

## **THE PROBLEM OF GENRE IN DRAMA STUDIES**

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The problem of genre is one of the most ambiguous and controversial in contemporary literary criticism. Such processes as the emergence, development and decline of a particular genre are among the most important problems of the theory of literature. The very definition of "genre" is rather controversial. Traditionally, "genre" in modern literary criticism is defined as a big type or class of literary works, one of the key elements of systematic literary material that classifies literary works by the type of their poetic structure. A particular genre includes literary works that have similar structures and similar ways of depicting reality. Genre summarizes common features typical for a large group of art works created in a certain period by the writers or dramatists belonging to a certain literary movement.

Critics have suggested that every work is its own genre. Other scientists believe that there are two genres-literature and non literature. One more idea is that there are three genres-lyric, epic and drama; that there are four genres-lyric, epic, drama and prose fiction. Finally, that there is an idea that genres are any group of texts selected by readers to establish continuities that distinguish this group from others. One more problem is that genres are open categories. Each member alters the genre by adding, contradicting or altering constituents, especially those of members most closely related to it. Since the purposes of critics who establish genres vary, it is self-evident that the same texts can belong to different groupings or genres and serve different generic purposes.

The greatest impact on the development and formation of the concept of genre in the early twentieth century had the works of Y. Tynyanov and M. Bakhtin. Though their views were almost totally opposite their importance is difficult to underestimate. Y. N. Tynyanov championed an idea of the variability of the entire system of genres that takes place in case of changing historical epochs. He also emphasized the individuality of genre structures in the works of various writers. M. Bakhtin believed that the genre is the most stable combination of techniques and the history of literature is a history of genres. M. M. Bahtin believed that genres are

stable forms that express specific artistic experience perceived in a finished form. Bakhtin explains it by the fact that the organic whole of literature included only stable genres, those who have formed certain features and were easy to recognize.

The theory of genres was frequently attacked. Michel Foucault states the general objection that dividing genre into groups like literature of philosophy is not useful since users of such distinctions no longer agree on how to take them. "We are not even sure of ourselves when we use these distinctions in our own world of discourse, let alone when we are analyzing groups of statements which, when first formulated, were distributed, divided, and characterized in a quite different way." Jacques Derrida argues that individual texts resist classification because they are interpretatively indeterminate. According to Derrida there are no pure genres since all genres include the elements of other genres, for instance a novel can contain poems, proverbs, letters, etc. No text which is denominated "novel", for example, has traits that will identify all texts within the class. He does not deny the necessity for grouping texts stating that a text participates in a group. But he points out that at the very moment a genre is generated, at that very moment its end begins.

Francis Cairns points out that genres are as old as organized societies and that early genres were classifications in terms of content. The functions of these were to aid the listener in making logical connections and distinctions; generic distinctions aided the listener in following oral communications from the poet. Genre markers served to distinguish one type of communications from another since such communications shared many secondary elements. Oral communication demanded primary markers. Members of the same oral genre shared at least one primary trait for purposes of recognition by hearers. In this respect it is necessary to mention that from these early beginnings of communication between poet and audience, we can note that genres possess social purposes in a community. The functions of markers or traits become the bases for value distinctions as well as artistic distinctions and interrelations.

## **References**

1. Foucault, Michel. (2004) 'The Archeology of Knowledge', in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, pp 90-96