Article

Genres Inside Genres. A Short Theory of Embedded Genre

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Abstract

The article is a theoretical study of the concept of the embedded genre. Its focus is on Rhetorical Genre Studies, but it draws from other traditions of genre research as well. The article understands an embedded genre as a genre that is included within the framework of another genre. By discussing a tentative distinction between three kinds of embedding, "recontextualized embedding" (from Bakhtin), "contextualized embedding" (from Orlikowski & Yates), and "element genre" (from Swales and Martin), the present study aims to establish elements of a conceptual foundation for a theory of embedded genres. Genre research needs such a theory, because embedding is integral to genre and present in all extended genre use in language. If we are to understand a genre, we need to analyze both how it interacts with its surroundings, and what its constituent elements are. Genre embedding is crucial to both. Therefore, genre research can profit from integrating an expanded understanding of genre embedding in its theoretical deliberations and its analytical work.

Introduction

We are all surprisingly skillful genre users. We go through our everyday lives performing, understanding, and even manipulating numerous genres—often without even noticing that we do so. We write "shopping lists", or participate in "job performance interviews" or various other kinds (genres!) of "meetings", we read a "recipe" to cook dinner, then hear a "podcast" while cooking, and after dinner we may then sink into a soft chair to see a "tv-show" or read a "novel" before going to bed. We can do all of these things competently without once reflecting on the various genres we use.

How extensive this tacit genre competency is becomes even more apparent when we look closer at the individual genres and discover that most of them include other genres, and that you have to master these *embedded genres* too, in order to master the genre itself. Of the examples given above, only the shopping list does not include other genres—though I might leave for instance a joke in a shopping list if I send someone else shopping, it is not intrinsic to the workings of the genre. However, even the

recipe contains a "list of ingredients" and a "procedure" that work together to build the genre—and must be taken together, too. Woe to the cookbook writer if these two embedded genres do not match, or the cook if both are not followed and, for instance, one or more of the ingredients are not at hand when the cooking begins.

Thus almost everywhere, genre goes, embedded genres follow, and our competency in understanding and using genre is closely intertwined with our mastery of embedded genres. The after-dinner speaker who knows just where and how to slip in a joke in his speech is much more likely to perform the genre successfully. Therefore, if we want to analyze how genre works, we need a clearer understanding of the workings of embedded genres. The present paper opens up this investigation. It is a theoretical study aiming to lay down some of the conceptual groundwork needed in order to study embedded genres.

Thus, by "embedded genre" I understand a genre that is included within the framework of another genre, or what Martin has called a "*genre inside a genre*" (1995, p. 24)[1]. For example, newspaper articles are embedded in newspapers, pie charts in white papers, jokes in lectures, and letters in novels. Any extended use of genre, and, by consequence, any extended use of written genres, will embed other genres. Moreover, the more complex a genre becomes, the more complex its embedded genres will also be.

If you study an utterance in language[2], you can ask the question of genre on at least four levels. You can ask, "what genre is this utterance?", "what genres does this utterance embed?", "into what genre pattern or patterns does the utterance fit?" (Concerning patterns of genre, see Auken, 2018), and "into what genre or genres can this utterance be embedded?" The first question has to do with the whole of the utterance; the second with the genres embedded in it, and the third and fourth with its relationship to its context of genres (Devitt, 2004, p. 25-32). All four are fundamental to the interpretation of the utterance, and they will have a dynamic relationship to one another—forming, if you will, a multi-layered hermeneutic circle. The understanding of the overall genre or genres of the utterance informs the understanding of the embedded genres, and they, in turn, influence how we understand the genre of the overall utterance, but in order to understand either we need to see the genre use of the utterance in its dynamic relationship to other genres (Freadman, 2020). The second of the four questions—which is crucial to the topic at hand—could be rephrased in other ways, like "what genres has this utterance been built of?", or "how does this utterance use other genres?" Each of these rephrasings would invite a somewhat different response.

