Genre and Autonomy in Cultural Production

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Copenhagen
Business School
HANDELSHØJSKOLEN

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in Cultural Production

The case of travel guidebook production

Ana Alačovska

Doctoral School of Organisation
and Management Studies

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The Doctoral School of Organisation and Management Studies (OMS) is an interdisciplinary research environment at Copenhagen Business School for PhD students working on theoretical and empirical themes related to the organisation and management of private, public and voluntary organizations.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey of this thesis was way too long, often circuitous and haphazard. The thesis grew steadily as it went, not unlike the guidebooks themselves. As a result, its debts accumulated progressively. Where to start?

It would have hardly been possible to work on such an odd and obscure topic (and stick with it), if it were not for the unwavering support of my supervisor, Brian Moeran. With a great dose of open-mindedness and tolerance, he granted me an immense freedom (and autonomy) to be infinitely curious, to wander seemingly fruitlessly through theoretical and analytical labyrinths, and to unleash my imagination. But, more importantly, he always managed to get me back on track. He painstakingly taught me to become a better writer, a better teacher, and a better ethnographer. And, yes, he always stood besides me, and not only as a supervisor, but as a great friend. My greatest thanks are to him.

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PRELUDE

The story of a rogue travel guidebook writer

> Hello Ana. This is Betty. Have you heard about the affair? Well, you certainly will soon. But I called just to straighten things up. We didn't become travel writers to copulate on restaurant tables and travel like impoverished irresponsible vagabonds. We don't fake reviews. We check everything we write about. We don't deal drugs for living. We write guidebooks. This is a serious genre. This is our job. We are in service of our readers. And the guy who did this, *he* is a real bastard.

I had met Betty, an experienced, and a widely published guidebook writer, well-respected by her peers, together with her fiancé, Harold a TV producer, just a few days before. She talked on the phone almost overzealously early that mid-April morning in 2008. I felt confused, caught off guard and out of the loop about 'the affair' that was just unfolding on the other side of the Atlantic. It sounded like a state of urgency. What the heck was going on? Copulate on restaurant tables, impoverished vagabonds, a bastard?! What?

I turned on the computer, and messages popped up one after another. It seemed that all of a sudden travel writers all over the world had become self-righteous and eager to defend their conscientious craft.

> Go online here (link to a BBC-hosted blog provided) and see for yourself. He is just a jerk. He devalued us all. He is nothing but a rogue writer. He is the embodiment of those worthless travel writers I was telling you about the other day that write to get laid, schmooze and get paid to travel. Corrupted, cutting corners to draw personal gain, no respect for the genre! He sullies the profession. We are not, and I repeat, we are not all like him. We may be paid dog's wages, but we get the facts right. It matters!

So, what was all the fuss about? I was in the midst of a fakery scandal -- a scandal that heralded 'the death of the genre', as one writer wrote in an email!

Thomas's memoir about 'the professional hedonism' of a travel guidebook writer, his 'questionable ethics' and 'high adventures' were finally out with a 'serious publisher'. He had told me about it earlier:

> Hey, Ana, I have a memoir out later this spring with a serious publisher about living as a travel guidebook writer. This tell-all is something that will interest you for sure. You may pre-order it on Amazon even now! I will be happy to chat with you.

Well, it did sound a tad like a promotional pitch, but so what. I would pre-order the book and score another interview. And, of course, a 'tell-all' by a travel guidebook writer was something that absolutely *had to* interest me. It was in January 2008 that I posted the first of three messages soliciting informants, on a travel guidebook writers' list serv. I was just embarking on my PhD project about the autonomy of creative work in cultural industries: was creative work really creative, or -- God forbid! -- really as cool as all my colleagues in comparative literature naively believed? What could be more 'cool' than being a travel writer? In February 2008, I had a phone interview with Thomas, who had an established track record as an expert in Latin American culture, where his language skills, degree in area studies from Stanford, and a local network earned him credibility with travel publishers.

> **Ana:** Is travel writing a dream job?
>
> **Thomas**: Yeah, I have lots of fun, but it pays peanuts. Travel writers sometimes ask hotel owners for a free room, kitchen chefs for a free meal. That supplements their budget. We can no way survive on the pay they give us. I hitchhike. If I was about to pay for every single hotel, meal and museum I write about, I would be broke in ten days. I can hardly visit all the places I write about in the guidebook. I quickly realized that even on a good day what gets into the guide is pretty arbitrary. That is no-nonsense. I talk to people and get as much info from the net, from other guides, sometimes invent things, not too sublime but … well ... just enough to spice up *the reality*. It is sort of a mosaic job, tying loose ends up. … Travel guidebook writing is kind of sexy, kind of addictive. I got a scuba-diving certificate last year, went wild in Rio during carnival, stayed in sexy spa boutique hotels. But, I am not happy. I want to become a real travel writer, not a guidebook writer.
>
> **Ana**: Thomas, apologies for the interruption, but what is 'a real travel writer'?
>
> **Thomas**: You know… *fiction*…Paul Theroux, Bruce Chatwin, that kind of thing. Published with a serious publisher. Travel writing is hack writing, facts, details . … Oh, and I am one step closer to becoming a real writer. As I said in the email, I have just authored a memoir about travel guidebook writing for Random House.

Once out, the memoir caused a stir of quite disproportionate dimensions. It set the industry in panic, severely divided the community, and mobilized Lonely Planet and BBC Worldwide, which had bought out Lonely Planet from its founders in a controversial deal in the autumn of 2007, to defend their publishing integrity, credibility and trustworthiness as travel publishers.

As part of the global promotion of his 'tell-all', Thomas admitted publicly in salacious detail to inventing and fabricating large portions of the guidebook to Colombia that he had authored for Lonely Planet. Strained by a 'thrifty' budget, 'draconian' deadlines and 'numb editors that never respond to your emails', he could not visit Colombia in person, and so gathered all the details from 'a chick at the Colombian embassy' whom he used to date, as well as culling info from the web and summarizing tips he received from random travellers. He divulged that he had been dealing drugs in Brazil while authoring his Lonely Planet guidebook, in order to complement the paltry income.

By his own admission, he did not have qualms about receiving free gifts of any sort for writing up what was contractually meant to be an 'objective, true and reliably accurate' review of establishments, so as not to incur a 'giant' personal debt. Thomas confessed to writing a positive review of a restaurant after having had sex with the waitress after hours: 'the table service is friendly' and 'the restaurant is a great surprise', he wrote.

Emblazoned on the first few pages of every guidebook edition, Lonely Planet states its official production policy:

> our writers don't research using just the internet or phone, and they don't take
> freebies in exchange for positive coverage. They personally visit thousands of hotels,
> restaurants, cafes, bars, galleries, palaces, museums and more. They tell it how it is.

Yet Thomas did not only act in contravention to Lonely Planet policies or his contract. More crucially and curiously, Thomas had, if only inadvertently, breached the industry-wide unwritten code of conduct and trust, and widely hit a raw nerve.

Aghast at the moral impropriety of guidebook-making thus exposed, the global press was filled with sensational headlines making the trade sound cheap and shoddy, and the genre contrived and sleazy: 'The truth about writing Lonely Planet guidebooks' (*The Guardian*), 'Author for the Lonely Planet admits he never set foot in the place' (*The Sunday Times*), 'The travel industry's dirty little secret' (*The New York Times*), 'The 'Hell' of travel writing' (*Los Angeles Times*), 'Postcards from the edge of travel writing' (*The independent*), 'Guidebooks: don't believe everything you read' (*Time Online*), 'Can you trust your travel guidebook?' (*Washington Post*); 'The death of the guidebook: lost in a cutthroat world' (*The Age*).

The industry panicked. The scandal was poised to damage the perceived quality and authority of branded content especially, in the face of travel information freely floating online. Lonely Planet swiftly reacted to Thomas's allegations by setting in motion a quasi-juridical, investigative process regarding the 'accuracy' and 'impartiality' of its guidebooks, subjecting many of the titles to close scrutiny, comprehensive review and fact-checking. As one editor put it in an interview with me later:

> Then we looked for content compromised by unethical behaviour. We usually trust
> our writers, we do not ghost them! We were tricked and let down. We were misled.

In the midst of the furore raging in the industry, Piers Pickard, the publisher of the Lonely Planet guidebooks, defensively repudiated the implied dubious ethical standing of its writers for the Associated Press: 'Thomas's claims are not an accurate reflection of how our authors work'. In a podcast, the chief executive Stephen Palmer told the BBC: 'We have faith in our authors. … We set realistic tasks and the pay is commensurate with that. Our pay is right at the top of the end'. Judy Slater, the then CEO, wrote to a private Yahoo-carried mailing group, consisting of Lonely Planet authors, both current and past: 'This is a shit. None of you deserve it, given the effort you put in'.

