Genre as Knowledge Organization†

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Rafferty, Pauline. 2022. "Genre as Knowledge Organization." *Knowledge Organization* 49(2): 121-138. 115 references. DOI:10.5771/0943-7444-2022-2-121.

Abstract: This article examines genre as knowledge organization. Genres are fluid and historically changing categories, and there are different views about the scope and membership of specific genres. The literature generally agrees that genre is a matter of discrimination and taxonomy, and that it is concerned with organising things into recognisable classes, existing as part of the relationship between texts and readers. Genre can be thought of as a sorting mechanism, and genres are not only a matter of codes and conventions but also call into play systems of use and social institutions. This article explores the history of genre analysis across a broad range of disciplines, including literary studies, rhetorical and social action studies, and English for academic and professional purposes. It considers genre theory as a framework for librarianship and knowledge organization and explores the use of genre within librarianship and knowledge organization. Finally, the article discusses the Library of Congress Genre/Forms Terms for Library and Archival Materials which, itself an evolving and changing standard, offers a step towards standardisation regarding genre terms and the scope of genre categories

Received: 10 November 2021; Accepted 20 June 2022

Keywords: genre analysis, categorization, Library of Congress Genre Terms

† Derived from the article titled "Genre" in the ISKO Encyclopedia of Knowledge Organization, Version 1.0 published 2021-10-20; last edited: Version 1.1 published 2022-01-11: Section 5.1.1 added. Article category: core concepts in KO.

1.0 Introduction

Historians of genre note the long existence of genre in human signifying practices (e.g., Frow 2015; Bawarshi and Reiff 2010). They look back to the ancient distinction between the Sacred and Profane, and refer to scholars such as Plato and Aristotle and distinctions between the lyric, epic and dramatic poetry, but where Aristotelean categories tend towards the ontological, assuming stability in the categories, some level of exclusivity, clear boundaries and fixed, essential permanence, genre is now seen in a different light and scholars of genre recognise that genre is more fluid, permeable, changeable and not always agreed upon. This article explores some of the issues that are addressed across the literature, drawing from literary theory and rhetorical genre studies in particular, and considers genre as knowledge organization and the ways in which genre has been used in knowledge organization.

2.0 Genre: definitions, concepts, and background

Frow (2014) outlines the constituents of genre using the example of newspaper hoarding headlines, noting the structural dimensions, which are relevant more broadly. The structural dimensions are:

- Thematic structure
- Situation structure

– Structure of implication, that is, presupposing a range of relevant background knowledges which sets up a certain complicity with the reader (Frow 2014, 107).

Frow describes genre as being "a set of conventional and highly organised constraints on the production and interpretation of meaning" (107). Genre can be thought of as a sorting mechanism, and genres are not only a matter of codes and conventions but also call into play systems of use and social institutions. Humans are always already part of an existing culture of genre, and this frames our horizon of expectations (Jauss 1982). Genres exist within a framework of economic relationships and practices (Neale 1980). Consumers of books, music, films are schooled in, and school themselves in the fine-grained detail of genres. When we listen or watch or read, we pull on a kind of folk classification, a very "unsystematically systematic taxonomy" (Frow 2014, 13) that feels intuitive, because we have been schooled in the generic categories that operate in the logonomic parameters within which we find ourselves. But genre categories can be incoherent and arbitrary. Frow uses the example of the record shop, where we might encounter "rock", "easy listening", "pop", "world music". There are questions about whether these categories are mutually exclusive or whether they overlap.

Hughes (2004) offers a useful definition of genre as "the division and grouping of texts on the basis of formal, thematic or stylistic criteria" (912). He notes that texts can be written in compliance with or against the "strictures of an established and identifiable genre" (913), and that genre identity can be assigned retrospectively. In addition, genre is conceptually located both within and outwith an individual text. It is a very flexible system of division. The boundaries of genres are not universally agreed and the degree to which "the title of genre is awarded to a broader or narrower field of artistic production", and the degree to which the title is accepted, depends on the "interested parties in authorship, reception and culture more generally" (913). Chandler (1997) notes that definitions of genre depend on purpose, and argues that even if theorists abandon genre, in everyday life people would continue to categorise texts, while for Hodge and Kress, genres exist in as far as a social group "declares and forces the rules that constitute them" (1988, 9). Kress echoes the rhetorical studies approach in his definition of genre as "a kind of text that derives its form from the structure of (frequently repeated) social occasions, with the characteristic participants and purposes (1988, 3). For Dimock, genres are messy, even ancient genres, and membership of any genre is an "open rather than a closed set" (2007, 1378).

3.0 History of genre: classical roots

Genre has long been recognized as a key consideration in categorizing human communication and, thus, an element for organizing documents in information retrieval systems. The ancient Chinese, for example, recorded the use of genre to organize texts and library collections more than two thousand years ago (Zhang and Lee 2012a). In the western tradition the Platonic theory of imitation is the context for genre (Farrell 2003). In Plato's view, poetry is a mimetic art and people work in genres suited to their personalities. Aristotle took a similar view: we have natural instincts for representation, tune and rhythm, and humans use these natural instincts to design and produce poetry. Poetry splits into two kinds: serious poets represent noble deeds of noble men while less exalted poets represent actions of inferior men. Farrell notes that while Aristotle classified genres by the kinds of action they represent, that is not the primary consideration, which is rather the poets' own character. Genres derive from a similarity of character between the doer and the poet, while metre is implicated in imitation of certain kinds of action.

The views of critics and changing world-views, constructed through and created by critical perception, matter in our understanding of genre: ancients such as Homer and Theocritus seem to belong to several different genres for modern readers, but for ancient critics, more interested in metre than ethos, they are all epic poets. Farrell notes that Aristotle was more interested in ethos than the critics who followed (386). Aristotle more than any of them decoupled genre and form, but even then, only to a certain extent (386). The ancient critics did not recognise generic ambiguity but saw every poem as belonging unambiguously to a particular genre. They did not see generic indeterminacy in poems, nor did they consider genre to be slippery and problematic. Genre was felt to be an imminent, unambiguous character of all poetry, however Farrell notes that the essentialism of critics was not always evidenced in the more flexible practice of the poets (386). Platonic and classical thinking tends towards the ontological and ideal, viewing genres as timeless and unchanging forms, but this approach was found to be unhistorical, indeed, Farrell discusses the gap, even in classical times, between theoretical approaches and the works of the poets.

Aristotle's theory of a general distinction between two kinds of poetry, one "noble" and "exalted" and the other "inferior", evolves to include formal criteria in the *Poetics*. For Aristotle, there are three different methods of distinguishing the "essential nature" (Hughes 2004, 913) of the work, which are:

– the medium: which is the verse or rhythmic form;
– the object of imitation: which refers to the way in which the character is represented;
– the manner of representation: which refers to the difference between representation and narration (913).

Aristotle's *Poetics* distinguishes between tragedy, comedy, and epics. Comedy is a low form in that it is "a projection of the ridiculous or of that which it is painful to perceive" (913). The assumption would be that this form is unlikely to provoke deep thought or self-reflection. Epic and tragedy do provoke introspection, being the reflection of serious action in dignified verse. Aristotle concludes that tragedy is the most effective, so it is the most prestigious (913). Epic and tragedy differ through formal conventions, so epic keeps to a single metre and narrative form. There are no time limits in relation to the action in epics but the temporal coverage of the action in tragedy is traditionally around twenty-four hours. The notion of appropriateness underpins this approach to genre. Even in relation to classical genres there are differences in opinions about the categories (Hughes 2004), and textbooks will often include epic, tragedy, lyric, comedy and satire as the traditional classical genres, while pastoral is sometimes included in other overviews (Murfin and Ray 1997).

