Key Concepts in Rhetorical Genre Studies:
An overview

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Cet article fournit une vue d'ensemble complète de l'état actuel des études rhétoriques de Genre (RGS), également connu sous le nom de théorie nord-américaine de genre. Elle suit le développement de RGS au cours des derniè-res vingt années avec une attention particulière payées aux tendances théori-ques récentes. Ces tendances incluent un nouveau traitement théorique de l'aspect temporel du genre, qui accentue la nature dynamique du genre qui est contraignant et permettant pour un rhetor. Une autre tendance théori-que qui suscite l'attention particulière est la nouvelle compréhension des genres surtout comme stratégies de communication flexibles. Ces tendances récentes dans le développement de RGS incitent des educators à reconceptualizer leur compréhension de ce qui rend la communication efficace et de ce qui est et n'est pas possible pour enseigner dans une salle de classe academique.

This article provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of Rhe-torical Genre Studies (RGS), also known as North American genre theory. It follows the development of RGS over the past twenty years with particular attention paid to the recent theoretical tren. These trends include a new theo-retical treatment of the temporal aspect of genre, which highlights the dy-namic nature of genre that is both constraining and enabling for a rhetor. Another theoretical trend that receives special attention is the new under-standing of genres as flexible communication strategies. These recent trends in the RGS development prompt educators to reconceptualize their under-standing of what makes communication effective and what is and is not pos-sible to teach in an academic classroom.

The reconception of genre as social action proposed by Carolyn Miller in 1984 provided a foundation for the development of a new discipline, Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS).[1] Unlike the traditional approaches to genre that view genres as stable text types characterized by their textual regularities, RGS considers genres as "typi-fied symbolic actions in response to stock sets of situation types. Such a notion of

genre allows for dynamism and change, given the inherent fluidity of the sociohistorical context to which genres respond" (Artemeva & Freedman, 2001, p. 166). The new, rhetorical approach to genre conceives textual regularities as socially constructed (Miller, 1984/1994) and brings together "text and context, product and process, cognition and culture in a single, dynamic concept" (Paré, 2002, p. 57). RGS views genres as much more than simple organizers and regulators of human social activity (Bawarshi, 2000; Devitt, 1996, 2000; Miller, 1994a); genres are now seen as constituting human activity by "making it possible through its ideological and rhetorical conventions"(Bawarshi, 2000, p. 340).

This paper presents an overview of the development of Rhetorical Genre Studies over the past twenty years. Particular attention is paid to the new theoretical treatment of the temporal aspect of genre, the new understanding of genres as flexible communication strategies, and the pedagogical implications of Rhetorical Genre Studies. The overview starts by presenting a brief history of the development of the social rhetorical view of writing and Miller's reconception and redefinition of genre as social action. It continues by discussing the contribution made to RGS by Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, focussing on the key notions of addressivity and utterance and discussing the flexibility of speech genres. The overview proceeds with the new revised definition of genre proposed by Catherine Schryer (2000) and then introduces notions of genre sets and genre systems that allow researchers to look beyond a single genre. The sections that follow discuss the Bakhtinian notion of chronotope and its temporal qualities, including a discussion of notions of chronos and kairos; Anne Freadman's notions of textual and nontextual uptake; and rhetorical notions of community and identity of a rhetor. This paper concludes with a discussion of pedagogical implications of Rhetorical Genre Studies.

The Development of the Social Rhetorical View of Writing

The development of Rhetorical Genre Studies followed the rise and fall of the product-based and later process-based approaches in composition studies. The primary focus of the product-based approach, which dominated North American composition studies before the 1970s, was on the finished text. By the 1970s researchers had recognized, however, that the singular focus on the final product could offer only a narrow view of writing that did not consider writers as in any way integral to the overall development of writing ability. This shift in the view of the writer's role in composing led to the emergence of the process approach that perceives the actual act of composing the text as the most important aspect of writing. However, the proponents of this approach continued to view writing as essentially a private, egocentric matter.

Both these perspectives — the product and the process — failed to account for how social contexts influence meaning and affect the way a writer approaches a writing task (the process) and what he/she writes (the product). Gradually, it became clear that "writing and what writers do during writing cannot be artificially separated from the social-rhetorical situations in which writing gets done, from the conditions that enable writers to do what they do, and from the motives writers have for doing what they do" (Reither, 1985, p. 621). Due to the changing perception of the social aspects of the act of composing, writing began to be considered as located in the social world and, thus, to be fundamentally structured by the shape of the environment (Cooper & Holzman, 1989).

A philosophic foundation for social and contextual perspectives on writing was provided by the work of Kenneth Burke (1957), Richard Rorty (1979), and Kenneth Bruffee (1986). A new emphasis on rhetorical context in composition studies has resulted in the emergence of a new approach that focusses on the social aspects of writing. This approach, known as the social view, began to dominate the area of composition studies by the 1980s (Cooper, 1989; Freedman & Medway, 1994a). The social view perceives knowledge as socially constructed in response to communal needs, goals, and contexts (Freedman & Medway, 1994a) and the composing of texts as part of the social process by which knowledge is constructed. A writer is seen as continually engaged with a variety of socially constituted systems and the discourse is viewed as "social, situated and motivated, constructed, constrained and sanctioned" (Coe, Lingard, & Teslenko, 2002b, p. 2). The central questions for research grounded in the social perspective are those that concern the contexts in which texts are created. This rhetorical context view emphasizes that awareness of audience and purpose influences both what and how a writer writes (Barabas, 1990; Faigley, 1985; Freedman & Medway, 1994c).

The theoretic shift toward the social in composition studies has been accompanied by a reconceptualization of genre as social action in response to recurrent rhetorical situations (Miller, 1984) perceived as a combination of purpose, audience, and occasion (Coe & Freedman, 1998). Traditional approaches define genres as regular grouping of text types characterized by regularities in textual, that is, thematic, stylistic, and compositional, features, "irrespective of the historical conditions under which the types come to exist and of the social values attached to them in a given context" (Hanks, 1987, p. 670). Because of this focus on the texts themselves, rather than on the actions of the writers who produce them and the contexts in which they are produced, this concept of genre seems limited from the social perspective. As Swales (1993) notes, to understand how genres function "we need more socio-cognitive input than the text itself provides" (p. 690). The new approach to genre studies puts

more emphasis on the rhetorical strategy, or to echo Coe et al. (2002b), on "the func-tional/motivated relation between form and situation" (p. 4). Genres in this view are defined as "the historically specific conventions and ideals according to which au-thors compose discourse and audiences receive it. In this view, genres consist of ori-enting frameworks, interpretive procedures, and sets of expectations that are not part of discourse structure, but of the ways actors relate to and use language" (Hanks, 1987, p. 670).

Rather than concentrating primarily on literary writing, as was the case with traditional genre studies, RGS has focussed more on the social dynamics and social constitution of nonliterary forms of writing and speaking. In other words, the main interest of the scholars conducting enquiry from the premises of RGS is to explore how and why non-literary – mostly workplace and academic — "typified texts reflect and reproduce social situations and activities.... how and why texts as cultural arti-facts are produced; how they in turn reflect and help enact social actions; and how, finally, they can serve as sites for cultural critique and change" (Bawarshi, 2000, p. 336). The RGS scholars turned their attention to such texts as the experimental arti-cle, reports by tax accountants, student writing in content areas, engineering docu-ments, business memoranda, government proposals, etc. (e. g., Artemeva, 1998, 2000; Beer, 2000; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993, 1995; Freedman & Medway, 1994a; Paradis, Dobrin & Miller, 1995; Dias & Paré, 2000; Paré & Smart, 1994).