The writers were convinced that the revelations were not only an affront to their hard work and steadfast ethics. In response to the CEO's email, some of them insinuated that the scandal was all about how the company treated its contractors. As one author wrote and has been reported widely in the international press:

> Why did you [management] not understand that when you hire a constant stream of new, unvetted people, pay them poorly and set them loose, someone, somehow, was going to screw you? It is a car crash waiting to happen.

Many authors relished in the exposé of travel (guidebook) writing that had the industry in a tailspin. Many understood the tell-all as blowing the whistle on the travel publishing industry's little dirty secret: publishers allowing (even openly encouraging) its writers to accept freebies for a write-up (writers hosted by airlines, hotels and tour operators) in order to underwrite production costs. Managerial impositions, bottom-lines, accelerated publishing schedules, open-ended employment policies, unclear commissioning procedures, and ambivalent freebie policies of 'don't ask don't tell' were all blamed for compromising the 'accuracy' and 'impartiality' of travel guidebooks.

Yet the scandal did not affect only industry practitioners, but also, and probably far more surprisingly, the audience whose horizon of expectation was deceived. Readers expressed distrust in the truth claims of travel guidebooks in blogs, websites and most importantly on the online traveller community, Thorn Tree, harboured by Lonely Planet. Apart from righteous indignation, they voiced their own concerns about the ethics of guidebook production by demonstrating their operative knowledge and interest in the ways authors worked and the ways policies and procedures were enforced. One guidebook user wrote on several occasions:

> I am shocked! I've always thought all those writers travelled incognito, and they have been there. Show up unexpectedly, inspect, see how 'ordinary' people are treated and not receive red carpet treatment. You can't do an honest, reliable job if you are not there, and if they try to bribe you. …
>
> Send out "Comedy! Fiction!" stickers to current vendors for the old Colombia edition! A spontaneous outpour of marihuana-fuelled imagination!

Another outraged and disappointed user posted this message:

> I felt totally deceived by LP (Lonely Planet) upon hearing the latest news. I always suspect whether it is possible to maintain LP's impartiality policy and giving fair reviews to all the hotels and restaurants. Well..... it seems we have the answer today ... Well, keep in mind, LP's paper is thin enough to serve as toilet paper in emergency situations. … I have no doubt that LP and other guidebooks underpay their authors, cos cost is a major constraint in every business. Isn't it? So I was wondering how they can say all their authors do not accept money, gifts or favours from any source. Integrity and honesty are easier said than done! You need to show us the proof, e.g. photos, receipts, clips. Saying "we have faith in our authors" is no longer enough in this world of ours.

As for Thomas, he told me later, following 'the brouhaha,' his memoir had become a bestselling title, and received a major review in the *New York Times*. Just what he had wished and hoped for on his way to becoming a 'real travel writer'.

<p style="text-align:center">∗∗∗</p>

Researchers say that they are lucky when their field of research disintegrates and enters a phase of crisis, or —as we have seen in the story just told -- is distressed by 'a scandal' in front of a researcher's eyes (Latour & Woolgar 1979; Born 2002). Only then can one sneak a glimpse at the underlying rules, commonplaces and habitualities of behaviour and discourse that remain tacit during periods of normality.

Although every scandal is hyperbolized and sensationalized by the media, and propels 'a politics of shaming' that tarnishes individual reputations, it still emphasizes an act of moral transgression traceable to real people whose actions are symptomatic of a larger social order, and in this case profession (Lull & Hinerman 1997), or – as I will argue in this thesis – a genre world. When genre-related norms are transgressed, the perpetrator's acts are perceived (sensationalized or hyperbolised) as scandalous and unethical.

The fakery scandal came as a godsend. It was not only that travel guidebook writers, who usually operate in the shadow of an anonymous reference publishing industry, were suddenly thrust into the media limelight. Nor was it about the moral culpability and corruptibility of travel writers, chastised for downright mendacity and outright fabrication as a result of questionable production techniques like accepting freebies, regurgitating word-of-mouth as facts, and fact-embellishment. Nor was it solely about 'evil' managers and editors who induced unethical behaviour and rendered their authors docile through murky commissioning policies, paltry terms of recompense, and unrealistic deadlines. The scandal was, first and foremost, about a genre; about what *mattered* to writers and readers; about its genre-poetics, that is, the legitimate and conscientious techniques and procedures pertinent to the genre, and not solely narrow managerial directions, editorial dictates or public criticism. The scandal pointed to the 'factual' and 'objective' status of a genre, which claimed to represent somehow as 'factually' and 'accurately' the world-out-there. It spoke to the genre's didactic status with its implied responsible service to readers who proceed to do something with the genre out-there, and who value the genre as much for its inner workings (well-written, witty, yet truthful prose) as for the practical task it accomplishes (reliability of information to be implemented on the road). And it was a scandal because indeed *the genre* proved that it possessed an *effectiveness* to influence agency: the ways writers work or were expected to work (honestly, reliably, conscientiously), readers read and expect honest and dependable work, and publishing institutions function (warrant quality, honesty and reliability); and, not least, the ways all of them self-reflexively ponder about themselves and

about one another. The extent to which, and the modes in which, the genre mediates (structures and organises) the producer's agency and experience of autonomy is what this thesis seeks to address and theorize.

Travel guidebooks: a lowly genre and hack writers

Travel guidebooks have long been considered a lowly, even raffish, genre - 'fit for moral ejaculation' (Barthes 1993: 75); 'an uninteresting, superficial, (if not vulgar) genre' (Behdad 1994: 36). Such a genre represents a sanctuary for 'second-rate literary talents' (Fussell 1980: 212), 'unashamed dilettantes' and 'opportunistic journalists' who are profit driven and entertainment oriented (Holland & Huggan 2000: 12-13). Guidebook writing has long been defined by literary scholars as a profession without professionalism. Travel guidebook writers are nothing but 'tourists with typewriters' (Holland & Huggan 2000:30); 'unimaginative writers', 'hacks' who churn out daily word counts established by publishers (Jackson 2011: 52).

Under the dictate of its genre-poetics, guidebooks vow to represent actuality accurately, and thus exude precision, objectivity and detachment as they provide hard data and practical information about visiting a foreign place. These include things like history, as well as where-to and how-to prose related to accommodation, eating and drinking, transportation, and itineraries. As scholars recently have argued, guidebooks are 'boring' because they are 'too real and descriptive' and 'handcuffed by the narration of brute facts' (Lisle 2006:30). It becomes obvious that being non-fiction (referential) and didactic (a functional *loco parentis* of sorts), travel guidebooks are denied the status of a literary genre, when compared with their 'sister genres' -- travelogues and travel journalism.

At the same time, travel guidebooks form a hybrid, mixed genre that blends stories, myths and word of mouth anecdotes with documentary, historical, and frequently scientific, accounts. It is precisely because of this hotchpotch character that some scholars have compared travel guidebook writing to a 'brothel': it 'is a raffish open house where different genres are likely to end up in the same bed' (Rabaté quoted in Borm 2004: 16).

Against this backdrop, this thesis is an attempt to take the genre seriously in its own structural *modus operandi* and understand its producers on their own terms, beyond the sordid and sleazy connotation they invoke in the popular imaginary. It is an attempt to restore the dignity of a 'lowly and blind' *animal laborans* that produces 'repetitive products for fast consumption' (Arendt 1998:133) - professional travel writers who make, or struggle to make, a living by writing ephemeral and factual travel guidebooks.

Travel guidebooks: reference publishing

As a non-fiction genre, travel guidebooks are the product of so-called 'reference' publishing (as such they share much in common with cookbooks, dictionaries, and encyclopedias). Travel publishers acquire content and turn a specific genre into cultural commodities (books, e-books, apps, audio tours, and similar) in the hopes that they will capture whimsical traveller tastes, and sell books sufficiently to generate profit.

The 'modern' guidebook was conceived almost concomitantly in the mid-1830s: in England, by the venerable publisher John Murray III; and in Germany, by the august publishing house of Karl Baedeker. Today,[1] the UK market is dominated by three guidebook publishing brands: Lonely Planet (purchased by BBC Worldwide in 2007); Rough Guides and Dorling Kindersley (both imprints of Pearson); and AA Publishing. In the US market, Fodor's (owned by Wiley) and Frommer's (part of Bertelsmann) follow Lonely Planet in market share. In reference publishing the brand is vital to market success because a strong brand secures repeated purchases and wide stocking of destination-specific books.

