

Editorial

Genres have always been hybrid entities and, since the turn of the millennium, their boundaries have become increasingly blurred. And yet genre classifications such as crime fiction, westerns, fantasy, horror, road movie or romantic comedy are relevant to everyday use of media when it comes to guidance on the book and media market. Even as theoretical categories they remain effective, despite all due scepticism, as they organise the world of literary and cinematic storytelling and reception. Genres place media in relationship – also historically – to one another as well as to how recipients experience them. In literature for children and young adults especially, genre classifications play a central role in both production and reception.

Although genres can be classified, their taxonomy does not capture the specific atmosphere that characterises generic formats. Genres are always processual and hybrid, and engaging with the meshing of generic modes and the evolution of new modalities gives a deeper insight into the poetics of texts.

In this sense, the seventh volume of the *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Kinder- und Jugendliteraturforschung / GKJF* (Yearbook of the German Children's Literature Research Society) illuminates the topic of genre(s) with contributions on the poetics and aesthetics of the interplay of generic modes. The authors explore the manifold implications of this complex topic in novels, short prose, nonfiction, picturebooks, graphic novels and computer games from both theoretical and aesthetic perspectives. Six articles that engage with the differentiation and hybridisation of genres show how productive the perspective on genre(s) is for research on children's and young adult literature and media.

Content

The six articles on the focus theme shed light on different aspects and theoretical concepts of genre(s) in children's and young adult media.

Sarah Maaß explores the current boom of the term ›nature writing‹ and takes it as an indication of an emerging diversification and hybridisation of the genre system of ecological children's and young adult literature. Anika Ullmann asks whether the youth novel, commonly used as a collective term for a variety of genres, could be defined as a narrative form of social mobility. She sets out to redress the balance of the common narrative and interpretive patterns that establish and solidify intrapersonal growth as the core of young adult literature and shows how youth novels are narratives of external, social mobility that construct and negotiate the social dimension of age.

In video games, long deemed the medal epitome of youth culture, coming-of-age has only recently become more frequently explored, ultimately leading to the intermedial adaptation of the coming-of-age-genre. Wendy Zelling takes a look at how individuation is creatively negotiated in the genre of adolescent games. The twenty-first century has seen an increase in Gothic fiction for children, as Peter Kostenniemi notes in his article. While most contemporary Gothic tends to emphasise child agency and competence, he shows how this discourse is challenged in recent Nordic Gothic fiction for children from Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

Focussing on the nonfiction picturebook as a multimodal medium that moves freely between the poles of factuality and fictionality, Marlene Zöhrer's article examines the pictorial possibilities and forms of conveying knowledge in current nonfiction picturebooks. Dilara Demirdögen and Helena Trapp, too, focus on the picturebook, specifically

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on the aesthetic transformation it has undergone in the last decades. They examine how traditional narrative forms have merged with media trends, taking into account changed reception habits, to produce new forms of presentation which blur the line between the analogue and the digital.

Beyond the focus theme, three articles explore questions of children's and young adult literature and media from a historical or theoretical perspective. A generic mode traditionally associated with children's literature texts is comedy. Deborah Keller traces the genealogy of the humorous in the work of the Swiss author August Corrodi (1826–1885), known as the »first pure humourist« of German-language children's literature. Lena Staskewitsch illuminates in her article how silence can be understood as a means of approaching the grimmest aspects of the Holocaust in children's literature in the form of implicit representation. She shows how silence can be seen as triggering a particular resonance that forms the impulse for dialogue grounded in the text.

The first part of the Yearbook is brought to a close with a polemical article by Thomas Boyken, in which he questions the concepts of ›Handlungssystem‹ (agent system) and ›Symbolsystem‹ (system of symbols), established in German children's and young adult literature research since the 1990s. In doing so, he traces the ambiguity of the terms in theoretical discourse and puts up for discussion whether it makes sense to adhere to these concepts.

Last, but not least, the reviews: A total of 19 reviews of current publications undertaken by members of the German Children's Literature Research Society present and discuss current research on children's and young adult literature and media.

As always, a special thanks for those who played a part in this *Yearbook*. First and foremost to Caroline Roeder, who is now leaving the editorial board. Her ideas, commitment, and extraordinary expertise have been instrumental in shaping the *Yearbook* in its new digital format. Many thanks! We welcome Julia Benner (Berlin) as a new member to the editorial team; she will work on the *Yearbook* from the next issue on. We thank our authors who staked out academic horizons and with their articles made the *Yearbook* 2023 an inspiring mesh of theory and analysis, and the peer reviewers for meticulously checking and commenting on the articles. Our special thanks go to Petra Schrackmann and Aleta-Amirée von Holzen from the Swiss Institute for Children's and Youth Media (SIKJM) in Zurich who coordinated the reviews in this volume with great care and circumspection, and to Simone Fischer, who once again created a thematically appropriate design for the cover. We would also like to express our sincere thanks to Anika Ullmann who, as every year, has been instrumental in helping the editors set up the articles in the Open Journal System.

We wish all our readers an inspiring read and continuing discussions on children's and young adult media and its dynamic and creative work on genre.

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