Reconception and Redefinition of Genre: Genre as Social Action

The new view of genre is based on Carolyn Miller's seminal article *Genre as So-cial Action* (1984/1994), which, in its turn, is grounded in Kenneth Burke's New Rhetoric (1957) and especially his claim that discourse is action, and, in part, is based on the work of Campbell and Jamieson (1979). In 1979, Campbell and Jamieson proposed the view of genre that opened the path to the reconception of genre. They wrote,

> If the recurrence of similar forms establishes a genre, then genres are groups of discourses which share substantive, stylistic, and situational characteristics. Or, put differently, in the discourses that form a genre, similar substantive and stylistic strategies are used to encompass situa-tions perceived as similar by the responding rhetors. A genre is a group of acts unified by a *constellation*[2] [italics added] of forms that recurs in each of its members. These forms, *in isolation* [italics in original], ap-pear in other discourses. What is distinctive about the acts in a genre is the recurrence of the forms *together* [italics in original] in constellation. (p. 20)

The New Rhetorical approach to genre studies allows researchers to concentrate on the ways "particular discourses are socially motivated, generated, and constrained" (Coe & Freedman, 1998, p. 137) and assists us in defining "the possibilities of meaning in discourse" (Hanks, 1987, p. 670). The distinguishing feature of the New Rhetorical inquiry is its focus on what discourse does. The New Rhetoric emphasizes discourse as primarily action — that is, its significance should be judged on the basis of what it does — and shifts emphasis away from discourse as representation, which is considered secondary (Coe & Freedman, 1998; Coe, Lingard, & Teslenko, 2002a). In other words, the New Rhetorical perspective on genre treats genre "as typified social action rather than as conventional formulas" (Devitt, 2000, p. 697). According to Jamieson (1975), "the question of the extent to which rhetorical response is determined by situation, audience expectations, antecedent rhetoric or other factor requires determined inquiry. It has no a priori answer" (p. 415).

Rhetorical situation

Reconceptualizing genre as a social action, Miller (1984) explored "how a [social] understanding of genre can help account for the ways we encounter, interpret, react to, and create particular texts" (p. 151) in response to a recurrent rhetorical situation, described by Bitzer (1968) as

> a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance; this invited utterance participates naturally in the situational activity, and by means of its participation with situation obtains its meaning and its rhetorical character. (p. 5)

While Bitzer identified a rhetorical situation as recurrent through a recognition of its similar material and perceptual components, Miller (1984) went beyond the material dimensions of this explanation and provides a social interpretation of "how genre represents 'typified rhetorical action' based on recurrent rhetorical situations" (p.151). In 1979, Campbell and Jamieson posed a question, "do comparable situations ever exist?" (p. 15). Miller's (1984) response to this question was,

> What recurs is not a material situation (a real objective factual event) but our construal of a type. The typified situation, including typifications of participants, underlies typification in rhetoric. Successful communication would require that the participants share common types; this is possible insofar as types are socially created. (pp. 156-157)

Miller argued that exigence is located in the social and is "a form of social knowledge — a mutual construing of objects, events, interests and purposes that not only links them but also makes them what they are; an objective social need.... It provides an occasion, and thus a form, for making public our private versions of things" (p. 157). In other words, claims Miller, exigence is nothing else but "a socially objectified motive" (1984/1994a, p. 31), and "to comprehend an exigence is to have a motive" (p. 30). Exigence is seen as a defining factor for a rhetorical situation: as the one that shapes our recognitions of a social situation and the one that helps us to reproduce it. Exigence is not only part of our experience and our concept of a recurring situation but also part of our response to the situation (Bawarshi, 2000).

Miller (1984/1994a) notes that situations are "social constructs that are the result, not of 'perception,' but of 'definition.' Because human action is based on and guided by meaning, not by material causes, at the centre of action is a process of interpretation" (p. 29). Genre provides a rhetor with a rhetorical means "for mediating private intentions and social exigence; it motivates by connecting the private with the public, the singular with recurrent" (Miller, 1984/1994a, p. 37). The development of "recognizable genres" assists rhetors with "the recognition of situations as alike as recurrent" (Bazerman, 1997, p. 22). The rhetorical situation is thus seen as socially constructed and entailing exigencies that make demands on both the reader and the writer in their interaction with and through the text. By situating exigencies within the social, Miller's definition allows researchers to consider genre as extending beyond regularities in textual features. Genres in this interpretation are considered *both* rhetorical actions *and* recurrent situations (Paré & Smart, 1994). That is, genres help rhetors to construct the very recurrent situations to which they rhetorically respond, or, to repeat after Bawarshi (2000), "we rhetorically recognize and respond to particular situations through genres because genres are how we socially construct these situations by defining and treating them as particular exigencies" (p. 357).

Genres as textual instantiations of rhetorical situations

In other words, while recognizing that genres can be characterized by regularities in textual form and substance, current thinking perceives these regularities as surface reflections of an underlying regularity. Genres play a key role in reproducing the very situations to which they respond. As Bawarshi (2000) puts it, genres constitute "their own social semiotic, a semiotic that rhetorically shapes and enables social actions and in turn is constituted by the very action which it enables. This is why genres shape our social realities and us as we give shape to them" (p.353). In this new perspective on genre, genres are less defined by their formal features than by "their purposes, participants, and subjects: by their rhetorical actions. Genre ... is defined

by its situation and function in a social context" (Devitt, 2000, p. 698). Paré and Smart (1994) redefine genre as "a distinctive profile of regularities across four dimensions: a set of texts, the composing processes involved in creating these texts, the reading practices used to interpret them, and the social roles performed by writers and readers" (p. 147). To sum up the new, rhetorical view of genre, Bawarshi (2000) describes genre as

> both the situation and the textual instantiation of that situation, the site at which the rhetorical and the social reproduce one another in specific kinds of texts. Genre *is* [italics in original] what it allows us to do, the potential that makes the actual possible, the 'con' and the 'text' at the same time. As such genre allows us to study the social and the rhetorical as they work on one another, reinforcing and reproducing one another and the social activities, the roles, and the relations that take place within them. This recursive process is what genre *is*[italics in original]. (p. 357)

Anne Freadman (2002) expresses the essence of the new understanding of genre in the following words: "Genre is the capacity of human discourse that makes it different, say, from the language of the bees; that is what makes 'culture' a different matter from programmed instinct" (p. 41). Fundamental for the social constructionist view of genre is the work of Russian literary theorist, M. M. Bakhtin.

Bakhtin: Utterance, Addressivity, and Flexibility of Genres

Bakhtin's ideas have enhanced our understanding of the social embeddedness of genres (both oral and written) within communities of language users and, therefore, are central for understanding social aspects of writing process. Bakhtin (1986a) defines speech genres as "relatively stable types" (p. 60) of utterances, thus providing two useful concepts for understanding the nature of genre: the responsive utterance as the analyzable unit of speech (rather than the word or sentence) and the addressive nature of speech. For Bakhtin, the "responsive utterance" is the fundamental unit of analysis of human communication because it"occupies a particular *definite* [italics in original] position in a given sphere of communication" (1986a, p. 91). Words and sentences acquire meaning through the utterance. Describing an individual's speech (both oral and written) as always situated within the speech of others, he stresses the importance of recognizing the plurality of speakers in order to examine language use as communication (Hunt, 1994). Bakhtin sees an utterance as a link in a chain of discourse and points to its dual nature: any utterance simultaneously responds to

past utterances while also anticipating future utterances. Bakhtin (1986a) highlights the importance of the presence of "the other" in language as well as the more specific awareness of a respondent in a communicative situation:

> from the very beginning, the utterance is constructed while taking into account possible responsive reactions, for whose sake, in essence, it is actually created. As we know, the role of the *others* [italics in original] for whom the utterance is constructed is extremely great.... From the very beginning the speaker expects a response from them, an active responsive understanding. The entire utterance is constructed, as it were, in anticipation of encountering this response. (p. 94)

Utterance

In Bakhtin's view, words and sentences acquire meaning through the utterance, and speakers choose the generic form of the utterance which best meets their "speech plan or speech will" (p. 77). The dialogical principle of language that Bakhtin advocates presupposes the importance of addressivity, that is "the quality of being directed to someone" (p. 95). Without an addressee to whom an utterance is directed, it loses its dialogic context and turns into a separate statement belonging to nobody. Bakhtin suggests that addressivity is a constitutive feature of genre, noting that each genre "has its own typical conception of the addressee, and this defines it as a genre" (1986a, p. 95).