Contrary to widespread public opinion, especially in light of new media technologies and adjacent discourses of the democratization of media production, travel guidebook publishing is not in precipitous decline: not, at least, in terms of sales and market share. Admittedly, the industry falls prey to world events; yet it seems immanently resilient. Economic and political crises or natural calamities indeed affect the way people perceive and spend their disposable income, and thus travel. Yet, according to publishing experts, the industry bounces back once travellers announce the end of a 'wallet freeze', or alternatively decide to travel closer to home (Mesquita 2009).

On the other hand, no one can deny the impact of digital technologies on travel publishing. Reference publishing in general is based on time-sensitive information and content-heavy databases which have lent themselves easily to digitization (Clark & Phillips 2008). Hence, the industry's insiders consider travel guidebook publishing to be a canary in the digital coalmine (Danford 2011). Travel guidebook publishers were among the first to experiment with different vehicles of content delivery, including CD-roms, disks, web sites, publishing-on-demand, and similar. With vast amounts of travel-related information available for free online, travel guidebook publishers strengthened the *brand* ever more intensively as an index of content quality. The recent proliferation of navigation-enabled locative media and handheld devices has provided the platforms travel publishers long wished for. They have opened up further possibilities for new, potentially lucrative, revenue streams -- ebooks, interactive guides, and augmented reality applications. 'These are exciting times' – is the most frequent industry-wide adage.

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[1] Based on Nielsen BookScan, Travel Publishing Yearbook 2009, (prepared by Stephen Mesquita)

These are, no doubt, exciting times for the researcher as well. The accelerated industry conglomeration of travel guidebook publishing in the last decade, followed by digitization, has resulted in changing patterns of authorship and commissioning polices that have strained industry labour relations. Within such a tumultuous institutional framework, writers were forced to constantly negotiate their professional status and craft standards in daily practice. Yet, I argue in this thesis that it is not enough to analyse these institutional conditions in a vacuum from the cultural object they give rise to; it is also necessary to take stock of the genre's *diachronic* trajectories, but also *synchronous* structural patterning, as institutionally embedded in, but also as constitutive of, the industry and industrial practice (commissioning, contracting, copyright and payment, scheduling), in order to arrive at a somewhat fuller understanding of cultural production.

Some years ago, Coser, Kadushin & Powell (1982:260) claimed that the products of reference publishing are 'books without authors' or 'no books' – 'products manufactured on an assembly line', and not written by individual authors. On the other hand, Barthes (1977) and Foucault (1979) argued that 'the author' tyrannizes and strangles the vitality of 'culture', so they readily proclaimed 'the death of the author' in the Western intellectual tradition. Authors were subsequently expelled from the study of culture, both sociological and formal-structuralist studies, in favour of reception analysis and reading practices (Radway 1991). In contrast, this thesis advocates attributing agency and subjectivity, that is authorship, to writers within the institutions of production, no matter how sleazy or lowly their status seems to be. Shunning crude biographism or sheer psychologism, I focus on authors' auto-biographies and authorial practices as imbued by the genre *with and in which* the authors work and live. Although his obituary has long been announced, the author in the digital era is ever more robustly the key supplier of content in the publishing value chain, and as such his authorship merits to be analyzed in all its complexity.

In the wake of the scandal of the factual genre
The scandal of 'the TK Affair', or the 'Memoirgate' as it is already widely referred to by industry's insiders, ripped open the *modus operandi* of the genre as simultaneously institutionalized by, and institutionalizing of, publishing institutions and producer practices. The genre and its poetics were presented as matters of process, procedures, and the sanction of 'accuracy', 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' (no-freebie policies, pay commensurate with efforts, quality assurance standards, and similar), but also as a matter of ethically-sound responsibility and respect for reader-travellers. At the same time, in the face of the scandal, which threatened to petrify the already value-laden image of travel writers as unreliable and shameless, travel writers ever more fiercely defended 'the seriousness of the genre', 'dignity of the profession', and 'responsible service to the reader'. The castigation of unethical behaviour, however, needs to rest on a proper acknowledgement of the ambivalences and complexities of a 'factual' genre and the production techniques it commands, as well as the assumptions it connotes (Winston 2000: 9-23).

The genre furnishes protocols of appropriate behaviour that is in turn sustained by concrete institutions and common practices of production. The genre's factuality is predicated on a series of assertions of truthfulness, upheld by producers, promoted and branded by publishers and expected by, and paid for audiences. Yet, the criteria of truthfulness are not abstract or supra-historical. They are to be found in the origin and diachronic development of the genre, as well as in the synchronic structural features that inflect established procedures and actual practices.

The scandal of the factual genre evinces the practical interplay between genres, producers, audiences and institutions of cultural production. Winston (2000), who summarized the British documentary fakery scandal in the mid-1990s, and Mittell (2004), who followed historically the quiz show scandal in America in the 1950s, demonstrate convincingly through textual and visual analyses how genres matter to producers and inflect the very processes of 'ethical' production. 'The strict reliability' (Winston 2000: 19) of documentaries and 'spontaneous, ad-libbed, unrehearsed, fair competition' (Mittell 2004: 37) of quiz shows are impossible to fulfill, not because of their producers' outright and unashamed moral corruptibility, but because neither language nor camera can offer 'unmediated' representation of reality, which will thus, diffract truth claims and complicate 'truth-telling'. Both Mittell and Winston vehemently contend that the factual genre inevitably relies on artifice or subterfuges – daily ploys and manoeuvres for the attainment of 'objectivity', and hence calls in question its producers' moral (ethical) and amoral (aesthetic or creative licence) choices. The question is then: just how much of a ploy is ethical? Or, to what extent is mediated reality permissible? It is this dose of mediation that Mittell and Winston argue is regulated by regulators. Although no top-down, governmental regulation was triggered by the TK affair, as it was by documentary or quiz shows scandals, it nonetheless induced producers to reflect upon the dose of inevitable mediation pertinent to the genre and to re-evaluate their commitments to the genre's claims to 'actuality' and 'realness', yet also to their professional sense of responsibility for the audience, but also the places and people they represent in their work.

In the wake of 'Memoirgate', the producers' overt invocation of 'genre' as a precondition for their ethically-sound and responsible practices of making 'good guidebooks' led me ask the question about the productivity of genres and their specific poetics: 'What is the role of genres in the actual processes of media/cultural production?'

INTRODUCTION

The place and role of genres in cultural production: an intellectual Odyssey

In what follows, I want to outline my somewhat personal intellectual Odyssey through numerous trials and tribulations in my search for authorial agency and autonomy in relation to the category of genre. The main reason for recognizing my own subjectivity and partiality in this overview is to make room for a dialogue with a plethora of voices that have informed my own thinking about the productivity of genres. These ideas have gestated for so long, accumulating an enormous amount of debt, that they have generated an 'anxiety of influence' (Bloom 1997) as I went about them. My aim here is to rescue some of these influences from becoming 'a vanishing mediator' (Jameson 1988) and to restitute their status as the forbearers of such thought, thus giving them due scholarly acknowledgment in order to move not beyond, but around and with them. This is inevitably a post-rationalized account that tries to make sense of a sometimes unreasonable spanning of disciplinary boundaries, which at the time seemed to consist of merely serendipitous, indeed partly irrational, choices. Therefore, owing to the detours that I took from comparative literature and hermeneutics to media and cultural studies, by way of social sciences mainly sociology and some anthropology, during the course of my intellectual development, I weave here a number of disciplinary strands that have had a formative influence on my own thinking about how to think, firstly the circularity between production and reception, and secondly the relation between the humanities and social sciences, as a precondition for a better understanding of the subjective standing of authors, or more broadly cultural producers, their autonomy and genres.

Some of these strands show little awareness of each other, for various reasons. One of these is the persisting impermeability of academic disciplines, such as the humanities and social sciences (Wolff 1999; Zolberg 1990); another, perhaps, the ever-growing hiving off of fields into sub-disciplinary areas. This has come about partly in response to the enormous proliferation of scholarly work being published, but also to the geographical and linguistic dispersion of various strands of thought, with the result that no one can reasonably be expected to grasp them all in their totality. In this protracted scholarly attempt to somehow bridge the divides between texts and contexts, reception or interpretation and production, I have probably ended up as a fully-fledged member of what Ytreberg calls 'a generation of "orphans", of researchers who have no "parent discipline" [for whom] the agenda of interdisciplinary exploration is perhaps the closest to a scientific platform they are likely to get' (2000: 60-61). It is owing to this attachment to interdisciplinarity that this thesis will look more like what Geertz (1983) has called a 'blurred genre' – neither belonging completely to, nor fulfilling the horizons of expectations of, either

humanities or social sciences, but one that will hopefully 'accommodate a situation at once fluid, plural, uncentred, and ineradicably untidy' (p.21). This situation fairly aptly describes the numerous studies, theories and thinking about genres and their relations to cultural production and reception.