The Renaissance saw a revival of interest in genre and the notion of appropriateness, for example, the sonnet was generally regarded as the appropriate form for amorous verse (Hughes, 914). Genre types developed to include the important tradition of the Romance, which in turn became unfashionable until it re-emerged with the rise of Gothicism and Romanticism in the late 18th century (Hughes, 915). Another genre developing from the 16th century Spain was the picturesque which became important in the 18th century. Genre was "enhanced" by the rise of mass publishing industry in 19th century (916), and over time, audiences became well-schooled in the conventions of genre.

4.0 Genre as classification: from ontological to historical analysis

The literature generally agrees that genre is a matter of discrimination and taxonomy, organising things into recognisable classes. It is a classifying activity, one of the many that permeate everyday life. But the type of classification that is genre differs from rigid scientific categorisations and from the classical theory of classification outlined in Bowker and Star (1999, 10-11):[1]

- consistent, unique classification principles in operation;
- categories mutually exclusive;
- system is complete.

These properties do not really apply to genre systems.

Another way of thinking about classification is seeing classification as being like standards in that they are explicit, formalised durable rules extending over communities of practice. Frow explains that this is how neo-classical accounts of literary genre operated in the 17th and 18th centuries, focusing on normative rules rather than ad hoc changing practices. This approach would imply that the normative rules are to some extent essential and ontological but, as we have noted already, genres change over time, shaped by diachronic transformations. There is something of this nod to historicity is to be seen In Ferdinand Brunetiere's 1890 "*Evolution of History in Literary Genres*". Brunetiere approached genres as species, as something similar to natural organisms. Scholars do not generally adhere to the view of genre as species[2] nowadays, but the approach, which allowed for the notion of change over historical time, is interesting. The view in Brunetiere's approach is that genres exist, they have distinct borders, operate systematically and they evolve according to a certain trajectory.

Agrell and Nilsson (2003) argue that the move away from regarding genre as ontological can be seen in approaches taken by Goethe and the Romantics who abandoned demands for purity in genre, but even so, Goethe (1819) introduced the idea of "Naturformen", that is the notion of specific ontological structures relating to the epic, lyric, and drama (Wellek 1955, 213-215). Modern genre scholarship has generally changed from the ontological, classificatory, and formalist to constructivist, functional and pragmatic approaches to genre, for example Alistair Fowler's notion of genre as family resemblances (1982), Bakhtin's dialogism (1982), and Jauss's notion of the "horizon of expectations" (1982), referred to already in relation to Frow's description of genre. Fowler (1982), writing about genre in literature, explains that genre is a code made up by literary conventions, habits, and procedures, since it incorporates and organises many others (20, 22). In this light, genres are families held together in a dynamic structure of relationships (38-43). It means that membership of one genre does not preclude membership of another. Genres are historically relative. We identify individual exemplars using "generic competence" (45) which is a social competence as well as a literary or musical or cinematic competence.

The issue of whether to model genre as an ontological universal or as historically changing conventions is important in relation to genre criticism. We noted that the notion of historicity in relation to genres can be seen in Brunetiere, but a counter-reaction to the notion of genre at all began fairly soon after, so that Croce (1992 [1902]) denied the value of genre concepts altogether, arguing that it is impossible to classify a unique work of art (Wellek 1992, 194-195). Chandler notes that many critics traditionally regard "genre texts" as inferior to those that they contend are produced outside generic frameworks and suggests that these critics are hanging on to Romantic notions of the "originality" and "vision" of the artist. This is where Chandler situates Croce's work (1997, 6). Derrida (1986) argued that most works are hybrids, without borders, however Chandler argues that Derrida's approach

differs from Croce's in that he wrote that: "a text cannot belong to no genre. It cannot be without ... a genre. Every text participates in one or more genres, there is no genre-less text" (Derrida 1981, 61).

Christian Metz (1974), writing about film genres, takes the view that all genres change as the society which produces them changes, and argues that genres go through a typical cycle of change during their lifetime, which consists of the following four stages:

- experimental stage: this is where the genre starts to be defined and generic codes and conventions begin to be established;
- classic stage: the codes and conventions of the genre are recognizable and become iconic and idealised;
- parody stage: the genre is mocked through parodies. This stage depends on the audience understanding what is being mocked;
- deconstruction stage: genres are taken apart and recreated. Some of the rules may be broken, creating hybrids, genres.

A similar type of approach can be seen in Fowler's 1982 model, relating this time to fiction:

Phase 1: the genre-complex assembles until a formal type emerges (212);
Phase 2: a "secondary" version of the phase develops as authors consciously base their writings on earlier primary versions;
Phase 3: is when the author uses the secondary form in a radically new way. the form may then be burlesque, or antithetic, or a "symbolic modulation of the secondary" (213).

These models are useful and interesting because they explore the historicity of genres. But, as Frow (2014) notes, any kind of strict and rigid approach does not really work in practice because genre does not involve genetic continuity, genres can be crossed with any other genre, and every individual text to some extent changes and modifies the group.

In relation to the notion of life-cycles of genres, recent digital humanities scholarship that uses computational methods to analyse literary big data has focused on whether and how different literary genres evolve over time. Moretti (2007) suggested a twenty-five year generational shift in genres, but more recently work by Underwood (2016) suggests that the life-cycle of genres is not quite so predictive, and argues for different rates of change and different types of change depending on the specific genre. The boundaries of some genres remain stable for 150 years, for example detective and science fiction genres (24), though Underwood argues that both genres begin to "evaporate" at the end of the 20th century. The Gothic is different. Many 19th century Gothic genres, or sub-genres, such as the Newgate or the Sensation novel were short lived. Maybe the Gothic is not a genre but something else: maybe literary scholars are acknowledging this different entity in distinguishing between "genres" and "modes". What is of particular interest here is that the issues surrounding definitions of genre are still being debated.

Another way of seeing genre is as a set of family resemblances (Fowler 1982) with chains that have something in common without necessarily having any single feature in common. There are questions then about where the boundaries of dissimilarity are drawn. In relation to this type of historical model, perhaps what they recognise and attempt to capture in model form is the notion that while genres form a horizon of expectations (Jauss 1982), against which any text is read, genres in turn are subsumed into a broader horizon formed by a period's system of genres.

The relationship between the individual text and the notion of specific genres as classes is an interesting one as specific novels might incorporate elements a number of genres, for example Romance or Westerns, without "belonging" to one specific genre. An individual text might have membership of many genres and never be fully defined by its genre. Texts might be considered to perform the genres by which they are shaped, and in turn to shape those genres. Dimock (2007, 1379), using Jauss's notion of the horizon of expectations (1982, 97) to explore the relationship between genres and texts, writes that:

> Genres have solid names, ontologized names. What these names designate, though, is not taxonomic classes of equal solidity but fields at once emerging and ephemeral, defined repeatedly by new entries that are still being produced. They function as a "horizon of expectations" to some extent (Jauss 1982,79), but that horizon becomes real only when there happen to be texts that exemplify it. Far from being clear cut slices of the literary pie, genres have only an on-demand spatial occupancy. They can be brought forth or sent back as the user chooses, switched on or off, scaled up or down. Each is one among several levels of resolution, with alternating features that can be read either as random detail or as salient pattern.