Addressivity and dialogism

Bakhtinian notions of dialogism[3] and the addressivity of speech indicate the degree to which individual texts act as links between previous texts and the inevitable response of others. Miller (1994b) notes that addressivity allows an "individual communicative action and social system ... [to] interact with each other" (p. 71). Following Bakhtin's view of earlier utterances as something the speakers can draw upon while shaping their own utterance, Holquist (1990) interprets the relationship of the speaker and the *other* as the one of co-authorship (p. 13). By bringing together Bakhtin's notions of *otherness* and *dialogism*, Holquist expresses the essence of *dialogism*: "In dialogism, the very capacity to have consciousness is based on *otherness* [italics in original].... in dialogism consciousness *is* [italics in original] otherness" (p. 18). Bawarshi (2000) responds to Bakhtinian notion of addressivity by asserting that "the speaker's very conception of the addressee is mediated by genre, because each genre embodies its own typical conception of the addressee. In fact, the very word and its relation to other words is also mediated by speech genres" (p. 348). The dialogic na-

ture of speech, the necessity for a change of speaking subjects and respondents, the process of utterance exchange, all this reveals the communicative sense of oral language, and, according to Flower (1994) and others, "much the same thing is said to happen in writing" (p. 60).

Foreseeing the critics' reaction to his theory of speech genres as limiting a rhetor's creativity, Bakhtin (1986a) asserts that the better our command of genres, the more flexibility and freedom we can apply in using genres, "the more fully and clearly we reveal our own individuality in them …, the more flexibly and precisely we reflect the unrepeatable situation of communication …" (p. 80). Thus even acting recurrently in a recurrent situation, one can express one's individuality; that is, "creativity is possible and visible everywhere, although Bakhtin insists that 'genres must be fully mastered to be used creatively'" (Freedman & Medway, 1994c, p. 7).

Primary and secondary genres

Finally, Bakhtin introduces an important distinction between primary genres, which are most akin to forms of spoken communication, and secondary genres, more complex written forms. He refers to the relationships between these genres asserting that "primary genres are altered and assume a special characteristic when they enter into complex ones" (1986a, p. 62). Bakhtin (1986a) stresses that "genres are subject to free creative reformulation … [but] to use a genre freely and creatively is not the same as to create a genre from the beginning" (p. 80). As Adam and Artemeva (2002) observe, redefinitions of genre based on Bakhtin's and Miller's views "recognize the plasticity and flexibility of texts and the rhetor's ability to reshape and manipulate genres to suit certain rhetorical situations" (p. 181). Rhetors acquire genres in the context of a situation and, therefore, genres can be "expertly used by speakers even though they may be unaware of generic parameters" (Hanks, 1987, p. 681). The central premise of Bakhtin's theory of genre as reiterated by Hanks (1987) is that "human consciousness … comes into contact with reality only through the mediation of ideology … and every genre has its own value-laden orientation" (p. 671). Hanks (1987) stresses that this "value-laden" quality of genre doesn't allow it to be viewed as a finished product; genres "remain partial and transitional. The actuality of discourse changes with its reception, and social evaluation is always subject to revision" (p. 681). Genres involve both form and content which are inseparable. The form of discourse in the field changes along with the changing intellectual content. As Freedman and Medway (1994c) state, "particularly significant for North American genre studies has been Bakhtin's insistence that … generic forms 'are much more flexible, plastic and free' (1986a, p. 79) than grammatical or other linguistic patterns" (p. 6). Far from being rigid templates, genres can be modified according to rhetorical circumstances

(Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). In Miller's (1984) words, genres evolve, develop, and decay. Miller (1994b) observes that the shared knowledge that allows individuals to be engaged in a competent communication "includes structures of interaction, of exigence, of participant roles, and of other rules and resources. Genres ... help do our rhetorical thinking for us" (p. 72).

The reconception of genre has led to the changes in the focus of genre studies, which in turn led to further development of the field of Rhetorical Genre Studies. Within the framework of RGS, genres are viewed as situational expectations. A complete description of a genre from the RGS perspective "requires attention to how the form is rhetorical, to how it embodies the type of recurring situation that evokes it, and how it provides a strategic response to that situation" (Coe et. al., 2002b, p. 6). In other words, genre is a concept that accounts for the ways all types of discourse function in the world, for the social roles assigned to various discourses, and for "the mode of being of those who participate in the discourse" (Bawarshi, 2000, p. 339). Within the framework of Rhetorical Genre Studies, genres are seen as types of discourse originating from "the interplay between systems of social value, linguistic convention, and the world portrayed. They derive their practical reality from their relation to particular linguistic acts, of which they are both the products and the primary resources" (Hanks, 1987, p. 671).

Schryer's Revised Definition of Genre

Schryer (1999), following Jamieson (1975), finds that genres have simultaneously diachronic and synchronic relations; that is

> genres have complex sets of relations with past and present text-types:
> genres come from somewhere and are transforming into something else.
> Genres, because they exist prior to their users, shape their operators; yet
> their users and their discourse communities constantly remake and re-
> shape them. (p. 81)

Schryer makes an important observation that genres are stabilized-for-now or stabilized enough sites of social and ideological action (1993, 1994) and asserts that genres are constantly changing in response to changing exigencies and, therefore, changing rhetorical situations. However, Devitt (2000) argues "that genres are never really stabilized. If each text always participates in multiple genres, then even in that text a genre is moving, shifting, and becoming destabilized. Even temporary stability is an illusion of genre theory rather than a reality of genre-in-action" (p. 713). Genres are not simple tools that rhetors use to deal with the situations that are already familiar with; "rather, situations and their participants are always in the process of reproduc-

ing each other within genre" (Bawarshi, 2000, p. 354). Schryer (1995, 2002) goes further and proposes to use "genre" as a verb: we genre our way through social interactions, choosing the correct form in response to each communicative situation we
encounter – and we are doing it with varying degrees of mastery. At the same time
"we are genred" (Schryer, 2002, p. 95) all the time; that is, we are socialized into particular situations through genres.

Schryer (2000, 2002) proposed a revised definition of genre grounded in Campbell
and Jamieson's 1979 work *Form and genre in rhetorical criticism: An introduction.*
Campbell and Jamieson use a *constellation* metaphor[4] as the basis of their view of
rhetorical genre: "a genre is composed of a constellation of recognizable forms bound
together by an internal dynamic" (p. 21). They assert that "an understanding of the
genre as a fusion of elements, formed from a constellation of forms, permits one to
distinguish between classification and generic analysis" (p. 23) and continue by saying that

> the term 'constellation' suggests another metaphorical insight. The stars
> forming a constellation are individuals but they are influenced by each
> other and by external elements; consequently they move together and
> remain in a similar relation to each other despite their varying positions
> over time. Like genres, constellations are perceived patterns with signifi
> cance and usefulness – they enable us to see the movements of a group
> of individual stars and they enable us to understand the interrelated forces
> in celestial space. (p. 25)

Building upon the notion introduced by Campbell and Jamieson in 1979, Schryer
(2000) redefines genres as "constellations of regulated, improvisational strategies triggered by the interaction between individual socialization ... and an organization" (p.
450). Schryer (2000) explains that the term *constellation* allows her " to conceptualize
genres as flexible sets of reoccurring practices (textual and nontextual)" (p. 450), while
the term *strategies* allows her "to reconceptualize rules and conventions (terms that
seem to preclude choice) as strategies (a term that connotes choice) and thus explore
questions related to agency" (p. 451). Coe (2002) adds that genre is "the motivated,
functional relationship between text type and rhetorical situation" (p. 198).