This state of 'untidiness' has to do probably with the long-lasting existence of the category of genre that has spanned more than two millennia, since it is at least as old as Aristotle. Over the centuries, it has been used and reused, abused and accused, denied and cursed, celebrated and cherished, in various contexts, to various ends, within various disciplines. A category loaded with such baggage defies a unitary or definitive definition of either its ontological or pragmatic status. A half century ago, Northrop Frye reproached literary studies for not being able to develop any systematic genre theory of action – that is, a theory of **how** genres actually *matter* in and *underpin* the processes of production and reception, the central aim of my thesis – because: 'the very word "genre" sticks out in an English sentence as the unpronounceable and alien thing it is' (1957:13). The concept is as elusive today as ever, associated with the anathema of genres in modern criticism that includes New Historicism, Post-modernism, and post-structuralism (Altman 1999).

Let me be clear about one thing at this point. I am not setting out to tidy up this messiness. That task looms too large. What I am more narrowly interested in, amidst the 'sound and fury' surrounding this category, is the relationship between genres and the processes of cultural production, in particular authorial action or agency (what is also well subsumed under the term *authorship*) and how this can be extended to institutional self-understanding. This means I am interested in the mediating and animating force of genres: that is, in genres as categories of 'production and labour' – not necessarily 'tools' as a means to an end, but 'resources' as a range of possibilities and abilities of and for action (writing, composing, configuring texts as cultural objects, but also self-interpretation). In a word, I approach genres as active ingredients in production practice, as opposed to merely being determined by or defined by institutions, social factors and organizational dynamics.

Almost in a kind of a *Zeitgeist*, the category of genre has lately been enthusiastically, though independently from one another, embraced and conceptualized by scholars coming from a wide variety of disciplines interested in issues of artistic or cultural production. I feel that there is a need now to take stock of these developments discussing divergences, but also convergences. I believe that genres are important in the analysis, not least, because of my conviction that the products (groups of products or genres) of such production are by their very nature categorically and ontologically different from other manufactured products in the consumer industry (Wodmansee 1984). For this reason, it is also important to understand how the different approaches have addressed the category of genre. I, thus, set out to critically discuss the place of genre within the studies of cultural production, especially those studies that have clearly marked the salience of genres to their analytical frameworks.

There are four interrelated points of overlap and convergence, that I hope will transpire from the overview Odyssey, and which I take as a departure point for the thesis as a whole: 1) every production act is genre-bound, and by corollary genres are a necessary even systemic condition, either enabling or constraining, of cultural production; 2) the interplay between innovation (original work) and tradition (epigone work) is enshrined in genres, so that genres immanently offer the resolution of the dichotomy between structure and agency; 3) genres are what makes the text historically and locally intelligible and communicable, so that they unite recipients and producers, reception and production, and 4) genres are social and institutional unities of individual textual instances, thus they offer to overcome the separation between text and context: that is, cultural objects and contextual factors of production such as organizational, managerial and institutional work that goes into a genre's production, distribution and definition. In a nutshell, one way or another, all these approaches[2] identify the notion of genre as a potentially productive means for foregrounding interdisciplinarity by bridging the gap between the humanities and social sciences. The divergences can mainly be detected with regard to the presentation of the genre as an analytical (rather than descriptive, explanatory, taxonomic or heuristic) concept for the empirical study of cultural production. It is here that I think useful interventions are still to be made by refining the analytical ways in which the genre can be productively introduced to and, most importantly, operationalized for the study of cultural production.

The points of overlap, therefore, promisingly reveal the emergence of a genre approach to cultural production. By bringing them into dialogue and pointing to certain of their deficiencies and divergences, I hope to contribute to a further consolidation of an emerging inevitably interdisciplinary, genre-centered perspective of cultural production. I especially focus on the possible modalities of turning a hermeneutical category of genre predicated on 'implied authors' and structuralist poetics into an analytical category for the empirical analysis of cultural producers, their work and professional self-understanding and perception of autonomy. As I meander through the vast array of studies, I also take a stance as to what I take genres to be in this study, and most importantly why I see a 'structuralist hermeneutics' (as developed in 'the strong program' in cultural sociology) to be a way forward in the analysis of what may be *tentatively* and *tautologically* called '*production poetics*'.

Hermeneutics: genres as production categories that mediate authorial action
Literary studies for a long time paid their dues to what has come to be known as 'the intentional fallacy' (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954). The intentional fallacy posits a disjuncture between authorial intention and the text, as well as between the social existence of the author and the cultural product. By abhorring the reductionist psychologism and biographism of literary

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[2] With the exception of 'the production of culture perspective' that serves as a contrasting backdrop for many other genre-centered approaches to cultural production

positivism (see Taine 1871, inter alia) or literary ideologism (see Lukasc 1974), Wimsatt and Beardsley, further assisted by proclamations of the 'death of the author' (Barthes 1977), have influentially undermined authorial agency and subjectivity in favour of the literary artifact as a self-sufficient, bounded entity. According to their argument, it is only the interpretive power of the recipient, not the creator, that counts as a productive force, insofar as it is through reception that the work is actually produced. Latching onto this tradition, reader-response criticism and the aesthetic of reception openly denied the ontological status of a work of art, and focused on the phenomenological relationship between texts and reception as taking place within the lifeworld of the reader (Jauss 1982, de Man 1979). Therefore, the relationship between author and text, and thus between producer agency and cultural object, was to be read backwards – in Gell's (1998) phrase, 'abducted' – from finished products through reception, and not to be read forwards 'in terms of the movements that gave rise to them' as 'objects-in-the-making' (Hallam and Ingold 2007:3).

Much of literary hermeneutics is similarly reception-oriented, yet does not deny the actual existence of a work of art and authorial intentions. Hermeneutics includes not only a theory of reading (Jauss 1982; Iser 1989), but also intersects with poetics, a theory of *techne* and creative activities[3]. It is the hermeneutical focus on production, that is on poetics, in addition to reception, that I found to be the most fruitful entry into the empirical investigation of the roles of genres in actual processes of cultural production. My own thinking about genre and production is, therefore, much indebted to hermeneutics, in particular to the phenomenological hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur (1973; 1991), but also of Edward Hirsch (1967). I here, start out from the assumption, that the hermeneutical tenets about the constitutive role genres play in the act of production, represent both an empirically testable hypothesis and an explanatory framework, that can be applied to the empirical study of cultural/media production.

For both Ricoeur and Hirsch the compositional and receiving practices are always interpretive and, as such, inevitably genre-bound activities. In Hirsch's (1967) words: 'all understanding of verbal meaning is necessarily genre-bound' (p.76). Hirsch establishes that every author possesses an 'intrinsic genre' that allows him to create and convey meaning. The intrinsic genre is 'the entire complex system of shared experiences, usage traits, and meaning expectations which the speaker relies on' to communicate a meaning to his readership (p. 72). But this genre is only indirectly, not empirically, accessible. It has to be recuperated by a reader (interpreter) through subsequent historical textual analysis.

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[3] That hermeneutics and poetics are entangled in 'the aesthetic od production' (in spite of the prevailing focus of hermeneutics on reception and the aesthetic of reception) is best captured by de Man's illustrative example: if Homer says 'Achilles is lion' then the hermeneutical act will encompass the understanding that Achilles is courageous, but if the reader concludes that Homer has been making use of metaphor or simile (what constitutes techne), then that is the sphere of poetics. An intelligent interpreter cannot indeed see these acts as separate because the one entails the other (see de Man, pp. ix-x, in Jauss, 1982)

For Ricoeur, too, literary understanding is always 'genre-bound', both at the level of configuration (Ricoeur's term for production) and refiguration (reception). As he pointed out: 'composition, belonging to a genre and individual style, characterizes discourse as a work' (1981: 136). However, 'composition, genre and style' are first 'categories of production and labour' (p. 136), and only afterwards categories of reception. The way genres work, therefore, is the way the work itself is done:

> To impose a form upon material, to submit production to genres, to produce an individual: these are so many ways of treating language as a material to be worked upon and formed. Discourse thereby becomes the object of a *praxis* and a *techne*. In this respect, there is not a sharp opposition between mental and manual labour. … Labour is thus one, if not the principle structure of practice: it is 'practical activity objectifying itself in works'. In the same way, the literary work is the result of a labour that organizes language. In labouring upon discourse, man effects the practical determination of a category of individuals: the works of discourse' (ibid. as above, original emphases).

For Ricoeur, the genre 'mediates' and 'structures' the individual composition. A work is 'subsumed' to a genre, but also given a 'unique configuration' through the same genre, in the process of 'stylisation', a process predicated on praxis or techne, that is labour. There is no belonging to a genre without the 'labour of distanctiation'. According to Ricoeur, that distanctiation or 'stylisation occurs at the heart of an experience which is already structured [by a codified genre] but which is nevertheless characterized by openings, possibilities and indeterminacies' (p. 137). Hence, Ricoeur argues, 'style is labour that individuates, that is, which produces an individual, so it designates retroactively the author' (p.138). There are as many genre-bound technes to underpin the style as creative activities.

