

Nov 14 -- Gridding “Genre and Social Construction” from a Postmodern Perspective

Text, Author, Date	What is the relationship of language to discourse?	What is the relationship of genre to social criticism?	What is the relationship of genre to knowledge (making)?	What is the relationship of genre to community formation?	Where is the (student) writer’s/communicator’s exigence located?
Carolyn Miller “Genre as Social Action” 1985	Discourse operates on a higher level of her hierarchy of meaning than language, which is near the bottom. That is, she might say that language itself is only one component that contributes to meaning in larger discursive structures. Genres are completed discourses and that completion is signaled by a shift in rhetorical situation. Classification is necessary to language and learning (152), which could imply that language is necessary for knowing and repeating genres, for turning genres into knowledge. She definitely builds away from purely linguistic ideas about genre constitution (such as Fisher’s 4 four levels) (154), but still relies on language as central to discourse.	“For the critic, genres can serve both as an index to cultural patterns and as tools for exploring the achievements of particular speakers and writers...” Classifications and distinctions based on form and substance have told us much about sentimentalism, women’s liberation, and doctrinal movements, for example (155).	Miller discusses that the practice of engaged in typified rhetorical actions creates knowledge about those actions (155) Borrowing from Alfred Schutz, Miller notes that “it is possible to arrive at common determinations of material states of affairs that may have many possible interpretations” because, as Schultz argues, our “stock of knowledge” is based upon types (157). “Our stock of knowledge is useful only insofar as it can be brought to bear upon new experience: the new is made familiar through the recognition of relevant similarities; those similarities become constituted as a type” (156-157) “Exigence is a form of social knowledge...”(157)	Situations for Miller are seen as “social constructs that are the result, not of ‘perception’ but of definition” (156). ...for the student, genres serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community (165). For Miller, the rhetorical situation is “a social construct, or semiotic structure” (157). In this sense, Exigence is seen as “located within the social world, neither in a private perception nor in material circumstance”(157) Communities are good for reinforcing rules of genre use, too (i.e., “rules” = the means by which genres can become interpretable)	Exigence is a social motive, located in the social world. It is not private and it is not a material circumstance. She calls exigence “a form of social knowledge—a mutual construing of objects, events, interests, and purposes that not only links them but also makes them what they are: an objectified social need” (157). Inside as well as outside the writer: Genre can be a means for “mediating private intentions” as well as “social exigence” (163)
Miller’s definition of genre (stated or unstated): - Genre as “pragmatic, fully rhetorical, a point of connection between intention and effect, an aspect of social action” (153). She goes on to say Genre can be seen as “typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations” (159). - Genre is action (152-153).					

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Marilyn Cooper "The Ecology of Writing" 1986	"I suggest that what goes on in these classes signals a growing awareness that language and texts are not simply the means by which individuals discover and communicate information, but are essentially social activities, dependent on social structures and processes not only in their interpretive but also in their constructive phases."	The systems reflect the various ways writers connect with one another through writing: through systems of ideas, of purposes, of interpersonal interactions, of cultural norms, of textual forms. (369) Her theory itself is a kind of critique, i.e., she uses "ecological" not merely as a way of saying "contextual" (367-368). "In contrast, an ecology of writing encompasses much more than the individual writer and her immediate context. An ecologist explores how writers interact to form systems: all the characteristics of any individual writer or piece of writing both determine and are determined by the characteristics of all the other writers and writings in the system" (369).	"The system of ideas is the means by which writers comprehend their world, to turn individual experiences and observations into knowledge. From this perspective ideas result from contact, whether face-to-face or mediated through texts." (369)	"The various roles people take on in writing also arise out of this social structure: through interacting with others, in writing and speaking, they learn the functions and textual forms of impersonal reporting, effective instruction, irony, storytelling" (373). Genre construction (writing) is born from social structures Writing is one of the activities by which we locate ourselves in the enmeshed systems that make up the social world. It is not simply a way of thinking but more fundamentally a way of acting. (373) "An important characteristics of ecological systems is that they are inherently dynamic; though their structures and contents can be specified at a given moment, in real time they are constantly changing, limited only by parameters that are themselves subject to change over longer spans of time" (369).	"The isolation of the solitary author from the social world leads him to see ideas and goals as originating primarily within himself and directed at an unknown and largely hostile other" (366). The writer's exigence originates from within and then they create their own goals to direct their writing. Yet, this was a critique of the social cognitive process model
Cooper's definition of genre (stated or unstated): • Socially negotiated living systems that inform and influence the writer (rhetor?) ("made and remade by the authors" (368) • Begin by delving into field and becoming aware of the conventions/discussions within (ie bird example pg 369) • "Textual forms, like language forms in general, are at the same time conservative, repositories of tradition, and revolutionary, instruments of new forms of action. A textual form is a balancing act: conventional enough to be comprehensible and flexible enough to serve the changing purposes of writing. Thus, new forms usually arise by a kind of cross-breeding, or by analogy, as older forms are taken apart and recombined or modified in a wholesale fashion." (370)					

