Genre Hybridisation

Global Cinematic Flows

«In a given society, the recurrence of certain discursive properties is institutionalised and individual texts are produced and perceived in relation to the norm constituted by that codification. A genre, whether or not literary, is nothing other than the codification of discursive properties».

Tzvetan Todorov (17f.)

«We need a corpus of basic studies that do not limit themselves to generalizing from a list of agreed-upon masterpieces. And, crucially, we need to get out of the United States [as a] cross-cultural approach to the topic might help loosen up the current critical logjam».

Alan Williams (124)

1. Film Genres and Genre Films

Genre structures mould the culture of moving pictures. The inventory of patterns manifest in films is provided by generic conventions, which are highly relevant discursive parameters on the levels of both production and reception. Genres serve as a creative organising principle for film productions while also devising expectations on the reception's side. Concepts of genre also affect academic studies by aiding accomplishments in various fields, e.g. classification, cultural history, stylistic analysis, narratology, and ideological criticism. Therefore, genres are of great importance for the understanding of the cultural flows and the evolving film industries around the world.
importance in the entire media scene. They often shed light on the aesthetic, economic and social dimensions of the particular conditions under which they were made and which they represent respectively. Generic structures also help to observe and analyse complex (inter)medial and (inter)cultural exchanges, because genres correlate with one another and are always subject to transformation.

Although the idea of auteurism predominated in film studies for a long time, by now there is broad consent that filmic patterns cannot be reduced to one creative mind. Their significance exceeds individual autonomy. Instead, they bear relation to generic norms: «Individual artists and filmmakers manipulate signs and meanings, but in contexts which are authorised by communal public consent, and these contexts [...] we call genres» (Ryall, «Genre and Hollywood» 328). The differentiation between generic models is not consistent, but spans specific subject and structure matters or iconographical and visual contexts (western, adventure film, war film, crime film, science fiction film, fantasy film, musical), as well as specific «physically» affective constellations (comedy, horror film, melodrama, pornography). Not only are the genres’ specific traits purely conventional, but also their constructed distinctions. Thus, genres hold no definite structure, but– in the sense of Ludwig Wittgenstein – bear certain family resemblances only: «[w]e see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing [...] : build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc.» (32). Just like Wittgenstein’s language-games, genres do not resemble each other because they have a common feature, but because they share multiple properties. Therefore, they cannot be designated essentialistically, but can be utilised pragmatically to describe a complex of films which – to follow Jörg Schweinitz’s approach – «has an effect on both producer and recipient [as an] institution of film culture.» (115). As a set of potential interpretations, genres shape knowledge and experience by systems of representation.

Rick Altman (Film/Genre 17) has pointed out the multiple meanings inherent in the concept of genre. Genre functions both

- as a label, as the name of a category central to the decisions and communications of distributors and exhibitors.
- as a contract, as the viewing position required by each genre film of its audience.
- as a blueprint, as a formula that precedes, programmes and patterns industry production.
- as a structure, as the formal framework on which individual films are founded.

Thus, while genres can be seen as such sets of meaning (label, contract, blueprint), individual texts provide textures. Whereas label, contract and blueprint refer to film genres, the genre film is defined by generic structures. As Barry Keith Grant pragmatically notes, genre films «are those commercial feature films which, through repetition and variation, tell familiar stories with familiar characters in familiar situations».
Due to the use of heavily coded conventions and modes of seriality, genre films and auteur films are considered to be mutually exclusive categories. The first designates an artistically ambitious, European-influenced cinema which is interested in ethics and insight. The other is characterised as a mass-produced American cinema, a symbol of escapism and the satisfaction of basic needs: «The pure image, the clear personal style, the intellectually respectable content are contrasted with the impurities of convention, the repetitions of character and plot» (Braudy 412). According to this, the European tradition of the politique des auteurs opposes the US-dominated politique des genres. The belief in the irreconcilability of the generic and the artistic holds persistently: «The belief that popularity and excellence are incompatible […] survives, particularly in the notion that the cinema offers two distinct phenomena, one important called art, and the other, trivial, known as entertainment» (Berry-Flint 40). Genres are equated with conventionalised formulas which are breached by the artistically motivated «genius» of the director-auteur. But as a matter of fact, Andrew Tudor identified art cinema as a genre in itself as early as in the 1970s: a genre «of films thought by a relatively highly educated middle-class group of filmgoers» (145). However, in addition to the target audience, Tudor neglects to specify any film-intrinsic determinants. To him, genre is not so much a tool of taxonomy, but of prescriptive polemic. His hypostatisation of reception turns a blind eye on the aesthetic differences of genre and art cinema which are proclaimed in film studies since the 1980s. Characteristics like linear causality (concerning interpersonal conflicts) and continuity editing (ergo transparency) are attributed to genre cinema. Art cinema, however, is attested with an off-centre narration (concerning subjective alienation) and self-reflexive commentary (ergo anti-illusionism) (see Bordwell, Narration in the Fiction Film 156–233). Genre and art cinema are thus considered as mutually exclusive categories. We will not fall into line with this assertion, but instead refer to the pioneering work of Stuart M. Kaminsky whose writings have unfortunately often been overlooked. For Kaminsky, auteurism and genre theory are not exclusive at all: «The concept of authorship in film study is not», he states, «a consideration which should or needs to be set in opposition to the concept of genre». Rather, Kaminsky proposes a dual focus:

«In fact, I believe a consideration of any film should recognise: (a) that it is the creation of a person or a group of persons reflecting the contribution of that person or persons (authorship); and (b) that the film does not exist in a cultural vacuum; that it must, of necessity, have roots in other works which surround it or have appeared before it (genre)».

(16f.)

We propose to see genre and art cinema both as historically specific instances of discursive material, never fully distinguishable by textual properties. In accordance with Ivo Ritzer’s more recent work on the dialectic relationship between genre and authorship (2009), several of the essays in this volume deal with the creative agency
of filmmakers. Thereby, we want to stress the hybrid nature of the intersection between genres and their constructive reworking. Attributing significant importance to genre auteurs such as Jules Dassin, Aleksey Balabanov, Eddie Romero, Tsui Hark or Sergio Leone, we wish to broaden the limited approach to genre. Along these lines, less logical codifications than the viewers’ horizons of expectations are defining, depending on cultural institutions and prevalent systems of legitimisation and meaning potential. Neither fully contingent nor arbitrary, genres may well be analysed in their given historical constellations. Being fluid structures rather than static bundles of artworks, they mediate between text and context.

2. Audiences and the Evolution of Genres

The French term genre can be traced back etymologically to the Latin noun ‹genus› meaning class, group or type. In literary criticism the terminology has been used early on to discriminate between different types of text, but this does not apply to the early years of cinema. Only since around 1910 – because of a surplus of film productions – the term genre has been utilised for cinema as well: as a rhetoric criterion of selection which serves the communication between cinema operator and film distributor, and organises the reception and cognition of the audience. This aspect of communication is (with some modifications) still valid today. Thus, genres work as indicators of communication:

«First and foremost, genres are terms of communication. By classifying different films they serve as a way of communication about films, on the parts of recipients as well as producers and between them both. Genres organise knowledge about cinematic composition and regulate the production of films. They provide guidance, create expectations and determine reception.»