> A techne is something more refined than a routine or empirical practice and in spite of its focus on production, it contains a speculative element, namely a theoretical inquiry into the means applied to production. It is a method; and this feature brings it closer to theoretical knowledge than to routine (Ricoeur 1996: 340).

From this Ricoeur infers that 'the author is the artisan of a work of language', the author always enquires into the nature and methods of his means of production, and so the investigation of authorial praxis or techne 'belongs to stylistics' (1981:138) while poetics to the art of composing (1996). From here it is not surprising that Ricoeur conceives of the author and 'the categories of production and labour' as categories of interpretation, categories that are cotemporaneous with the meaning, rather than with the empirical activity, of the production of the literary work. There is no authorial subjectivity, intention or action outside what can be retroactively inferred: that is, 'reconfigured' or 'construed' from a literary artifact through reception/criticism/interpretation. In this way, a literary work transcends its own sociological conditions of production and thus becomes necessarily 'decontextualized', only to be 'recontextualised' in novel socio-historical circumstances by the act of reading (p. 139). It follows from this that the production and labour are nothing but 'a guess' (Ricoeur 1973:106) and interpretation 'a guesswork' of 'authorial actions', which pertain to the 'categories of production and labour', that now become solely heuristic devices for making sense *a posteriori* of the process of text construction. As Ricoeur put

it: 'the localization and individualization of this unique text are still guesses' (ibid.). In other words, the localization and individualization of texts cannot be solved by simply returning to the imputed intention or subjectivity of the author or, as Ricoeur prefers to call it, 'the incommunicability of the psychic experience of the author' (p. 107). Rather, the meaning of a text is achieved by *guessing* the relationship between the 'implied author' and 'the genre system' – a relationship that Hirsch called 'the intrinsic genre' (1967: 86), which is always reconstituted by the reader.

Now, as I worked through these arguments, the question that I felt loomed large was: is there a way to curb such clairvoyant analysis? Can the study of the methods of production or techne be more than tea-leaf reading? If authors care about 'their' genre, that 'intrinsic genre', how do they themselves interpret, cherish or work with it? Isn't this as important as how readers imply authorship? Is the act of creation so ineffable that the 'psychic experience' of the author becomes 'incommunicable' and 'unintelligible'? Can poetics, involving genre-bound techne, be researched empirically?

In order to begin to answer these questions, I conducted one such hermeneutic/stylistic study of 'retroactive production' on the genre of postmodern fiction (Alacovska 2002, Master's thesis). The probing of retroactive production was indeed apposite for a genre that has commonly been referred to in literary studies as 'postmodern metafiction', a genre that is characterized by a high degree of 'self-reflexivity' (Hutcheon 1980) or 'self-consciousness' (Waugh 1984), which overtly turns in on its own principles of constructedness and legitimation, to its status as a cultural product (hence the prefix 'meta'). In this study I strove to 'deconstruct' the genre's self-referentiality, its closing in on itself. I detailed how authorial practices and techniques (praxis and techne) of making were prompted by an author's awareness of the genre and theory underlying the construction of fiction, which itself called upon the reader to engage in co-productive interpretation of the principles of making, as a precondition to understanding.

Yet the deliberate impenetrability of this 'narcissistic genre' (Hutcheon 1980) planted in me the 'sociological' worm of suspicion that came to underpin my future research. Could 'self-reflexivity' and 'self-consciousness' be anything more than educated or erudite 'guesswork'? Could an author's 'intrinsic genre' be grasped forwards instead of backwards? If the author was so 'self-reflexive' why could I simply not call him up and ask for an explanation of his 'artisanship' (Ricoeur 1981)? What would happen when 'the intrinsic' genre was actually 'contextualised' in the act of production, instead of 'decontextualised' in the act of reception? Well, then the genre would cease to be 'narcissistic', I supposed, but also the analysis would require some sort of wedding between the humanities and more sociological disciplines. But how was this epistemological leap to be accomplished? First, I found it plausible to extrapolate from hermeneutic theory the working mechanisms that govern the production of texts as genre-bound process and procedures; and second, I recast them from the sphere of reception and structuralist-semiotic analysis (the privileged focus of hermeneutics) to the sphere of sociological/anthropological inquiry. Culler's work on structuralist poetics, the later work by Ricoeur regarding hermeneutics of action, and

Geertz's work regarding the 'interpretive turn' of social sciences proved especially inspiring to me during the course of my research trajectory.

As already argued, for hermeneutics each act of production as well as reception is inevitably genre-bound. From here textual production must be read always with reference to the genre system to which the text claims to belong. Culler's work (1975/2002) was especially formative, since he recasts the study of genres (in relation to composition and style) from 'stylistics' (as Ricoeur held, a discovery and interpretation of prefigured meaning) to 'structuralist poetics', that is, 'an understanding of the devices, conventions and strategies of literature, of the means by which literary works create their effects' on readers (p. xiii), meaning and beauty included. Thus poetics sheds light on how meaning and experiences were crafted or prefigured, while concentrating on the conditions of textual existence, its laws, ethics and principles of making. Production involves artifice and literary activities. So one has to study modes of writing: that is, how genres are related to the activity of producing (and reading). Then the question of how genres, more particularly specific features of a genre, 'govern' the production (and reading) of texts, becomes a pivotal concern for poetics: 'formulating the internalized competence which enables objects to have the properties they do for those who have mastered the [genre] system' (p. 139). The genre establishes what is permitted to happen in a text as it foregrounds the 'literary competence' of producing and receiving. In other words, the genre 'makes possible' both writing and reading, because both authors and readers are compelled to do things in relation to the genre, at least as a minimum requirement of intelligibility and communicability.

> To write a poem or a novel is immediately to engage with a literary tradition or at the very least with a certain idea of the poem or the novel. The activity is made possible by the existence of the genre, which the author can write against, certainly whose conventions he may attempt to subvert, but which is none the less the context within which his activity takes place, as surely as the failure to keep a promise is made possible by the institution of promising (p. 135).

For Culler, essentially, genres are cultural codes based on sign systems 'with which the practicing writer comes to terms through his writing' (p. 159). The 'genre system' enables and constrains authorial agency, in that it allows the author to choose between words, modes of presentation, tone, tropes and similar linguistic, semiotic or symbolic devices which are pertinent to that genre. Thus genres are 'constitutive rules' – culturally coded material, patterned complex signs, cultural and semiotic models – more than merely conventions, arbitrary contracts between readers and authors, or descriptive taxonomies (pp. 159-173). Ascribing genres the capacity to 'make possible' things and actions was but a first step to making the notion of genre operative in terms of underpinning the authorial praxis and techne' (Ricoeur 1981).

All this is in compliance with Aristotelian poetics in which the genre legitimizes certain kinds of action as acceptable, permissible or probable at the expense of others. My own thinking owes a great deal to Aristotle. In this respect, it is worth mentioning here that one of the most knowledgeable translators of *Ars Poetica*, Kenneth Telford (2012), suggested that a more

appropriate translation of that work should be *Concerning the Productive* or *Concerning Productive Science*, rather than *On the Art of Poetry* (as the work has been usually translated into English). It is this concern with the 'productivity' of genres, which organize the parts of each individual work to become a unique member of the class of things called 'tragedy', that is subsumed under 'poetics'. For Aristotle, the genre of tragedy, inductively inferred from a body of empirical data of existing individual works constituting a tradition, circumscribed authorial agency and channelled what it was possible and pertinent to do. At the same time, the author needed to possess a practical grasp of his own position within the (play or literary) tradition. The effectiveness of genre in influencing authorial productivity has indeed been reified into neoclassical schemes or templates, and thus achieved a pragmatic (even prescriptive) power to guide the cultural work in practice[4].

Thus, poetics, or the concern with authorial agency, and by corollary authorship, is essentially generic in nature and should proceed by means of the study of genres (Scholes 1969, Gadamer 2006[1975]). As Scholes vividly argues, this is because the process of inception, that is production, is essentially 'generic in nature':

> The writing process is generic in this sense: every writer conceives of his task in terms of writing he knows. However far he may drive his work into "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme", like Milton himself he must take his departure from things already attempted. Every writer works in a tradition, and his achievement can be most clearly measured in terms of the tradition in which he works. … A writer may claim … to look in his heart and write but he will actually … see his heart only through the formal perspectives open to him' (1969:103).