For Van Venrooij and Schmutz (2015), writing about music, genres consist of rules and conventions shared by participants and particular "genre worlds" (801). These rules and conventions might relate to ways in which to play an instrument (the "swing" of jazz drumming), the use of voice (the "rawness" of rock singers), the inclusion of certain instruments (the "banjo" in bluegrass), the form of presentation (the "long hair" of heavy metal) and the legitimacy of par-

ticipants (is "white rap" "real"?) (801). Genres are invoked in decision making processes in the production and distribution of art, in evaluation by critics, and they are invoked by consumers. "Hybrid" genres are less easily "institutionalised" (802). Van Venrooij and Schmutz argue that the negative penalties might be less in categories that are emergent, weak or in flux than in mature, institutionalised systems (802-3). Pop music, they argue, has become associated with a "plethora of genres" for commercial and promotional purposes. Focusing on jazz and funk as examples, Verrooij and Schmutz explore the ways in which genres change over time (803), using Di Maggio's (1987) notion of the ecology in relation to a "bounded aesthetic space" to explore how genres change, and also compete for space.

Genres are often subdivided into sub-genres, but the scope and the range of the sub-genres are not always necessarily agreed upon. Lee (2001), defining genre as a category assigned on the basis of external criteria such as intended audience, purpose and activity type, that is groupings of documents based on properties other than lexical or grammatical co-occurrence (38), cites Swales view that genres are owned, and to various extents, policed by particular discourse communities (1990, 24-27). The notion of the discourse community is significant in relation to the issue of the sub-genre. For example, in relation to fiction, we can examine three genre terms lists, (1) OCLC's *World Cat Fiction Finder*, (2) *Goodreads* and (3) *Library of Congress Genre Form Terms* (LCGFT). and find that while all three listings include the sub-genre "steampunk", only *Goodreads* includes "dieselpunk". Goodreads distinguishes between "steampunk", which is "a subgenre of speculative fiction, usually set in an anachronistic Victorian or quasi-Victorian alternate history setting. It could be described by the slogan "What the past would look like if the future had happened sooner..." and "dieselpunk", which covers novels which have "[a] fictional setting in which an advanced and modified society rely on diesel fuel as its primary resource, where nuclear technology and a 1920s to 1950s lifestyle and culture coexist." Different discursive communities have different needs which are manifested in the development and use of different ranges of sub-genres (see also Abrahamsen (2003), on the differences between the heavy metal discourse and the blues discourse).

In relation to the internal structures of genres, Cho et al (2018), writing about Japanese anime genre, used facet analysis to unpack and organise anime genre information in knowledge organization contexts. This project maps the genre terms of anime that are currently used and constructs a framework that identifies facets and foci. Six hundred and forty-three genre terms were sorted into nine facets with thirteen sub-facets. The results are interesting: the mood facet contains the following genre foci: Tragedy, Thriller, Comedy, Horror. The Character facet includes Detectives, Pirates and Robots, while the Plot/Narrative facet includes Coming of Age, Mystery and Romance. Underpinning this approach is the idea that individual texts might be indexed using a number of generic terms, so that the individual text need not necessarily be situated in one genre category.

Cho et al. cite Rafferty (2012), who argued that even in the discourse of literary theory there has been a shift from the idea that genre is based entirely on literary warrant to a viewpoint that sees the interaction between the work and the interpreting reader as the basis for meaning making (564). This points to the creation and recognition of genres, and sub-genres, as being interpretative and open to differences of opinion, and indeed as being historically contingent. Rafferty raises the issue of genre and sub-genre relations, citing Saarti, whose 2002 paper acknowledges that there are some "well known genres" (241) that are shared across fiction KOS. Rafferty writes that although "well known genres" are acknowledged, it is less clear that what constitutes them is shared across KOS systems. For example, "Detective novels" is a generic category in Saarti's paper, but in OCLC's Fiction Finder, detective fiction is subsumed as a sub-genre under "Mystery fiction" (556).

There have been some machine learning approaches to analysing sub-genres which focus on searching for patterns relating to stylometric features, such frequent words; topics, themes and ways of telling the story, and character identification (see for example, Hettinger et al, 2016) to try to map out sub-genres and their relationships. In the musical field, Quinto and Atienza (2017) have developed an approach to the analysis and mapping of sub-genres of jazz music that uses definitions as a framework through which to measure and classify individual pieces of music, but ultimately, the question of constitutes a sub-genre is as fuzzy, fluid and open to interpretation and debate as the question of what constitutes a genre.

Genres might be regarded as classes or categories, but they are unusual types of classes. A useful framework through which to consider genres is the notion of intertextuality, or the range of processes by which a text invokes another and the way in which texts are constituted as such by their relationships with other texts. In relation to intertextuality, Frow wrote that "[n]o text is unique: we would not recognise it, and would not know how to use it, if it were. All texts are relevantly similar to some texts and relevantly dissimilar to others" (2014, 52). We might wish to qualify this statement a little, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that no text is entirely unique, but the notions of relationships and influence is important in relation to genre, and the individual texts making up genres. In summary, the literature suggests that while genres depend on discrimination and taxonomy, neither the Aristotelian model, which depends on homogenous members, nor the biological model deals with the fuzziness of generic logic (Frow 2014), suggesting that genre is a very slippery concept. The fuzziness and slipperiness of genre as cate-

gory is perhaps not surprising given that etymologically, genre simply means "kind".

Historically, there was an approach to genre theory that was ontological in focus, but in modern times scholars of genre have increasingly moved towards focusing on genre as historical, shifting, changing and flexible. Genre exists as part of the relationship between texts and readers. There are cues to signal genres, both internal and external, for example book covers or CD covers, and genre can be used to promote and market texts as well as to describe them. Genres are grounded in the institutions in which genre has its social being and they encompass a set of expectations.

5.0 Rhetoric, genre, metaphors, and classes

The 1980s saw the emergence of a theoretical approach to genre that frames genre as social action. This approach grew out of rhetorical studies and social action studies and led to the development of rhetorical genre studies. Underpinning the social action approach is the view that genre classifications have an organising force in real, everyday life and that a useful way of looking at genre is to see it as the relationships between textual structures, or perhaps documentary structures, and the situations that occasion them. This approach has led to some interesting work in a number of professional disciplines, including information and library science. Significant scholars in this context include Carolyn Miller, Charles Bazerman and Amy Devitt. The social action approach reflects the social sciences "turn to language", that is the growing interest in rhetoric, discourse and narrative and how these facilitate and make possible social action and reflect social action, which became influential in social sciences and professional studies in the 1980s and 1990s. The notion of genre as a product of recurring discursive action can also be seen in Todorov (1976), who notes that the recurrence of certain discursive properties is institutionalised in society, and individual texts are produced and perceived in relation to the norm constituted by the codification. Seen in this light, genres are the codification of discursive properties (162).

Carolyn Miller's 1984 article is very often cited by scholars of genre in rhetorical and social sciences as being highly influential. Miller writes of genres as being "typified rhetorical action based in recurrent situations" (1984, 155), Rhetorical studies and social sciences emphasise the role that genre plays in shaping strategies for occasions, and for getting work done. Genres grow out of, and reflect, communities of practice in the broadest sense. Miller drew from speech-act theory to construct her 1984 dissertation, and referred back to Aristotle, noting the pragmatic element that underpins Aristotelian categories.

In her 2015 revisiting of the 1984 article, Miller acknowledges the similarity between her work and Bakhtin's work, which focused on language as utterance and "relational, contextualised action" (59). Bakhtin's focus on language as utterance suggests a perspective on functional characteristics, that is echoed in Miller's work, and that might be fruitful for genre classification. Miller writes that there is a major difference amongst disciplines about what kind of category genre is: "[d]oes it belong to the researcher/critic or does it belong to the community of users?" (66). This is an important question in relation to the use of genre in knowledge organization. Miller refers to Todorov's model of genre which distinguishes between two conceptualisations of genre, the theoretical and the historical (66). Table 1 shows the differences between these approaches.

Theoretical	**Historical**
Scholar/researcher	User communities
Theoretical basis	Phenomenological basis
Close-ended taxonomy	Open ended ecology
Systematic features	Significant features
Systematic similarities	Family resemblances
Static	Dynamic

Table 1. Theoretical and historical approaches to genre.

The theoretical approach is favoured by literary scholars, some linguists, and some rhetorical scholars (67), while the historical approach is favoured by film scholars, some rhetoricians, some linguists, ethnographers, and anthropologists (67).

In relation to genre as social action, scholars sometimes use metaphors to explore the role of genre. Freadman (1999) uses the metaphor of the ceremony, suggesting that any text takes place within a broader ceremonial frame and involves all constituents of the occasion: audience, the opening and closing, talk about the performance, and demarcation from other performances. Ceremonies are like games that situate other games. There are rules for setting the game, for constituting participants as players, placing and timing in relation to other places and times. Frow (2014) explores the notion of the generic frame as a projected world, that is, genre as a relatively bounded and schematic domain of meaning, values and affects, with instructions for handling them. The idea of genres as worlds suggests that each has its own habits, habitats, structures of ideas, forms, perspectives, and ways of making sense of things.

5.1 Genres in academic and research settings

Rhetorical Studies approaches to genre have also been used by ESP (English for Specific Purposes[3]) scholars, leading to the development of genre models relating to genre in academic settings. Important in the development of this approach is the work of John Swales, who includes the following definition of genre in the first chapter of his influential

book *Genre Analysis*: "[genres are] classes of communicative events which typically possess features of stability, name recognition and so on. Genre-type communicative events (and perhaps others) consist of texts themselves (spoken, written or a combination) plus encoding and decoding procedures as moderated genre-related aspects of text-role and text-genre-related aspects of text-role and text-environment" (1990, 9). Swales also includes a footnote in the introductory chapter which explains that although genres are not to be equated with texts, he will often use textual genre-names such as textbook, or lecture as a matter of shorthand convenience (9). The acquisition of genre skills is for Swales dependent on the following elements: previous knowledge of the world, which gives rise to content schemata; knowledge of prior texts, giving rise to formal schemata; and experience with appropriate tasks (9-10). Binding the three elements together is communicative purpose which drives the language activities of the discourse community.

At the heart of Swales' approach is the concept of the "discourse community" (22). A discourse community "recruits its members" by persuasion, training, or relevant qualification (24). An archetypal discourse community tends to be a specific interest group. One of the defining characteristics of a discourse community is that it utilises and hence possesses (25) one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims. A discourse community develops "discoursal expectations" (25), which might include appropriacy of topics, form, function, and positioning of discoursal elements, and the role texts play in the operations of the discourse community. In as much as genres are how things get done when language is used to accomplish them, the discoursal expectations are created by the genres that articulate the operation of the discourse community. The research article is the central example in *Genre Analysis*, while the other types of research-process genres that are discussed are: abstracts, research presentations, grant proposals, theses and dissertations, and reprint requests.

In 2004, Swales returns to the notion of research genres, situating the research world in its broader context, discussing constellations of genres, and reflecting on non-native speakers of English, and the role of the analyst. He notes the proliferation of works about genre in ESP studies since the late 1980s. One of the topics that interests Swales at this point is the issue of hierarchy of genres (12). In 1990, the research article was at the "privileged center of the spider's web of interlocking genres" (13) but by 2004, he considered this to be a simplification (14). Swales discusses the notion of the "genre chain" (19), such as the steps in the call for abstracts for a conference, which being articulated can help people to plan ahead, and "genre sets" (20), a notion borrowed from Devitt (1993), which is that part of a total genre network that an individual, or class of individuals, engages in. Swales also discusses genre networks, that is the totality of genres available for a particular sector, for example, the research world, as seen from any chosen synchronic moment.

Bazerman (1988) also write about scientific journals and their development, outlining the historical development of scientific genres. He follows Miller's (1984) approach to genre, focusing on text and situation in relation to the emergence of genre, and writes about the research article as a genre, discussing its development regarding references, citation practice, passive voice, content, and length. He argues that the success of the research article genre in "carrying out the business of the scientific community has also turned the genre into another kind of social fact, as an authoritative model to be emulated by other disciplines" (317), though interpreted through their own perceptions and problems. He reaffirms that genre is a sociopsychological category used to recognise and construct typified actions within typified situations (319).

This approach to academic genre, which sees the text as one element in a broader socio-discursive event, is echoed many other papers, often focusing on one genre in detail (see, for example, Myers 1990, Schryer 1993 and Bhatia 2014). In such approaches, the document, the text, is the central element of the genre: it is not the sole element, but the name of the document is typically used as a short-hand convenient indexical sign. There are debates in the literature about the scope and relationships between terms used to describe various concepts relating to genre. For linguists, the focus is often on terminological and conceptual debates regarding the scope and relationships of the terms, "genre", "text type" and "register".

Lee's 2001 paper is of some interest in this context. Lee notes analytical approaches that distinguish between the "text type", referring to intrinsic features of the text, and "genre" referring to extrinsic features. Lee cites Biber who explains the relationship in some detail: "[t]exts within particular genres can differ greatly in their linguistic characteristics; for example, newspaper articles can range from extremely narrative and colloquial in linguistic form to extremely informational and elaborated in form. On the other hand, different genres can be quite similar linguistically; for example, newspaper articles and popular magazine articles can be nearly identical in form. Linguistically distinct texts within a genre represent different text types; linguistically similar texts from different genres represent a single text type" (Biber 1989, 6).

Lee refers to Couture (1986, 84-85) who distinguishes between "register", which is the language used by specific discourse communities, such as preachers, or sports reporters or scientists, while "genre" is used to refer to literary and non-literary text varieties, for example short stories, novels, sonnets, informational reports, proposals, and technical manuals. For Lee, what is important here is that Couture

focuses on *language* when referring to register and *text varieties*, that is groups of texts when discussing genre. Lee begins to develop a categorisation model for genres, referring back to Steen's 1999 use of prototype theory to the conceptualisation of genre. In Steen's model, genres are to be treated as basic-level categories characterised by seven attributes: domain, medium, content, form, function, type, and language. Lee notes that Steen's model is biased towards written genre and suggests adding setting or an activity type and audience level, but he acknowledges that the Steen model is a useful starting point.[4]

The question of the relationship between "document type" and "document genre" is of some interest in knowledge organisation contexts, as one often finds databases in which the "documents by type" listings are names or labels that are used in the literature to identify genres. Some scholars (e.g., Freund, Toms and Clarke 2005, 442) use the terms interchangeably, noting that "genre repertoires, which are sets of commonly used document types, exist within work domains, and provide an organizing structure for information sharing". They follow on from Orlikowski and Yates (1994) in this practice. Berkenhokotter and Huckin (1993), discussing genre in academic settings, refer to "generic forms of writing: lab reports, working papers, reviews, grant proposals, technical reports, conference papers, journal articles, monographs and so forth" (476) as the means through which knowledge production is carried out and codified. Here "forms" is used alongside genre to name what in other contexts might be "document types". It might be that term "document type" does the work of "form" in information science contexts. Following Miller (1984), we would expect resemblances between texts at the levels of substance, form, and style in particular genres. It is perhaps in the area of form that we can locate the concept "document type".

When Crowston and Kwasnik discuss genre in relation to information retrieval, they refer to "document genres" specifically, and note that the document type cannot be separated from the context in which it is used, so that a letter may be a personal communication, a piece of evidence in a court of law, or even a work of art (Crowston and Kwasnik 2004, 1). Their faceted classification approach is an attempt to address the challenge posed by genre "as a multidimensional phenomenon" (1). Crowston, Kwasnik and Rubleske (2011) cite Rosso (2008) in defining document genre as "essentially a document type based on purpose, form and content" (Rosso 2008, 2). They note that the relative emphasis on form or function depends on the domain from which the genre emerges. Their project was to develop a taxonomy of genres and they "assumed that a traditional typology of genre and document forms would not be sufficient to describe the emerging and dynamic genres, identified by users in general and our study community in particular" (8). Here the terms "genre" and "document forms" or "document types" have become more or less synonymous.

Rosso (2008) is interesting in this context because of his approach to genre classification and because in his discussion of the fuzziness of genre, he engages with the challenging issue of document genre and document type. Rosso distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic features of document genre, form and function and argues that this approach would allow for the construction of a "true taxonomy" (1058) of document genres, for example in relation to letters, one would need to understand salient features of content and form to distinguish love letters from other kinds of letters. Rosso uses "genre" and "document type" interchangeably and relates the discussion back to the literature of user searching, and the use of "type" in searches in bibliographic document systems. Rosso's study, which focuses on the ".edu" domain, asks respondents to sort documents into genres. The term "document genre" is used in the instructions, and genre is defined for the respondents as a "a category of documents characterized by similarity of function, form or content" (1058). The respondents are to note that a document's genre is not the same as its content.

The forty-eight genres that emerge from the first iteration of the sorting exercise are interesting because the names of genres include purpose led labels ("About", "Blurb" or "Joke") and content led labels (Article (2 types), Form, News Index) (1061). This list was then trimmed down to a palette of eighteen genre labels, which proved to be challenging given the fuzziness of genre boundaries (1067). It seems that article genre is one of the least well recognised (1068) of the genres. In his discussion of this finding, Rosso refers back to Swales (1990, 61), who questions whether "letters" is even a genre. Swales writes that:

> The English-speaking world... uses names to describe classes of communication that quite appropriately operate as higher-order categories than genres. One very common example is the letter. This useful term, of course, makes reference to the means of communication, but lacks as a class sufficient indication of purpose for genre status. The same observation holds for subsets of the class that refer to fields of activity such as business letters or official letters. It is only when purpose becomes ascribable that the issue of genre arises, as in begging letters, or letters of condolence. Category labels like letters . . . operate as convenient multigeneric generalizations.

Swales distinguishes between "means of communication" and "genre". "Means of communication" would seem to equate to "document type" as used in databases. It may be that the distinction between the two is perhaps elided in some information science approaches. Possibly the docu-

ment type or means of communication could be seen as a meta-genre, or maybe it should be regarded as a different type of category, as Swales suggests. What would seem to be agreed upon by all scholars is the fuzziness of genres as a categorising principle.

5.2 Genre theory as a framework for librarianship and knowledge organization

In the social action models, documents are theorised as traces of typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations. Scholars in library and information science, following the social action approach to genre, have examined the nature of genre and how it might be used in knowledge organization systems. Jack Andersen explores knowledge organization through the lens of genre as social action (see for example, Andersen 2015; 2017a; 2017b; 2021). Andersen's approach allows us to see knowledge organization as social and cultural practice instead of as a distinct professional practice**.** Web searching (Andersen 2015) offers an example of knowledge organization as social practice: the web means that search terms, search histories, and search results, once the provenance of information professionals are now of interest to a broad range of people. Information retrieval through the web has become ubiquitous social practice because anyone with the technology and the desire can an information searcher. Acknowledging this reality should help in improving information system design.

Another example of knowledge organization as social practice is the use of tags (Andersen 2021), which arguably makes indexers out of users. The term "indexing" would have to be used in the broadest sense in this context, and there is a wealth of literature which alerts us to the limitations of tagging as knowledge organization, nevertheless, tagging is powerful as a knowledge organization practice. When we use tags, we are engaging in communicative practice. Tagging grows out of a recurrent situation and gives rise to a typified form of communication; that is, it works as a genre. There is also recognition in Andersen's work that users use genre as well as other tools to achieve their goals, and because of this, genre should be taken into account when we are designing knowledge organization systems and approaches (2021).

Other scholars have used the social action framework to suggest typologies of genres within library and information sciences, identifying genre groups and the specific forms of documents in such groups. The move towards using genre as an organising principle is exemplified in the research undertaken by Davenport in relation to information management. Davenport (1999, 46), argues for using genre as a macro-level ordering principle in relation to professional "worlds", and refers to Yates and Orlikowski's (1992) identification of the three characteristic elements in genre, which are:

- a recurrent situation
- substance (social motives, themes, topics)
- form (structural features, communication medium, symbol).

Genres are enacted through rules that associate appropriate elements of form and substances with certain recurrent situations, which means that to engage with a genre is to draw on genre rules, implicitly or explicitly, and to reinforce and sustain the legitimacy of those rules. Genres are an articulation of what has emerged as appropriate behaviour, and also a prescription for activity in a community of practice. Using genre as an ordering mode is also explored by Beghtol (2000), who suggested that for genre analysis to be most useful, we need to identify the domain of interest and then assemble a full set of genre typologies, and use that understanding to help improve information retrieval.

Nahotko et al. (2016) explore the genres used in information and library studies and categorises them into five groups which are then used as a starting point for in-depth analysis of their purpose, scope, and content. The five groups are as follows:

Genre group 1: Texts of primary documents, collected in the system of information (SoI, for example, library) as a main source of information for the SoI users.

Genre group 2: Texts from the sources either external or internal to the SoI, which are the textual tools used within the system. Vocabulary tools controlled and uncontrolled subject vocabularies and formal authority files, and also standards, manuals, and instructions containing cataloguing rules, and metadata element sets are all included in this group.

Genre group 3: Texts created in the SoIs to represent the content and bibliographic features of primary texts (genre group 1), which are called the "derived texts".

Genre group 4: Texts introduced by the SoI users as information requests (search query texts). They are prepared by both the knowledge organizers and the end users, often in close cooperation.

Genre group 5: Texts situated within an information system interface, both a manual one (for example, a card catalogue interface, including its arrangement) and an electronic one (for example, the software interface), which are a part of a system's information architecture. They are designed and prepared by the information system designers and developers. (557-9)

One of the interesting aspects of genre and the information profession relates to the projected world metaphor. Following Nahotko, it is possible to see professional information and library science as a "projected world", with its own genre groups and document forms and types, but in addition infor-

mation professionals, as documentalists, knowledge organizers and gatekeepers, need to become familiar with the "projected worlds" of those for whom they are information managers in order to construct knowledge organization systems to best serve their needs.

6.0 Genre in librarianship and knowledge organization

Genre has long been used in knowledge organization as a principle of organization. From 2007, the Library of Congress began working on the LCGFT (Library of Congress Genre Form Term list), but even before this time genre has been a topic of interest in relation knowledge organization and information retrieval solutions, with approaches to fiction indexing often using genre as a categorisation principle (see, for example, Pejtersen and. Austin 1983, Baker and Shepherd 1987 and Adkins and Bossaler 2007, on fiction indexing and genre). Genre analysis is also used in relation to music information retrieval (see, for example, Scaringella, Zoia, and Mlynek 2006, for an overview of music genre as a favoured approach to music indexing) often forming the basis of content-based automatic music retrieval. Examples of specific list of genre headings for libraries include: Association of College and Research Libraries (1991), Benemann (2006), Yee (1988 and 2001) and Zinkham and Parker (1988).

In relation to the use of genre cataloguing, Lee and Zhang (2013) investigated the conceptions of and treatment of genre in four different sets of Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACRs)[5] over 171 years. They write about the confusion between the terms "form" and "genre" in *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (LCSH) (894), however in the method that they develop they use both terms as search terms because, they argue, "form" and "text type" are used as referents of genre in literary theory, and "form" and "type of composition" are referents of genre in cataloguing tools (897). When it comes to results, most of the hits relate to the term "form". When it comes to the discussion, they argue that the term "form" is a problematic word, and note that "the use of "form" by itself is also at odds with the current thinking in genre studies where genre is defined through the use of the triplet of content, form, function" (907). In the conclusion, the authors suggest that we need much clearer definitions of "form" and "genre", which suggests that the confusions and complexities about these terms are ongoing.

More recently, Zhang and Olson (2015) have explored genres in relation to the notions of essence and context. In this paper, "(e)ssence is defined by essential characteristics: innate, immutable, independent of context. Unlike essences, contexts are fluid, changing with time and location. Genre has the stability of the essential characteristics that define essence and the fluidity of differing circumstances that define context, thus making it effective for the exploration of essence and context" (540). There is some stability in relation to generic essences, but this stability operates within the flexibility of context. However, Zhang and Olson note that while essence might be considered as being immutable, there are eight definitions of essence in the OED, the final one of which is a looser notion of essence as the most important indispensable quality or constituent element of anything: the specific difference, of the essence (of); indispensable (to) (542).

For Zhang and Olson, genres are recognisable in relation to their structure, purpose and "typical communicative purpose" (544). They fuse the ontology/historicity approaches, arguing that genre is characterised by its stability and is conventional, but genres are also constantly evolving, although, this evolution is usually only observable over time. Genres can reveal communicative practices and their changes in a community, so genre is not just text, but text in context, and genres are what the users of their terms want to be. Boundaries of genres are fuzzy, allowing for integration of of-ness, is-ness and about-ness. Genres change over historical time, therefore gatekeeper librarians need to be aware of changing usages (633).

6.1 Genre, music and knowledge organization

Abrahamson (2003) explored genre in relation to music, focusing on the challenges of using genre in indexing. Abrahamson notes that while classical music tends to be analysed in terms of structure, style, content and syntax, popular music tends to be analysed, within the academy anyway, through sociological, cultural, and historical perspectives (147). This may be partly because popular music is simpler in its construction, but arguably it also reflects the academy's ideological worldview regarding popular music and folk music. Abrahamsen defines a musical genre is a set of musical events, real or possible, whose course is governed by a definite set of socially acceptable rules. He cites Frith (1998, 77), who takes the view that the genre terms in popular music arise because of the music industry's wish to make music a commodity, arguing that:

> Genre maps change according to who they're for. And there is a further complication. The point of a music label is, in part, to make coherent the way in which different music media divide the market – record companies, radio stations, music magazines, and concert promoters can only benefit from an agreed definition of, say, heavy metal. But this doesn't always work smoothly, if only because different media, by necessity, map their consumers in different ways.

Abrahamsen argues that there are no generally agreed standards for genre categories, and different music communities and discourses might be inclined to take different views about music genre categories. For example, in relation to heavy metal music, Abrahamsen (154-5) writes that:

> The heavy metal discourse has, for example, classified music into several sub-genres like doom metal, speed metal, grind core and hard core. The blues discourse would generally not have the same need for classifying heavy metal into so many sub-genres and even though commercial interests (making music a commodity) influence the need for genre divisions, it is not the only aspect that influences the development and use of genre concepts.

In summary, Abrahamsen takes the view that genre analysis in classical music focuses on the "qualities of artwork" approach while genre analysis in popular music focuses on the "qualities of experience" approach, which is more cultural, sociological, and historical.

Madalli et al. (2015), focusing on faceted ontologies, discusses the challenges of classifying music, not least because "the genres such as popular music are becoming progressively more fusional and integrated with other types of music" (12). They explore the genres used by YouTube and Allmusic.com for browsing videos and navigating musical content and include a table of musical genres of both sites, showing the differences in terms and scope (13). In relation to the development of a domain-specific ontology for music, they draw on Leach's musical thesaurus (14). In this thesaurus, the facets are theory, themes, forms, genres, and persons. Forms and genres are differentiated in this thesaurus, so that forms associated with notions and notes. For example, fugues, plainsong, canon, chant, madrigal are examples of form (14), while examples of genres include country, classical and traditional. In the ontology that they design they generally borrow genres from YouTube and AllMusic.com. The top classes used in this ontology are theory, persons, instruments, kinds, forms and works (18), and genre labels are subsumed into "kinds".

Weissenberger (2015) is very clear about the socio-cultural context of music, noting that the chanting of al-Quran is not considered music to Muslims, even when it sounds musical to outsiders. Weissenberger makes that point that Muslims might regard it as insulting to call the chanting music (918). Weissenberger's approach to music analysis is based on the following three metaclasses:

- symbolic: which refers to representations of Musical Information Objects e.g., symbols, sheet music;
- interpretative: which refers to the actualisation of the abstract music object through sound creation e.g., performance;
- derivative: which refers representation that places the Musical Information Object in time and space. These might include the type of tradition, and the composer. Genre sits in this meta-class.

There is a considerable amount of scholarship focused on machine-learning approaches to music indexing that look to develop ways to automatically recognise musical genres. Genre classification is central to computerised machine-learning approaches, even though it is acknowledged that assigning genre labels is difficult because there are no clear and precise definitions of genres (Bodó and Szilágyi 2018). Bodo and Szilágyi note that genre information is usually assigned to an artist and album rather than to a musical piece, even though the latter would be preferable (169). They had problems trying to find a taxonomy of genres in their study, so they randomly chose some popular tags from the dataset that they used. They then used lyrics to try to classify genres.

The challenge of developing music genre taxonomies is also raised in Pálmason et al (2017). The authors note that by 2017, there were almost 500 publications exploring the automatic recognition of musical genre, even though genre is problematic as a principle of categorisation. Taxonomies have been designed and developed (see Aucouturier and Pachet 2003 for an overview), but they differ from each other, nevertheless, genre is still regarded as a grand truth in music information retrieval. Pálmason et al (2017) provide a relatively recent overview of approaches to genres in music information retrieval, and what is striking is the number of papers which agree that the automatic generation of generic categories is difficult, because genres are not always agreed upon. The Allmusic genre dataset is an influential source, not least because it is one of the sources consulted by LCGTF. Allmusic also uses mood and themes to categorise music. GTZAN is the most commonly used dataset (Tzarietakis and Cook 2002), and this has ten genres: classical, country, disco, hiphop, jazz, rock, blues, reggae, pop and metal. (3) Tzarietakis and Cook compare genre labels attached to specific songs on a number of datasets, including GTZAN, iTunes, Allmusic.com, and show the differences in interpretation and application of generic labels.

The issue is complicated even more by the fact that the application of generic labels might depend on purpose, function, audience, and the given community. Ancouturies and Pachet (2003, 83) note that genre is intrinsically related to classification: genre might be an intentional concept shared by a given community, where genre acts as a linguistic category, so "Yesterday" by The Beatles can be categorised as a Brit-pop title; genre might be extensional, that is a genre might be considered a set of music titles, and in this view genre is a dimension of a music title, like tempo, so "Yesterday" can be categorised as a mellow pop song. The difficulty is that in relation to music genre taxonomies, such

as those used in music sites, is that there is no consensus and no shared structure.

6.2 Genre, film and knowledge organization

IMDb (Internet Movie Database) is probably the most widely known film database, and it uses genres to help in organising, searching or discovering information. IMDb identify elements of genre as "Story (Action) + Plot+ Characters + Setting = Genre". They make a distinction between subjective and objective genres and state that objective genres are not influenced by personal feeling. Objective genres are "hand coded to the set rules of our guidelines". Subjective genres may be influenced by viewer opinions, interpretations, judgements, and other affective dimensions. The IMDb genre list contains twenty-eight genre terms with scope notes and examples included.

Film genre has attracted the attention of video analysis scholarship, and various studies have examined the possibility of predicting genres based on, for example, the trailer (Wehrmann and Barros 2017), poster images (Chu and Guo 2017), and film content and screenplay structure (Nakano, Ohshima and Yamamoto 2019). There is usually a genre term list used to underpin these studies.

6.3 Genre, fiction and knowledge organization

The use of fiction genres in knowledge organisation systems has a long history (Saarti 2019). Genre headings are often used as signposts to shelve fictional works in public libraries, and in schools, where genrefication as an approach to organising fiction developed from the 1980s (see Moeller and Becnal (2019) for an historical overview). The LCGFT (Library of Congress Genre Form Terms) list offers a standardised typology, but there are different interpretations regarding fiction genres in practice in libraries, and there have been studies, from Harrell's 1985 paper onwards that have examined the way in which libraries differ in their interpretation of fictional genres. In this context WorldCat Fiction Finder is interesting, as it used the American Library Association's (1990) GSAFD (*Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama Etc*) typology as starting point, but then developed the headings further. Not only is the selection of appropriate genre categories problematic, defining chosen categories also poses difficulties. The difference between "crime" and "detective" categories is not clear-cut, and this can lead to confusion for both the classifier and the library user (Scott 1995). Recommender sites such as Goodreads and LibraryThing offer a solution to the issue in their use of crowd sourced user generated tags to generate generic labels for specific novels.

Antoniak et al (2021) explore the ways in which different reading communities on LibraryThing assign and define genres via tags. Social media sites such as Goodreads and LibraryThing make the study of reader response much easier than it was in the past and allow for the examination of genre identification in and through cultural consumers. LibraryThing is of particular interest because of the scope it offers its users to create and apply their own genre tags. The study highlighted that changing shapes and multiple perspectives rather than rigid taxonomies are necessary when understanding genre on LibraryThing (22). The study suggests that there is strong evidence for an understanding of genre as "shifting, overlapping entities in a living system rather than fixed parts in a descriptive historical hierarchy" (24), echoing much of the modern genre theory discussed earlier in this article.

6.4 The Library of Congress Genre/Forms Terms for Library and Archival Materials

The most highly developed standardised genre terms listing for knowledge organization purposes is the *Library of Congress Genre/For Terms for Library and Archival Materials* (LCGFT). The project to develop the LCGFT began in 2007. The LCSH has for many decades included headings that denote "what a resource is rather than what it is about (e.g., Horror films; Detective and mystery fiction; Constitutions)" (*Library of Congress Subject Headings* 2010, 1). Since the 1980s, LCSH has developed discipline specific genre/form lists such as the *Thesaurus of Graphic Materials* (LCTGM) and used genre/form lists developed elsewhere, for example, the GSAFD. The LCGFT project, which recognises the value of genre/form terms, is intended to "develop a dynamic, multi-disciplinary body of genre/form terms that is cohesive, unified, intuitive, and user-friendly" (1). Each discipline is dealt with as an individual project, and as of April 2020, the following discipline areas were completed (p. 1):

- artistic and visual works
- cartographic materials
- "general" materials (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias)
- law materials
- literature
- moving images (films and television programs)
- music
- non-musical sound recordings (primarily radio programs)
- religious materials

The LCGFT is a stand-alone vocabulary that can be used with any subject heading list and descriptive cataloguing code.

The Library of Congress define genre/form as "categories of resources that share known conventions. More spe-

cifically, genre/form terms may describe the purpose, structure, content, and/or themes of resources. Genre/form terms describing content and themes most frequently refer to creative works and denote common rhetorical devices that usually combine elements such as plot and setting, character types, etc. Such terms may be closely related to the subjects of the creative works but are distinct from them" (3). Library of Congress (2020) distinguishes between form and genre:

> (t)he thesaurus combines both genres and forms. Form is defined as a characteristic of works with a particular format and/or purpose. A "short" is a particular form, for example, as is "animation." Genre refers to categories of works that are characterized by similar plots, themes, settings, situations, and characters. Examples of genres are westerns and thrillers. In the term Horror films "horror" is the genre and "films" is the form.

The preference is for broader rather than narrower terms. The disciplines of art, cartography, law, literature, moving images, music, religion, and non-musical sound recordings each have a single term to which all other terms are subordinate. Those terms are: Art; Cartographic materials; Law materials; Literature; Motion pictures; Music; Religious materials; Television programs; Sound recordings, and Video recordings. The terms Art, Motion pictures, Television programs, and Video recordings are subordinate to the broadest term "Visual Works", while the other terms are the broadest terms in their fields. The terms for general works are: Commemorative works; Creative nonfiction; Derivative works; Discursive works; Ephemera; Illustrated works (which has the BT Visual works); Informational works; Instructional and educational works; Recreational works; and Tactile works (4-5).

Iseminger et al. (2017), who were involved in the development of the music genres included in LCGFT, present an overview of the creation and construction of LCGFT and LCMPT (*Library of Congress Medium of Performance Thesaurus for Music*), situating the thesaurus and its historical context with reference to LCSH and the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus* (Petersen 1990). The authors discuss the random nature of LCSH, where genre and medium are mixed up together and note that the desire to remedy this mixing of concepts was an important motivation for developing the LCGFT. LCSH terms are a mixture of genre, form, medium of performance and other aspects that tend to describe "is-ness" of music work rather than "about-ness" (413). For example, "Grindcore (Music)" is a genre, so a book about grindcore is often shown as "Grindcore (Music) – History and criticism". The LCGFT thesaurus allows for the is-ness to be addressed. Faceting is used in the thesaurus because faceting is seen as an improvement over other information architecture approaches.

In relation to music, the genre and form definitions come from *Grove Music Online*, where genre is "class, type or category sanctioned by convention" and form is "the constructive or organising element in music" (418). MLA and LC worked together to produce broad hierarchical categories which are:

- art music
- dance music
- dramatic music
- folk music
- jazz
- instrumental music
- popular music
- sacred music
- songs
- vocal music
- world music

They found, looking at source texts, that genre terms and definitions are not always agreed upon. Iseminger et al. state that literary warrant drove the project and argue that the most significant addition, structurally and culturally, to LCGFT was that the term "Art Music" was used to represent court, classical and art music from any culture at the same level as "Folk" and "Pop", under "Music" as the Broad Term (421).

Defining what is and what is not a genre is difficult in relation to LCGFT, as it is in relation to other controlled vocabularies. Examples of issues are the LCSH terms "Protest songs" and "War songs" which are not included in LCGFT. "Love songs" is accepted as a genre but "Death songs" is not accepted. The authors note that "these ongoing concerns are being resolved on a term-by-term basis" (421). The genre "World music" "confounded definition" (421): it was created by music industry and is used in the names of festivals and CD compilations, but the task force found there is no one definition except at such a high level as to render it useless. It is not currently in LCGFT.

Hider and White are involved in a broad ranging project that explores the use of genre in a range of controlled vocabulary contexts. They place their research in the context of third-order classification theory (Tennis 2018), which looks at how knowledge organization systems relate to given populations and contexts (347). In their 2020 paper, White and Hider compare three film genre vocabularies used in three cultural contexts: American Film Institute (AFI), the Australian Centre of Moving Image (ACMI) and the British Film Institute (BFI). They found ACMI uses thirty-three genre terms and shows hierarchical relationships. BFI has twenty-eight terms and does not show relationships. AFI uses twenty-nine terms and does not show interrelationships. While there are some

shared genre terms, there is a considerable amount of difference in relation to alignment. This study throws into doubt the universality of the LCGFT, which is more closely aligned to the AFI vocabulary than to the ACMI or the BFI vocabularies.

Hider, White and Barlow (2021), compare LCGFT terms with genre terms used in web-based platforms, focusing on the comparison of the "everyday" treatment of films compared to "professionals" treatment of film genre, noting in passing that LCGFT does not adhere to ISO 25964 (2011), and so is not officially a thesaurus (635). This study showed a considerable amount of divergence between LCGFT and the other vocabularies suggesting that genre terms are not universally agreed. Examples of surprising omissions are included, for example, "new wave films" (642) is missing in LCGFT although it is a LCSH term. The study shows that some vocabularies of film are more aligned to LCGFT than others, but overall alignment is hard to predict. It is not necessarily a case of "professional" vocabulary being more aligned. The study also suggests that few genres are truly universal but are instead based on different perspectives.

As part of this same series of studies, Hider and Spiller (2020) compare genres used in various online bookshops, and Wikipedia, with those used by LCGFT and "other libraries around the world" (666), to gauge how closely the book trade genres map to library cataloguing genres. They also investigated the alignment of genres amongst bookstores. The results showed that the OCLC genre list is most strongly aligned with LCGFT, unsurprisingly, while the other sources are much more weakly aligned. Geography seems to be a significant factor in alignment. Interestingly, although there was a large degree of non-alignment between lists, one genre common to all is Westerns. Wikipedia lists many genres not covered by LCGFT. The authors note that both bookstores and libraries tend to be a little "behind the Zeitgeist of genre formation" (679), while Wikipedia is a richer source of subgenres and new genres, "with its mission to educate more than to provide access" (679).

Hider's 2020 ISKO Conference paper focused on LCGFT and LibraryThing's genre listings. This study found that the non-LCGFT genres, mostly based on entries in Wikipedia, were markedly more used than the LCGFT genres. The non-LCGFT genres contain an element of affect, which is missing in the LCFGT sample. Hider suggests that this reluctance to engage with affect might be due to the "traditional, modernist paradigm of the cataloguer as gatekeeper to objects rather than facilitator of experiences and feelings that those objects might provide" (190). He speculates that the modernist paradigm is "especially imperfect, it would seem, for the provision of access to works of the imagination, such as fiction" (197-8), echoing earlier scholars in the realm of fiction retrieval (e.g., Pejtersen 1978, Saarti 1999, Hypén and Mäkelä 2011). The study would suggest that the importance of affect needs to be recognised in the development of genre lists.

7.0 Concluding comments

The literature emanating from a number of academic disciplines suggests that while genre is a slippery and difficult to define concept, it is nevertheless a concept that is useful in a broad range of documentary practices. Genre has long been used by scholars of cultural documentation and communicative practice, but perhaps its main importance in relation to knowledge organization is that it is firmly situated in everyday communicative practices. As a principle of categorisation, genre is interesting because there are no set rules about what the specific categories are. Genres are fluid and historically changing categories, and there are different views about scope and membership of specific genres. Genre as a knowledge organization concept has been used for many years to organize cultural documentation, for example music, film and fiction, and while there have always been different views regarding the specific genres to use in genre-based schemes within libraries and information services, genre as a knowledge organization tool has been successful, as evidenced by the continued practice of using genre. The LCGFT offers a step towards standardisation regarding genre terms and the scope of genre categories, although even at this early stage in its inception, there have been critical analyses. It is clear that LCGFT is itself an evolving and changing standard, and over time it might well incorporate some of the user generated approaches to genre categorisations that we currently see in social media platforms such as GoodReads and LibraryThing. Despite the issues and the complexities of using genre in knowledge organization as a mode of categorisation, it is likely that, to quote from Zhang and Lee (2012b), "genre's role in knowledge organization will continue to be further articulated and expanded" (44).

Endnotes

1. The term "classification" is not, however, limited to this narrow meaning.
2. It should be said, however, that today there is no consensus about the meaning of "species" in biology. On the contrary, it is an extremely ambiguous and muddled concept (see, e.g., Richards 2010, Stamos 2003 and Wilkins 2018).
3. ESP is sometimes also called English for Special Purposes.
4. Concerning the use of the concept "genre" in the field of art, Makeeva's (2020) discussion of whether installations shall be considered a genre provides useful considerations. The most common application seems however to

be about what is depicted in paintings. Encyclopedia Britannica (2018) defined: "Genre painting, painting of scenes from everyday life, of ordinary people in work or recreation, depicted in a generally realistic manner. Genre art contrasts with that of landscape, portraiture, still life, religious themes, historic events, or any kind of traditionally idealized subject matter."

5. About AACR see Dobreski (2020).

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