(Hickethier 63)

In genre cinema, communication between producers and consumers manifests itself in recursive visual patterns and recurrent standardised situations. But their respective functions differ depending on how they are integrated into the narrative framework which injects the actual meaning into the visual elements. Steve Neale speaks from a psychoanalytical point-of-view of «systems of orientations, expectations and conventions that circulate between industry, text and subject» (Genre 19). The subject in this case is not an individual person, but a hypostatised entity, a fragile network of psychosocial forces, which is constituted through language and participates in the genesis of generic structures. In any case, this is not to proclaim a producer-centred approach. Genres attain stability only by critical audience reception shaping the production process. Far from being only functions of the text, viewers actively negotiate a film’s meaning. They participate in interactive processes, directing the constantly proceeding evolutions of a genre. The industry
is not able to exhaustively determine the terms upon which audiences use genres. The success of a genre is always the result of the interplay of economic interests and the cultural gratifications of the viewers. As a consequence, according to Raphaëlle Moine, genre «is not only a classificatory category, but also an interpretive category». She observes that in this regard the concept of genre «only finds meaning in the interactions between works, and between works and their contexts of production and reception» (96). A theory of genre therefore has to be attentive to both filmic texts as well as cultural, social and ideological contexts.

Genres are «sets of cultural conventions» (Tudor 139), rhetoric agreements for producers and consumers of films to communicate indirectly via semantic indicators. Hence, as institutions, genres organise frameworks of expectations. Fredric Jameson concurs with this in regard to literature: «genres are essentially contracts» (Marxism and Form 135). To define these contracts more precisely, it is necessary to explore the structures within which the film is produced, merchandised and received as a genre. Just like the auteur has a function for film, so has genre. This indicates «a relationship of homogeneity, filiation, authentication of some texts by the use of others, reciprocal explication, or concomitant utilisation» (Foucault 107). Following Foucault, the same inquiry has to be undertaken as in regard to the function of the auteur:

«What are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where has it been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for himself? What are the places in it where there is room for possible subjects? Who can assume these various subject functions? And behind all these questions we would hear hardly anything but the stirring of an indifference: What difference does it make who is speaking?» (119)

The association of a film with a genre is always defined by practices of interpretation. Therefore, questions of formal classification are much less important to us than issues of historical analysis of discourses.

Inspired by Foucault, Malte Hagener has contrasted a formalist and unhistorical approach to genre with a discourse analytical perspective that is descriptive and non-normative, allowing a more dynamic understanding of genres. Whereas formalist genre critics have long asked for clear definitions as well as selective criteria of inclusion and exclusion, discourse analysis looks for uses and stakes of genre classifications. The latter approach is of particular importance because every subsuming of a film under a specific genre always already performs an operation of standardisation, not only on the film but also the genre itself. In other words, genre is never a neutral category given in advance; the act of addressing every instance of genre rather generates a particular understanding of it. Hagener proposes the concept of a genre «cluster» (19–20) in his argumentation, making a case for the recognition of intersections between generic elements that have to be seen as unstable, temporary, and contingent configurations. From this point-of-view, not only
the «development of genres» (20) mentioned by Hagener can be seen as diverse processes of clustering, but also hybridisations of different generic elements. Every cluster bundles up various parameters that may stem from very distinct contexts but form a new compound in every new film.

According to Martin Seel and Angela Keppler, it gets problematic, though, if «products and categories are minimised to mere effects of the communicative exchange» (58). Indeed, it seems important that the potential understanding between producers and consumers must be implied in the film itself. Otherwise, communication would not even be a possibility: «Genres may be defined as patterns/forms/styles/structures which transcend individual films and which supervise both their construction by the film maker and their reading by an audience» (Ryall, «Teaching through Genre» 28). Thereby, Ryall adds a descriptive dimension to the question of communicative aspects and broaches the issue of filmic forms itself. Ryall is the first to regard genre as a criterion of classification which both evaluates semiotic characteristics and carves out fundamental correlations between individual films in order to assign single artefacts to a collective. By doing that, he gives special regard to recursive visual patterns and recurring standardised situations. But Ryall's pioneering research did not receive a strong response until the 1980s, when a more broadly perceived discourse about the concept of genre came up. Especially Rick Altman criticised the process of simply registering or describing conflictive visual elements instead of analysing them with regard to their function within the narrative framework, which integrates them and charges them with meaning. Alongside analysing the semantic order (like the followers of Claude Lévi-Strauss did), the syntactic structure of the order must be investigated as well. Referring to Vladimir Propp, Altman thus demands a semantic/syntactic approach:

«we can as a whole distinguish between generic definitions that depend on a list of common traits, attitudes, characters, shots, locations, sets and the like – thus stressing the semantic elements that make up the genre – and definitions that play up instead certain constitutive relationships between undesignated and variable placeholders – relationships that might be called the genre's fundamental syntax. The semantic approach thus stresses the genre's building blocks, while the syntactic view privileges the structures into which they are arranged».

(«A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre» 30)

But a sharp differentiation between the semantic and the syntactic, i.e. the linguistic and the textual dimension in Altman's model, remains precarious. Is the final shoot out in the western a semantic or a syntactic element? Or is it both? Similar questions arise with regard to vocal numbers in the musical and sex-scenes in a pornographic film. Besides, not even Altman can avoid the danger of a circular approach, criticised as the «empiricist method» by Janet Staiger (186). Films are chosen for their representative function in regard to a genre to begin with, just to later tauto-
logically prove their belonging to this genre in the second step. In other words, the analyst has to depend on a prior determination of the generic structures formed by her specific goals. Both approaches put forward a rather problematic concept of essentialism, referring normatively either to supposedly essential characteristics for a genre or to a supposedly essential canon of film constituting the genre.

Nonetheless, Altman's categories can be utilised pragmatically to determine the evolution of genres. Every new genre film participates with its individual organisation of semantic and syntactic elements in the development of its genre. Genres are not subject to a stable set of regulations. The principles of language (langue) allow for an unlimited choice of individual utterances (parole). Because of their reciprocal relationship, language itself can be changed by an utterance. Thus, genres must be understood as a provisional, since dynamic, category, which requires a historicised way of thinking: It requires a diachronic instead of a synchronic analysis. Francesco Casetti differentiates between three possible developments of genres: specification (the refinement of a common pattern), masking (essential traits appear in a different form) and actualisation (modifications which transform the traditional pattern without touching its original content). Therefore, genres cannot be understood as closed systems, but only as processes of systematisation. They are always in flux and undergo changes, especially when the semantic dimension (the general inventory of signs of genres) is realigned by the syntactic dimension (the special approach of the filmmakers).

### 3. The Genre System

As Barry Langford has recently summarised, genres actively produce meaning, culturally and practically alike. They are of value both for theorisation as for film practice:

«For film-makers, organising production around genres and cycles holds out the promise of attracting and retaining audiences in a reliable way, so reducing commercial risk. For audiences, genre categories provide basic product differentiation while the generic <contract> of familiarity leavened by novelty seems to offer some guarantee that the price of admission will purchase another shot of an experience already enjoyed (once or many times) before. For scholars, genre provides a historically-grounded method of establishing <family resemblances> between films produced and released under widely differing circumstances, and of mediating the relationship between the mythologies of popular culture and social, political and economic contexts.»

(1)

In this sense, genres can be seen as discursive entities fundamentally organising the production, the understanding as well as the analysis of artefacts. We perceive
genres as narrative categories. This makes every film telling a story a genre film. There is no film without genre and no genre without film. What the viewer notices is always the film in its generic horizon. But according to Jacques Derrida, this participation never amounts to belonging:

«And not because of an abundant overflowing or a free, anarchic and unclassifiable productivity, but because of the trait of participation itself, because of the effect of the code and of the generic mark.»

(The Law of Genre 65)

Derrida establishes the trait of participation between the inner and the outer, presence and absence; it is always constituted by its opposite. Thus, with every film, genre appears newly and differently. There is no finite logic constraining textual energy. Neither can every genre be subsumed under a certain header nor does an essence exist from which they might be deduced. Every film transformatively shapes its genre in the very process of speaking it. However, what features such a genre bears, what expectations it raises, what sets of artistic potentials it provides or to what extent it is engaged by audiences, remains the object of genre theory.