But how do those 'formal perspectives' open to the author mediate what he sees, feels and acts? How can this formal specificity of genres be pinpointed? For Culler, as indeed for any scholar rooted in structuralism, the differences and innovation of a literary work are matters of intra-aesthetic forces; they 'lie in the work of the literary sign: in the ways in which meaning is produced' (p. 150). Genres, then, are complex, yet historical and traditional signs or formal systems that *do something* for the producer in the process of making a work intelligible to others. Genres then cease to be heuristic devices, and constitute the ontology of a work of art: the genre becomes a structure that mediates aesthetics because it is 'effective as a model' (Gadamer 2006:117). The genre thus mediates between aesthetic, historical and subjective consciousness. The genre-model supplies the 'values' or 'the common truth' which, as Gadamer argues, mediate 'the mode of being of the aesthetic', by affecting the 'event' (subjective and historical) in which meaning occurs: that is, the event of writing and reading where meaning is formed and actualized (p. 157):

> For the writer, free invention is always only one side of a mediation conditioned by values already given. He does not freely invent his plot, however much he imagines he does. …

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[4] For an illuminating discussion of the cultural work of genres, see Rosalie Colie (1973) or Adena Rosmarin's *Power of Genres*, (1984); for ambitious studies of the human mind that treat genres as integral to and constitutive of the very nature of human knowledge and understanding see Turner (1997) or Gibbs (1994).

The writer's free invention is the presentation of a common truth that is binding on the writer also (p. 129).

This contrasts with a hermeneutic approach in which the object of art is wrenched from its historical context of creation and its original authorial constitution, and so loses an intelligibility that needs to be restored or reconstructed through interpretation during the act of a historically-deferred reading. Therefore, as Gadamer says, it is the major task of hermeneutics to 'reproduce the writer's original process of production', but that only can happen by reconstructing the tentative authorial genre within which the writer worked and experienced his work as 'innovative' (Gadamer 2006: 159; Hirsch 1967: 81).

Now the question is: why should interpretation necessarily proceed from after the fact? Is the interpretation of *hic*-and-*nunc* production possible? If the genre embodies and establishes an author's action and feelings, why can the author not be conceived of as a producer-who-interprets? Is it only correct to approach interpretation as a reproduction of the original 'event' of production, even through one's own historicity? The answer to these questions called for some sort of 'sociologizing' the relationship between genres and production, and genres and authorial action – a relationship that is treated by hermeneutics as a matter of universal human mind, or an essential expression of human creativity. What was needed in order to answer these questions was to make them observable by putting them in a local, experiential, social context of contemporaneity with the meanings of the actors involved in production-reception, not with the meaning of the work of art itself.

Once the possibility of genres governing authorial agency and action was delineated as a matter of structuralist poetics and aesthetic formalism, once the reconstruction of the original genre-bound act of creation was ascribed to hermeneutics, the question was how to incorporate such *poetics* 'into the texture of a particular pattern of life' and 'place it within the other modes of social activity' (Geertz 1983a: 97). Where and how did genres reveal their constructive power? To what degree were the authors self-aware and competent to manage the genre's effectiveness (as imputed by poetics and hermeneutics)? These questions, to echo Geertz, had to be studied locally, where such a relationship between genres and producers occurred: 'unity of form and content is … a cultural achievement', not purely aesthetic, historical or philosophical (p. 102). It is here that I found Geertz's approach to aesthetics 'which can be called semiotic, that is one concerned with how signs signify' (p. 118) immensely helpful, for he argued that such an approach should engage with signs – not signs understood as completely autonomous entities, but as entities that had their own history, traditions and sensibilities:

> We are going to have to engage in a kind of natural history of signs and symbols, an ethnography of the vehicles of meaning. Such signs and symbols, such vehicles of meaning, play a role in the life of a society, or some part of a society, and it is that which in fact gives them their life. Here, too, meaning is use, or more carefully arises from use, and it is by tracing such uses … that we are going to be able to find anything general about them. This is not a plea for inductivism – we certainly have no need for a catalogue of instance – but for turning the analytic powers of semiotic theory … away from an investigation of signs in

abstraction towards an investigation of them in their natural habitat – the common world in which men look, name, listen, and make (pp. 118-119).

Following Geertz's analytical injunction, it became suddenly possible to approach genres not in abstraction as sign systems, but as engaged with, used and interpreted by authors here and now, not just producing artistic objects in reference to such genre systems or worlds, but indeed, inhabiting those genre worlds. The author would in this way cease to be just a paper instance of an 'implied author', inferable from the text, but would gain the status of a historically and locally situated actor, who uses genres in order to enact and make sense of her own artistic productions and her own artistic life. In this way, how genres, as complex signs, *signify*, *mean* and *make something possible* for the producer (established through the analytical power of textual – semiotic and structuralist analysis) would become a matter of 'talk' and 'practice' researchable locally, within a 'common world' (p. 102). Only at this level of reversal, would the interaction between the constitutive rules of a genre and the productive agency of the author (that is, issues of poetics) become meaningful and relevant, instead of arbitrary and abstracted as in the 'guesswork' of hermeneutics.

Geertz's analytical proposal thus 'localised and individualized' (Ricoeur 1973:106) the text beyond the validity of guesses, as it made the text a matter of local knowledge situated in localized and individualized social worlds capable themselves of 'talking', 'interpreting' and 'experiencing'. Through this analytical prism, genres would indeed shine through as both formal and social, individual and collective 'vehicles of meaning', since the focus was on individuals, as members of a common world, who engaged with formal, yet shared categories of production, in order to work out their own difference and originality. Above all, the genre, as a vehicle of meaning, could be approached as something vital for members of that world, affirming their professional identity as producers of such and such a genre.

Therefore, authors may be said to be productive users of genres; they produce texts by actively using the genre as a 'production and labour' category (Ricoeur 1981). One can therefore expect interpretation and production to be mutually constitutive and coterminous. To translate this into Ricoeur's terms, every interpretive act prefigures a meaningful action, and 'every meaningful action is rule governed' (Ricoeur 1991b: 194). Genres are thus systems of rules, codifications and conventions that assign meaning and action (not just classifications or taxonomies) to gestures or statements, within which individual action takes place (ibid.). Thus, an individual authorial action is always assessed and evaluated against and within such rule-governing genre systems. It is through the *sui generis* logic of the genre that authorial action be explained as meaningful. It is such ideas of Ricoeur that led Geertz to postulate the 'interpretive turn' in social sciences. Drawing on Ricoeur (1973), Geertz posed the fundamental question about the similarity between action and texts, and the production and interpretation of meaning in terms of a rapprochement between social sciences and the humanities:

How is to be conceived, how the games, dramas or texts [he could have easily said genres, as he latter discusses agonistic poetry] that we do not just invent or witness but live, have

the consequence they do remains far from clear. It will take the wariest of wary reasonings, on all sides of all divides, to get it clearer (1983b:35).

There is probably no more obvious place to study the influence ('consequences') of genres on action and the social world than in the worlds of cultural production. Members of these worlds self-interpret themselves, in search of meaning in relation to the genre they not only produce but inhabit. As a result, their worlds function in practice as a kind of 'genre world'. Ricoeur and Geertz paved the way for understanding authorial action as 'symbolically mediated', that is to say, mediated by the autonomous processes of symbolically formulated signs, norms, rules of culture (Ricoeur 1986, Geertz 1983a, b). As Kaplan, a prominent scholar of Ricoeur, has put it: 'the symbolic mediation of action refers to systems of symbols and patterns of meaning that provide the background and contexts for describing, interpreting, and judging actions' (2008:206).

As Ricoeur (1986: 8) himself specifies: 'unless social life has a symbolic structure, there is no way to understand how we live, do things, and project these activities into ideas'. In the realm of literary production, the symbolic level of action is prefigured in genres (Culler 2002), which in turn, as culturally and symbolically patterned codes, constitute the basis upon which producer action is rendered imaginative and pertinent, and not just innovative or repetitive. The genre suffuses what producers of meaning, enshrined in texts, say and do. This is what Ricoeur (1986) had called 'cultural imagination' – that autonomy to act imaginatively under the influence of symbolic codes which are autonomous by virtue of their poetic (pertaining to poetics) logic. Producer action, that is his production and labour, is thus mediated and articulated by genre systems, which already offer to mediate and to explain; they 'already always articulate action' (Ricoeur 1991b:198). If this is the case, writes Ricoeur, now himself explicitly drawing on Geertz's notion of 'symbolic mediation', then 'the explanation of action has to be itself mediated by an interpretation of its ruling symbols' (1991a:317). All self-understanding and individual action comes through culturally coded systems:

The self does not know itself immediately, but only indirectly by the detour of the cultural signs of all sorts which are articulated on the symbolic mediations which always already articulate action and, among them, the narratives of everyday life (1991b:198).