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Amy Devitt “Generalizing about Genre” 1993	Discourse is privileged, as the intertextuality of discourse is a key component of genre and its process of recognizing and responding to recurrent situations. Language, like genre, also constrains the individual in some situations.		Knowing a genre means knowing generic conventions but also knowing “how to respond appropriately to a given situation” (577). There is no knowledge about writing without knowledge about genre.	Genre responds to/is tied to communities; it responds to the behavior of people in particular contexts. Communities construct and use genres (see also 582).	Liana said something about realizing about situation. Critical genre theories can point students to what they do or don't know, thus allowing them to perform or subvert genres in language performance. Comes from the writer's need (583). Located in the situation, where “situation” means “the way we use language to speak to our understanding of what's happening and who's involved.”

Devitt's definition of genre (stated or unstated):

- Genres are social, communal, disciplinary constructions (576)
- “Genre not only responds to but also constructs recurring situation.” (576)
- “In sum, genre is a dynamic response to and construction of recurring situation, one that changes historically and in different social groups, that adapts and grows as the social context changes.” (580)
- “Dynamic Genres are also fluid rather than rigid, are possible responses that writers choose and even combine to suit their situations” (579)

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Carol Berkenkotter and Thomas N. Huckin “Rethinking Genre from a Sociocognitive Perspective” 1993	-Cites Bakhtin. Communication negotiates tensions between centripetal and centrifugal forces (476), suggesting that authors negotiate genres and contexts simultaneously as they invent discourse. Discourse is then affected	-B and H argue that we should pay attention to insiders, people who know and deploy genres effectively (477). We should study genre experts, uncover and explore their tacit knowledge.	-“Knowledge production is carried out and codified largely through generic forms of writing” (476). “Social interactions are the instruments in the production of knowledge” (475). They suggest here that the genre is a framework for epistemology, a terministic	-“Because genres and intimately linked to a discipline's methodology, they package information in ways that conform to a discipline's norms, values, and ideology” (476). Building on Swales (1992), Giddens (1979), and others:	-By extension studying effective genre practitioners who function is specific contexts (i.e. discourse communities), students can better understand communities of practice with which they hope to identify.

	by the author's decisions in negotiating content and form in the kairotic ecology. Content is embedded in form (a la Bakhtin and Kress).	Perhaps more than Miller, they emphasize the malleability of genre as a "dynamic" socio-rhetorical structure: one that is continually reinforcing social and discursive norms while also manipulating them to suit a new situation (or even disciplinary environment or workplace).	screen for symbolic language enactment It both relies on and makes knowledge. Background knowledge is an important aspect of content (for defining genres) but the fact that genres arise out of embodiments of discursive differences (again, a la Bakhtin and Kress) means that their recurrence is powerful enough to make new realities..	we constitute and simultaneously reproduce social structures when using organization or disciplinary genres (493).	-Rhetorical Genre Studies can help mediate "the thorny issue of the relationship between socially determined human communicative activity and agency" (481). Located in social constructionist views of knowledge.
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Berkenkotter and Huckin's definition of genre (stated or unstated):

- Based on their literature review, they conclude that genre is defined by these five qualities: dynamism, situatedness, form and content, duality of structure, and community ownership (478).
- "Community ownership"-- Genre conventions signal a discourse community's norms, epistemology, ideology, and social ontology.

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Susan Delagrange "Visual Arrangement as Inquiry" 2007	Language is fluid and does not necessarily have to be logically organized for discourse to come into being, i.e. move away from the syllogism to "alternative non-academic discourse" (112)	Genre in terms of use in digital media allows "greater potential for decentering authority" (114), or allowing conversations that subvert the status quo	Continuing the emphasis on new digital technologies, "multiple perspectives" become a part of genre and therefore create knowledge that an authoritative perspective would not typically allow	The call for multiple perspectives which call into question authority allows "new possibilities for communicating and forming alliances" (114) allowing "construction of other positions from which to write" (114). Genre thus becomes a forum for subversion of authority and discussion of many ideas.	Being able to work with others for effective "arrangement and inquiry" in order for "theoretically informed practice to take place" (145)

Delarange's definition of genre (stated or unstated):

- An element of composition with "defined rules for arrangement" (112); limited options for arrangement

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Anis Bawarshi "Beyond the		"Thinking about genre from a translingual perspective draws our	If we shift our attention from the genre (products) themselves to the process by/through which students		

Genre Fixation” 2016		attention to uptake as a research as well as a pedagogical site of transaction where memory, language, and other semiotic resources, genre knowledge, and meanings are translated and negotiated across genres, modalities, and contexts” (247).	contend with genres, there is great knowledge-making potential. “Such strategic knowledge and brokering of uptakes shifts the locus of agency from the genres themselves (which is often implied when explication of genres is the pedagogical goal and when genres are treated as sites of access) to their users, who are constantly having to negotiate genre uptake across boundaries” (248).		
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