Moving up from the utterance to the genre a related question arises, namely what other genres any particular genre is capable of or likely to embed. In itself, this will characterize the genre. A research paper, for instance, may contain genres such as acknowledgements, graphs, tables, discussions, and evaluations, whereas a hymn may contain prayers, dirges, praises, exhortations, and confessions. The two genres share the narrative as a possible embedded genre, and both may also embed jubilations,

but they will be rhetorically subdued in the research article, whereas they can be emphatic in the hymn. Incidentally, it is fully possible, albeit non-standard, for a research paper to embed a hymn, whereas hymns don´t embed research papers[3]. The difference between the two genres, thus, is visible in what genres they regularly embed, and how they embed them. Therefore, in working with the genre interpretation of a given utterance, we are looking for both the overall genre (and genres) determining the utterance and for the genres embedded in it.

Complex genres will always be composed of a number of different genres combined into a larger whole. Thus, genre embedding can be added to the list when Devitt posits that genre can be redefined "as a dynamic concept created through the interaction of writers, readers, past texts, and contexts" (2000, p. 699). Bawarshi states that "genres help reproduce the very recurring situations to which they respond" (2000, p. 340; referencing Devitt, 1993). Embedded genres help reproduce these situations within the framework of the embedding genre. If, for instance, you tell an anecdote in a lecture, you add the social dynamic of the anecdote to the lecture, your students momentarily become the audience of the anecdote, you become the storyteller, and the interest and social bonding connected to the anecdote are reproduced in the lecture.

Therefore, by calling awareness to the generic structures that enter a genre through its embedded genres, an interpretation can map the patterns of cultural meaning in the genre, and demonstrate how these patterns inform the genre and our understanding of it.

The available theoretical work concerning embedded genres is not extensive; the question plays a limited role in existing genre research. There are, however, some studies within genre research proper (Auken, 2020) that address the problem at hand to an extent. Notably, the description of the relationship between macrogenres and microgenres (or elemental genres) in the tradition of Systemic-Functional Linguistics (Martin, 1994, 1995, 1997), and the Swalesian move-analysis made poignant in the English for Specific Purposes tradition (Swales 1981, 1990). Both of these deal with the way in which larger textual genres are built from smaller genres; albeit these are rarely conceptualized as genres in the move-analysis.

Embedding as Recontextualization

This section and the next two lay out three different kinds of embedded genres, recontextualized embedding (this section), contextualized embedding (the next section) and element embedding (the section following that).

The idea of recontextualized embedding, derives from Mikhail Bakhtin's rightfully famous distinction between primary and secondary speech genres. Bakhtin defines a primary speech genre as a "simple" (p. 61) one that takes form "in unmediated speech communication" (p. 62). As examples, Bakhtin mentions "rejoinders in everyday dialogue" and "private letters". They derive their primacy

from being the original genres out of which other, more complex, genres are built. These more complex genres are Bakhtin's "secondary speech genres".

There are distinct problems in Bakhtin´s description. The notion of the primary speech genre is somewhat ill-defined, and it remains unclear how a letter can be unmediated, since it is in itself a form of mediation. The basic point, however, still holds: Complex (secondary) genres are built from simpler (primary) genres. About this process Bakthin remarks:

> These primary genres are altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex
> ones. They lose their immediate relationship to actual reality and to the real utterances of others.
> For example, rejoinders of everyday dialogue or letters found in a novel retain their form and their
> everyday significance only on the plane of the novel's content. (p. 62)

Thus, a secondary genre provides a new context for the primary genre or genres embedded in it. There is, therefore, a very enlightening tension in Bakhtin's description. On one hand, the terms "primary" and "secondary" clearly marks the simple genres as foundational, and as the building blocks out of which the secondary genres are made. On the other, Bakhtin's description of the relationship between the secondary genre and the primary genre or genres embedded in it clearly gives primacy to the overall genre, subsuming the embedded genre to the point where it is completely dependent on its new context.

As Lähdesmäki (2009) points out, this kind of embedding is a form of recontextualization, and like other recontextualizations it changes the function and meaning of the recontextualized object. A letter in a novel has no actual existence and does not fulfill the material, formal, and communicative requirements for a letter. However, within the framework of the diegesis it reacquires its normal characteristics; it has a writer and a reader, is a non-fictional document written by the writer for the purpose of perusal by the reader, and has a clear—albeit fictional—materiality; the letter-in-the-novel is perceived as real; in the novel.