And this self-interpretation, enabled and constrained by genres, is not only cognitive or psychological but practical: that is, 'a matter of praxis and techne', belonging to poetics as well as to ethics (1991b:191-6). Hence, the user-producers of genres should proceed by explaining their own action, so that the account of motives will 'foreshadow a logic of argumentation procedures' (1973: 109) which makes the explanation of action (poeisis, making of texts, as well as a selfhood) similar to the explanation of the texts they gave rise to (thus the ethical life is made equal to literary techne, which nonetheless underpins 'the aesthetic'). If genres are categories of production and labour which mediate action, then such 'mediation underlines this remarkable characteristic of self-knowledge – that is self-interpretation' (Ricoeur 1991b:198). Self-interpretation always occurs in and through cultural signs, which articulate the self through the symbolic mediation, which in itself already articulates action.

Thus genres[5] are operative at a very practical action-level, and are constitutive of social and individual action as self-exegesis: 'we think and act from them, not about them', to make use of Kaplan's cogent gloss on Ricoeur's hermeneutics of action (2008: 206). In this sense, the genre functions no longer as an abstract and abstracted sign system, but as a resource or indeed interpretive 'generative' matrix[6] which will be capable ('already always') of organizing meaning and experience of action, mediating what producers are capable of, or indeed held responsible for doing or knowing. Producers as first-order configurative users of genre think, feel, experience, and act in and through the genre system they work in and inhabit. To read or write, Ricoeur argued, is to inhabit the world of the text as a genre, and to let it guide practical action. Thus genre should be studied as operative in practice, as *a mediator of action* which is meaningful to its users-producers and, as such, makes them act and do, feel and experience things in certain ways (Hennion 2003; DeNora 2003). In this sense, a pragmatic understanding of the genre becomes prominent: genres are complex sign systems[7] that fundamentally pattern and order, or 'symbolically mediate' (in Ricoeur's and Geertz's sense), the course of producer action and self-interpretation, as the producer openly engages with the genre in the course of his production and labour. And this is what I mean when I use the notion of genre. This leap from poetics – semiotic, cultural codes or models of writing, to practice, understood as action, experience and self-interpretation of production is what I try to chart and elucidate in Chapter 2, and empirically investigate in the following chapters.

By now, I hope, it should have become clear that hermeneutics explicitly privileges the instance of reception or refiguration as a site where the meaning of a text is produced. Yet it also provides an important insight, through its emphasis on poetics and hermeneutics of action, into the process of production or of what Ricoeur (1986) called configuration. To reiterate again, those processes are 'already always' genre-bound, and it is this insight with regard to the production of media texts that I set out to investigate in practice. Not quite unexpectedly, many of the most inspiring empirical studies of genre-bound production have been those of the productivity of reception within cultural studies. It is because of this that I consider the segregation of audience and reception studies and production studies unhelpful, and I will argue here that a coming closer of these strands will be immensely productive for the understanding of their circularity and complementarity (see also Caldwell 2006). Therefore, I treat authorial agency and autonomy as mediated by autonomous – that is, symbolically structured and patterned – cultural systems (Alexander and Smith 2006, 1993) which are also genres in which producers are simultaneously interpreters of the texts they produce, inasmuch as they are conscientious and self-aware users of genres. It is this accent on genres that situates authorial agency in specific socio-cultural contexts, as they are constitutive of and constituted by tradition.

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[5] Ricoeur focuses on the 'literary genre of utopia' (1986), 'science fiction' (1991b), and 'the modern novel' (2008)
[6] In Chapter 2 I will call such generative matrix a set of affordances.
[7] I will later call these sign systems 'systems of dominants', following the structuralist poetics by Jakobson (1987).

A certain exasperation with what I perceived to be the elitism of the narcissistic genre of metafiction I had been studying, together with a desire to 'sociologize' what I knew from the humanities, next drew me to cultural studies. Cultural studies accorded due significance to lesser genres or popular genres, in a way that seemed alluring and more accessible for the inquiry of authorial genre-bound 'self-reflexivity' (Hutcheon 1980). This shift complemented my hermeneutical concern with co-productive interpretation as a corrective to a work's enclosed self-referentiality, because of cultural studies' sociological and empirical attention to what may be called the 'genre-bound' productivity of reception. Indeed, cultural studies made the category of genre operative at a production level, although in a primarily subcultural, amateur, or fan production framework. These studies looked at how genres 'governed' (Culler 2002) or 'mediated' the productive actions of amateur authors and the self-interpretation of fans in the context of what Kinsella termed 'the twilight sphere of cultural production' (2000:105), or Fiske called 'shadow cultural economies' (1992:30), spreading beneath, yet always in dialogue with, the official institutions of production. Some important scholarship in this 'twilight' zone obviated the fact that genres are indeed capable of influencing production, though of a subcultural and amateur kind. This was a step closer to my determination in this thesis to study professional genre-bound cultural production 'in the limelight' – that form of production which unfolds within the official institutions of production.

Reception studies: genre-bound productivity of reception

A parallel emphasis on recipients rather than on producers or authors in hermeneutic and literary theory is visible in the realm of cultural studies as well. This may partially, perhaps, be attributed to the seminal article 'Encoding/decoding' by Stuart Hall (1992/1973). However, while Hall elaborates the '*de*coding' of the massage by its recipients in sophisticated detail, he somewhat leaves untheorised the processes of '*en*coding' by the sender of the message[8]. Such an influential elaboration on 'decoding' resulted in burgeoning scholarship on the productivity of reception. Seminal studies by the Birmingham School paved the way for the analysis of the audience's critical engagement with mainstream culture, through deployment of available technologies to *do-it-yourself* publication pursuits. Productive communities, such as zine cultures (Duncombe 1997) and fans (Fiske 1992), have been studied as *genre-bound* self-publishing subcultures that make use of mimeographs and photocopiers, or more recently the Internet, to create, multiply and disseminate their independent (from the commercial interests of media industries) productions. These include horror comics (Barker 1992), adult manga (Kinsella 2000), and sci-fi (Jenkins 1992, 1995).

Audience studies have provided, in my opinion, the model for seeing audience-driven cultural production as *genre-bound production*. Barker, for example, shows how the genre of the horror comic, although (or probably because) it is commonly considered an 'awful object' (1992:

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[8] For a critique along these lines see du Gay et al, 1997.

5), exerts an influence, never predictable or determining, on its readership: 'The further the reader goes into the genre, the more she or he learns the rules and roles and relations of it' (p. 134). By immersive reading, readers steadily acquire genre competence: that is, they become aware of the genre principles of composition (shock logic, topicality and similar), to the extent that they can then start rejoicing in producing the genre on their own. Moreover, Barker argues, the genre provides the tools with which readers are able to evaluate and judge critically the quality and aesthetics of their own, their fellows', or professional producers', horror comic production.

In similar manner, Kinsella (2000) argues convincingly that amateur producers in Japan appropriated the conventions of institutionally published manga, while simultaneously reinventing and revitalizing the genre. In short, they 'produced radical and stylistically innovatory manga' that in turn accelerated the transformation of professional adult manga production (p. 107). Kinsella goes on to ethnographically substantiate how the 'self-defined characteristics of amateur manga genre … which self-consciously identifies itself as manga without direction, narrative or meaning' (p. 184) underpinned professional editors' evaluative judgments and criticism of professionally-created manga and its artists. For instance, the amateur genre's self-definition permeated editors' discourses about the lack of passion and social engagement on the part of professional artists – unlike amateur artists, who were passionate, energetic and outspoken, qualities that were then connected to the themes of 'pride', 'passion' and 'sex' of the genre of amateur manga (pp. 182-185).

However, it was not only genres of publishing that had the capacity to influence amateur productive practices, but also those of music and television genres. Among the most inspiring studies concentrating on the power of genre to influence amateur productivity are the studies of hip-hop by Andy Bennett (1999, 2001). Bennett (2001) contends that the genre of hip-hop disseminated by the media industry 'is a global resource' (p. 93) appropriated and rearticulated in localized youth music-making practices across the world, thereby indicating young people's attempt to reconcile issues of musical and stylistic authenticity with racial and gender identities through the genre (p. 138). In his study of Turkish and Moroccan hip-hop fan communities cherishing their particular sub-genres of rap in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, he demonstrates trenchantly how the fans turn and rework the genre into 'a localized form of cultural expression', so as to explore nagging problems of racism and citizenship (Bennett 1999:71). The hip-hop enthusiasts self-compose rap songs in German, but interlace them with Turkish and Arabic lyrics, melodies or tunes in response to dominant linguistic and cultural repression. In short, the genre of hip-hop and rap (Bennett uses them interchangeably) was put to use in local situations to personal and communal ends. After having identified the impact of institutional arrangements (such as municipal facilities, non-profit immigration reconciliation projects, and so on) on the localization of hip-hop, Bennett insightfully links the process of genre localization to the genre's specificity (in addition to socio-cultural circumstances in which the fans have been embedded). He writes: 'it seems to me that there are certain characteristics of the hip hop genre which make it particularly well placed to act as a form of local expression' (p. 86). He then pinpoints these 'characteristic'

aspects of the genre as its distinctive 'hands on' accessible nature – rhymed speech delivered against continuous pre-recorded backbeat, as well as its grassroots origins in African-American street culture – and developed as a mode of channelling a gang spirit to creative ends, thereby playing on the capacity of genre to be reworked and appropriated in local alternative, immigrant music-making scenes.