Recently, attention of genre researchers has shifted from the analysis of single
genres to groups of connected genres and to "the relationships among genres within
a community" (Yates & Orlikowski, 2002, p. 103).

Sets and Systems of Genres

Genre theorists have acknowledged that, even though analyses of individual genres provide us with information necessary for the understanding of community norms, practices, and ideologies, it is impossible to unpack complex communicative phenomena without studying interactions among genres (Devitt, 2000; Yates & Orlikowski, 2002). Bazerman (1994) suggests that within each specific setting, a limited range of interrelated genres "may appropriately follow upon another" (p. 98) affecting other genres that follow in response to a specific situation. He states that in response to a typified situation, rhetors must act generically in order for others to recognize and accept their act, which would not be possible "without a shared sense of genre" (p. 100). However, considering singular texts produced in response to rhetorical context may limit our understanding of the complexity of generic interaction and the ways in which some genres call for other genres (Devitt, 2000). In one and the same social situation, usually, more than one genre is used, and "each genre within a situation type constitutes its own ... particular social activity, its own subject roles as well as relations between these roles, and its own rhetorical and formal features" (Bawarshi, 2000, p. 351). Devitt (2000) observes that in order to understand how a genre functions, it is necessary to understand all the other genres that surround and interact with the one under consideration, both the ones that act explicitly and the ones whose existence is only implied.

Genre sets

Over the past ten to fifteen years various concepts describing interaction among genre have been proposed. Thus, in her study of tax accountants' work, Devitt (1991) introduced the notion of a "genre set." A genre set represents all types of texts produced by a person in a particular occupation in the process of his/her work. The concept of genre repertoire proposed by Orlikowski and Yates (as cited in Yates & Orlikowski, 2002), as well as Devitt's genre set, refer to the groups of genres routinely used by members of a particular community. However, according to Bazerman (1994), it is crucial to understand that generic texts "have highly patterned relationship with the texts of others .... The genre set represents ... only the work of one side of a multiple person interaction" (p. 98). Bazerman (1994) extends the notion of genre sets proposing to overcome its limitations by introducing the concept of the system of genres that encompasses a full set of "interrelated genres that interact with each other in specific settings" (p. 97) and represents

full interaction, the full event, the set of social relations as it has been enacted. It embodies the full history of speech events as intertextual occurrences, but attending to the way that all the intertext is instantiated in generic form establishing the current act in relation to prior acts. (p. 99)

Genre systems

Bazerman's concept of genre systems (1994) goes beyond the local community or professional organization context and addresses connected genres produced as a result of consequential social action within the same activity "enacted by all parties involved" (Yates & Orlikowski, 2002, p. 103), from both within and without a particular organization or community. Bazerman (1994) suggests that members of the communities involved in an activity create "a complex web of interrelated genres where each participant makes a recognizable act or move in some recognizable genre, which then may be followed by a certain range of appropriate generic responses by others" (pp. 96-97). This concept reflects a complete communicative interaction including all social relations and the history of the interaction.

In 1979, Campbell and Jamieson observed that a rhetorical genre theory would allow rhetoricians to move beyond separate individual events limited by time and place and explore similarities of rhetorical actions across time. The concept of chronotope developed by Bakhtin (1981) and absorbed into RGS provides us with this opportunity.

Bakhtinian Notion of Chronotope

Bakhtin introduces the dimension of time-space, which he calls the chronotope, in *Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel: Notes towards a historical poetics* (1981). Following Bakhtin, Michael Holquist (1981) provides the following succinct definition of the chronotope: "a unit of analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories represented.... neither category is privileged, they are utterly interdependent" (p. 425). Bakhtin stresses that in his definition of chronotope, time is inseparable from space; that is, temporal and spatial relationships are intrinsically connected.

Even though the notion of unified time-space (or spacetime) as a dimension of the human universe has been used in other disciplines (e.g., in mathematics by Minkovski; in biology by Ukhtomskyi, and in physics [relativity theory] by Einstein), Bakhtin (1981) makes a clear distinction between the use of the term in hard sciences and in his literary theory[5]:

> The special meaning [time-space] has in relativity theory is *not impor-*
> *tant* [italics added] for our purposes; we are borrowing it for literary
> criticism almost as a metaphor (almost but not entirely). What counts
> for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time
> (time as the forth dimension of space). We understand the chronotope
> as a formally constitutive category of literature; we will not deal with the
> chronotope in other areas of culture. (p. 84)

Bakhtin (1981) explains that "it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and
generic distinctions" and adds that "the primary category in the chronotope is time"
(p. 85). He says, "everything – from an abstract idea to a piece of rock on the bank of
a stream – bears the stamp of time, is saturated with time, and assumes its form and
meaning in time.... Everything in this world is a *time-space,* a true *chronotope* [italics
in original]" (1986b, p. 42); that is, genres regulate how readers and writers "spatially
negotiate ... [their] way through time" (Bawarshi, 2000, p. 346).

   When Bakhtin analyzes chronotopes of various types of novel, he demonstrates
that in some chronotopes (for example, in the literary chronotope of the Greek Ro-
mance "adventure novel of ordeal"), "an individual can be nothing other than com-
pletely *passive,* completely *unchanging....* to such an individual things can merely
happen [italics in original]. He himself *[sic]* is deprived of any initiative" (1981, p. 105),
while in other chronotopes (as in the Greek "adventure novel of everyday life"), the
primary initiative belongs to the individual character.

   Schryer (1999, 2002) further extends Bakhtin's definition of the chronotope by
stressing its axiological quality and stating that the notion of the chronotope expresses
the connectedness of not only place and time but also human values and current
social beliefs. She (1999, 2002) stresses that in each chronotope differing sets of values
are attributed to individual agents and, therefore, individuals in some chronotopes
have more access to meaningful action and power than in other chronotopes. She
insists that when we explore the relationship between genre and power we need "to
explore its relationship to time, not just in form of its relationship to the past, present,
or future ... [but also] in terms of a genre's attempt to control time/space by defining
what categories of time/space are at work within specific genres and accepted as just
common sense" (1999, pp. 81, 84). To understand the rules of genres and use them
properly means "to know when and where it is appropriate to do and say certain
things, and to know that to do and say them at inappropriate *places and times* [em-
phasis added] is to run the risk of having them ruled out" (Freadman, 1994, p. 59); in
other words, our knowledge of genres is inseparable from our understanding of the

chronotope. Schryer (2003) also asserts the need to explore "the possibilities for hu-
man action" in different chronotopes and "genre's relationship to time and space" (p.
76) within these chronotopes.

Schryer (1999) notes that Bakhtin's view of "the relationship of discourse to space
and time" is characterized by the three key terms that he has introduced: dialogism,
genre, and the chronotope (p. 82). Holquist (1990) further links the concepts of
dialogism and chronotope by explaining that

> all meaning is relative in the sense that it comes about only as a result of
> the relation between two bodies occupying *simultaneous but different*
> *space* [italics in original], where bodies may be thought of as ranging
> from the immediacy of our physical bodies, to political bodies and to
> bodies of ideas in general (ideologies). (p. 20)

In his concluding remarks to *Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel: Notes
toward a historical poetics* (1981), written much later than the article itself,[6] Bakhtin
asserts the representational importance of the chronotope. He states that time is ma-
terialized in the space through the chronotope and thus, "the chronotope [is] ... a
centre for concretizing representation" (p. 250). He restates the crucial role of the
chronotope as a "conductor" of meanings through which they enter humans' social
experiences. In other words, Bakhtin says that meanings

> must take on the *form of a sign* [italics in original] that is audible and
> visible for us (a hieroglyph, a mathematical formula, a verbal or linguis-
> tics expression, a sketch, etc.). Without such temporal-spatial expres-
> sion, even abstract thought is impossible. Consequently, every entry into
> the sphere of meanings is accomplished only through the gates of the
> chronotope. (p. 258)

In Freadman's words (1994), "Meaning is not content; it is place and function" (p. 59).
Schryer (1999) further explains the interconnectedness of the communication of
meaning in discourse, dialogism and the chronotope, stating that first, "in dialogism
all discourse is located, and the notion of an objective observer outside of place and
time is impossible. Secondly, in dialogism simultaneity is a necessity. Participants are
in a constant state of openness to time, to the present" (p. 82). The exchange of mean-
ing, "or point of temporary stability is possible only if the participants have access to
shared categories or concepts. So *the other* [italics added] must be present either meta-
phorically or actually for events and for the participants to acquire meaning" (p. 82).
In other words, "communication is, ultimately, about creating shared time" (Fabian;
as cited in Schryer, 1999, p. 85). Genre is a constituent of society that largely defines its

communicative structure should be seen "as that aspect of situated communication that is capable of reproduction [italics in original], that can be manifested in more than one situation, more than one concrete space-time [italics added]" (p. 71).

With this new focus on time and space, their role in the development, use, and recognition of genres within various chronotopes and the analysis of specific temporal and spatial notions becomes particularly useful.

Chronos and Kairos as Two Types of Time

Two ancient Greek notions that reflect different qualities of time are *chronos* and *kairos*. *Kairos* can be defined as "the right time," "the right moment" or "the opportune"; that is, the qualitative, experiential aspect of time, while *chronos* is a measurable, quantitative, calculable and repetitive aspect of time that "designates the continuous flux of time"[7] (Definition of Kairos, n. d.; Miller, 1992). In other words, *kairos* points to a significant, unique moment of time. The word "timing," that is, doing something at the right moment, characterizes the meaning of *kairos* best (Definition of Kairos, n. d.). *Kairos* is "a rhetorical combination of understood context and proper timing" (Doherty, n. d.) or as Tillich defined it, a "'crisis' or 'fullness of time,' the right time for creative thought and action" (Sessions, 1995, p. 803).

However, the two meanings of the word *kairos*, that is "the right moment" or "the opportune," give rise to the key question that needs to be resolved before the notion of *kairos* can be productively used in Rhetorical Genre Studies: is *kairos* objectively given or constructed by humans?, or, in other words, "is the rhetor *recognizing* [italics added] the kairos of the situation, or *creating* [italics added] it?" (Doherty, n. d.). Yates and Orlikowski (2002) propose an interpretation of *kairos* that follows the "third" perspective offered by Miller (1992). This perspective recognizes the "dynamic interplay between objective and subjective, between opportunity as discerned and opportunity as defined" and sees *kairotic* opportunities as both "constructed as well as discovered" (Miller; as cited in Yates & Orlikowski, 2002, p. 109). Therefore, Yates and Orlikowski (2002) interpret *kairos* as both "*emerging* [italics added] from the communicative activities of human actors (i.e., rhetors and audiences) in specific situations (e.g., institutional context, task, place, and *chronological* [italics in original] time)" and as "*enacted* [italics added], arising when socially situated rhetors choose and/or craft an opportune time to interact with a particular audience in a particular way within particular circumstances"(p. 108). Yates and Orlikowski further suggest that we should focus on notions of *chronos* and *kairos* "to help us think about issues of time and timing in *genre systems*[italics added]" by concentrating "our attention on active shaping of kairotic moments rather than passive acceptance of the chronological ones" (p. 118).

Yates and Orlikowski (2002) see Bazerman's concept of genre systems as directly connected to the notion of the chronotope, that is, "situated in the interconnected nexus of time-space" (p. 107). Genre systems provide temporal and locational expectations for the system itself as well as all genres that constitute the system. That is, the genre system "may be seen to coordinate or choreograph a multiparty interaction within the community. It serves as a template or schematic representation of the interaction that participants ... draw on in accomplishing this interaction" (p. 107). Yates and Orlikowski see the sequencing of genres as part of the temporal aspect of the system's chronotope and suggest that this sequencing may be understood in terms of *kairos*, which plays a central role in "the enactment of genre systems" (p. 110). That is, the notions of *kairos* and *chronos* can help us to understand the timing and sequencing of the genre system and its constituent genres and to uncover how individuals coordinate activities by tacitly using or deliberately shaping *kairotic* time. Kairotic coordination (the orchestration of communicative activities within communities [Bazerman; as cited in Yates & Orlikowski, 2002])

> can be seen both to emerge from participants' enactment of a genre system and to shape that enactment as participants situate the communicative action within a particular time and place. *Chronological*[italics in original] time serves as one resource upon which participants may draw in focusing other participants' attention and thus coordinating their communicative activities. This resource, like others that participants draw on in acting, both constrains and enables those activities. (p. 110)

Miller (1994b) notes that "genre becomes a determinant of rhetorical *kairos* (emphasis in the original) – a means by which we define a situation in space-time and understand the opportunities it holds" (p. 71). Schryer (2002) indicates that agents within a particular social setting may become habituated to genres – or, in her definition, to the constellations of communicative strategies – and may "fail to see the possibilities for the constraints on human action that they enact" (p. 85). Under such circumstances the agent's ability to create or seize a *kairotic* moment in the flux of *chronological* time may become impeded by the constraining features of genre.

The view of genre that includes the understanding of its chronotopic and, in particular, temporal qualities highlights its dynamic nature that is both constraining and enabling for a rhetor. The rhetorical view of genre allows us to uncover the recursive nature of the connection between genre and exigence within a particular chronotope. However, this view may lead to certain oversimplifications if we define genres "only as the typified rhetorical ways in which individuals function within socially defined and a priori recurrent situations" (Bawarshi, 2000, p. 356) within a par-

ticular time/space. To avoid this simplification, Anne Freadman in her articles *Any-one for tennis?* (1994) and *Uptake* (2002) introduces the notion of *uptake* borrowed from speech act theory.

Notions of Uptake and the Nontextual Part of the Utterance

Uptake

Freadman (2002) defines uptake after Austin: "'Uptake' is what happens when you accept an invitation to a conference, or agree to rewrite a paper for publication (and erase the traces of its previous occasionality for that purpose), or disagree with, or explore, a proposition in theory" (p. 39). She introduces the notion of uptake in order to highlight that "important issues of genre arise at the point of interaction between texts" (Coe et al., 2002b, p. 7).

Freadman proposes to use the concept of a game to facilitate our understanding of genres and uses the game of tennis as an example. She says that we do not learn "the content" of a game first and then learn its rules; rather "a game – and likewise a genre – is *constituted* [italics in original] by its rules and the techniques for imple-menting them" (1994, p. 46). A text in this view is considered a move in a game, and each move expects an uptake. In Freadman's (1994) view, the *playing* of a game con-stitutes what she calls "a ceremony" (p. 46), and the ceremony includes not only the game but all activities surrounding it: preparation, the choice of partners, occasion, location, timing, the warm-up, the declaration of a winner, and closing rituals. Or, in other words, she says, "ceremonies are rules for playing, games are rules for play" (p. 46). Continuing with the tennis metaphor, Freadman notes that it is useful to con-sider each game, that is, each genre, as consisting, minimally, either of two texts, or of a text and a nontextual response, in a dialogical relation.[8] In other words, "genre is governed by a ceremonial sequence in a formalized *space and time* [italics added]" (Coe et al., 2002b, p. 7) that is enacted by appropriate persons to cause a specified outcome. It is important, however, to bear in mind that the two texts constituting one genre in Freadman's view, or a text and its nontextual uptake, will have different prop-erties, like, for example, a question and an answer.

Nontextual utterance

The notion of a nontextual utterance had been mentioned in the literature be-fore Freadman used it in her theoretical treatment of *uptake*. Thus, for example, tex-tual as well as nontextual utterance, or uptake, were discussed as early as in 1930 by Voloshinov (1930/2000) who analyzed the notion of *vneslovesnaya (podrazumevaemaya) chast' viskazivaniya* (the non-verbal [implied)] part of the ut-

terance) (1930/1983)[9], noting that "every utterance is composed in effect of two elements: a *verbal* and a *non-verbal* part [italics in original]" (p. 124). He uses an example of an interaction between two individuals, in which one says "Hm..." and the other, in response, blushes and leaves, and then provides several different scenarios in which this interaction becomes fully meaningful in different, but typified and recognizable, ways. Voloshinov (1930/1983) proposes that we consider three main factors that affect the non-verbal component of the utterance: "the *time* and *place* of the event of the utterance (the 'where' and 'when'); the topic or *theme* of the utterance ('what' is being spoken about); and the speakers' *attitude* [italics in original] to what is happening (the 'evaluation')" (p. 125). By introducing these three factors, he inextricably links the meaning of the non-verbal (nontextual) part of the utterance to the chronotope of a particular situation. Schryer (2000) reasserts the equal importance of textual and nontextual communication practices that comprise genres. It is important for our understanding of the notion of *uptake* that we realize the equal importance of the textual and nontextual parts of the utterance and accept that a textual "tennis shot" may be taken up non-textually.

In *Anyone for Tennis?* (1994) Freadman proclaims that what is most important about our knowledge of genres is our knowledge of the difference between genres. As Devitt (2000) puts it genres need to be understood in terms of what genres are and what they are not. We never occupy a chronotope that is devoid of genres: as Freadman (1994) puts it, "we never leave the space of rituals for a space of non-rituals: we choose one ritual instead of another" (p. 61). Freadman continues by saying that "knowing a genre [that is, being able to carry out a task effectively] is also knowing how to take it up" (p. 63) and understanding its time and place (the chronotope). However, it also includes the understanding that genres do not exist independently. A genre "arises to complete or to contrast with other genres, to complement, augment, interrelate with other genres.... A genre, therefore, is to be understood in relation to other genres, so that its aims and purposes at a particular time are defined by its interrelation with and differentiation from others genres" (Devitt, 2000, p. 700). Schryer (2002) insists that while conducting a genre analysis, researchers should bear in mind that the recurrence of a specific rhetorical situation to which a genre or a genre system is a typified response may be identified only by "the social actors involved in that social setting" (p. 77). Understanding relationships of the social actors within a community becomes, therefore, one of the key issue of Rhetorical Genre Studies.

The Notion of Community in Rhetorical Genre Studies

As this overview of Rhetorical Genre Studies has shown, genres can be fully mastered only by insiders of a particular community and are best understood in action. This concept can be considered as the basis for the emergence of the notion of discourse community that has become one of the key notions of modern social constructionist genre theory.

Discourse community

Swales (1990) made an important contribution to rhetorical genre theory by suggesting that genres are located within their *discourse communities.* According to Swales, discourse communities develop, use, and modify written genres in response to the recurrent rhetorical situations they face. Swales (1990) presents a fully developed notion of discourse community as a construct which provides insight into the "socio-rhetorical" activities of groups. These groups communicate their norms and values and conduct their affairs through the appropriation and use of particular forms of discourse.

The usefulness of the concept of discourse community has come under some criticism because of the difficulty of defining it in any precise way and because of certain implications it seems to have accumulated (Dias et al., 1999; Harris, 1989). The term *community* suggests a kind of harmony that seldom exists in the real world and thus can prevent researchers from seeing that multiplicity and diversity must exist in any group (Williams, 1976). Moreover, the idea that disciplines may use language in ways unique to them has sometimes been interpreted to mean that there is a set of external rules that a newcomer can simply study and learn (Dias et al., 1999). Thus the discourse community may be seen as replacing the grammar handbook as a source of guidelines for good writing. Devitt (1996) notes that Rhetorical Genre Theory "needs to heed the criticisms of discourse community as homogeneous, without conflict and tension and examine how genre theory can acknowledge conflict and diversity as an important part of genre" (p. 613).

Swales himself (1993) admits that he was "too easily seduced by the concept of discourse community" (p. 694) and continues to say that "the 'true' discourse community may be rarer and more esoteric than I once thought" (p. 695). He goes on to observe that individuals simultaneously belong to multiple communities that require command of distinct genres used in response to dissimilar situations and questions the kind of discourse community that exists through membership and collectivity. An alternative notion was proposed by Parks and Maguire (1999) in their study of acculturation of a francophone nurse at an Anglophone hospital: the notion of *community of discursive practice* (p. 152). However, this notion is not developed by the

authors. Swales suggests that in the light of critique of the notion of discourse community, we may want to turn to another view of community, the one that Carolyn Miller (1994b) introduces as an entity internal to rhetoric, "a virtual entity, a discursive projection, a rhetorical construct. It is the community as invoked, represented, presupposed, or developed in rhetorical discourse.... Like genres, rhetorical communities 'exist' on a discursive hierarchy, not in space-time; they exist, however, at a much higher level of cumulation than genres" (p. 73). Carolyn Miller asserts that many genre researchers have been looking for communities as groups either unified demographically or geographically (e.g., classrooms, civic task forces, hobby groups, academic conferences, and so on). The rhetorical community, as Miller (1994b) calls it, "works in part through genre ... as the operational site of joint, reproducible social actions, the nexus between private and public, singular and recurrent, micro and macro" (p. 73) and "it is this inclusion of sameness and difference, of us and them ... that makes a community rhetorical, for rhetoric in essence requires both agreement and dissent, shared understanding and novelty .... In a paradoxical way, a rhetorical community includes 'the other'" (p. 74). The rhetorical community does not have the same comfortable and homogeneous qualities as Swales' discourse community – Miller characterizes it "as fundamentally heterogeneous and contentious" (p. 74).

Communities of practice

However, recently, social theorists of learning and practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) have proposed other, more refined concepts, for example, the concepts of *communities of practice* and *learning communities*. As Dias et al. (1999) claim, the term "'communities of practice' despite the problematic term 'community' ... [is] both more general, in that it covers activity beyond language, and more precise, since it centers on what groups of people *do*[italics in original]" (p. 29). For communities of practice, "learning is not a separate activity. It is not something we do when we do nothing else or stop doing when we do something else" (Wenger, 1998, p. 8). The notion of communities of practice allows one to see learning "that is most personally transformative ... to be the learning that involves membership in these communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998, p. 6). Each community of practice is constituted by distinct intellectual and social conventions. These conventions are shared assumptions about the roles of the audience and the writer and the social purposes for communicating. Writing in a domain-specific course in an academic setting can be used as a means of acquiring domain-specific genres (that is, learning such intellectual and social conventions), thus giving students the occasion "to use the lines of reasoning of a disciplinary forum to resolve issues important to that forum and to assume the role of a participant in that forum" (Herrington, 1985, p. 405).

This discussion of community as one of the central RGS notions would be incomplete without a discussion of the formation of a professional *identity* in novices entering professional communities of practice.

The Notion of Identity in Rhetorical Genre Studies

The notion of identity is particularly important for RGS because genre "is largely constitutive of the identities we assume within and in relation to discourse" (Bawarshi, 2000, p. 343). Bazerman (2002) notes that over the past ten to fifteen years multiple studies of the development and formation of identities through participation in systems of genres have been conducted. These studies have demonstrated that social action and identity construction are both mediated through genre and constituted by genres (Hirsh; as cited in Bawarshi, 2000, p. 343). Genres provide social codes of behavior for both interlocutors (the speaker and the listener, the writer and the reader) involved in a dialogic exchange (Bawarshi, 2000; Voloshinov, 1930/1983). Particularly important in the recent literature on RGS is the formation of a professional identity of a novice who moves into the workplace after years of academic and professional training. Paré (2002) defines this move "into the professional persona [as] ... an ideological transformation that occurs through participation in workplace genres" (p. 66). The development of a professional identity is inextricably linked to participating in workplace genres and "learning one's professional location in the power relations of institutional life" (p. 69). From this perspective, identity formation is linked to socialization into, the resistance to or subversion by local genres, which may occur either without one's conscious involvement or through a critical analysis of a chronotope of an organization. It is our goal as educators to prepare our students for such analyses of the chronotopes, situations, and communities they will become part of upon leaving academe.

Bazerman (2002) discusses the interconnectedness of genre acquisition and the development of an identity linked to a particular experience and activity. He observes that individuals become committed to the identities they develop through participation in genres of a particular community, and "in these ways genre shapes intentions, motives, expectations, attention, perception, affect, and interpretive frame" (p. 14). Lave and Wenger (1996) introduce the notion of a *knowledgeably skilled identity*, which, as Smart and Brown (2002) observe, is closely linked to a growing sense by novices of professional competence. Learning to communicate in a particular professional situation is part of the process of becoming a legitimate member of a particular community of practice. As Dias et al. (1999) and Smart and Brown (2002) have observed, learning to become an accepted and functioning member of a particular workplace situation does not involve a simple transfer of knowledge and skills acquired in an

academic setting directly to a professional setting. Smart and Brown (2002) note that a growing sense of a novice as a competent professional, that is, the development of the professional identity, contributes to the novice's ability to act as an expert and enhances his/her capacity to learn in the workplace.

These key notions developed within the framework of RGS and reviewed above have important implications for pedagogy.

The Pedagogical Implications of RGS

The rhetorical view of genre reviewed in this paper allows us to analyze university writing by studying the contexts in which it has been created in the writers' roles *as students* rather than through comparing it to writing produced by accomplished writers (Bawarshi, 2000; Parks & Maguire, 1999). Miller (1994a) makes the following point:

> what we learn when we learn a genre is not just a pattern of forms or even a method of achieving our own ends. We learn, more importantly, *what ends we may have* [italics added] .... We learn to understand better the situations in which we find ourselves and the potential for failure and success in acting together. As a recurrent, significant action, a genre embodies an aspect of cultural rationality .... for a student, genres can serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community. (p. 38)

If we as educators subscribe to Miller's perspective on learning genre, it is only logical for us to agree that teaching genre conventions of workplace genres in a classroom is useless at best. Freedman (1993, 1994, 1999) strongly cautions educators from falling into the trap of teaching textual features and conventions of genres out of the natural context in which these genres occur and asserts that only in *some* situations, explicit indication of certain genre conventions may be to some extent helpful to students. Anne Freadman (1994) agrees that the teaching of linguistic forms does not result in the production of appropriate texts. She uses her notion of the *ceremonial* with its *chronotopic* qualities (locational and temporal) and the notion of *nontextual uptake* to underscore that language interacts with *multiple* semiotic systems to form texts, and that the linguistic forms, or textual conventions of genre, are derived from all these semiotic systems and the chronotope of the situation.

RGS scholars (e.g., Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993, 1995; Dias & Paré, 2000; Dias et al., 1999; Freedman, Adam, & Smart, 1994; Parks & Maguire, 1999) base their understanding of genre on the notion of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and define genre as situated, "derived from and embedded in our participation in the communi-

cative activities of daily and professional life'" (Devitt, 1996, p. 610). Therefore, as
Anne Freadman (1994) cautions, even if we teach a range of interconnected semiotic
systems that form any genre, "it would also be wise not to confuse the recipe with the
rules of place and appropriateness, nor constitutive rules with regulative rules" (p.
63).

Bringing together recent developments in RGS and complementary theories,
Adam and Artemeva (2002) summarize important characteristics of genre and genre
acquisition as follows:

1) genres arise out of and reflect rich discursive environments;

2) in addition to distinctive textual features, genres are characterized by
   distinctive composing and reading practices, as well as social roles of
   parties involved;

3) rhetors' knowledge of genres is largely tacit, even, or especially, for ex-
   pert genre users (e.g. writers and speakers);

4) an individual's ability to "genre" (Schryer, 1995, 2002) in a community is
   almost always a necessary part of her socialization/acceptance into a com-
   munity, and

5) people learn to use genres (at home, in the community, in classrooms, at
   work) very often without explicit instruction. (p. 183)

This last point is important because it dramatically changes perceptions of how gen-
res are learned and taught. RGS provides us with a new and radically different per-
spective on genre learning as opposed to the traditional view that genres (that is, their
textual features) can and should be explicitly taught in the classroom.

Explicit teaching of genre features[10] and the dangers of creating simulations in
the classroom and trying to teach genres through simulated tasks have been fully
discussed in the RGS literature (e.g., Freedman, 1993, 1994, 1999; Freedman & Artemeva,
1998). As Anne Freadman puts it, "the use of simulation techniques in the ceremonial
frame of 'straight' classroom practice subverts the simulated game: its stakes are no
longer at stake; the stakes of playing are those of playing the usual work for marks and
teacher's feedback game" (p. 48). In a simulated context (that is, in a very specific
context of the classroom [Lave and Wenger, 1991]), the text produced by the simula-
tion is no longer followed by and connected to its appropriate uptake. Freadman
argues that

> knowing a genre is also knowing how to take it up: the manners are re-
> ciprocal…. Using a text is primarily a matter of understanding its genre
> and the way it plays it — recognizing it, certainly, but also reading its
> tactics, its strategies, and its ceremonial place. Learning to write, equally,
> is learning *to appropriate* and *occupy a place* [italics added] in relation to
> other texts, learning to ensure that the other chap will play the appropri-
> ate game with you, and learning to secure a useful uptake: the rules for
> playing, the rules of play, and the tricks of the trade. (p. 63)

Attempts have been made "to avoid problems associated with simulations: the rhetorical confusions and the thinness of the discursive context" (Freedman & Artemeva, 1998, p. 12); however, it remains unclear how successful acquisition of a genre by students in the classroom can be assessed, unless we agree that such an as-sessment becomes possible only years after the students have been involved in the interaction with a particular genre. It has been suggested (e.g., Adam & Artemeva, 2002: Freedman & Adam, 1996, 2000) that when determining the success of the ac-quisition of (written) genres, one must focus on the following areas: "the goals, au-thenticity, and attenuation of the writing task; the roles assumed by guides and learn-ers; the nature of evaluation; and the sites for learning" (Adam & Artemeva, 2002, pp. 183-184). This advice takes us well beyond the teaching and learning of textual fea-tures in a traditional classroom.

Swales (1993) stresses that it is important to pay close attention to the way genres function within systems of genres (Bazerman, 1994), in which genres coexist symbiotically "(feeding one off the other) and yet in a state of dynamic tension" (p. 692). Pedagogical implications of this view are such that the teaching of genres is only meaningful if genres are taught as systems, that is, not as separate assignments but as connected and interdependent ones, not as stabilized entities but as only stabilized-for-now (Schryer, 1993, 1994) or, in fact, never stabilized ones (Bawarshi, 2000; Devitt, 2000). A question then arises, should we even attempt to teach genres? RGS scholars (e.g., Coe et al., 2002; Dias et al, 1999; Dias & Paré, 2000; Freedman & Medway, 1994a, 1994b, and so on) argue that "writing is a by-product of other activities, a means for getting something else done" (Dias et al, 1999, p. 235). If we agree with this view, we need to find ways to engage students in tasks that require them to write in order to accomplish something, to do work. In the concluding paragraph of their book *Worlds apart*, Dias et al. (1999) propose:

> if there is one major, obvious seeming way in which educational courses
> might prepare people better for the demands of writing at work, it is
> through constituting the class as a working group with some degree of

complexity, continuity, and interdependency of joint activity. Such ar-
rangements will go some way toward realizing the far richer communi-
cative relations that contextualize writing in the workplace. (p. 235)

Another consequence of the rhetorical approach to genre is that it allows educa-
tors to treat student writing as a *metagenre* (Mirtz, 1997), containing features of both
primary and secondary genres (Bakhtin, 1986a), and at the same time being shaped
by the institutional constraints and the students' resistance to these constraints. We as
educators should recognize the difference between workplace and academic writing
as highlighted by numerous researchers (e.g., Beer, 2000; Dias et al., 1999; Dias &
Paré, 2000; Freedman & Adam, 1996, 2000; Freedman et al., 1994) and start consider-
ing student writing as having "overarching purposes that mediate and influence and
construct genre choices for students in ways different from professional writers" (Mirtz,
1997, p. 194).

In addition to the issues reviewed above, questions of ideology and power have
come to the forefront of Rhetorical Genre Studies (e. g., Coe et al., 2002a; Paré, 2002;
Schryer, 2000, 2002). As Devitt (2000) puts it, "The historical and institutional
situatedness of genres makes them essentially ideological" (p. 701). Paré (2002) ob-
serves that participation in "genres situates writers in relations of power" (p. 63). In
this respect, Schryer (1993) proposes that as teachers of writing we can teach students
to critically examine genres as "evolving … ideological vehicles that represent the
values of certain groups" (p. 230). According to Coe (1994), generic structures contain
attitudes built into them. These attitudes are "sometimes danced without conscious
awareness or intent on the part of the individual using the genre" (p. 183). Paré (2002)
notes that in the workplace, the routine "unfolding" of genres often makes them ap-
pear inevitable, "simply the way things are done" (p. 59). Perceived as such they can
easily subvert novices joining the workplace if these novices have never experienced
what it means to take a critical stance toward a genre, take a genre apart, and analyze
its actions. These issues require further research.

Conclusions

In this paper I have presented an overview of the theoretical constructs of rhe-
torical genre studies and demonstrated that the reconception of genre, which started
with Campbell and Jamieson in 1979 and continued with Miller's redefinition of genre
as social action, provided a new direction for the study of genre. With the integration
of key concepts developed by Bakhtin (e.g., utterance, addressivity, otherness,
dialogism, chronotope), further exploration of these concepts by North American

and Australian scholars, and the development of new theoretical constructs over the past twenty years, RGS has become a full-fledged discipline that allows us to view genres as much more than just textual forms. As Bazerman (1997) puts it,

> genres are forms of life, ways of being. They are frames for social action. They are environments for learning. They are locations within which meaning is constructed. Genres shape the thoughts we form and the communications by which we interact. Genres are the familiar places we go to create intelligible communicative action with each other and the guideposts we use to explore the unfamiliar. (p. 19)

The overview of the recent developments in RGS has demonstrated that genre possesses the transformational force that turns "general discourse into a socially recognized and meaningful text" (Bawarshi, 2000, p. 349). Genre does not simply communicate meanings; rather, it mediates and maintains these meanings. As I have indicated in the review presented in the paper, genres are "inherently open-ended rather than complete wholes" (Hanks, 1987, p. 677) that shape rhetors as much as rhetors shape genres (Hanks, 1987; Schryer, 2000, 2002).

The current developments in RGS focus predominantly on the refinement of our understanding of genre as a regulated and at same time improvisational and flexible communication strategy and on its temporal aspect. RGS has proved to be a very powerful tool not only in the analysis of workplace and academic genres and systems of genres but also in indicating and unpacking differences between academic and workplace communication practices.

It is important to note that RGS has been developed and used in conjunction with other rhetorical, psychological, and social theories, such as activity theory (Engeström, 1987; Leont'ev, 1981; Wertsch, 1981), theories of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and distributed cognition (Hutchins, 1995), and social theories of practice by Bourdieu (Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 1990) and Wenger (1999). At present, it is difficult to find a study that would rely on RGS as its sole theoretical framework, as it has been demonstrated (e.g., Paré, 2000; Schryer, 2000) that complementary theories provide further insight into the questions RGS attempts to answer. In addition to its significant theoretical contribution to the modern understanding of human communication, RGS used in combination with complementary theories has important pedagogical implications. The rhetorical view of genre that serves as the basis of Rhetorical Genre Studies allows educators to reconceptualize their understanding of what makes communication effective and what is and is not possible to teach in an academic classroom.

Notes

[1] Rhetorical Genre Studies is a term coined by Aviva Freedman (1999, 2001). RGS is also known as North American genre theory.

[2] I have emphasized the term "constellation" used by Campbell and Jamieson because this term later becomes a cornerstone of Schryer's revised definition of genre (2000, 2002). Schryer's definition is discussed later in this paper.

[3] Curiously, M. Holquist (1990) asserts that "dialogism" is "a term ... never used by Bakhtin himself" (p. 15), while I have observed that, for example, in the Russian version of *Problema teksta v lingvistike, filologii i drugih gumanitarnih naukah: Opit filosofskogo analiza* [The problem of the text in linguistics, philology, and the human sciences: An experiment in philosophical analysis] (1986c) Bakhtin uses the Russian word dialogism on p. 491 and various derivatives of this word throughout the article.

[4] Campbell and Jamieson's definition is quoted earlier in this paper.

[5] This clear distinction somehow escapes M. Holquist (1990) in his book *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world,* where, in a lengthy discussion of the Bakhtinian notion of time-space, Holquist treats it as if it were exactly the same as Einstein's.

[6] The original Russian article is attributed to 1937-1938, while the concluding remarks are dated 1973.

[7] It is important to remember that "standard time measures are, of course, social constructions (as exemplified by the fact that different calendars are used in different societies) but their broad usage and intersubjective acceptance renders chronos essentially taken for granted" (Yates & Orlikowski, 2002, p. 108).

[8] Please note that even though this view of genre is very close to Bakhtin's concept of addressivity, Freadman's definition of genre is not the same as Bakhtin's (1986a). Bakhtin defines genres as relatively stable types of utterances, where each utterance is limited by its boundaries. The boundaries, in turn, are defined by the change of speaking subjects. Freadman's view of genre differs from Bakhtin's in that she sees two related utterances produced by *different* speaking subjects as *one genre* (1994; 2002). (I would like to thank Aviva Freedman for pointing out this distinction for me).

[9] The only English translation of the Russian article (1930/2000) that I was able to locate was the 1983 abridged translation. The parts of the article omitted from the abridged edition are translated into English and reproduced in Parrot (1984).

[10] "The prescriptivism and the implicit static vision of genre" (Freedman & Medway, 1994c) represents the most significant difference between the North American (RGS) and Australian ("the *Sydney School*") approaches to genre pedagogy.

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