Films provide genres with a space of transmission and performance. Between the paradigms of genres lies a temporal space which is open for experiments, extravagances and follies. Jacques Derrida's concept of différance points to such a place of dynamic and flux. This is where cinema is situated: at the différance between genres. «It is because of différance», Derrida explicated,

«that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called present element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element.»

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Thus, meaning can only come into existence if the present bears a relation to the past which has taken place as well as the future which might take place. It always remains deferred, i.e. it is never present, always absent. The signifier is always the signified already. If transferred to cinema and its genres, the moment ofsignifying is thereby perpetually bound to conventions evolving from the past which can be remodelled in the future. Cinema is always tied to familiar structures, but at the same time leaves nuances of a différance which utilises the familiar for the alien. Its play of difference and repetition, «narrow enough for recognition of the genre to take place, but wide enough to allow enormous individual variation» (Pye 187), establishes porous patterns always open to generic hybridisation. Or, as Jean-Loup Bourget puts it, the genre film's extreme «conventionality is the very paradoxical reason for its creativity» (51).

We do not see genre hybridisation as an instant of creative exhaustion. On the contrary, it seems to us as a liberating force challenging notions of homogene-
ity, purity or essence. In hybrid texts, it is no longer possible to assert a dominant generic trait to a film. In spite of a defining property, hybridisation creates open texts. Adopting a notion by Langford (28), we would say that while hybridisation makes for a rather problematic concept of «film genre», the «genre film», however, remains more than ever alive and kicking. The individual hybrid text does not only self-consciously work with(in) given generic traditions, it also contests dominant ideologies of a genre.

4. Genre Hybridisation and Cultural Globalisation

Compared with Hollywood, other cinemas have to «carve a space locally and internationally for themselves in the face of the dominant international cinema, Hollywood» (O'Regan 5). Indeed, Hollywood cinema has dominated movie theatres in most countries (see Segrave), and to a certain degree still functions as «the world's mainstream film style» (Bordwell, «The Classical Hollywood Style» 4). Outside of Hollywood, national cinemas often were in need of «maintaining cultural identity while responding to the dominance and influence of American cinema», as Raphaëlle Moine points out, using the example of French cinema of the 1950s (152–154). Many cinemas react to Hollywood’s output, which fundamentally is a cinema of genres, not only by adopting the dominant genre system but also by hybridising its aesthetic parameters. Nonetheless, this does not imply a «pure» generic matrix in Hollywood cinema. Quite on the contrary, many Hollywood productions themselves are «hybrid and multi-generic» (Neale, *Genre and Hollywood* 51). In her influential article *Hybrid or Inbred: The Purity Hypothesis and Hollywood Genre History*, originally published in Film Criticism in 1997, Janet Staiger makes the point that Hollywood productions have never been «pure». Notwithstanding, she does not fall prey to the fallacy of solely inverting the «purity» paradigm by indiscriminately labelling Hollywood cinema as hybrid, which would eliminate the heuristic value of the notion of hybridity. Instead, Staiger differentiates between different forms of genre mixture by distinguishing hybridity from «inbreeding», a term she introduces to genre theory. Rather than regarding Hollywood productions as «truly cross-cultural», as the term hybridity would suggest, she argues that «the strands of patterns that intermix Hollywood filmmaking» belong to «the same language family of Western culture» (196) and thus should be considered as forms of inbreeding.

Ascribing a potentially subversive trait to the notion of hybridity, as is common in the humanities in the last decades, Staiger acknowledges the existence of «internal hybrids» created by minority groups in Hollywood cinema that make use of genre mixing in order to «dialogue with or criticise the dominant» (Staiger 197).

Of special interest in the present context are Staiger’s considerations not only of aesthetics, but also of social and political dimensions of genre hybridisation as well
as the location of the concept in a realm that exceeds Hollywood cinema. Indeed, as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam have shown in *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, their standard work on ‘postcolonial’ film history first published in 1994, manifold cinematic traditions exist that do not draw to Hollywood as a matrix of representation (see Shohat and Stam). Therefore, Hollywood cinema should by no means be regarded as the sole benchmark of hybridisation (even if it is a pivotal matrix of global genre hybrids). Instead of asserting binary oppositions between Hollywood and ‘world cinema’, a ‘polycentric approach to film studies’ is more productive as Lucía Nagib et al. have argued (xxii). Numerous films draw on generic patterns that stem from various cinematic and non-filmic traditions of diverse cultural backgrounds. Genres are appropriated according to specific cultural contexts, often without paying attention to notions of ‘authenticity’, ‘purity’ or ‘origin’. The ‘generic identities’ of the referred models thus are reshaped through specific ‘productions of locality’ (see Appadurai 178–199). Unlike the paradigm of cultural imperialism, which assumes a mere homogenisation of local cinemas around the world according to the stipulation of dominant Hollywood productions, processes of heterogenisation are at work at the same time. Global cinematic flows are far from unidirectional, but rather characterise themselves by their many facets and multi-directionality. As part of the global cultural economy, the dialectics of globalising and localising forces in cinema exceed the aesthetic realm. In his much-cited essay *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*, Arjun Appadurai elaborates a valuable framework for the categorisation and analysis of the cultural economy of globalisation, which he understands as a ‘complex, overlapping, disjunctive order’ (32). Appadurai distinguishes five interconnected dimensions of ‘global cultural flows’ which he denominates as ‘ethnoscapes’, ‘technoscapes’, ‘financescapes’, ‘mediascapes’ and ‘ideoscapes’. Rather than being coherent, delimited entities, these ‘scapes’ exhibit ‘fluid, irregular shapes’ that are ‘deeply perspectival constructs’ (33), inflected by particular interrelations and contexts in which they are situated. Thus, Appadurai’s approach considers the interconnected and multifaceted global fluxes of persons, technologies, capital, media representations and ideologies. Of special relevance in the present context, the mediascapes provide ‘complex repertoires of images, narratives and ethnoscapes to viewers throughout the world’ and include aspects such as production, dissemination/exhibition and reception as well as different modes (fiction or documentary) and hardware (analogue or digital technologies).

Although not explicitly mentioned in Appadurai’s essay, the mediascapes with their ‘series of elements (such as characters, plots, and textual forms)’ (35) correspond to the concept of genre, as it is conceived here. Following Rick Altman, we regard genres as sites of conflicting discourses and representations:

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1 Shohat and Stam, however, criticise the usage of the term ‘postcolonial’ and convincingly introduce the term ‘polycentric multiculturalism’ (48).
«Because a genre is not one thing serving one purpose, but multiple things serving multiple purposes for multiple groups, it remains a permanently contested site. [G]enres [are] ever in process, constantly subject to reconfiguration, recombination and reformulation.»

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These conflicts inherent to genres do not solely occur as stylistic tensions or alterations on a formal level, but also manifest themselves in the negotiation of different imaginaries expressed via certain generic regimes that are again frequently subject to particular forms of hybridisation. Nonetheless, genre hybridisations do not necessarily imply the subversion of power relations, as many authors – especially in postcolonial discourse – would have it.

Hybridity has become a buzz word in various disciplines. Since the proclamation of the «era of postmodernity» in the early 1980s and the emergence of a «global heterophilia» (Werbner 19), hybridity or hybridisation advanced as a key term in various discourses – not only in the humanities including disciplines such literary studies, linguistics or media theory, but also in the natural sciences and technologies. Whereas in the field of technology hybridisation applies to an increase of efficiency and complexity, in the humanities it refers to «the mixture of materials, concatenations of codes, the combination of distinct modelling in theoretical discussions» (Schneider 57). A common denominator of hybridity is the almost unanimously positive connotation – contrary to the former usage of the term in the context of evolutionary biology and racial ideology, which also served as justifications for the colonisation of non-European peoples, as Robert J. C. Young has shown (6).