Another elaborate and ethnographically grounded piece of scholarship consists of the studies of science fiction by Henry Jenkins (1992, 1995), in which he describes the move from watching to producing television, and thus from reading to writing, as mediated by genres. If Bennett opened up the possibility of according genres the power to become an active participant (actor, mediator) in the process of local self-expression and self-exegesis, it is the work of Jenkins that looks at this possibility more systematically. He shows convincingly in his work on *Star Trek*, the pinnacle of the science fiction genre, how the genre provides the repertoires and resources that loyal fans adopt and accommodate to their particular practical needs and identity work, as a kind of self-exegesis:

> Not only do readers select from the range of generic options available to them at any particular moment but they also inflect their readings of those selected narratives to reflect their own particular orientations and interests. Science fiction enthusiasts, …, recognize the potential problems within the genre's characteristically optimistic versions of the future. At the same time they are attracted … [to the genre] as a utopian alternative to their lived experience; hard science fiction provides them with a set of core myths which facilitate their own practical activities and flatter their own need for professional dignity (1995: 214).

Jenkins shows how 'Trekkers', as *Star Trek* fans prefer to be called, employ or 'poach' cultural material from mass culture so as to make sense of their own subordinate status, social exclusion and identity crises. He also provides extensive evidence of how women as members of fan clubs, set in motion a whole publishing industry of newsletters and fanzines, whereby they 'reinvent' the genre conventions of science fiction previously perceived to be dominated by masculine conventions (Jenkins 1992). They thus re-wrote the genre and move it closer to romance, as they were mainly interested in exploring intimately salient romantic and erotic relationships in a genre that had hitherto largely ignored romantic or erotic features (genre markers). The fans thus made the genre *fit* into their lives, while the genre itself furnished them with culturally available modes of self-interpretation and self-knowledge, as well as with alternative sources of recognition as fan writers or artists. Moreover, the establishment of such a semi-professional publishing industry provided a major training ground, 'a nurturing space' to aspiring science fiction professional writers who were able to develop skills, styles and themes pertinent to the genre (pp. 47-49).

The genre, then, not only furnishes audiences with 'a set of core myths', but also with institutions that cherish, one way or another, the specific genre. Jenkins (1995) argues that MIT, a hive for the world's most venerable interpretive and producing community of science fiction, 'imagines' itself through the genre. He concludes: 'Strong cords of technical utopian thinking run

through the Institute's official rhetoric and self-promotion' (pp. 119-220). The genre permeates the Institute's 'technoculture', from employing science fiction writers in residence as 'catalysts of more imaginative research', to offering language courses on 'Advanced Klingon'. Exams crafted with reference to *Star Trek* or William Gibson, and dorm discussions of sexuality framed by *Star Trek*, are just a few examples that Jenkins credibly puts forward (pp. 120-121). In her work on adult manga, Kinsella (2000) goes a step further when she illuminatingly sheds light on how the genre of adult manga was appropriated and acted upon by large Japanese companies such as Sony or Honda in their effort to self-promote and self-reflexively ponder their corporate status. The genre, argues Kinsella, was chosen 'as a medium of choice for communication and public relations':

> Presenting public relations and internal communications in manga format appeared to be a means of attracting target audiences to read what might otherwise be unattractive or irrelevant information (p. 77).

So the genre – with its associations with personal progress, passionate social perspectives, complex exploration of psychology, and anti-establishment aesthetics – offered a model for institutional self-inquiry and self-interpretation. By making use of such genre characteristics, a company's promotional activities were made to look more like dramatized humanitarian projects geared towards improving living standards than like sales pitches on the part of profit-making capitalist enterprises (pp.78-79).

My own Master's thesis argued for the genre-bound productivity of reception in the use of travel guidebooks (Alacovska 2007). Through a combination of ethnography and a critical discourse analysis of guidebook use, I was able to trace how guidebook readers became accustomed to specific genre principles that informed their genre-related 'foreknowledge' (Jauss 1982) and eventually morphed into 'genre competence' (Culler 2002). Guidebook readers shared prescriptions (not only expectations) about what constituted a 'good guidebook', reflecting their demand that the genre be factual, accurate and based on an actual journey (and thus reliable). Such genre knowledge and competence gave rise to reader production of genre-related derivatives – first in the form of travel tips, recommendations and guidebook updates; and second in travelogues, travel blogs or wlogs (very much in vogue at the time of writing) through which the by now user-producers made sense of, rejoiced in, or re-imagined their past travels through the genre.

Audience studies of the genre-bound productivity of reception showed systematically and empirically how the genre helps organize productive action and self-understanding from within the genre worlds fans voluntarily inhabit. The genre provided the resources or the culturally coded material that its users-cum-producers drew upon when producing 'subcultural' or 'amateur' texts as an act of self-knowledge and self-exegesis that 'already always', as Ricoeur (1991a, 1991b) argued, happens through the detour of cultural and semiotic codes enshrined in genres. Although no overarching theoretical approach was spelt out, reception studies in my opinion managed to situate textual formalism and structuralism within diversified modes of social and communal

activity in Geertz's sense (1983a, 1983b). This placement was – quite understandably for audience or reception studies – in the social world of the recipients, who acted, behaved and tried to self-understand in and through the genre they intimately and affectionately cared about.

As such, these studies act as a model for operationalizing the co-productive relationship between interpretation and production, authors and genres. My intention, however, is to widen the scope of this scholarship by recasting the focus from reception to production, while never losing sight of the fact that production only comes about through interpretation, and interpretation, as well as self-interpretation, is always a genre-bound activity. In this way, I came to start musing about the possibility of situating genre effectiveness in influencing action and self-understanding from the social worlds of audiences to the social world of professional authors or producers more generally.

Paradoxically, such audience studies strengthened my interest both in producers and in the processes of professional genre production, and thus foregrounded this doctoral thesis. Who stood behind these sleek and bright guidebooks that appeared to come as if from nowhere? Who were the travel guidebook writers? What was going on behind the scenes of an industry that overtly defined itself as travel guidebook publishing through the genre it produced? Did travel guidebook publishers 'imagine' and 'self-promote' themselves through the genre, as Jenkins, in a slightly different context, argued happened in MIT? If the relationship between a text and its active, productive audiences is genre-bound, what about the relationship between professional producers and texts? What about the relationship between institutions and genres?

One might reasonably expect, as hermeneutics always contended, that the relationship between professional authors and texts is respectively genre-bound as well. Following Ricoeur, if genres were indeed matters of 'production and labour', then one should examine 'the praxis' and 'the techne' of genre-bound professional production, or more precisely interrogate how the textuality of genre 'jumps' into action 'in practice' (so as to influence the act of composition and individual style). Following audience studies' empirical engagement with genre-bound 'fan' production, one should in principle also be able to research empirically the 'action-level' or mediating power of the producing actors (Wolff 1975:54) since this was most likely to reflect the relationship between genres and producers. This trajectory of thinking led me in search of 'the professional producer' and thus to the field of creative labour studies, on which this thesis builds and to which, hopefully, it also contributes. At the same time, I sensed that a move from the 'twilight' to 'limelight' zone of professional production necessitated an engagement with studies of the institutions and organizations of cultural production. So, at one and the same time, I found myself being drawn towards sociological approaches to culture and art, and in particular to creative labour studies, as well as to the production of culture perspective. What I have been particularly interested in here is to understand if and how these strands of analysis treat the category of genre, and by corollary authorial agency or autonomy.

'Cultural industries approach': the study of creative labour (and genres)

The popularity and influential standing of audience studies within media and cultural studies, which obviously placed their research emphases on audiences or media users, resulted in a dearth of studies concerning professional production and producers, especially popular culture production (Hesmondhalgh 2002)[9]. Even when professional productions were in analytical focus, such as the production of reality shows, scholars have concentrated on the cooptation of ordinary people/audiences as participants in these shows rather than on production in a narrow sense (see for example Andrejevic 2004 or Syvertsen 2001). