

Lamenting the Loss versus the Fallacy of Extinct Literary Genres in World Literature

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ABSTRACT

This article explores some ostensibly extinct literary genres in world literature. The theoretical thrust of this article is based on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of chronotope, Gregory Bateson's concept "ecology of the mind", and Hubert Zapf's concept "literature as a cultural ecology." The main objective of the article is to show whether literary genres really become extinct or rather integrate into others to be reborn or to give life to new genres. Regeneration, resurrection and rebirth are not germane to species, but are also inclusive of literary genres. This hypothesis would prove the fallacy of the extinction of literary genres in world literature. Just like animals, some literary genres become extinct and new ones emerge. The array of the seemingly extinct literary genres in world literature is huge, so the current study will be limited to discussing a handful of these genres as illustrative examples. Extinct literary genres include the epic, trilogies, classical tragedies, morality plays, shadow plays, the Arabic *māqamāt*, oral literature, ballads, odes, sonnets, the Japanese poetry "Haiku", the Chinese Shenmo "martial arts novels", Zhiguai fiction "folkloric myths", metaphysical poetry, confessional poetry, pastoral poetry, fairy tales, the Bildungsroman, diaries, memoirs, and many others. The study shows that technology, modernization, globalization and people's changing preferences have resulted in the alleged extinction of many outdated literary genres and the emergence of new genres such as screenplays, sitcoms, soap operas, movies and cyberspace literature.

Keywords: Loss; fallacy; extinct; genres; cyberspace literature.

Introduction

Whether old literary genres entirely die out or merge into new generic forms is still a controversial issue amongst genre theorists. However, this article argues for the latter view. Scholars distinguish between the "physical mode of existence" and the "non-physical or institutional mode of existence" of literary genres. Most scholars classify literary genres in the latter category rather than the former one. In *Theory of Literature*, René Wellek and Austin Warren (1956) argue that a literary genre is merely an institution rather than a physical entity. In such a context, they elaborate, new literary genres keep emerging while old ones never become extinct, never remain fixed but are rather presumably reshaped (226-227). Elements of what is fallaciously thought of as being extinct literary genres never vanish completely, but rather live on in new ways in the current literary canon. In "The Origin of Genres", Tzvetan Todorov discusses how new genres are formed out of older genres. In fact, social, cultural and scientific factors help create new genres and cause others to become obsolete but never completely die out. Many theoreticians claim that every text must belong to a literary genre. Jacques Derrida (1981) states, "a text cannot belong to no genre, it cannot be without... a genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genre-less text" (61). In fact, Derrida's theorizing about categories of literary genres; mislead and imposed restrictions on writers' artistic creativity. Ansgar Nünning (1993) stresses the fallacy of the extinction of literary genres and posits that the "proliferation of hybrid genres" is a natural response to changes affecting societies (282).

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Theoretical Framework

In general, human knowledge, literature is no exception, is interdisciplinary in nature. Such interdisciplinarity constitutes the ontological foundation of any study of literary genres. With the passage of time and with the appearance of new scientific inventions, just like organisms, literary genres evolve, multiply, merge, assimilate and dissimilate. This article, which advocates the interdisciplinary nature of literary genres, applies the concept “ecology of the mind” coined by the British epistemologist Gregory Bateson and Hubert Zapf’s concept “literature as a cultural ecology.” Ecocriticism is a form of literary ecology that denotes a reciprocal and mutual influence and interdependency among literary genres. Zapf (2006) attributes the changes in literary genres to changes in environment. He states that literature “acts like an ecological principle or an ecological energy within the larger system of cultural discourses” (55).

Literature is continuously restructured to mirror the changes of a society’s cultural values and this justifies the emergence and the ostensible extinction of some literary genres. Zapf points out that literature is a dynamic repertoire, through which a culture can objectify and remake its inner dialectics and values. Zapf further argues that literature controls a society’s cultural discourse through the assimilation, reintegration and amalgamation of “marginalized, neglected, repressed or excluded.” literary genres (56). The key point in Zapf’s theory of “literature as a cultural ecology” is the perpetual, creative regeneration of language and fictional narratives. In fact, many scholars have also supported Zapf’s theory of literature as cultural ecology. Serenella Iovino (2013) argues that some literary genres are more evolutionarily “strategic” than others (115).

In his seminal essay “The Problem of Speech Genres”, Mikhail Bakhtin (1968) applies a rhetorical approach to the study of genre kinship asserting that the nature of such an intimate affiliation amongst literary genres can be either horizontal or vertical or both. In Bakhtin’s dialogic perception of genres, horizontal relations involve how a literary genre constitutes a reproduction in a new form or a response to another genre or how a certain genre causes the emergence of a new one within the same generic sphere of communication. Genres of this type are constantly involved in dialogic interaction with each other. Whereas, vertical relations pertain to the interactions between both primary and secondary genres of the same lineage across cultures and historical epochs (61-62). For Bakhtin, simple primary genres include, but are not limited to, people’s daily speech utterances, conversations and private letters, whereas the more complex secondary genres include literary works mainly fiction, drama and even scientific research. Bakhtin’s dialogism rests on the assumption that during the process of their evolution and final formation, secondary genres “absorb and digest various primary genres” which, in turn, “are altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex ones” (62). Genres are literary, social, historical, cultural and ideological constructs that, as Bakhtin (1986) puts it, “emerge from particular functions and conditions of communication” (64).

