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## To Read (a Classic) in a Bent Sinister Way. On Stefania Skwarczyńska's Theory in the Context of the Contemporary Genre Studies

The purpose of this article is to present Stefania Skwarczyńska's genre theory in order to show its inspirational character for the contemporary genre studies. The scholar's works, predeceasing threads of theories enclosed in works of M. Bakhtin, G. Genette, helped to form the way genres are present in different interpretative methodologies today, for example in architextual readings of texts, tracing of various genre's places within cultural spaces and also of their role as signs of times in which one or another becomes popular or dominating.

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## The Limits (if any) of Holocaust Discourse

Despite Adorno's famous 1949 proclamation that to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric, poets nevertheless do so continually. Even so, some Holocaust topics, and even language, remain tacitly forbidden. This essay examines taboos of Holocaust linguistic discourse and highlights several contemporary American poets who did not themselves directly experience Holocaust trauma — Sylvia Plath, Sharon Olds, Myra Sklarew, and the more radically experimental Irena Klepfisz — but who use Holocaust topics and imagery for their moral and narrative power. Despite controversy, then, these poets (deliberately, or sometimes unwittingly) stretch the limits of commonly-held linguistic parameters and are creating a new Holocaust discourse.

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## Falling Short of Reading: Intention and Innovation in the Short Story

Julio Cortázar defines the short story as a genre that creates unpredictable effects on the reader through its poetical dynamics. While this definition foregrounds the unforeseeable elements of the genre, Cortázar also emphasizes that the short story operates in fore-seen parameters. He draws our attention to the role of the reader in a particular form enabled by the brevity of the genre. In Cortázar's formulation, the sphericity of the short story posits the shortness as the basic fore-seen parameter of the genre in which the same sphericity creates a possibility of the unforeseen by forcing its parameters. In

2004, thirty five years after the publication of Cortázar's article, *The Oxford Literary Review* published a special issue on *The Blind Short Story*. The issue aimed to open a new discussion on the notions of enlightenment and epiphany in the short story, questioning the theoretical discussions that center on the visual images. Since the brevity of the short story has been conceived as a device to open gaps starting with the first theoretical attempts to define the genre in the nineteenth century, the reader of the genre has been expected to reach a totality from its episodic structure. Thus the reader's success has often been considered to depend on his/her visual abilities of foreseeing the plot. Departing from the tendency to look for truth and inspired by Cortázar's conceptualization of the unforeseen effects along with the discussions on „the blind short story”, this article attempts to understand the experience of reading the genre as ignorance and its readers as short-sighted detectives.

DAVID BOUCHER

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## Aux racines du théâtre et du cinéma de l'absurde: Witkiewicz, Buñuel et la vision philosophique de Rensi

Ever since Martin Esslin formulated the concept of a Theatre of the Absurd, criticism has endorsed the notion almost exclusively in a theatrical sense. The need to open up Esslin's concept to the field of cinema now seems imperative. This view finds its ultimate justification at the juncture between the work of Luis Buñuel and of S.I. Witkiewicz, but also between the work of those two creators and philosopher Giuseppe Rensi. My article seeks to demonstrate that, as early as the 1930s, an aesthetics of the Absurd already existed — on the stage as well as on the screen — combining cheery non-sensical content with the ambiguity of abstract form. A study of the landmark play *Kurka Wodna* (*The Water Hen*, written in 1921), and of the film *L'Âge d'or* (1930), in parallel with the essay *La Filosofia dell'assurdo* (*The Philosophy of the Absurd*, first published as *Interiora Rerum* in 1924), supports this argument, which also aims to bring out some „invariants” from the aesthetics of the Absurd.

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## Problem gatunku powieści Michaiła Bułhakowa *Mistrz i Małgorzata*

The article presents an attempt to specify the literary genre of one of the most mysterious novels of the 20th century — *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov. There was a variety of defines trying to qualify the novel in literary studies examining the works of the writer. Among most popular were: philosophical novel, menippea, satirical novel,

novel as mystery, novel-parable, novel-myth. The multidimensional character of the given work makes it difficult to classify the genre of the novel just to one type. Nevertheless, in the present article the author makes this attempt to specify the genre of the novel as the initiation novel. As a matter of fact, the theme, the structure and the idea of the unusual novel correspond to requirements of this kind.

EWA KOBYLECKA-PIWOŃSKA

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## Gombrowicz według Piglia, czyli o rewizji argentyńskiego kanonu

The aim of the article is to focus on the interpretation that Ricardo Piglia gives to Witold Gombrowicz's writings and to fix the position attributed to the Polish writer inside the Argentinian literary canon. Having examined Piglia's texts related to the author of *Ferdydurke* (*The Polish novel*, *The language of the Dispossessed* and *Artificial Respiration*), we claim that Gombrowicz occupies a border position between Jorge Luis Borges' and Roberto Arlt's poetics.

JOANNA FIRAZA

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## Der zumutbare Gesang: Musik in Ingeborg Bachmanns Hörspiel *Zikaden*

Being part of a critical reflection on language, music constitutes the works created by Ingeborg Bachmann. It results from the writer's conviction, rooted in romantic tradition, that music is superior to language and as such should be used to „save” language in the process of constructing an interdisciplinary dialogue between literature and music and in the process of searching for new ways of expression. The aesthetics of a radio broadcast *Die Zikaden* (*The Cicadas*), elaborated in collaboration with a composer Hans Werner Henze, is based, to a large extent, on using sound not only as background but as an integral part of the whole regarding content and structure. Criticizing art which is aseptic and remote from the realities of life, *The Cicadas*' primary message surpasses its epoch. References to texts from the 50s can be traced next to certain analogies in the usage of sound. *Das Ende einer Welt* (1952) by Wolfgang Hildesheimer and *Träume* (1953) by Günter Eich anticipate a functionalization of cicada sound in Bachmann's works. Constructing an unsettling dialectical figure of memory and oblivion, harmony and dissonance, the author enters into a polemic with a cicada myth which goes back to the times before Homer and which was popularized by Platon in *The Phaedrus*. In this way, the symbol surpasses its pure aesthetics and acquires the status of socio-critical appeal. Nevertheless, the function of art (here: music) in *The Cicadas* is not limited to the slightly moralizing message. Distinguished from Bertolt Brecht, who perceived

a rational power in music, Bachmann comprises its irrational aspect and emphasizes its potential. Cicadas singing as a metaphor of awakening to responsible existence excludes a possibility of being enchanted by music or being lost in it. It does not, however, exclude emotionality in itself. Bachmann entwines cicadas' singing into her post-utopian faith in the causative power of literature.

STEPHEN DEWSBURY

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### Ayi Kwei Armah's Criticism of Post-Colonial Ghana in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

In 1957 newly independent Ghana under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah — acknowledged as „Osagyefo” — „the Redeemer” —, adopts a socialistic system with limited success. Ultimately, Ghana descends into a dictatorial state. Later, debutant novelist Ayi Kwei Armah publishes *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968), a politically-engaged novel in which corruption and moral decay are ubiquitously depicted. This paper presents the kinds and styles of criticism Armah uses to present doubt and scepticism about life in a newly independent post-colonial Ghana.

НАУМ Л. ЛЕЙДЕРМАН

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### Мир как *Мозаичное панно* (о поэтике новеллистического цикла)

The article attempts to isolate the methods of world-modeling in the genre which is most affected by the centripetal tendencies — a novelistic cycle. Novelistic cycles in the Russian literature of the twentieth century constitute the article's focus. Among components that acquire essential functions in the formation of this genre, we detect the following: a per-sonified narrator (or a system of narrators); a limited chronotope; the transformation of separate stories' plots into a unified metaplot; a system of leitmotifs; and an associative aura. The article detects a dominant component of this genre in a constant balancing act between the organization of the cycle and organic flexibility of its structure manifesting relative elusiveness of the author's concept of the world. On this foundation, we make conclusions about the role played by novelistic cycles in the history of literature.