As noted, the reason why genres embed other genres in the first place, or why complex genres are built from simpler, is that the embedded genre carries its own character into the new context, adding meaning to it. By consequence, interpreting a complex genre necessitates a coherent understanding of the many simpler genres that constitute it. Thus, there is a dialectic relationship between the two levels. The embedded genres are transformed by their new generic context, but features are carried over from the original genre specifically to influence this new context. Thus, a genre will be defined by the genres it embeds, and will in turn define those genres. (See also Frow (2014) for a Bakhtin inspired analysis of recontextualized genre embedding. Mäntynen & Shore (2014), too, see embedding as recontextualization.)

Embedding as Contextualization

This section sets out to describe a kind of genre embedded that is widely different from what Bakhtin envisages. I call this contextualized embedding. The main difference between the two is in the relationship between the embedded and the embedding genre. Here, as elsewhere, the choice of subject matter is anything but innocent. Bakhtin's example, the letter in the novel, presents a specific challenge which leads him to see the relationship between the embedded and the embedding genre in a particular way; but in many cases, and in particular those concerning rhetorical genres, embedding works differently. A starting point for an understanding of this could be a description offered by Orlikowski & Yates. They discuss a genre overlap,

> in which a particular communicative action may involve the enactment of more than one separate genre. For example, shareholders´ meetings often include oral presentations, video screenings, and votings, while genres such as proposals and trip records are often incorporated within memos. (1994, p. 544)

In a terminology at some distance from Bakhtin, Orlikowski & Yates describe the genres as "separate" and forming a "communicative action". However, the communicative actions mentioned, shareholders' meetings and memos, are genres in their own right, and thus we are still dealing with some form of genre embedding.

The terminological difference, however, is telling. Instead of the clear subordination of the embedded genre, the term "overlap" used by Orlikowski & Yates, sets the genres involved on a more equal footing; and on closer inspection, the difference is even more striking. Whereas, generally speaking, you do write novel with the purpose of writing a novel, a shareholders' meeting with no other purpose than to be a shareholders' meeting is a waste of time; at best pointless at worst an insult to the participants. Therefore, the point of the shareholder's meeting is in the embedded genres, the presentations, the screenings, the votes, etc. The embedding genre is in some sense just a frame.

However, even then the shareholders' meeting is not without force in the situation. Depending on the regulations governing the meeting, it frames and enables a number of the genres in play. The vote is binding because it has been carried out in the context of the meeting, the information to the shareholders contained in briefings or screenings can be counted as given to the shareholders, because it has been presented at the meeting etc etc. Therefore, even if the embedding genre is somehow subordinate, it still forms a crucial context, and the embedded genres must be seen in their generic context to get at their full meaning.

Element Genres

Returning to the concept of the elemental genre from SFL, but tweaking it slightly, we can see that there are certain embedded genres that are neither contextualized nor recontextualized. We could call them "element genres" because they overwhelmingly have their function as elements in other genres. These element genres include most of the peritextual genres (Genette, 1997), a lot of what Freadman (1994, 2002, 2020) would call "ceremonial" genres, and things like introductions, conclusions, and indexes. Most, if not all, element genres acquire their function through a high level of regularity. They are needed in a larger genre because that genre needs to go through certain moves.

Element genres have their distinct social functions and formal traits, but they exist to be building blocks in larger genres; they are elements. For a well-established example, consider how one of the main genres in science publication, the IMRaD article, is formally comprised of four element genres set in a particular order: "Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion". In SFL the term "macrogenre" is used "for texts which combine familiar elemental genres" (Martin, 1997, p. 16), and it is remarked that with "embedding, a whole genre is made to function as one stage in the development of text" (Martin, 1997, 24). Similarly, in the Swaelsian move analysis, the individual moves within a text or at text corpus are often genres in their own right; thus, for instance, the four different moves in the peer reviewer's referee report identified by Fortanet (2008, p. 35; see also Paltridge, 2017) are in themselves genres. Moreover, one of them, "Conclusion and recommendation" even consists of two different genres.

Martin's expression that the embedded genres are "made to function" within the framework of the larger genre, is quite apt in the case of recontextualized embedding and also catches some of the intricacies of contextualized embedding. However, in the case of element genres, the figuration is different. Element genres are not *made* to function in larger genres; larger genres are *where* they function. Thus, they are indeed genres within genres, but not moved in the process. Their "natural" state is as parts of a larger whole; they primarily exist as building blocks. Element genres can be targeted for genre analysis (see for instance Bhatia, 1997; Martín and Pérez, 2014; Nyboe, 2016), and the Swaelsian move analysis is to an extent an analysis of the interplay of element genres. However— for very good reasons—these analyses will tend towards describing the function and form of the element genres, as they appear in the context of larger utterances.

Embedding as Social Action and as Uptake

As should be evident, the relationship between the embedded and the embedding genre is more nuanced and versatile than Bakhtin's description indicates. This is hardly surprising given that every complex genre will embed other genres. Even in the cases where the embedding genre is the "natural"

place of the genre, it will affect the form of a given genre, how it is perceived, and what role it gets to play. Moreover, the role of the individual agent in genre use has a deciding role to play (Devitt, 2009; Freadman, 2014, 2020); there is always individuality at work in genre use. Therefore, the relationship between the embedded and the embedding genre is bound to be as complex and variable, as the actual users make it.

The difference between the three forms of embedded genres, recontextualized, contextualized, and element genres, can be described in their relationship to two of the core concepts of Rhetorical Genre Studies, Carolyn Miller's concept of "Genre as Social Action" (1984) and Anne Freadman's "uptake" (1994, 2002). See also the discussion between the two in Freadman (2020), and Miller (2020).

Miller describes how genres work as formalized actions. As social situations recur, so do social responses, and these responses will, over time, become genres. Genres are thus means of social action. However, the way social action is performed through embedded genres varies strongly in the different forms of embedding.

In recontextualized embedding, the embedded genres are not social actions in their own right. Instead, they contribute to the overall social action of the embedding genre. This is what Bakhtin implies when he declares that the primary speech acts lose their immediate relationship to actual reality and to the real utterances of others. Thus, Freadman's statement that genre "is the context in which what is said has the force that it has" (2012, p. 557; see also Freadman, 2020) holds true for the embedding genre, rather than for the embedded genre.

In contextualized embedding, the embedded genres *are* social actions in their own right, and the function of the embedding genre will often be to add strength to, or even enable, the social force of the embedded genres. It is arguable that the embedding genre is in some cases subordinate to the embedded genre. If you call a meeting to hold a vote, the vote is the central social action to which the meeting might be seen as ancillary—even if it is formally speaking the embedding genre.

With elemental genres, the figuration is yet another. First, the social action performed by the embedded genre will, to a large extent, be determined by the embedding genre in much the same way as is the case with recontextualized embedding. However, instead of having lost "their immediate relationship to actual reality and to the real utterances of others", these genres are in the embedding genre *in order to* mediate between the embedding genre and the cultural context that surrounds it. They are there as points of contact, because the embedding genre needs to reach out in order to perform its social action. Returning to the Freadman-quote above, the embedding genre is part of the context that enables the embedded genre to have its force.

The different character of the three kinds of embedding is also evident in relation to the question of uptake. From the Bakhtinian point-of-view, a recontextualized embedded genre does not belong to the genre it proclaims itself to be, but is rather an uptake on the same genre. The letter in the novel is no longer a letter, having lost many of the defining properties of a letter. In fact, it has probably never had

them. The genetic interpretation implied here by the expressions "no longer" and "having lost" is in accordance with a Bakhtinian interpretation of genre embedding in which genres are transformed as they become embedded. However, in many cases there is no movement. The great majority of letters appearing in novels have not lost anything because they have not moved. They are written for the novel and have no prior existence. The letter genre may have moved somewhere in the distant past, but since then an extensive tradition of letters in novels mean that any particular letter in a novel is as likely to have derived its inspiration from other letters in novels as from actual letters.

Instead, it is a "letter-in-a-novel". This does not make it any less a genre—you can easily study the "letter-in-a-novel" as a genre—it just makes it a different genre. An embedded genre invites and enables uptakes like any other genre, but these uptakes will be determined by its embedding. This is no great secret. When we shout a warning at the movie ingénue who is about to walk into a "trap", we are definitely taking up the genre of the trap, but we do not expect that person to hear the warning. Thus, the uptake is different from the "warning" we shout if we are in the car, and the driver is inadvertently about to run somebody over.

In contrast, contextualized embedded genres are *not* uptakes on the genres, but the genres themselves. The vote is a vote, the speech a speech, the pie chart a pie chart. Like other genres they may, and will, take up any number of previous genres, but in themselves, they are no different from any other uses of the genre. They will be influenced, in some cases even determined, by the embedding genre, but they remain as individual uptakes in their own right.

Likewise, element genres are not uptakes on the genre but the genres themselves; an introduction is an introduction, a table of content, a table of content etc. In fact, one might say that the recognition of the recurrent social action they perform is crucial to their function within the embedding genre. It is precisely because they are recurrent and standardized that they work; we know an introduction when we see one, because it critically looks and functions like previous instantiations of the genre. However, at the same time the element genres in their role as building blocks are participants in the overall uptake of the embedding genre. They are included to participate in the uptake performed by the embedding genre and to help it in turn secure its preferred uptakes.

Talk show–interview–question–speech.

Recent genre research (for instance Devitt, 2021; and Freadman, 2020) has emphasized the role of the individual agent in genre use. Thus, a real-life example to demonstrate some of the dynamics in the interplay between embedded genre, embedding genre, and actual genre users. On September 3rd, 2015, Senator Elisabeth Warren joined Stephen Colbert for an interview in *The Late Show*. It should be a friendly setting for her. Both interviewer and interviewee are well-known liberal figures; the talk show interview itself is a friendly genre, anticipated to be enlightening and entertaining, not tough.

Softball questions are the order of the day. Moreover, the two knew each other from earlier interviews, and Warren had every reason to expect that she knew what she was walking into. It is worth noting that even though a talk show interview is a form of contextualized embedding, it has more than a whiff of recontextualization about it. The keyword is "show". The first purpose is entertain, and performing a talk show interview well is largely to contribute to the entertainment. On this point, Warren did not have a home field advantage; she is a politician, not an entertainer.

Colbert, however, is not only an entertainer through and through, but also a well-known jester and trickster. In the opening of the interview, he sprung an apparently well-prepared trap on her. After some light banter, when moving through the introductory element genres in the beginning of the interview (Colbert teasing Warren—who has been campaigning for more political control with the financial markets—with the Wall Street money that have paid for the *Late Show*-studio), Colbert starts discussing whether Warren is running for president. The interview continues:

> Colbert: Are you sure you are not running for president of the United States? Have you checked the newspapers lately? Cause a lot of people have joined in. You might have done it in your sleep?
>
> Warren: Right, no … I am sure I am not!
>
> Colbert: These days politicians have to check the opt-out button. Okay?
>
> Warren: Okay. [nods]
>
> Colbert: It's like unsubscribing for an email. Alright?
>
> Warren: Okay. [nods]
>
> Colbert: But you say you´re not running for president. Can you tell us why you'd be such a terrible choice to be president of the United States? Why we shouldn't be clamoring for an Elisabeth Warren presidency?

The final question, which is of course what Colbert has been aiming at the whole time, is patently unfair as a journalistic question. Instead of asking Warren the obvious, why she is not running for president of the United States, Colbert presupposes that Warren will not run because she knows she would be bad at it, and asks her to explain why that is.

The unfair question can only be asked because of the genre structure into which it is embedded. The talk show embeds the talk show-interview as one of its central genres, and the interview, obviously, consists of questions and answers that may, in turn, embed new genres. As a genre, the talk show is, as stated, largely a form of entertainment. It is light-hearted and fast-paced, and making its audience laugh is one of its major purposes. As talk show interview questions go, Colbert's is a perfect success, as it cracks the audience up.

However, it still leaves Warren in a challenging position. The genre of the question is tricky in the sense that its given uptake genre, the answer, by default has to correspond to the actual wording, and thus also the assumptions, of the question. Veering away from this default is socially awkward at the best of times and highly problematic for a politician giving an interview. The accusation of dodging a

question is always a threat. This threat is even more real in a talk show interview because it is supposedly a friendly genre, and arguing with an interviewer who is entertaining his audience is definitely a bad idea. However, simply answering the question is not an option, as a reply, due to the assumptions inherent in the question, would amount to a declaration of incompetence, and could seriously hamper any later bid for the presidency; a bid Warren was to venture in the next presidential cycle.

The absurdity of the situation is not lost on Warren, and she looks stunned or baffled for a split-second. However, with the surefootedness of an experienced debater she regains her composure almost immediately, and starts talking. What she says, however, is not a reply, but a representation of her own character and at the same time a stump speech aimed at how the current lack of regulations for the financial sector is hurting everyday Americans. The speech is impassioned and intense, and she makes absolutely no attempt at answering the question, and no attempt at making jokes. Placed in the uncomfortable and disadvantageous terrain of an undercutting question, she moves into a genre much more familiar to her—and much safer.

Subsequently, Colbert does not press the point. The unfair question may be a challenge and a trick, but it cannot be pursued. Instead, he recognizes that she has answered the challenge by keeping her composure, and that she has used the platform offered to her. The audience breaks out in wild applause, and Colbert nods while he lets it settle and then remarks, "Well … You don´t sound like you´re running for president, I´ll tell you that", drawing yet another outburst of laughter. Given how Colbert poked fun at the insincerity of presidential runs at the beginning of the interview, this is no faint praise.

What is evident from this exchange is both the complexity of the genre use involved in the situation, and the genre competency of both parties involved. Colbert´s question is determined by being embedded in an interview, and the interview is determined by being embedded in a talk show. The question, of course, is the first actual punchline of the exchange, and thus, despite Bakhtin, the embedded genre has an immediate relationship to actual reality; if Warren gets her reply to the question wrong, the difficulties it will cause her are quite real. However, just like in the example with the shareholders' meeting the overarching genre still has a role to play. The character of the question with its insidious presupposition is enabled, even legitimized, by the talk-show genre.

Warren's reply demonstrates that she is as genre-savvy as is her interviewer. Her uptake demonstrates that she is acutely aware that in fact, the question is less an actual question and more a teasing invitation to talk, and as long as she manages to present an interesting and energetic reply, she is quite safe. Thus, she launches her political speech with reasonable assurance that Colbert will not press his question any further, thereby demonstrating that she has understood the genres in play as well as has her interviewer.

Discussion and conclusion

We know much about the interplay of different genres in various genre patterns; in genre sets (Devitt, 1991), systems (Bazerman, 1994) repertories (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994) and chains (Swales, 2004). Genres are sites of social action; and societal and institutional macro-actions will always require the usage and interplay of numerous different genres. Thus, an important key to the character and function of any given genre is not only what that genre it is likely to embed, but also what genre it is embedded in and where it belongs in a larger hierarchy of genre embedding.

Thus, a university lecture, itself embedding numerous genres, is often embedded in a "lecture series" or a "course", which is in turn embedded in the complete "curriculum" of a given discipline, which is embedded in a faculty curriculum embedded in a university curriculum. The further up you get in the hierarchy, the less specific the genre is likely to be, and the more other genres will be lodged around it: syllabi, exams, student essays, rulebooks, meetings, memos, guidelines, and any number of other metagenres (Giltrow, 2002), occluded genres (Swales, 1996), and intermediary genres (Tachino, 2012).

Many genres have more than one likely genre to be embedded into, and in each case, the embedded genre is to some greater or lesser degree changed by the embedding. A genre like the interview has an almost modal character in the sense that it can move between other genres. You can have expert interviews, talk show interviews, lifestyle interviews, opinion interview, job interviews, portrait interviews, police interviews, and numerous others. Moreover, you can have interviews across many different media; books, journals radio, TV, newspapers, internet sites, social media, etc.

The interview as a genre always belongs in a larger genre context; it is hard to imagine an unembedded interview. This genre context may be more or less loose, but it is always there. As is evident even from the changes of label above, there are distinct differences between a portrait interview and a police interview, and these interviews are largely determined by the embedding genre. Their settings will be different, their tone will be different, their topic will be different, the possible outcomes and uptakes will be different. Indeed, the different roles the interview attributes to the participants will also be modified by the embedding genre.

For example: the police interview would belong in a police investigation and would thus be under a strong exigence, and controlled by strict procedural guidelines, including how it can be transformed into written text and taken up in later proceedings. In contrast, the portrait interview is much looser and allows for considerable leeway in format, choice of topic and tone, and in the distribution of roles between the interviewer and the interviewee. For instance, the interviewee may be allowed to determine which topics to avoid and may even have a determining say, in the final editing of the published interview.

Finally, it takes imagination to conceptualize the interview as an element genre, though it has surely

been done, however it is easily seen both in recontextualized and contextualized embedding. The job interview, for instance, does not just appear as a contextualized genre, embedded in a hiring process, but is a stable of many contemporary artistic genres, many fiction-, film-, or TV-genres. Moreover, it can be made a recontextualized genre in training sessions for both employers and employees.

In conclusion: The present paper distinguishes between three different kinds of genre embedding; recontextualized, contextualized, and element embedding with the aim of establishing some of the theoretical foundations for analyses of genre embedding. The three kinds of genre embedding differ in the character of the embedded genre, in the interaction between the embedded and the embedding genre, and in their relationship to core concepts from Rhetorical Genre Studies. The paper further point to embedding as a fundamental feature of genre and endeavors to raise and discuss some of the questions involved in an understanding of embedded genre.

However, the intricacies involved in the embedding of genres inside genres reach far beyond the scope of the present article. Thus, further research is needed not only in the concepts related to embedded genres, but also in the role embedded genres play in hyper-complex genres, in the genres of institutions, in public genres (Mehlenbacher & Miller, 2017; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2016; Cooke, 2021), and in individual exchanges (Freadman 1994, 2002). Related to the last point we need a better understanding of the roles and actions of the agents (Freadman, 2020) involved. As we saw in the exchange between Colbert and Warren, the way each of them handled the genres embedded in the talk show interview were crucial for the outcome. Embedded genres also involve central questions on how genres develop, and what the relationship is between a diachronic and a synchronic description of genres (Applegarth, 2017; Fowler, 1982; Miller 2017; Ongstad, 2021). Finally, though the present paper treats them alike, there may be significant, hitherto unexplored, differences between the way embedded genres work in written and oral genres.

If I am right to posit genre embedding as a fundamental feature of genre use, then these intricacies are worth further study. A better, wider reaching and theoretically sound, analysis of genre embedding can help our understanding both of genre as a phenomenon in itself and of the innumerable different contexts in which genres are active in human writing, culture, cognition, and communication.

End Notes

1. My use of the term "embedded genre" follows Martin, but deviates from Bhatia who writes "In genre embedding, for example, one often finds a particular generic form, it may be poem, a story or an article used as a template to give expression to another conventionally distinct generic form" (1997, p. 191). What Bhatia describes is obviously important and interesting, but the term itself seems better suited for the phenomenon described here. Bhatia's topic might more rightfully be called "genre combination" (Fowler, 1982, p. 171). Thus Bhatias example, a job offering poem, is, in fact, a poem, even if a rather

poor one, and can be read as such, including its function; functional poetry being a stable of literature. A job-offering poem may be unusual, but the job-*application* poem was common in 17th century Denmark, and today small Danish businesses often market themselves using short commercial poems, usually couplets (Auken, 2014). A sufficiently successful new genre combination may form a genre in itself. Compare also the somewhat contrasting use of the term in Mäntynen & Shore (2014, p. 745f.

2). Though numerous genres are non-linguistic or only partially linguistic, embedding is probably a more fundamental and more pervasive phenomenon in linguistic than in non-lingustic genres. Even then, genre embedding is clearly possible in many non-linguistic genres. Thus, Bach's *Weinachts-Oratorium* is to a very large extent build from four other genres "Recitativo", "Aria", "Choral", and "Sinfonia". This, too, will vary from genre to genre and from work to work, and will probably require specialist research to unravel in each case. For a constructive use of the concept of genre embedding in sound studies see Ahern, 2012.

3. For an interesting example of how the formation of a genre is to an extent a standardization of the genres it embeds see Lueck, 2017. See also how Mehlenbacher maps the difference between two stages of registered reports as a difference of which genres are embedded in them: "Stage 1, a pro tem research article comprising only the introduction and methods sections, and Stage 2, a full research article that includes the introduction, methods, results, and discussion sections." (2019, p. 39)

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