Scholars of contextual historiography classify the evolution of literature into four principle modes; the socio-historical determinism or the sociological positivism mode, the genre evolution mode, the humanity mode and the biological mode (Min Wang 2013: 145). The genre evolution theory proposed by Ferdinand Brunetière (1849-1906) and John Symonds (1840-1893) suggests that the evolution of literature is similar to the evolution of species in nature. Both literary genres and animal geneses pass through the same stages: origin, development, culmination, decline and disappearance. Inspired by Darwin’s doctrine of the origin of species and natural selection Brunetière in *L’évolution des Genres* explains the concept of genre in light of biological evolution. Brunetière proposed that all genres in literature have undergone basic changes and evolutions; some have remained partially intact such as the three main modes of rhetoric; poetry, drama and fiction, whereas others have died out. Brunetière points out that in the struggle for survival among literary genres only the most adaptable genres survive while others disappear.

In his seminal essay “On Literary Evolution”, the genre theorist of Russian formalism Yuri Tynyanov (2002) insightfully articulates that boundaries between literary genres keep changing and even features of a genre evolve and do not remain the same. According to Tynyanov, literary genres undergo constant evolution and change whereby some genres change shape, while others within a period of literary discourse decline and eventually vanish from the literary canon (70). In “The Literary Fact”, Tynyanov (2000) renounces the systematic and canonical classification of genres in

its entirety and speaks of “the moving, evolving historical order” influenced by literary studies which keep redesigning the entire order (34). Similarly, Derrida (1989) seems to deconstruct the genre hierarchies when he declares that “there is no absolute underlying structure to which a text must be accountable... Language is important, but it is not stable; it exists in an infinite interplay of signification” (961). In this line of argument, in an essay entitled “Antecedent Genre as Rhetorical Constraint”, Kathleen Jamieson (1975) stresses that the current rhetorical discourse is influenced and governed by ancestral genres that outline and form the existing literary genres. She further elaborates that antecedent genres never die out, but rather impose authoritative constraints on emerging genres which are frequently reshaped to respond to situational literary demands (414). As for the humanity mode proposed by George Brandes (1842-1927), the human soul and emotions are perceived as the main cause of the evolution and decline of literary genres. Gustave Lanson (1857-1934) argues that social influences inspire authors to create new literary genres and avoid others (Wang 2004: 145).

It is noteworthy to mention that each new literary work incites changes within the lineage of the genre to which it belongs and may help originate new sub-genres which may later become fully-fledged recognized genres. In “The Law of Genre”, Derrida elucidates his concept of the genealogy of genres and the “interplay of signification” when he asserts that genres play the role of order's principle: resemblance, analogy, identity and difference, taxonomic classification, organization and genealogical tree”(5). Similarly, Nicholas Abercrombie (1996) argues that “the boundaries between genres are shifting and becoming more permeable” (45). The unceasing changes in the genealogical order of literary genres are triggered by socio-economic factors and technology that keep influencing people’s literary tastes and preferences. Abercrombie attributes the steady dismantling of the boundaries between genres to socio-economic changes and television which have changed people’s perceptions and literary tastes (45). Likewise, the British semiotician Daniel Chandler (1977) recognizes the social nature of text production, economy and technology as the main factors in changing audience preferences (3). Writers write literary works for specific audiences. Thus, text production is governed by the relationship between the writer and recipients of his work. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye (2000) points out that “The basis of generic criticism is rhetorical, in the sense that the genre is determined by the conditions established between the poet and his public” (247).

In this context, it should be relevant to clarify the differences between neoclassical and structuralist approaches to genre. While neoclassical theorists rely on transhistorical modes to classify literary texts, structuralists assert that texts are socio-historically contextualized and localized. Fredric Jameson (1981) states, “genres are essentially literary institutions, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact” (106). At the other extreme, Romantic and post-Romantic theorists have rejected the domination of genre conventions on literary texts instead calling for the autonomy and liberation of literary texts from such constraints (Frow 26). Likewise, Benedetto Croce (1968) complains that the classification of a literary text in a genre category is a denial of its true esthetic worth. For Croce some literary works challenge genre classification and are indeterminate in nature (38).

Illustrative Examples of Seemingly Extinct and Endangered Literary Genres

An almost extinct literary genre is shadow puppetry used to be practiced in the eleventh century through the thirteenth century in many countries in Asia. In a shadow play, the shadows of two-dimensional puppets made of leather were manipulated by a puppeteer called a master of ceremonies behind a translucent screen lit by candles. Only the shadows of the puppets were visible to the audience watching the performance on the other side of the screen. Theatre historian Marvin Carlson (2013) asserts that shadow plays were performed in Egypt as early as the eleventh century (153). The thirteenth century poet playwright Ibn Dāniyāl, an immigrant Cairene oculist and libertine litterateur from Mosul, wrote three obscene shadow plays in the manner of Aristophanes’ bawdy plays to satirize the Mamluk edifice of bureaucracy and its prohibitions of vice in medieval Cairo. Safi Mahfouz (2015) contends that eroticism, near pornography and sexual folk humor characterize much of these three shadow plays in the manner of classical

Greek bawdy comedies and phallic dance shows. Mahfouz elaborates that obscenity was a dominant feature of the fool variety in medieval Europe and the East (187). Ibn Dāniyāl's trilogy parodies a historical event in medieval Mamluk Cairo. In 1267, the Mamluk Sultan Baybars I (1260-1277), the military commander of the Muslim army which defeated the Seventh Crusade of King Louis IX of France (1248-1254), launched a strict campaign against vice and sinners in Cairo.

An allegedly extinct literary genre is the *karagöz* or the *karagiozis* which used to be performed since the sixteenth century in many countries in both Asia and Europe. The *karagöz* seems to have been a descendant of the Mamluk shadow plays. Dror Ze'evi (2006) states that the shadow plays of Mamluk Cairo were "the most probable source" for the physically very similar Ottoman *karagöz* plays (128). The *karagöz* puppet shows staged in medieval Asia provided an outlet for playwrights and puppeteers to portray the lives of peasants toiling under the rigid feudal system and provoke them to form a communal entity and to criticize the government's social and political hierarchies. Cengiz Kirli (2000) pointed out that the *Karagöz* was not meant to be crude pornography, but rather a "symbolic inversion of commonly held norms and behaviors through the medium of sexuality" (170). Linda Myrsiades and Kostas Myrsiades (1988) argue that the Turkish shadow puppetry was performed as both an entertainment and a Sufi religious ritual stressing that man is merely "a shadow manipulated by his Creator" (2). *Karagöz* shows were farcical, humorously political, obscene, offensive, and subversive and were performed to revolt against public order, dictatorship and severe prohibitions. However, it should be noted that *Karagöz* performances exhibit many features of Bakhtinian carnivalesque such as uproarious laughter, celebratory folk humor, satire, mockery, lampoon, insolence toward despotic political figures, grotesque realism, and obscenity through explicit reference to scatology and functions of the lower bodily stratum. The *tolubommatala* of India, and the *wayang* of Indonesia which belong to the same puppetry tradition of the *karagöz* all derived from shadow play. Andreas Tietze (1977) confirms that the *karagöz*, which was performed throughout the sixteenth century, derived from the shadow puppetry performed in China, Indonesia and Egypt in the thirteenth century (Cited in Smith 188). Though folklorized in most cultures, unfortunately the *karagöz* is almost not a living art form anymore.

A major genre that seems to have died out in the Arabic literary canon is the *maqāmāt* (literary assemblies and plural of *maqāma*). The Arabic *maqāmāt* are hybrid prosimetric unrelated narratives consisting of long passages of highly rhetorical rhymed prose mixed with intervals of verse. *Maqāmāt* were common in the tenth century and were first written by the Persian Arabic litterateur Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī and were later developed during the eleventh century by al-Ḥarīrī in Iraq. The central characters in *maqāmāt* are scoundrels, tricksters and conmen of literary wit and the events were recounted by a narrator addressing assemblies of influential people. The anti-heroic protagonist of a *maqāma* is a witty rogue who tricks a narrator with his literary rhetoric in both verse and prose to eke out a living. More than fifty unrelated miniatures of *maqāmāt* contain an imposter in disguise and the events involve his tricking of the dupe narrator to extort money from him and leading him into hilariously embarrassing situations. Despite being tricked by the voguish wanderer, the dupe narrator keeps seeking out the fascinating entertainment he gains from the witty rhetorical anecdotes of his swindler. In fact, the *maqāma* genre was not exclusive to Arabic literature. In Spain, most of al-Ḥarīrī's *maqāmāt* were translated into Hebrew by Yehūda al-Ḥarīzī and other translators. Andalusian Hebrew writers of *maqāmāt* "mahbarot, singular mahberet" such as Yehūda al-Harizi, Joseph Ibn Zabara, and Yehūda Ibn Shabbetai imitated the Arabic genre's stylistic and formalities, but at later stages they made formal and thematic additions lacking in the *maqāmāt* of al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī (Wacks 185).

A literary genre fallaciously thought of as being extinct in Chinese literature is *Shenmo* "fiction of gods and demons." This sort of fantasy fiction which was prevalent in China from the sixteenth century until the early twentieth century is drawn from Chinese mythology, folktales, legends and religions mainly Taoism and Buddhism. The vernacular fiction *Shenmo* written during the Ming Dynasty portrays battles between deities, demons, immortals and monsters. The best exemplary sixteenth century *Shenmo* novels are Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West* and Xu Zhonglin's *The Investiture of the Gods*. *Journey to the West*, which belongs to the martial arts subgenre, is deeply

rooted in Chinese myth and folklore. It recounts the adventures of the Buddhist monk Xuanzang who made a pilgrimage in Western China and India during the Tang dynasty searching for Buddhist sacred scriptures. Shih-Chen Chao (2012) pointed out that *Journey to the West* elevated the vernacular *Shenmo* narratives to a prominent position among other genres (128). Nowadays, *Shenmo* novels belonging to the martial arts subgenre are rarely read by Chinese people. Nevertheless, some of these novels have been televised, while the most notable ones still constitute the bulk of the motion picture industry in China. *Shenmo* fantasy fiction in China declined in the aftermath of the May Fourth Movement in 1919. The student demonstrations were not only anti-imperialist and political in nature, but almost influenced all walks of life in China including literature and culture. David Wang (2004) points out that the Cultural Revolution that accompanied the Movement incited newly emerging writers to avoid fantasy in favor of realism. Wang further elaborates that the new generation of Chinese writers denounced *Shenmo* as being superstitious; a remnant of the feudal society which oppressed Chinese peasants for centuries and an obstacle to the modernization and liberalization of China (264). Nevertheless, to promote Chinese popular culture, some aspects of *Shenmo* are still used in fantasy and science fiction texts and in the cinema industry in the making of animation movies. Chao (2012) contends that the *Shenmo* genre constitutes a bricolage of several Chinese philosophical traditions including Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Chinese folklore and mythology (128). For Chao, *Shenmo* fiction recounts historical narratives that continually oscillate between “historicizing fiction” and “fictionalizing history” (140). Moreover, a newly emerging Chinese internet fiction that seems to have links with *Shenmo* and martial arts is the Chinese Immortal Swordsman fiction, which, as Chao (2012) asserts, combines fantasy with martial arts genres and is produced/consumed by internet users (129).

The verse epic is a literary genre that completely died out in world literature. An epic is a lengthy narrative poem recounting the heroic deeds of a nation. Most ancient cultures knew some sort of folk legends in epic form. Some illustrative ancient world epics include *The Epic of Gilgamesh* from ancient Mesopotamia, the ancient Indian epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the Ancient Greek Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In Medieval world literature, epics were still an important canonical literary genre. Illustrative examples of epics in this period include the Sanskrit epic *Kiratarjuniya* by Bharavi, and *Beowulf* from Old English. Arabic epic literature includes *Taghribat Banī Hilāl* (an Arabic epic recounting the journey of the tribe Banī Hilāl from Egypt to Tunisia), the epic of the pre-Islamic Arabian-Abyssinian warrior poet 'Antarah Ibn Shaddād, and *The One Thousand and One Nights*. Other world epics include Dante's *Divine Comedy*, *The Tale of the Heike* (Japanese epic war folk tale), the Scottish epic *The Brus* by John Barbour, *Siege of Jerusalem* (Middle English epic), and *Mlokhim-Bukh* (Old Yiddish epic). In modern times, starting from the sixteenth century the epic was still a vibrant genre in world literature. The nineteenth century witnessed a drastic increase in the number of epics in world literature. Notable epics in this period include *The Revolt of Islam* (1817) by Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Hyperion* (1818) and *The Fall of Hyperion* (1819) by John Keats, *Don Juan* (1824) by Lord Byron, *Tamerlane* (1827) by Edgar Allan Poe, *Prometheus Bound* (1833) by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Earthly Paradise* (1870) by William Morris, and *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889) by William Butler Yeats. The twentieth century also witnessed an increase in the number of epics in world literature. Such modern epics include *The Divine Enchantment* (1900) by John Neihardt, *The Cantos* (1969) by Ezra Pound, *The Bridge* (1930) by Hart Crane, *Emperor Shaka The Great* (1979) by Mazisi Kunene, the Caribbean epic *Omeros* (1990) by Derek Walcott. The epic tradition almost died out in the late 1990s with the publication of *Fredy Neptune: A Novel in Verse* (1998) by the Australian poet Les Murray. Quite recently the Indian poet Jagadguru Ramanandacharya (b.1950) has so far written three epics: *Of Paraśurāma* and *Rāma* (2002), *Ashtavakra* (2009) and *Rāmāyana in Songs* (2010).

The Homeric epics mainly *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* constitute the basis for the epic genre in Western literatures. Almost all Western epics including Virgil's *Aeneid* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* were based in form and content on these epic poems. The epic genre is on the brink of extinction and though some epics have been written in the modern period, the quality in both form and content of these epics does not equal the grandeur of the classical epics and their

number is decreasing drastically. Michael Streeter (2009) argues that the epic is “an endangered, if not already extinct, genre or perhaps now a mode” (5). Alastair Fowler (1979) argues that in the early eighteenth century the epic was effectively deleted from the genres’ repertoire (110).

In fact, the verse epic did not die out entirely, but has rather assumed a different shape. The novel can be roughly called a modern epic in prose despite having deviated from the epic in form, content and style. For Bakhtin, the globalization of literary genres, an ongoing process since the Renaissance, is attributed to what he calls “the novelization of all genres.” Due to the openness of the novel, its cultural diversity and its huge territorial span, Bakhtin (1981) pointed out that the early modern novel, which includes all literary genres, is not only a generic literary form of its ancestor; the epic, but it also defeated it. Bakhtin (1981) stresses that since the epic was defeated and was replaced by the early modern novel, all the other literary genres are doomed to either encounter a similar fate like that of the epic or join the novel and consequently be novelized (5). Franco Moretti argues that Bakhtin asserts that while the novel is characterized by open-endedness and polyglossia, the epic leans towards finalized and enclosed quality (54–68). In his seminal essay “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel”, Bakhtin proposes his notion of “chronotopes” which entails grasping the spatio-temporal features of novelized literary genres and is certainly applicable to the picaresque novel (114). For Bakhtin, chronotope involves the configurations of time and space among literary genres thus giving each genre its distinctive narrative features.

The Aristotelian and Shakespearean verse tragedy also disappeared from world literature. Measured against the Aristotelian definition of tragedy and tragic hero, none of the plays classified as modern tragedies qualifies as an authentic tragedy simply because the protagonists in these plays lack the nobility of stature and the mental qualities of an Aristotelian tragic hero. Nevertheless, such plays qualify as modern tragedies; the characteristics of which were defined by the American playwright Arthur Miller in a newspaper article entitled “Tragedy and the Common Man.” Miller (1949) argues that in a modern tragedy, the common man regardless of his stature, qualifies as a tragic hero in the same way a semi-god or a king was regarded as a tragic hero in a classical tragedy. Miller writes, “I believe that the common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were” (2). In modern prose tragedies, human greatness is not measured by nobility of stature. “Insistence upon rank of the tragic hero,” Miller elaborates, “is but a clinging to outward forms of tragedy” (2). Suffering and the intensity of a common man’s emotions, Miller asserts, give the layman “size” and a “tragic stature” which have always been features of noble personages in classical tragedies (3). Furthermore, Miller believes that the “tragic flaw”, which leads to the tragic downfall of Aristotelian tragic heroes, is not “peculiar to grand or elevated characters” (3).

Though such modern prose tragedies do exist, the like of Greek and Renaissance high verse tragedies completely vanished from world literature. The extinction of classical tragedies is attributed to the waning of religiosity which is a fundamental feature of the tragic. The Arab playwright Tawfiq Al-Hakim asserts, "There is not a single poet in the world today who can write a single tragedy of lasting value" (qtd. in Hutchins 31). Moreover, the monotheist notion of the tragic is different from the Greek one. While the tragic in classical tragedies was inherent in religiosity manifested in the struggle between man and cruel fate, the notion of the tragic in modern tragedies stresses man’s backbreaking efforts to triumph over the restrictions of space and time imposed on him (Hutchins 6). Carlson (2004) attributes the absence of the tragic in theaters in the West to the decline of religiosity (370). In *The Death of Tragedy*, George Steiner (1980) states that tragedy no longer exists in comparison with its former manifestations in classical antiquity (xiii). Steiner attributes the departure of tragedy to a point of no return to social and political changes in societies, contemporary theatre and the film industry and more importantly “the triumph of rationalism, and secular metaphysics” (193). Thomas Van Laan (1991) points out that “tragedy suffered an unfortunate, but unequivocal, demise” (6). In “The Tragic Fallacy”, Joseph Krutch (1956) laments the evasion of the tragedy canon “we still need tragedy but no longer produce it and are gradually losing the capacity to get even remotely in touch with the tragedies of the past” (xiii). Krutch attributes the decline of tragedies from world literature to science, technology and materialism. Krutch states, “the mechanistic, materialistic, and deterministic conclusions of science” have diminished our “tragic faith” (96).

Literary genres are ideological, sociocultural and technological constructs that are always involved in an ongoing process of fusion, fission, and transformation. In *The Ideology of Genre: A Comparative Study of Generic Instability*, Thomas Beebee argues that literary genres are culturally and ideologically- oriented and genre relations and their use values are continually denaturalized and reconfigured. Moreover, Ericka Hoagland (2006) points out that “genre is itself ideologically charged, extending beyond the text to include writers and readers alike in perpetuating specific values and world views” (3). In the same line of argument, Peter Hitchcock (2003) remarks that literary genres are not only situated within the scope of an ideology, but should also be perceived as historical and sociocultural urges linked with colonialism and nationalism. Hitchcock states, “The classificatory ambition in literature is indissoluble from a particular history of self and society” (308). At the heart of Hitchcock’s argument is his assumption that the urge to classify the novel as a literary genre throughout the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century was triggered by the rise of newly emerging subgenres of the postcolonial novel especially those created by writers from decolonized nations (309-10). Theorizing about the law of literary evolution, Franco Moretti (2000) argues that some new literary genres, for instance the African novel, emerge as a result of combining local content with a foreign narrative form (58–65).

A major literary genre that seems to have vanished from world literature is liturgical or religious drama which was a product of certain religious, social and ideological circumstances. This sort of extinct drama, which was performed in Medieval Europe until the mid-sixteenth century, is undoubtedly the source of secular modern drama. Liturgical plays, along with mystery, miracle, elegiac comedy, farces and morality plays, were performed throughout medieval Europe to celebrate Christmas and Easter. Such sacred plays, as Bates (2006) asserts, “had ceased to be in harmony with the temper of the age” (11). The evasion of religious drama can be attributed to many factors mainly the decline of faith, renaissance, rationalism, individualism, skepticism, and above all the church’s contemptuous disregard of drama and actors; a contempt that accelerated the issuance of the 1548 decree of abolishing religious drama by the Parliament of Paris. The decree prohibited any further liturgical performances on charges of mixing comicality with Biblical teachings. Due to these reasons, the sacred drama, with its odd intermixture of the sublime and the grotesque, rapidly lost the charm it had once possessed (Bates 12). Thus, circumstances define literary genres that are relevant to a society and which can express its ideology. Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) remark that genre formations and transformations reflect social changes and newly emerging ideologies (25). In *Genres in Discourse*, Todorov notes that what makes some literary genres canonical while others are rendered outdated is the needs of society and its ideology in relation to time and space (12).

The Emergence of New Literary Genres: The Art of Fusion and Fission

Genres have the nature of dynamic fluidity since their distinctive features never demise totally, but rather merge into other genres to create newer genres and sub-genres. However, due to the influence of technology, modernization, globalization, and transnationalism on world literature and the constant change of people’s tastes as a result of cultural, societal, and economic changes some genres become marginal, while others become endangered or even seem to have ceased to exist. Theodore Martin (2017) rightly argues in favor of historicizing contemporary literary genres emphasizing that “genres lead distinctly double lives, with one foot in the past and the other in the present” (6). He further elaborates that genres encompass “the entire abridged history of an aesthetic form while also staking a claim to the form’s contemporary relevance” (6). The main rhetorical modes remain active and in frequent use, nonetheless some subgenres vanish while others come into existence. Fowler (1979) points out that “each age makes new deletions from the potential repertoire. But the repertoire of active genres has always been small and subject to proportionately significant additions and deletions” (110).

It is worth noting that extinct genres do not disappear completely though they might become out of use entirely. Some features of the extinct genres do still exist in the newly emerging genres. Tzvetan Todorov (1990) notes that “a new genre is always the transformation of an earlier one, or of several: by inversion, by displacement, by combination” (15). Speaking of literary globalization or the globalization of literature, Habjan and Imlinger write, “The history of literary genres is one of an ongoing expansion of differentiation since the onset of modernity” (qtd. in Todorov 4).

However, it should be made clear that some genres are more lasting than others. The narratives of fiction and drama have outlived other modes of literature since they have easily been televised and made into movies and series. Nevertheless, the opposite is quite true; some movies such as *Star Wars* have been novelized. Guynes, and Forest (2018) pointed out that since its premiere in cinemas in 1977, the movie *Star Wars* has influenced other literary genres such as science fiction, magazines and comic books (62). Guynes and Forest elaborate that the novelization of *Star Wars* and similar movies has even helped create new genres mainly video games and the film novelizations as a newly emerging literary genre (73).

The three main modes of rhetoric; drama, fiction and poetry have undergone drastic changes due to advances in technology and the constant changes of people's preferences. Digital proliferation in our globalized world spawned a large bulk of new literary genres. Most people in modern times prefer to see televised versions of works of literature rather than read them. The cinema genre and television have expanded genres and have created new subgenres never known before the invention of the film industry. This innovation has created different forms of audio and visual entertainment. Most of the world literature classics whether they are plays or novels have been reproduced as movies or series. The literature-inspired cinema genre has indeed broken the boundaries between genres to the extent that some literary works fit into multiple genres. Pier and Landa (2008) point out that recently the screenplay has emerged as a new genre and the radio play has attracted considerable attention in many European countries (356).

Online literary genre hybrids reflect interdisciplinarity and cultural diversity resulting from the give-and-take relationship between literature and technology or between a literary text and multimedia. Marcel Cornis-Pope (2014) remarked that generic hybridization in multimedia, which involves the merging of real and virtual space-times, constitutes an application of Bakhtin's "chronotope" (138). Speaking of the emergence of new literary hybrids in multimedia, Divya McMillin (2007) rightly argues that the global cinema industry makes use of "strategies of hybridization, dubbing, cloning, and collaging" (103). Cyberspace or internet literature constitutes a kaleidoscope of global literary works published over portal websites. Such electronic literary works belong to a variety of transnational genres from the ancient past to the modern period. David Ciccoricco (2007) argues that American hypertext fiction exemplified by Stuart Moulthrop's electronic novel *Victory Garden* (1992) and network literature represented by Judd Morrissey's novel *The Jew's Daughter* (2000) are designed using computer programs and are consumed by internet users (95). Shih-Chen Chao (2012) remarked that internet literature is presumed (produced and consumed) by multicultural virtual literary communities of internet users (12). The division between various literary genres and subgenres is increasingly becoming blurred due to the growing number of literature portal websites. Internet literature mainly fiction constitutes a multicultural bricolage or mélange of new and traditional literary genres which keep merging into each other or even splitting into secondary genres to create new ones. Shih-Chen Chao (2012) calls such intertextual fusion and fission of traditional and current literary genres to create newly emerging on-line genres "nuclearization" or hybridization; a process that continuously combines old and new forms and links West and East (186-187).

In fiction, many hybrid subgenres combining many features of other genres have emerged. Bakhtin (1981) pointed out that the novel encompasses and recontextualizes a variety of literary genres into its fictional world. Bakhtin states, "The novel, indeed, utilizes these genres precisely because of their capacity, as well worked-out forms, to assimilate reality in words" (320-21). Literary globalization has resulted in the novelization of all genres. For Bakhtin, the epic did not die out, but was rather replaced by the modern novel, and the other remaining genres are doomed either to demise just like the epic or to be unified with the novel (6). Peter Hitchcock (2010) pointed out that the novelization of the epic was a necessity triggered by the commodification of the publishing industry (3).

The repertoire of illustrative examples of newly emerging fiction subgenres is so huge that it would be convenient to cite some of them. All these subgenres have become known as digital or televised fiction since they can be watched on T.V or in cinemas rather than being read. Military fiction portrays historical or fictional wars and battles usually mixed with romance. Spy fiction tells stories of espionage missions. A fantasy story like the *Harry Potter* series

incorporates elements of science fiction in exploring magic, witchcraft and supernatural forces. A scary horror story relies on violence, suspense and the infliction of extreme pain on innocent victims to scare audiences. Supernatural fiction "dark fantasy" infringes and violates all laws of nature and norms of creation. Some abnormal creatures in fantasy fiction just like the Spiderman and the Wolfman are merely humans having animal attributes, whereas in animation movies animals are endowed with human attributes such as *Planet of The Apes*. Slasher is a new sort of horror fiction that portrays the demonic crimes of a serial killer or a psychopath who sadistically and successively slays and slaughters many people. A ghost story portrays the resurrection of the spirits of the dead and how in some works they attack people. Mystery or detective fiction portrays a weird but smart investigator who unravels the hidden facts of a crime. Science fiction uses fantasy to predict the future. Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction is a sort of speculative pessimistic science fiction that portrays the demolition of civilization on earth through futuristic apocalyptic disasters whether they are natural or man-made such as the end of the world through a nuclear or biological war. In fact, most of these fiction subgenres include elements of the broader main genre of science fiction which portrays speculative and futuristic events influenced by technology. Jules Verne's fantasy novels such as *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1870), and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873) are all illustrative examples of science fiction. Finally, a thriller is a story that provokes fear and excitement in the viewers by relating the adventures of a brave hero (Steve Neale, 2000: 45-134).

Bakhtin's concept of chronotope is necessary to the understanding of the power dynamics of literary genres and how they are formed and transformed into other genres. The term entails that literary genres, as social and historical constructions, operate with various formations, and combinations in a huge space-time continuum (Bawarshi and Reiff 87). For instance, some types of fiction seem to have become extinct, but are still thriving in other modes. In China, *Zhiguai* was a literary genre based on the narration of folkloric myths and fairy tales with supernatural events. *Zhiguai* has almost become extinct with modernization and the government's prohibition of superstitious practices. Mingming Liu (2015) states, "with the advent of the modern age— partially characterized by secularization in terms of government's suppression of superstition – one would easily assume that *Zhiguai* (accounts of the strange) is almost an extinct species for present-day cultural production (96). Liu elaborates that though marginalized and suppressed and "nearly extinct in our modern world" *Zhiguai* is still a living literary genre of Chinese popular culture (97). Nowadays, *Zhiguai* has inspired the production of many animation movies for children.

In the realm of drama and theatre studies, a new subgenre has recently appeared. A docudrama is a sort of documentary drama that presents dramatized re-enactments of actual historical events and real-life people. On television, this genre is called feature film whereas when performed on stage, it is best known as documentary theatre. By contrast, in the film genre, docufiction portrays true stories drawn from real life, but in most cases, these actual events are mixed with fictional material. A mockumentary is a television mock documentary that presents fictitious events in documentary layout to mock or recreate actual events mainly those related to portraying dinosaurs and other extinct animals. Many new fiction subgenres blend realistic material with fictitious narratives to create hybrid subgenres such as the nonfiction novels, historiographic metafiction, documentary fiction or the postmodernist historical novel, and the parahistorical novels (Nünning 282). Many subgenres of comedy have also become common in today's world literature, cinema and on television. Slapstick is a comedy showing hyperbolic physical violence beyond common sense. Sitcom is a situational comedy featuring characters placed in weird or bumpy situations. Stand-up comedy is a solo live performance in which a comedian narrates comic jokes in front of an audience sitting in a comedy club, bar or a theatre. Soap Opera or soapie is a daily serial drama on television or radio. A soap opera portrays the daily life of many persons. The first soapie *Painted Dreams* appeared on Chicago T.V station in 1930.

Poetry seems to be the least genre affected by the change of time and technology. Many poetry subgenres have discontinued and have been replaced by songs and lyrics. The verse drama has become almost extinct and nowadays in many cultures, playwrights write only prose drama. Narrative poetry including the verse fable disappeared from world literature. A verse fable features humanized animals, plants, and inanimate objects for the purpose of illustrating a

moral lesson. Nevertheless, prose fables transformed into animated cartoons have provided the cinema industry of Walt Disney and other cartoon companies with an abundant source of entertainment for children. Some fables have been reproduced as animated musicals featuring human and animal characters. Animated cartoon companies have produced a large body of computer-animated fantasy movies based on fables such as *The Lion King*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Grasshopper and the Ants*, *Zambezia*, *Tarzan*, *The Jungle Book Cartoon*, *Bolt*, *Shrek*, and many others.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that extinction of literary genres operates as an influential fallacy in world literature. Transcultural and geopolitical diversity, globalization and modernization have undermined the rigid categorization of genres and have resulted in the flux of new transnational genres. The main argument in the current study is that it is a fallacy to assume that some genres have fallen out of practice. World literary genres mingle, assimilate and constituent elements of marginalized literatures are constantly incorporated into canonical genres. Nowadays, writers advocate generic freedom or even transgeneric hybridity that helps them incorporate elements from world literary genres into their texts and thus resist the strict classification of literature into distinct genres within individual cultures. Literary genres are in constant flux. The empty slots in the genre repertoire continually give place to new innovative generic formations emerging from older genres. It should be noted that every new literary work belonging to a certain genre makes amendments and transformations within the genre resulting in the creation of newly emerging sub-genres. In *Globalizing Literary Genres*, Jernej Habjan states, “the history of literary genres is one of an ongoing expansion of differentiation since the onset of modernity” (4). Edouard Glissant and Betsy Wing (1997) posit that there is an endless interaction among narrative voices across genres, geographies, cultures and histories and this constitutes a dynamic, relational generic structure that is far from being linear or chronological (211-212). However, the authors elaborate that despite this relational generic heterogeneity inherent in literary texts, each distinct generic element, interrelates with the others in an erratic manner and adds to the existing relational history. Accordingly, no individual text is closed off within the restrictions of its own generic category, but rather belongs to collective thought (211-212). Martha Drift (2014) defines genre hybridity as “the intersection of literary and artistic generic diversity, fictional and historic discourses and heterogeneous world cultures” (iii). Edouard Glissant (1995) argues for transculturality in writing literature and breaking free of ethnocentric literary genres that restrict artistic creativity. Accordingly, he encourages writers to write “outside of genres,” to reach the goal of intertextuality, interdisciplinarity and generic hybridity (25).

In this context, it would be hard to speak of extinct literary genres since even the seemingly dead genres keep floating to the surface and fight for a place among living arts. In her book review of *Methatheatre*, Susan Sontag complains that “the burial of a literary form is a moral act; a high achievement of the modern morality of honesty” that does not denote “self-definition” but rather “self-entombment” (qtd. in Van Laan 27). That said, it becomes clear that it is a fallacy to think that some literary genres have died out, but rather their distinct elements merge with new ones due to modernization, technology and the changes of people’s literary tastes and likings. The distinctive borders between literary genres have been blurred to the extent that we can speak of generic heterogeneity as a dominant classification of literary forms. Nevertheless, there remain the three modes of rhetoric: poetry, fiction and drama with all other subgenres belonging to this classification. Moreover, it is worth concluding that genres are cannibalistic in nature since genres and subgenres keep absorbing each other in an unpredictable manner under the heavy weight of socio-historical and materialistic changes. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) state, “genres are dynamic rhetorical forms that develop from responses to recurrent situations and serve to stabilize experience and give it coherence and meaning” (479). This leads us to the assertion that genres, whether obsolete, living or newly emerging ones, are dynamic rhetorical constructs that are continuously reshaped to respond to transnationalism, globalization, modernization and people’s changing preferences.

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ظاهرة انقراض الأجناس الأدبية في الأدب العالمي بين الحقيقة والتصور الخاطئ

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ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في بعض الأجناس الأدبية المنقرضة ظاهرياً في الأدب العالمي ويستند الإطار النظري للدراسة على مفهوم الكرونوتوب "chronotope" الإطار المكاني والزمني "الميكانيك باختين، ومفهوم "بيئة العقل" الغريغوري بيتسون ومفهوم "الأدب كإيكولوجيا الثقافة" لهوبيرت زابفو إن الهدف الرئيس من إجراء هذه الدراسة هو تقصي فيما إذا كانت هذه الأجناس الأدبية قد انقرضت بالفعل أم قد اندمجت في أجناس أدبية أخرى لتتجسّد أجناساً أدبية حديثة. إن إعادة التشكيل، والانبعاث، والولادة من جديد ليست مقتصره على الكائنات الحية، ولكنها تشمل أيضاً الأجناس الأدبية. تفند هذه الفرضية الاعتقاد الخاطئ والسائد بأن بعض الأجناس الأدبية قد انقرضت من الأدب العالمي تماماً كالحيوانات، فإن بعض الأجناس الأدبية تنقرض لكن ظاهرياً، وتظهر أنواعاً جديدة. إن عدد الأجناس الأدبية التي يعتقد جزافاً أنها قد انقرضت من ساحة الأدب العالمي كبير جداً، لكن سنقتصر هذه الدراسة على مناقشة عدد قليل من هذه الأجناس كأمثلة توضيحية. وتشمل الأجناس الأدبية المنقرضة: الملحمة، والتريلوجي أو المسرحيات الثلاثية، والتراجيديا الكلاسيكية المكتوبة شعراً، ومسرحيات الأخلاق، ومسرحيات خيال الظل، والمقامات العربية، والأدب المحكي، والقصائد الغنائية الشعبية، والأدوات أو القصائد المغناة، والسوناتات، وشعر الهايكو الياباني الذي يتغنى بالطبيعة، وروايات الفنون القتالية الصينية الشينمو Shenmo، وروايات الأساطير الصينية الشينغواي Zhiguai، وشعر الغيبيات الميتافيزيقي، وشعر الاعتراف بالخطايا والذنوب، والشعر الرعوي، وحكايات الحوار الخرافية، ورواية تتبع نمو شخصية الراوي، واليوميات الأدبية، والمذكرات الأدبية، وغيرها. أظهرت الدراسة أن التكنولوجيا والتمدن والعولمة وتغير ما يفضله الناس فيما يقرأون ويشاهدون قد أدت إلى الإعتقاد الخاطئ بانقراض العديد من الأجناس الأدبية وظهور أنواع جديدة كالمسرحيات السينمائية، والمسرحيات الاجتماعية الهزلية، والمسلسلات الإذاعية والمتلفزة، والأفلام، والأدب الإلكتروني

الكلمات الدالة: مرثاة، المغالطة، الأجناس الأدبية، المنقرضة.

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