Despite its origins, the term is used in the humanities to express an anti-essentialist notion of cultural productions and culture in general. In this regard Edward W. Said makes the point that «all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic» (xxv). Whereas Said refers to the term «hybrid» to underline the specific configurations of distinct cultures and the power relations implied in them, the term has often been used with the result of erasing differences or to uncritically celebrate hybridity as a subversive cultural practice without sufficiently localising the phenomenon. Rather than a counter-hegemonic cultural practice, hybridity often «becomes an end in itself, serving only to undo binary oppositions», while «dodging entirely the question of location» (Mani 31). The prevalent conception of hybridity as subversion of repressive power structures often tends to have an apologetic character. In regard to the uncritical usage of the term, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has pointed out the risk of a palliative «romancing hybridity» (398f.) or a «hybridist triumphalism as an end in itself» (403). This premonitory observation is of particular relevance if one considers that hybridity is also a factor of production

2 See Gumbrecht for the origin and usage of the term «postmodernity». 
in consumer culture, which serves to gain additional market shares and to maximise profits vis-à-vis the increasingly glocalised capitalism, in which the «becoming cultural of the economic, and the becoming economic of the cultural» (Jameson «Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue» 60) are reciprocally intertwined. Indeed, strategies of hybridisation are ever more common in the sector of cultural economy. Regarding cinema, hybridity not only occurs as a response in «minor cinemas» to the dominance of U.S. American film industry, but also increasingly in Hollywood itself (see Jaffe), not least as a sales strategy for the purpose of market expansion. This being the case, different forms, functions and intensities of hybridity need to be specified as a corrective and located to the respective socio-historical constellations. Or, as Ella Shohat pointed out in her seminal essay Notes on the «Post-Colonial», first published in 1992 in Social Text:

«As a descriptive catchall term, hybridity per se fails to discriminate between the diverse modalities of hybridity, for example, forced assimilation, internalised self-rejection, political co-optation, social conformism, cultural mimicry and creative transcendence.» (Shohat 137)

Therefore, hybridity is not per se a subversive cultural practice, as conceived in many approaches, such as the elaborations of Homi K. Bhabha, who ranks amongst the most prominent and influential theorists on the (postcolonial) discourse of hybridity in the humanities. Bhabha attributes subversive qualities to hybrid phenomena and at the same time tends to disregard social and historical context. Characteristic of his approach, Bhabha states in a broad brush that

«Strategies of hybridisation reveal an estranging movement in the «authoritative», even authoritarian inscription of the cultural sign. [T]he hybrid strategy or discourse opens up a space of negotiation where power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal.» (58)

Interestingly, as early as 1971 Silviano Santiago published an essay called O entre-lugar do discurso latino-americano (The In-Between Space of Latina American Discourse), in which certain notions resemble Bhabha’s theorisation, such as the concept of hybridity and «in-between space», although Santiago’s approach stems

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3 The term ‘glocalisation’ blends the words ‘global’ and ‘local’ to point out that ‘homogenizing and heterogenizing tendencies are mutually implicative’ (Robertson 27) in so-called globalisation processes.

4 For a critique on Bhabha’s psychoanalytically grounded conception of hybridity see Fludernik.

5 Bhabha’s conception of «in-between space» in relation to the notion of hybridity is explicitly elaborated in the following passage: «the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualising an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity. To that end we should remember that it is the ‘inter’ – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible
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from the perspective of cultural anthropology and is more closely tied to social and historical backgrounds. According to Santiago, notions of 〈unity〉 (unidade) and 〈purity〉 (pureza) disseminated by European colonial empires in Latin America have been «contaminated» by local cultural practices. Although the «hybrid element» («elemento híbrido») gained importance according to Santiago, he does not deduce the subversion of colonial power structures per se. Rather, he states that imaginaries in (neo)colonial societies could not develop in mere naivety. As a result, and this is of special interest in the present context, forms of «writing on other writing» («escritura sobre outra escritura», Santiago 23) emerged, often resulting in pastiche, parody and digression.6

The notion of «writing on other writing» indeed is central for genre productions, which are strongly based upon structures of repetition and variation. The genres and modes mentioned by Santiago correspond to a concept of postmodernism, as prominently elaborated by Ihab Hassan, who regards hybridisation as one of eleven characteristics of the postmodern – also including, as already mentioned by Santiago, parody and pastiche. Hybridisation as a trait of the postmodern is conceived as «the mutant replication of genres», which leads to the «deformation of cultural genres» (196f.). Whereas genres traditionally were assumed to have «recognisable features within a context of both persistence and change» and therefore were conceived within the dialectics of identity and difference, these traits are ever harder to maintain, according to Hassan. This notion echoes Derrida’s deconstructivist call for «undoing genre» already mentioned above.

The concept of hybridity traces back to Mikhail Bakhtin, who theorised «hybridisation» in Discourse in the Novel (Slovo v romane), his seminal study on «genre stylistics» of the novel, written in 1934/35. According to Bakhtin, a dialogue between different languages can occur even within one sentence and thus create a polyphony directed against the «standardisation and centralisation of the verbal-ideological world» (163). In this context, Bakhtin introduces the term hybridisation, defined as a blending of two social spheres within a single utterance. Importantly, «intended hybrids» are differentiated from «organic hybrids», which exist in every language (244–247).7 Without denying the subversive potentials that Bakhtin already emphasised, the take in the present volume argues for a conception of hybridity that pays close attention to the distinct forms of the respective phenomena as well as the particular constellations in which they occur. Thus, we concord with Néstor García to begin envisaging national and nationalist histories of the «people». And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves.» (38f.).

6 Apart from Santiago’s reflections, another Brazilian author, Oswald de Andrade, pioneered in the conception of a culturally specific form of hybridisation: the antropofagia, conceptualised in the Manifesto Antropófago, published in 1928 (see Schulze).

7 See Stam for the first thorough transfer of Bakhtin’s concepts to film studies.
Canclini, who underlines that «hybridisation takes place under specific historical and social circumstances» (XII).

As Dimitris Eleftheriotis has pointed out in his important book on *Popular Cinemas of Europe: Studies of Texts, Contexts and Frameworks* (2001), processes of cultural interaction and exchange are always at work and should therefore be considered as the beginning not the end of matter: «the fact that «everything is hybrid» should not be a point of arrival but a point of departure in the investigation of the different conditions and forms of hybridisation». With this in mind, a careful attention to aesthetics as well as structural forms such as economic relations is highly necessary:

«While it is beyond doubt that hybrid forms […] are the product of cultural interaction and exchange, there is a need for a theoretical approach that accounts for the textual specificities of the films and offers an understanding of how these forms relate to a broader field of power relations and to national and international historical contexts.»

(Eleftheriotis 101f.)

Even though, we do not claim to propose the new theoretical approach Eleftheriotis has called for, the present volume nonetheless intends to open up new perspectives on hybrid configurations in cinema at the level of global cinematic flows. Various articles in the present volume problematise the concept of genre from different angles based on diverse case studies and historical backgrounds. Rather than offering a single view of genre hybridisation, the phenomenon is illuminated from different perspectives, resulting in a kaleidoscopic picture accounting for the different facets inherent to genre configurations in regard to global cinematic flows.

5. (Post)National Cinemas

Commencing the volume, Tim Bergfelder’s seminal essay fundamentally reconsiders central questions of both the conception of cinematic genres and cultural globalisation. He points out that there remains a widespread assumption that popular film genres are synonymous with Hollywood, or at least that they originated in the American context before being exported and adapted across the world. In the first part of his essay, Bergfelder discusses how this assumption has developed across the history of academic genre criticism and how it fits within debates about Hollywood’s supposedly universal appeal versus the distinctiveness of national cinemas. He argues for a more complex understanding of the emergence and global circulation of popular genres, suggesting transcultural affinities that are often ignored when international film relations are scrutinised under the more generalising headings of cultural imperialism and colonisation, and industrial hegemonies. In the second half of his article, Bergfelder homes in on a specific case study: the Edgar Wallace
films of the 1960s, one of the most successful domestic genre cycles in the history of German cinema, hybridising traditions of comedy, the detective thriller, film noir, Weimar cinema, gothic horror and superhero comic books. Bergfelder’s focus is on the specific hybrid configuration of the original series, claiming a fundamental hybridity in that the original films were for the most part genuinely scary, bleak and disturbing, yet included comic interludes. In this respect, the series contravened audience expectations associated with horror and comedy as distinct genres, not fully fitting into either category. Finally, Bergfelder looks at the differences evident in the later spoof films that parodied the Wallace cycle and became popular in the mid- to late 2000s. The author’s question is again what the films can tell us about the evolution of generic formulae more generally, and their chances in the contemporary media landscape to translate and export across borders. In doing this, Bergfelder considers terms of genre and nation not as stable or fixed categories, but as processes that occur very unevenly across different cultural contexts and historical periods. He argues that the dynamic between these concepts has been constitutive of most of cinema since its inception, while flows of influence never run in just one direction; there also are no unambiguous points of origin of generic developments or conventions. At the same time hybridisation processes, which occur simultaneously at the levels of the text, of production, and of reception, undoubtedly take on localised forms and fulfil localised functions.

Harald Steinwender discusses one of the earliest and most important traditions of genre hybridisation in European cinema. During the «anni d’oro», the golden years of Italian cinema between 1955 and 1970, the Cinecittà film industry managed to launch an enormously successful production of genre pictures, turning Italy into a producer and exporter of popular movies for mass audiences. The first wave of genre films to cross national borders and succeed in international distribution were the peplum films, an Italian subgenre (or filone) of the adventure movie, ranging back to costume epics such as Giovanni Pastrone’s Cabiria (1914) which set commercial records for the Italian silent film. The post-war pepla claimed a first triumph with Pietro Francisci’s low-budget Le fatiche di Ercole/Labours of Hercules (1958), a colourful adventure movie featuring bodybuilder Steve Reeves in the lead. Following Francisci’s blockbuster, most pepla of the late 1950s and early 1960s were realised as co-productions and used elements of Greek or Roman mythology or history as well as fantasy motives. A great many of these sword-and-sandal pictures are fascinating examples of a free and easy use of mythology and history in popular European filmmaking that is matched by an almost post-modern dealing with generic boundaries, genre hybridisation becoming the rule rather than the exception. Drawing to key movies such as Mario Bava’s Ercole al centro della terra/Hercules in the Haunted World (1961), Riccardo Freda’s Maciste all’Inferno/The Witch’s Curse (1962) and Sergio Leone’s Il colosso di Rodi/The Colossus of Rhodes (1961), Steinwender analyses the ironic nature
of the *peplum*, its strategies of genre hybridisation as well as its gender and body politics, most obvious in the casting of bodybuilders, and points out connections to the Italian-European westerns of the 1960s.

Marcus Stiglegger picks up on this point and engages with the case of Italian-European gothic westerns. Drawing on theoretical concepts by Rick Altman and Ivo Ritzer, he describes how the semantic set of the gothic horror film is adopted into the set of syntactic elements established by the Italian-European westerns of the 1960s. At first he defines the semantic-syntactic set of both gothic horror and Italian western, following up with a close reading of the extraordinary westerns directed by Antonio Margheriti such as *Joko invoca Dio ... e muori/Vengeance* (1968) and *E Dio disse a Caino/And God Said to Cain* (1969). These hybrids of western and gothic horror use the familiar imagery and well-established semantic set of gothic horror to create a picturesque and interesting backdrop for syntactically conventional but gothically executed revenge stories commonly known from the context of Italian-European westerns. Seen as surreal or even horrific plays, these films offer strong atmosphere, cruel inflictions, high pitched desires and biblical metaphors.

Fernando Ramos considers the *giallo*, another particularly popular *filone*. During the early 1970s a group of Italian-European popular films challenged the common conceptions of the murder mystery genre. Combining elements of literary conventions of the hard-boiled fiction with a colourful mix of horror, violence and sex, *gialli* were on one hand the result of the dependency of the Italian film industry from the aesthetic parameters established in the local market by American popular cinema, but were also part of a broader trans-European development, not least as a result of the co-production status of many of these pictures. Formal and narrative similarities can also be found in the same period in British, German or Spanish films. At the same time, the *gialli* were also very much an Italian phenomenon; their structural characteristics as genre are strongly related to local circumstances of production, distribution and consumption of Italian popular cinema. Relying on the semantic/syntactic approach to genre studies proposed by Rick Altman, the chapter analyses this paradox and focuses on the structural characteristics of this group of films (which clearly depart from classical narrative structures) and on their relation to a set of institutional and reception-related aspects (which often fall under the category of a «pragmatic» approach to genre studies) in order to problematise a categorisation of the *gialli* as generic entity, especially regarding their nature as a result of a process of international generic hybridisation.
6. Cosmopolitan Agencies

Dimitris Eleftheriotis discusses fundamental questions of genre hybridisation and global cultural flows from the perspective of cosmopolitanism. His pivotal essay considers the films of Jules Dassin, an émigré/diasporic/exilic director, in relation to hybridisation and globalisation. Eleftheriotis opens with a brief examination of these terms before proposing the blossoming discourse of cosmopolitanism as an alternative conceptual framework. There are certain, rather marginal, strands in the discourse on cosmopolitanism that can be brought to bear on Dassin's films. Two concepts in particular are of pertinence for Eleftheriotis here, the sociological category of the «stranger» (Simmel) and that of the «errant subject» (Agamben via Foucault). Dassin's life and work are marked by an extreme form of strangeness, a position of displacement that is characteristic of his entire career. In Simmel's definition of the stranger a peculiar dialectic of proximity/distance is ascribed in such a cosmopolitan position and disposition. A similar dialectic can be traced in Dassin's work through a series of formal conventions such as voice-over, observational structures, point-of-view systems and editing, foreign characters, narrative structures, the use of urban space, fluid and eclectic employment of the melodramatic and the comedic, performance, mise-en-scène and frame composition. Eleftheriotis explores the relationship between proximity and distance through a detailed analysis of selective Dassin films but also identifies some of the inconsistencies in its use. The examples focus on The Naked City (1948), Du rififi chez les homes/Rififi (1955) and Pote Tin Kyriaki/Never on Sunday (1960), made in the USA, France and Greece respectively, chosen as evocative instances in which aesthetic choices are evidently the product of negotiation around production practices, critical evaluations and processes of cultural differentiation and exchange. Eleftheriotis' inspiring case study of Dassin as a cosmopolitan author who operated in conditions that enabled, even demanded hybridisation, offers two usefully generalisable concluding points. Cosmopolitan positions and dispositions engage creative agents in cinematic negotiations that are informed by sensibilities, aesthetics and ethics that can be traced across a dialectic relationship between proximity and distance. Such dialectic operates in an inconsistent and errant manner that undermines the stability of conventional markers of authorial style as well as that of rigid national or generic frames.

Ivo Ritzer focuses on the work of Filipino «national artist» Eddie Romero, especially his Philippine-U.S. co-productions, and the «testamentary» text SUDDEN DEATH (1975) as a paradigmatic example of hybrid media culture. In a generic hybridisation of western, conspiracy thriller and blaxploitation martial arts film, this movie does not only hybridise several genres and production cycles but also exerts a substantial discourse on the post-colonial imaginary in the Philippines. On that note, SUDDEN DEATH questions several interrelated fields of film as well as cultural theory. In the area of production (as well as distribution and exhibi-
tion) it positions the Philippines in a transnational system of film circulation. As a result, the movie’s treatment of the notion of national cinema hints at representations and subjectivities signified by an appropriation of Hollywood genres. On a textual level this poses important questions of inscribing aesthetic differences to these very genres in the process of hybridising them. Ritzer’s paradigmatic textual analysis of Sudden Death works out the complex practices of hybridising generic traditions, the modes by which these hybridisations embody the paradigm of cultural globalisation of media and the significance of the Philippine experience of being colonised by the imperialist power of U.S. empire. In doing this, he argues that global cultural flows in media are not one-way processes which perpetuate cinematic homogenisation, but open up hybrid spaces of cultural media exchange and geopolitical interaction. Instead of overemphasising structural factors of economic dominance, Ritzer draws on theoretical concepts by Homi Bhabha, Mary Louise Pratt or Marwan M. Kraidy who recognise structural factors as important determinants, yet refuse to see global flows of media culture as mono-directed in a limiting sense of ‘cultural imperialism’. Mobilising the framework of a critical transculturalism, Ritzer aims for a careful consideration of hybridity in order to both defy claims of idealist cultural essentialism which sees national cinemas threatened by ‘foreign’ generic conventions as well as point out the fluid spaces of negotiation which provide media cultures with potentials of transformation. In Ritzer’s view, Romero’s films such as Sudden Death are not only shaped by colonialist ideology but are active shaping processes in their own right, forming complex reciprocal encounters of global flows in media culture. By way of tinkering, tampering and toying, Hollywood genres are taken apart, reassembled and transformed, in the end forming a discourse critical of colonial power. According to Ritzer, Romero’s cinema thus takes place in a cultural exchange between local Philippine media culture and Hollywood’s global genre system, never fixed in an absolute power structure.

Ella Shohat has been examining fundamental issues that concern the scope of the present volume in works such as Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation (1989), and especially in the recent postscript to her seminal book, which is partly reprinted here. In her pioneering study, Shohat moves beyond a nationalist perspective and discusses ‘Israeli’ and ‘Palestine’ cinema relationally, as densely intertwined and inserted in transnational, globalising contexts. In connection with institutional politics, diverse discourses and narratives, she considers the complex politics of representation in documentary and fiction films, including the emergence of ‘new hybrid generic spaces’ in the past decades that have transcended delineations of genres like the traditional war film or the Bourekas. During the 1990s, ‘generic walls separating ‘ethnic tension’ and ‘national conflict’ narratives’ began to crumble, allowing for new cinematic encounters. Often omitted in the discussion of genre, the ‘politics of casting’ are called to attention as a site for critically exploring both the ‘chromatic hierarchy of the Israeli/Arab stereotypes’
and the «schizophrenic existence of the Arab-Jew within a partitioned land». Sho-
hat underlines that in the past two decades films have been representing Israel as a multilingual space, thus moving beyond the «Hebrew/Arabic split» and reflecting complex processes of globalisation and migration. This is particularly evident in the case of Palestinians-in-Israel filmmakers, a great number of whom have emigrated, including Michel Khleifi, Elia Suleiman or Hanna Elias. Their films address issues of multiple dislocations within exilic and transnational perspectives. As demonstrated, the diasporic films explore complex identities shaped along «the fault-lines of gender, class, ethnicity, religion, migration, partition, and exile».

7. Transcultural Subjects

Barry Keith Grant considers adaptations of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, providing new insights from a transcultural perspective. Picking up the famous line of John Ford's classic western *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962) – «When the facts become legend, print the legend» – Grant argues that this certainly has been the case with Vlad the Impaler, for whom history has largely given way to myth. Bram Stoker's late Victorian novel *Dracula*, published in 1897 and based in part on Vlad, established the conventions of vampire mythology, but his mythic image has proven extremely useful for filmmakers, generating at least six versions of particular cinematic, sociological and ideological interest: *Nosferatu* (Germany, 1922, directed by F. W. Murnau), *Dracula* (USA, 1931, directed by Tod Browning), *Dracula* (UK, 1958, directed by Terence Fisher), *Nosferatu* (Germany, 1979, directed by Werner Herzog), *Dracula* (USA, 1979, directed by John Badham) and *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* (USA, 1992, directed by Francis Ford Coppola). Each of these films imagines the monstrousness of the vampire differently and is indicative of the cultural context of its creation. Considering Stoker's novel in the context of Robin Wood's influential conception of the ideological structure of horror, Grant's analysis focuses on the two German adaptations, the closest of the films to their source text, and the way each has offered a different conception of the vampire and of the relation between normality and the monstrous from that of Stoker's novel. In doing this, Grant also illuminatingly discusses the hybridisation of generic conventions of the horror film with art cinema elements and the auteur style of Murnau as well as Herzog.

Andreas Stuhlmann's contribution deals with the development of film melodrama as a transcultural narrative over a period of sixty years. Stuhlmann examines melodrama in the light of the discontent of cultural globalisation, the effects of the concept of successive paradigm shifts, the ambiguity of the idea of hybridity and the history of genre theory, reflecting on strengths and flaws of the theoretical framework of hybridisation. The article traces a line of themes and motives from the genre's hayday in Hollywood's studio system to contemporary examples, from

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Douglas Sirk’s oeuvre and Pier Paolo Pasolini’s Medea (1969), through to Pedro Almodóvar’s Todo sobre mi madre/All About My Mother (1999), Fatih Akin’s Gegen die Wand/Head-On (2004) and Wong kar-wai’s Fa yeung nin wa/In the Mood for Love (2000). Building on earlier research, the essay traces the expansion of the concept of melodrama from a stage to a screen genre with a globally prevalent set of stylistic features and a cinematic sensibility. The process of adaptation at play in this process can be seen as an intercultural translation beyond the question of genre. The genealogy of auteur filmmakers poses an alternative tradition of intercultural narratives, across boundaries of space and time to the globally dominant paradigm of melodramatic formats on television.

Florian Mundhenke examines how genre hybridisation works in respect to the core elements of genre structures such as characters, motifs, themes, and narratives. The essay reviews basic genre elements and then considers theories of generic evolution and hybridisation. This theoretical framework is applied to the western, a genre particularly lending itself to such an analysis because of its long history with numerous diversifications in different national cinemas, and frequent attempts of critics to both declare the death of the genre and later proclaim its revival. Against the backdrop of his theoretical reflections, Mundhenke reconsiders how elements of the western genre have developed until the present, especially regarding motifs, themes, and characters. Subsequently, this framework is used to analyse a recent example as a case study: Joel and Ethan Coen’s No Country for Old Men (2008). Mundhenke infers that since the 2000s, genre hybridisation and intercultural dialogue through standardised genre formulas have grown both in significance and frequency. He concludes that genre structures provide strategies of framing, illuminating, and explaining global and culturally diverse realities by means of familiar formulas.

Peter W. Schulze discusses transregional cinematic flows between Hollywood and the Mexican film industry, using the example of two major genres; the American western and its Mexican counterpart, the comedia ranchera. Conceived as a paradigmatic study of cinematic «glocalisation» (Robertson), the essay traces some of the complex interconnections between the two genres and the «media capital» (Curtin) at work; it examines the circulation of stars and other film personnel and transnational cross-media synergies among film and music industries, as well as political interventions from governments and economic and technological interrelations between the respective (trans)national culture industries. Specific attention is paid to the negotiation of generic and cultural identities vis-à-vis intertwined globalising and localising processes. Both western and comedia ranchera have shaped national imaginaries to a degree that they appear to be quintessentially U.S. American or Mexican, respectively. Contrary to these «invented traditions» (Hobsbawm/Ranger), both the «national(ist)» figures of the cowboy and the charro, who play central roles in the western and the ranchera culture, are far from being genuinely U.S. American or Mexican. Schulze traces their «multiple origins» from early mod-
ern globalisation of equestrian culture to mid-20th century genre configurations in cinema, which has been a major catalyst in the globalisation of cultural economy. Although genre hybridisations and the «multiple generic identities» (Moine) of the western and the *comedia ranchera* are highlighted, the essay avoids the widespread «hybridist triumphalism as an end in itself» (Spivak). Schulze points out that when the *comedia ranchera* emerged in Mexico, affirmative discourses on *mestizaje* and the «raza cósmica» (Vasconcelos) may have prevailed in terms of the construction of a hybrid cultural identity with nation-building function. Nevertheless, intra-national exclusions based on ethnicity, gender, class and regional belonging seem to be structurally inherent in the genre. Rather than being perceived as a «subversive» quality, the generic and cultural hybridity of the *comedia ranchera* is grasped in the sense of a «postcolonial exotic» (Huggan); it is interpreted to be a form of folkloric autoexoticisation as a means of global commodification of cultural difference. This representational strategy proves to be aimed especially at the Latin American film market with its domination by Hollywood films, many of which capitalised on U.S. American folklore in the western genre.

### 8. Glocalising Hollywood

Ute Fendler deals with recent tendencies of «(e)merging genres» in Francophone African cinemas. Usually, these are primarily regarded as «cinémas d’auteur». However, recent films draw increasingly from elements of popular genres to address larger audiences and thus call into existence a new vein in African film production. The essay discusses two recent examples as case studies of «(e)merging genres», Cédric Ido’s *Hasaki ya Suda/The Swords* (Burkina Faso/France, 2011) and *Viva Riva* (Congo, 2010) by Djo Munga. As Fendler underlines, the short film *Hasaki ya Suda* surprised critics because of its hybrid aesthetic and narrative structures, as well as its apocalyptic setting, which have appealed to a global audience. The award-winning crime thriller *Viva Riva* deals with a network of gangs across national borders in central Africa and makes use of generic structures of sex and crime that are hardly found in any other Francophone film. As demonstrated, both *The Swords* and *Viva Riva* draw from popular genre patterns which are modified in a particular way, but, notably, steering clear of a particularism that would prevent their reception by an international popular audience. Referring to Alain Badiou’s concept of cinematic abstraction, Fendler makes the point that the two films considered illustrate how Francophone African filmmakers hybridise internationally popular genres in order to reach a global audience.

Claudia Böhme analyses the hybrid character of Tanzanian horror films. She demonstrates that Tanzanian filmmakers draw on ideas and iconographies from Hollywood, Bollywood and Nollywood and local folklore, literature and theatre to
Ivo Ritzer/Peter W. Schulze

build the narratives. Böhme shows how, through the appropriation of different contents, aesthetic and artistic practices, filmmakers build up distinct genre aesthetics. While the composition of a film is influenced by transnational stylistic currents everywhere, she claims that the integration of these sources into local traditions and practices of narrative production is crucial. Tanzanian horror films not only differ from their Western counterparts in their practices of production and reception, but also in aesthetics and style. The film Nsyuka, released in 2004, was both the first Tanzanian horror film as well as one of the first films of the developing Tanzanian video film industry. By now the Tanzanian horror film, filamu ya kutisha, is an established genre with subgenres and stylistic currents featuring Tanzanian witches, vampires, zombies or mami wata. While the filmmakers are obviously influenced by transnational stylistic currents, Böhme proofs that the remediation and integration of local oral literature, discourses and practices is one of the main characteristics of these films. She argues that the filamu ya kutisha is part of a rich story-telling tradition in Tanzania which is remediated in film. By looking at the construction of these monsters it becomes clear that the remediation in the new medium has severely changed them. While the creatures of folklore have been rather ambiguous in their character, neither entirely good nor bad, they have turned into evil and bloodthirsty monsters in the films. In discussing the filamu ya kutisha in comparison with genre conceptions in the West, and giving a close-up perspective of Tanzania’s film monsters, Böhme points to their specific hybrid genre aesthetics.

Andreas Rauscher discusses how Hong Kong cinema of the 1980s did not only redefine the possibilities of cinematic space by combining martial arts wirework with spectacular visual effects, but also crossed borders between horror, romance and comedy as well as between Eastern wuxia epics and new standards of Western Hollywood fantasy. The article examines Tsui Hark’s and Ching Siu-Tung’s A CHINESE GHOST STORY franchise (since 1987) as a paradigmatic case of creative transnational genre aesthetics. Tsui’s auteurist appropriation of a classic folk tale by Chinese author Pu Songling and the effects-wizardry of I.L.M. and George Lucas resulted in a template that indicates the potential of global hybrid story worlds that are continued in video games by Canadian developer Bioware as well as in the hip hop collages of the Wu Tang Clan. To start with, Rauscher carefully situates A CHINESE GHOST STORY in the cultural context of 1980s Hong Kong cinema and in regard to the adaptation process of updating a story well-known to the Asian audience as a template for an internationally competitive fantasy special effects epic. In Rauscher’s estimation, its hybrid style rediscovers an immediate emotional impact, at the same time sophisticated in its approach to genre syntax and nevertheless providing a sense of wonder created by its feel for rhythm and innovative iconography. He puts forward the argument that the process of hybridisation works in A CHINESE GHOST STORY on the level of storytelling as well as on the level of style; in contrast to several Hollywood franchises it is not reduced to creating a fixed
formula. Instead, the resurrection of the wuxia genre became not a simple form of adaptation, but an ongoing transformation resulting in a story world no longer restricted to Hong Kong cinema and a specific medium. Therefore, Rauscher finally deals with formalist questions of style and artistic appropriation that have become part of a cultural flow process enabling originally specific Asian genre concepts to travel not only across continents but also into the realm of video games. In this way, as an alternative to considering genre concepts to be stagnant forms, the chapter considers the rules and motives of wuxia, offering an inspiring playground for formalist experimentation as well as a seismograph for cultural developments even beyond the disappearing space of the Hong Kong of previous decades.

Irina Gradinari focuses on the influence of Hollywood cinema, specifically of American action films of the 1980s, on the development of its post-Soviet counterpart. In the 1990s, Russian filmmakers adapted and transformed Hollywood muscular cinema in order to formulate a new Russian national identity. They employ formulas, taken from action films of the Reagan Era, whose plots were usually based on the opposition between the USA and the Soviet Union, usually implying a chauvinistic dehumanisation of the «enemies» (i.e. the Vietnamese or the Soviets). In this context, Gradinari poses the question how in this type of action cinema anti-Soviet ideas could have been turned into its opposite and how it could be functionalised for the so-called New Russian Idea. She elaborates that Hollywood action films provide Russian cinema with a successful compensation mechanism for self-empowerment and genre structures like generic hybridity and bricolage. On one hand, they allow immediate pleasure through identification with the omnipotence of the main character in a period of social crisis. On the other hand, they allow to renegotiate the current discourses of post-Soviet society and to update Soviet and Russian aesthetics. Gradinari suggests that the end of the Soviet ideology required a reformulation of subject constructions and systems of articulation. Due to the incapacity of habitual forms of representation to adequately articulate actual social meanings, the adoption of existent Hollywood genres was triggered. Gradinari’s main focus is on the Russian cult film BRAT/BROTHER (1997) by Aleksey Balabanov, as this film uses generic elements of U.S. muscular cinema, hybridising them with modes of typification known from Soviet traditions of representation as well as character configurations typical of Russian folk tales. In Gradinari’s view, especially Balabanov’s films thereby postulate a superiority of Soviet and Russian aesthetics over Hollywood cinema, thus enabling the audience’s satisfaction through the cinematic compensation of failed social utopias.
9. Undoing Genre

Robert Stam sheds new light on the categorisation of documentary and fiction as film genres, challenging their prevalent classification as polar opposites or mutually exclusive generic forms. In an intriguing conjunction, his essay reflects upon the theoretical discourse on documentary/fiction, drawing from striking examples, many of which have not sufficiently been considered in Anglophone film studies. Stam regards documentary and fiction as *trans-genres* harbouring infinite crossings and variations. He shows that an analysis depending on its theoretical grid can possibly interpret the same film both as fiction and documentary. Thus he argues against the notion of generic essence, and instead proposes to speak of «documentary operations as opposed to fictive operations». As demonstrated, this corresponds with the practice of various filmmakers and theoreticians, who have coined hybridising terms, such as Agnès Varda’s «documenteur», Frederick Wiseman’s «reality fictions» or Jacques Rancière’s «fiction documentaire». Even though assumed examples of convergences between documentary and fiction may dissolve many distinctions, Stam still underlines the differences of the two as theorised in documentary discourse, in which «documentary operations» are characterised especially by what Jean-Louis Comolli has called the «risk of the real» or, as others have described, by an ethical responsibility. The essay reveals that the question of the mimetic real in the sense of a verisimilar style increasingly gets displaced by «the register of who is empowered to represent the real». The fact that ‘giving voice’ can be highly problematic, is demonstrated using the example of the deconstructive documentary *Mato Eles?/Should I Kill Them?* (1983) by Brazilian filmmaker Sérgio Bianchi. A similar critical function is shown to be performed by certain fake documentaries, or so-called mockumentaries, which may foster «an anti-hermeneutics of suspicion», as Stam notes. The importance of a «control of the archive» in the sense of Jacques Derrida’s analysis is shown by example of African-American queer-feminist filmmaker Cheryl Dunye’s *The Watermelon Woman* (1995) and her «use of intertextual mimicry».

Richard Porton delineates some of the intriguing ramifications of fiction/non-fiction hybrids in contemporary film culture. The first section, preoccupied with what Bill Nichols calls the «blurred boundaries» of recent documentary practice, focuses on the stylistic and generic importance of non-fiction films such as Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Illisa Barbash’s *Sweetgrass* (2009) or Nikolaus Geyrhalter *Our Daily Bread* (2005) which merge an interest in the contours of reality with an experimental aesthetic orientation. Particular attention is given to «performative» documentaries (e.g. Marie Losier’s *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye*, 2011), which synthesise social criticism with an avant-garde cinema approach. Furthermore, the essay explores the hybridism embraced by practitioners of art cinema like Abbas Kiarostami, Jia Zhangke, and Pedro Costa – fiction filmmakers,
whose work reflects both a revivified neorealism and an awareness of documentary traditions, as is shown by the examples of Kiarostami’s Nema-ye Nazdik/Close-Up (2000), Jia’s Er shi si cheng ji/24 City (2008) and Costa’s trilogy Cartas da Fontainhas/Letters From Fontainhas (1997–2006). Finally, Porton considers essay films such as Avi Mograbi’s Nekam Achat Mishtey Eynay/Avenge But One of My Two Eyes (2006), Adam Curtis’s All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace (2011) or Rodney Ascher’s Room 237 (2012). He is particularly concerned with these films’ fusion of a literary style pioneered by Montaigne with political and social commentary. The essay films discussed «generate a digressive aesthetic and contrarian scepticism by juxtaposing ostensibly dissimilar preoccupations», as Porton points out. Most of the films discussed in the essay reflect upon the ambiguous consequences of modernity.

Oksana Bulgakowa provides new research on the peculiarities of the «Soviet anti-genre production system» in the period between 1934 and 1954. Stalinist cinema was dominated by film types and categories such as the «revolutionary film», the «labour (production) film» and the «kolkhoz film», all of which did not correspond to established cinematic genres. Traditional genre cinema was rejected – tellingly, the film minister Boris Shumyatsky was shot in 1938 after having been accused of installing a system of Hollywood genre production in Soviet cinema. As Bulgakowa points out, the revolutionary film was of utmost importance and almost every leading Soviet film director adapted the history of the October uprising. The result was that one screenplay could easily be transferred to another and certain shots became canonical and were repeatedly reproduced. Bulgakowa underlines that both the «production film» and the «kolkhoz film» refer to their milieu and subject (the representation of labour) and do not define the generic structures of these film types. In 1935 Sergei Eisenstein tried to make a different «kolkhoz film», Bezhin Lug/Bezhin Meadow, an oedipal revolt of the son and the ritual revenge of the father, but the Central Committee stopped the production of the film. Interestingly, hybrid forms between fictional, educational and documentary films emerged, such as the «biography of the objects» suggested by Sergei Tretyakov or Dziga Vertov’s method of a non-fictional associative film. Mikhail Kalatozov’s Jim Shvante/Sol’ Svanetii/Salt for Svanetia (1930) is based on Tretyakov’s bio-interview, but both the «production film» and the bio-interview are transformed into an avant-garde picture of an auteur. The hybrid forms developed in Stalinist cinema include elements of film genres (for example, elements of romantic comedy in «kolkhoz films» or structures of monumental pictures in the «revolutionary film»). Nonetheless, the stylistic peculiarities and the politics of the affect of the hybrids resist their inclusion into a genre system.

Lúcia Nagib critically notes that it has become redundant to champion the breaking of boundaries in media and the arts, which is prone to the celebration of hybridity as an end in itself. Her seminal essay on «The Classical-Modern Hybrid
and the Politics of Intermediality» offers new perspectives on hybridisation and mixed media in film studies. Nagib retraces the history of Bazin's conception of intermediality, which he has defined as «impure cinema», and enquires the relations to his understanding of «modern» cinema, based on «realism» and «ambiguity» resulting from time and space uncut. The concept of «impurity» is then expanded by Jacques Rancière's politics of «dissensus» and applied to an intermedial film sequence of Mikio Naruse's YAMA NO OTO/ THE SOUND OF THE MOUNTAIN (1954), an adaptation of Yasunari Kawabata's novel. Nagib addresses the issue of the hybrid genre by calling into question the classical-modern divide in cinema. Due to its reliance on montage, YAMA NO OTO might be qualified as a «classic» in the Bazinian sense. However, Nagib strikingly demonstrates that the qualities of Naruse’s film actually derive from a combination of representative and aesthetic regimes, locating a combination of the «classical» and the «modern» in a single scene concerning a noh mask. In the film sequence analysed, the noh mask introduces a moment of yugen, in the sense of an ineffable meaning, or dissensus in Rancière’s terms. «Dissolution of frontiers», as Nagib shows, «takes place at all levels: between different art media, modern and classical genres, and between genders and sexualities, all of which remain as elusive and non-pedagogical as yugen.»

Works Cited
Genre Hybridisation


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