compare James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* with Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, despite some shared qualities of a comic novel. There are many texts that bear the generic label of the novel but have few formal markers specific of the genre. Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate* (written in rhyming verse form) and John Fuller's *Flying to Nowhere* (written in highly poetic prose) are only two examples of novels whose discourse owes much to poetry.

The fluidity of genre boundaries and fuzziness of generic distinctions result from the fact that 'genres are not discrete systems, consisting of a fixed number of listable items', nor do they adhere to rigid rules of inclusion and exclusion⁵⁸. Generic 'disobedience' entailing recombination and crossing-over is quite a frequent phenomenon in literature and other discursive media, exemplified by various intergeneric texts. However, if a work 'disobeys its genre, it does not mean that the genre does not exist,' remarks Tzvetan Todorov⁵⁹. Actually, 'it is tempting to say –

⁵⁴ O'Sullivan, Tim, et al.: *Key Concepts in Communication*. London: Routledge 1994, p. 128.

⁵⁵ Hodge, Robert, Gunther, Kress: *Social Semiotics*. London: Polity Press 1988, p. 7.

⁵⁶ Chandler, Daniel: 'An Introduction to Genre Theory'. p. 4.

⁵⁷ Devitt, A.J.: *Writing Genres*. p. 22.

⁵⁸ Gledhill, Christine: 'Genre'. In: *The Cinema Book*. Pam Cook, ed. London: British Film Institute 1985. p. 64.

⁵⁹ Todorov, T.: *Genres in Discourse*. p. 14.

on the contrary', he adds, for exceptions tend to prove the rule. If there were no generic expectations and norms, then no irregularities, exceptions or deviations would be identified, a peculiar instance of which is the novel⁶⁰. By the same token, Maurice Blanchot says, 'in the novelistic literature and perhaps in all literature, we could never recognize the rule except by the exception that abolishes the rule – or, more precisely, that dislodges the centre of which that certain work is the uncertain affirmation, the already destructive manifestation, the momentary and soon-to-be negative presence'⁶¹.

That many novelistic texts constitute the 'uncertain affirmation' or the 'already destructive manifestation' of the genre may be true because, as Bakhtin argued in the 1930s, 'the novel is [probably still] the sole genre that continues to develop, [and] that is as yet uncompleted'⁶². Therefore, 'it reflects more deeply, more essentially, more sensitively and rapidly, reality itself in the process of its unfolding', as 'only that which is itself developing can comprehend development as a process'⁶³. The dynamic potential of the novel owes its flexibility to the dialogic complexity of this genre, explains Bakhtin⁶⁴. The novel is the first genre to have 'appropriated a zone of contact with the present in all its open-endedness', whereas other genres, insofar as they resemble the novel, are following the suit and 'becoming dialogized,' till 'finally – this is the most important thing – the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic open-endedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality (the open-ended present)'⁶⁵. Bakhtin suggests that this 'zone for structuring literary images – the zone of maximal contact with the present', together with the 'stylistic three-dimensionality linked with the multi-linguaged consciousness,' as well as 'the radical change the novel effects in the temporal coordinates of the literary image,' is what distinguishes the novel from other genres⁶⁶.

Genres permeate one another in the way languages interact and influence one another in 'an actively polyglot world,' Bakhtin says, which resembles a 'process of active, mutual cause-and-effect interillumination'⁶⁷. Sharing and borrowing generic qualities allows for the 'interillumination' and cross-breeding, exemplified by the evolution of the novel, which has assimilated many attributes of other genres. Bakhtin accounts for the considerable flexibility and popularity of the novel claim-

⁶⁰ Todorov, T.: *Genres in Discourse*, p. 14.

⁶¹ Blanchot, Maurice: *The Space of Literature*. Transl. by Ann Smock. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1989. pp. 133–134.

⁶² Bakhtin, M. M.: 'The Epic and the Novel: Towards a Methodology for the Study in the Novel'. In: *The Dialogic Imagination*. Transl. by Caryl Emerson, Michael Holquist. Michael Holquist, ed. Austin: University of Texas Press 1981. p. 3–40.

⁶³ Bakhtin, *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

ing that the other genres were formed in the 'eras of closed and deaf monoglossia' of the narrative; the novel, however, 'in contrast to other major genres, (...) emerged and matured precisely when intense activization of external and internal polyglossia was at the peak of its activity; [hence] this is its native element'⁶⁸. Polyglossia, closest to daily communication and reality, and best illustrated by the novel's dialogic discourse and multitude of voices (the narrator's or narrators', characters', author's), is what enabled the novel to 'assume leadership in the process of developing and renewing literature in its linguistic and stylistic dimension'⁶⁹. Bakhtin contrasts the novel with the epic: while the former thrives on diversity, he argues, the latter attempts to decrease it⁷⁰. The uniqueness of the novel and its domination in the postmodern culture, despite the claims of its death and deterioration, depend on the 'voracious' capacity of the novel, which can embrace, draw from, digest and devour other genres without losing its status and identity; a feat that other genres cannot perform⁷¹.

The inherent impurity and ambiguity of genre and generic boundaries and the position of the novel among other genres is what Jacques Derrida highlights as well, applying the deconstructivist perspective. He argues that

the designation of the novel should be marked in one way or another, even if it does not appear in the explicit form of a sub-titled designation, and even if it proves deceptive or ironic. This designation is not novelistic; it does not, in whole or in part, take part in the corpus whose denomination it nevertheless imparts. Nor is it simply extraneous to the corpus. But this singular *topos* places within and without the work, along its boundary, an inclusion and exclusion with regard to genre in general... it gathers together the corpus and, at the same time, ... keeps it from closing, from identifying itself with itself⁷².

Chris Hopkins expands on that paradox posed by Derrida, suggesting that 'the marking of generic membership within texts is itself an impurity', because 'if generic markers indicate membership of a set, they cannot, by virtue of their role as an indicator of membership, themselves be part of the set' whose boundaries they demarcate⁷³. The generic boundary, therefore, according to Derrida, is not fixed within the genre but rather makes a 'larger pocket'; nevertheless, it delineates where the genre begins and ends⁷⁴. Hopkins illustrates Derrida's argument by means of the idea of sets shown in a Venn diagram. The first smallest set represents a genre; the second, which stands for the 'larger pocket', features the generic boundary; and the largest, enveloping the other two sets, corresponds to all the other genres (fig. 1)⁷⁵.

⁶⁸ Bakhtin, M.M.: 'The Epic and the Novel'. p. 12.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

⁷⁰ Bakhtin, *ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 17. Some critics and philosophers who predicted the death of the novel are: José Ortega y Gasset, Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes, Tom Wolfe, Robert B. Pippin.

⁷² Derrida, Jacques: 'The Law of Genre'. p. 228.

⁷³ Hopkins, C.: *Thinking about Texts*, p. 190.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 190.

⁷⁵ Hopkins, C.: *Thinking about Texts*, p. 190.

According to Derrida, the zones between a genre itself and its boundary, as well as between that boundary and other genres, and, consequently, their boundaries, certainly exist but seem to escape firm demarcation⁷⁶. As the figure modelled on Derrida's theory and visualized by Hopkins demonstrates (fig. 1), a genre is delineated from among other genres, yet, at the same time, remains embedded in their realm. The paradox of Derrida's proposition is, therefore, that 'all genres are mixed because genres are not to be mixed'⁷⁷.

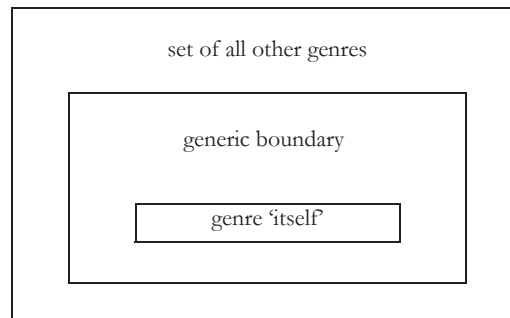


Fig. 1.

Hopkins explains Derrida's apparently self-contradictory idea referring to the example of the novel: the novel is designated as such by generic markers which are not themselves novelistic; for instance, a subtitle 'a novel', provided by an author, is a genre marker, but is not itself a feature to be found within a novel⁷⁸. The generic marker distinguishes the novel from other genres but does not belong to the genre itself. Thus, a genre is 'never a finite set', as it 'always contains the impurity of its own generic markers'⁷⁹. Since a genre is enveloped by other genres, family resemblances among genres are possible⁸⁰. As to genre markers, they are 'neither inside nor outside texts, but in a blurred [fuzzy] boundary set participating in the genre itself, but not belonging to it'⁸¹. According to Derrida, Hopkins concludes his commentary, genre is a 'system with a systematic flaw', as 'no text is ever straightforwardly describable in generic terms'⁸².

Derrida's theory reveals much of genre's nature, yet is also raises several problems and controversies, for instance the question: what constitutes the genre itself, as well as the original text and its meaning, once all generic markers have been ex-

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 189.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 190.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 191.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 191.

⁸⁰ Swales, John: *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1990. p. 49.

⁸¹ Hopkins, C.: *Thinking about Texts*. p. 191.

⁸² Ibid., p. 191.

cluded?⁸³ And another query: is there anything in the text that is not somehow a generic marker? The answers might perhaps be found among novels, but when one regards poetry, it could be hard to decide which part of a poem is not a generic marker nor an indicator of its membership in a given genre, for example in a sonnet⁸⁴. The paradox of Derrida's argument and the fluidity of the boundary between texts and their generic markers can perhaps be traced back to Bakhtin's general observations about the nature of an utterance, such as text. 'Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear,' Bakhtin remarks, so that 'the process of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance'⁸⁵. As an instance and unit of genre, text is hence the realm where opposite forces interact and contradictory processes occur, which finds its reflection in the dialogic fuzziness of genre.

Bakhtin also mentions some other important boundaries which affect genre; namely these between 'two consciousnesses': the approach of an author to their text, and the approach of a recipient or critic to the text:

the event of the life of the text, that is, its true essence, always develops on the boundary between two consciousnesses, two subjects. The transcription of thinking in the human sciences is always the transcription of special kind of dialogue: the complex interrelations between the text (the object of study and reflection) and the created, framing context (questioning, refuting, and so forth) in which the scholar's cognizing and evaluating thought takes place. This is the meeting of two texts - of the ready-made and the reactive text being created - and consequently, the meeting of two subjects and two authors⁸⁶.

Text is the natural realm of encounter between the author's and recipient's interpretations and consciousnesses that result from genre expectations and genre awareness, but before the author creates the text and addresses it to recipients, she or he needs to face and determine their position on generic conventions and antecedent texts. Gledhill notes that 'whilst writing within a genre involves making use of certain "given" conventions, every work within a genre (...) involves the invention of some new elements' that are produced by the author's 'creative tension' with the conventions, and their 'attempt at a personal inflection of them'⁸⁷. Another 'creative tension' grows when the recipient, having genre savvy and expectations about the given text, faces the author's utterance and makes their own interpretation of it. 'On the one hand, writers write in function of (which does not mean in agreement with) the existing generic system... On the other hand, readers read in function of the generic system, with which they are familiar thanks to criticism,

⁸³ Ibid., p. 191.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 191.

⁸⁵ Bakhtin, M. M.: *The Dialogic Imagination*. p. 272.

⁸⁶ Bakhtin, M. M.: *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1984. pp. 106–107.

⁸⁷ Gledhill, C.: 'Genre'. p. 65.

schools, the book distribution system, or simply by hearsay', remarks Todorov⁸⁸. Steve Neale, in turn, suggests that 'genres are not systems' at all: they are 'processes of systematization' based on the reciprocal negotiation between the makers and the interpreters⁸⁹.

Vague and fluid though it may seem, genre is not, of course, too imprecise or random a concept to be deemed invalid. It is, none the less, fairly complex, and its complexity stems from the nexus of connections among subject matter, form, content, period, purpose, social context, authorial inflections, rhetorical situation, readers' or interpreters' reception and categorization, intertextual relations among texts and intergeneric 'breeding'. It all amounts to the fact that 'genre is not ... simply given by the culture: rather, it is in constant process of negotiation and change'⁹⁰. It is possible that the same text belongs to different genres in different countries or times⁹¹. 'Genres permit variation' and 'must adapt to variation,' says Devitt, like all living entities, for they have long been 'seen metaphorically as having lives; being born, growing and sometimes dying'⁹². 'To persist in paying attention to genres may seem to be a vain if not anachronistic pastime today,' as many genres 'seem to be coming undone', observes Todorov; yet genres are still thriving and evolving⁹³. A controversial statement announcing the opposite was once made about the death of the novel, which, to some critics, is imminent, as the novel has expired as a novel genre; whereas to others, it flourishes and still represents, as Bakhtin noted nearly a century ago, the most dynamic and adaptable genre nowadays⁹⁴.

Anis Bawarshi proposes a different interpretation of genres, arguing that they should be approached as an ecosystem, a lively and interdependent entity in which communication recreates genres as well as genres recreate communication, some genres dying a natural death, new ones developing⁹⁵. The evolutionary and quasi-biological nature of genres appears also in Todorov's theory. 'Where do genres come from?' he asks and responds, 'quite simply: from other genres. A new genre is always the transformation of an earlier one, or of several: by inversion, by dis-

⁸⁸ Todorov, T.: *Genres in Discourse*, pp. 18–19.

⁸⁹ Neale, Steve, ed. *Genre and Contemporary Hollywood*. London: British Film Institute 2002. p. 5.

⁹⁰ Buckingham, David: *Children Talking Television: The Making of Television Literacy*. London: Falmer 1993. p. 137.

⁹¹ Hartley, John, Tim, O'Sullivan, et al. eds. *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*. p. 129.

⁹² Devitt, A.: *Writing Genres*. p. 88.

⁹³ Todorov, T.: *Genres in Discourse*, p. 21.

⁹⁴ Some of the critics who envisaged the crisis or the death of the novel are: José Ortega y Gasset - *Decline of the Novel* (1925), Walter Benjamin - *Crisis of the Novel* (1930), as well as Gore Vidal, Roland Barthes, John Barth, Tom Wolfe, and Italo Calvino. Others, for example Kathleen Fitzpatrick, claim that these predictions are dire and inaccurate (*The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television*, 2006).

⁹⁵ Bawarshi, Anis. 'The Ecology of Genre'. In: *Ecomposition: Theoretical and Pedagogical Approaches*. Christian R. Weisser and Sydney I. Dobrin, eds. Albany: Suny Press 2001. pp. 69–80.

placement, by combination... There has never been a literature without genres'⁹⁶. The longevity of genres is ensured when genres are 'flexible synchronically and changeable diachronically', says Chandler; therefore, as Frow, Jauss and Todorov seem to agree, 'genres should be taken as a historically changing system rather than as logical order'⁹⁷.

That genres can be lively and robust diachronically is possible, as they undergo constant renewal through processes of specialization and recombination, but it is also natural that some genres do not survive and may only be partially traceable in others. Generic vigour and multitude that mark contemporary communication result from the (frequently random and spontaneous) processes of hybridization, genre switching and adaptation – the common phenomena that extend the existing genre scheme and offer a whole gamut of new possibilities. Hybrid genres abound today and mixed-genre works are far from uncommon, as genres are becoming increasingly blurred, some mass media examples of which include infotainment, edutainment, tryvertising, doc musicals and cinematic poems⁹⁸. Generic cross-breeding is such a widespread phenomenon in all discursive media that it shapes the nature of genre itself, adding to its flexibility and mutability. That is why contemporary theories view genre as a vigorous concept, whose both function and form are dynamic, yet whose fluidity does not apparently lead to 'the final demise of genre as an interpretive framework'⁹⁹.

The vigour and interrelatedness of genres result from the fact that 'genres are not free-standing entities, but are actually intimately connected and interactive amongst themselves'¹⁰⁰. This somehow modifies Frow's and Burckhardt's frame-like models of genre, for 'none [of genres] is clearly defined at the edges, but rather fades into one another,' Chandler observes¹⁰¹. Thus, as Swales adds, some genres appear as 'prototypical', that is classical examples of their formal markers, with strictly defined rules and boundaries, whereas others, as Chandler continues, prove to be 'looser', more open-ended in their conventions or more permeable in their boundaries' than the prototypes¹⁰². Therefore, many genres appear as 'fuzzy' systems rather than fairly inflexible frames. Generic fuzziness is also the consequence of the loosely defined differences among genres and the fact that 'an individual text within a genre rarely if ever has all of the characteristic features of the genre'¹⁰³. That is why, as Derrida argues, 'every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text, there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation

⁹⁶ Todorov, T.: *Genres in Discourse*. p. 16.

⁹⁷ Chandler, D.: 'An Introduction to Genre Theory', p. 11. Frow, J. *Genre*. P. 70. Cf. Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. (1982) and Todorov, T.: *Genres in Discourse*. (1990).

⁹⁸ Fairclough, Norman. *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold 1995. p. 88.

⁹⁹ Chandler, D.: 'An Introduction to Genre Theory'. p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ Devitt, A.: *Writing Genres*. p. 14.

¹⁰¹ Chandler, D.: 'An Introduction to Genre Theory'. p. 7.

¹⁰² Swales, J.: *Genre Analysis*. p. 49. Chandler, D.: 'An Introduction to Genre Theory'. p. 10.

¹⁰³ Fowler, Alastair: 'Genre.' p. 215.

never amounts to belonging. And not because of an abundant overflowing or a free, anarchic and unclassifiable productivity, but because of the trait of participation itself ... in marking itself generically, a text unmarks itself¹⁰⁴.

Generic affiliations and coalescence is what Derrida sees as the source of the generic embedment – a genre is enveloped by the set of all other genres, as Hopkins's figure above represents. One may wonder whether the study of genres can be sustainable if genres tend to be amalgamates and if they 'unmark' themselves by 'marking' their generic properties and participating in other genres, as Derrida claims¹⁰⁵. The fluidity and prolific cross-breeding of genres beg more questions and raise more doubts, which are still waiting to be resolved, for instance: 'Is there a finite taxonomy of genres or are they in principle infinite? Are genres timeless Platonic essences or ephemeral, time-bound entities? Are genres culture-bound or transcultural? Should genre analysis be descriptive or proscriptive?'¹⁰⁶

There seems to be no definitive agreement among critics and scholars addressing genre as to what the answers to these questions are, however, what most of the experts agree on is that today's miscellany of generically heterogeneous texts and cross-genre works constitutes a sign of the times – a landmark of postmodernity, ancient though genre blending is. 'The nature of our world, fluid and inconstant, requires that we understand genre as dynamic,' Devitt notes, for 'the fluid world requires fluid genres, categorized differently according to different purposes'¹⁰⁷. Clifford Geertz observes that 'it is not that we no longer have conventions of interpretation; we have more than ever, built – often enough jerry-built – to accommodate a situation at once fluid, plural, uncentred, and ineradicably untidy'¹⁰⁸. An interesting case of hybrid genres is, for instance, the literary legacy of Charles Williams (1886–1945), an English writer, poet and playwright, and a lesser-known Inklings. His novels, mixing Christianity with the occult, magical and demonic, convey his theory of Romantic theology, and blend reality with fantasy, religion with myth, allegory with the literal, as well as the physical and bodily with the spiritual and mystical. Williams's arguably best novel, *Descent into Hell* (1937), appears, for instance, to be a morality drama in a novelistic frame, a 'spiritual thriller' and a 'Christian shocker' challenging most generic conventions; 'it is satire, romance, thriller, morality, and glimpses of eternity all rolled into one'¹⁰⁹. Written in the inter-war period, the text seems to be one of those that anticipated the post-modern free treatment of genre, favouring hybrids and startling amalgams of generic markers. If

¹⁰⁴ Derrida, J. 'The Law of Genre'. p. 225.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁰⁶ Stam, Robert: *Film Theory: An Introduction*. p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ Devitt, A.: *Writing Genres*. p. 90.

¹⁰⁸ Geertz, Clifford, 'Blurred Genres: the Refiguration of Social Thought'. In: *The American Scholar*, vol. 49 no. 2 (1980), pp. 165–179.

¹⁰⁹ The last phrase comes from the book jacket review by The New York Times. Williams, Charles: *Descent into Hell*. London: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1999.

composed with skill, such texts are not chimeras but rather ingenious compilations of genres best suited to rendering the writer's thought and style.

The 'untidiness' and blurredness of the postmodern landscape accommodate well generic fuzziness. Since postmodernity is the era of simulation and dissolution, as Baudrillard says, and of hazy borderlines between the signs and reality, the reification of objects, that is making objects real and concrete, is often impossible¹¹⁰. This might also account for the increasingly vague and mixed nature of genres in discursive media, and, particularly, in literature, for texts may be interpreted as simulacra of original genres, the latter becoming less and less real and accessible. Simulacrum, a term introduced by Jean Baudrillard, is a 'sign' which refers to and often replaces the Real in the process of simulation¹¹¹. The postmodern culture, according to Baudrillard, is marked by the 'third order simulacrum', the most advanced stage of simulation, whereby 'the copy precedes and determines the Real, and there is no longer any distinction between reality and its representation, for the simulacrum has destroyed the Real'¹¹². If this transformation were to be applied to the relationship between genre – representing 'the Real', and text – simulating the genre as its 'copy', it would imply that in the postmodern era genres have dwindled away, having been virtually obliterated by their hyperreal representations. Baudrillard proposes also a four-phase description of simulation, that is the process of simulacrum-making, the last stage of which could probably illustrate the nature of postmodernity, in the aftermath of which the sign, image (or any utterance of communication, such as, in this case – text) bears no resemblance to reality whatsoever, and becomes its own pure simulacrum¹¹³. Thus, if Baudrillard's analysis of simulation is germane to the interpretation of the evolution of genres and texts, one might venture to conclude that contemporary genres have lost their embedment in genres and no longer reflect the 'real' genres but merely simulate themselves. Hence, the ancient order of genres, standing for 'reality' in this context, has been in fact destroyed and replaced by its simulacra, which have ceased to simulate genres and are now only simulacra of themselves.

This paper makes no pretensions of introducing the problem of genre as it exists in the postmodern culture, nor does it do justice to the wealth of genre theories popular in the contemporary criticism. It ought to extend into an analysis of some texts representing the fuzziness of postmodern genres and perhaps illustrating the processes of simulation between genre, the 'profound reality', and text, as its simulation that ceases to simulate genre¹¹⁴. Considering the ubiquitous nature of genres

¹¹⁰ Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Transl. by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1994. p. 33.

¹¹¹ Baudrillard, J.: *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. Transl. by Iain Hamilton Grant. Washington: Sage Publications 1993.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 35.

¹¹³ Baudrillard, J.: 'The Precession of Simulacra'. In: *Simulacra and Simulation*. p. 6.

¹¹⁴ The term 'profound reality' comes from Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, p. 6.

in contemporary culture and everyday life, and their crucial role in communication, one may wonder, however, whether genres have become unreal and anachronistic, and whether they have been completely eradicated in the process of simulation. An analysis of several sample cases of fuzzy hybrid genres in contemporary literature, with their dialogic polyglossia, intertextuality and simulacra, which ought to follow this theoretical overview, shall fill another paper.

Bibliography

- Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich: 'The Problem of Speech Genres'. In: *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Transl. by Vern W. McGee. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press 1986. pp. 60–102.
- Bakhtin, M. M.: 'Discourse in the Novel'. In: *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Michael Holquist, ed. Transl. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press 1981. pp. 259–422.
- Bakhtin, M. M.: 'The Epic and the Novel: Towards a Methodology for the Study in the Novel'. In: *The Dialogic Imagination*. Michael Holquist, ed. Austin: University of Texas Press 1981. p. 3–40.
- Bakhtin, M. M.: *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Transl. by Caryl Emerson, ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1988.
- Baldick, Chris, ed.: *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford UP 2008.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Transl. by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1994.
- Baudrillard, J. *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. Transl. by Iain Hamilton Grant. Washington: Sage Publications 1993.
- Bawarshi, Anis. 'The Ecology of Genre'. In: *Ecocomposition: Theoretical and Pedagogical Approaches*. Christian R. Weisser and Sydney I. Dobrin, eds. Albany: Suny Press 2001.
- Blanchot, Maurice: *The Space of Literature*. Transl. by Ann Smock. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1989.
- Buckingham, David: *Children Talking Television: The Making of Television Literacy*. London: Falmer 1993.
- Burckhardt, Olivier: 'Genre beyond the Noun: a Review of John Frow's *Genre*'. In: *Poetry Nation* 33:6 (2007), Manchester: Carcanet Press 2007. pp. 78–80.
- Chandler, Daniel: *Semiotics for Beginners*. London: Routledge 2001.
- Coe, Richard M.: '"An Arousing and Fulfillment of Desire": The Rhetoric of Genre in the Process Era – and Beyond'. In: *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, eds. London: Taylor & Francis 1994. pp. 181–190.
- Derrida, Jacques: 'The Law of Genre'. In: *Acts of Literature*. Transl. by Avital Ronnel. Derek Attridge, ed. London: Routledge 1992. pp. 223–231.
- Devitt, Amy J.: *Writing Genres*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP 2004.

- Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics (Advances in Semiotics)*. Bloomington: Indiana UP 1976.
- Fairclough, Norman. *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold 1995.
- Feuer, Jane: 'Genre Study and Television'. In: *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*. Robert C Allen, ed. London: Routledge 1992.
- Fowler, Alastair: 'Genre'. In: *International Encyclopedia of Communications*. Vol. 2. Erik Barnouw, ed. Oxford: Oxford UP 1989.
- Frow, John: *Genre*. London: Routledge 2006.
- Frye, Northrop: *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton UP 2000.
- Geertz, Clifford, 'Blurred Genres: the Refiguration of Social Thought'. In: *The American Scholar*, vol. 49 no. 2 (1980), pp. 165–179.
- Giltrow, Janet: 'Meta-genre'. In: *The Rhetoric and Ideology of Genre: Strategies for Stability and Change*. Richard Coe, Lorelie Lingard and Tatiana Teslenko, eds. Cresskill: Hampton 2002.
- Gledhill, Christine: 'Genre'. In: *The Cinema Book*. Pam Cook, ed. London: British Film Institute 1985.
- Hodge, Robert, Gunther, Kress: *Social Semiotics*. London: Polity Press 1988.
- Hopkins, Chris: *Thinking about Texts*. New York: Palgrave 2001.
- Hunt, Russell A.: 'Speech Genres, Writing Genres, School Genres and Computer Genres.' In: *Learning and Teaching Genre*. Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, eds. Portsmouth: Heinemann 1992, pp. 12–38.
- Martin, James M.: *English Text: System and Structure*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins 1992.
- Miller, Carolyn: 'Genre as Social Action'. In: *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 70 (1984) pp. 151–167.
- Neale, Steve, ed. *Genre and Contemporary Hollywood*. London: British Film Institute 2002.
- O'Sullivan, Tim, John Hartley, et al.: *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge 1994.
- Russell, David: 'Rethinking Genre in School and Society'. In: *Written Communication* (1997). vol. 14, pp. 4504–554.
- Stam, Robert: *Film Theory: an Introduction*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell 2000.
- Swales, John: *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1990.
- Todorov, Tzvetan: *Genres in Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1990.
- Williams, Charles: *Descent into Hell*. London: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1999.

Internet resources

- Chandler, Daniel: 'An Introduction to Genre Theory'. <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/intgenre/intgenre.html>, retrieved 20 June 2011.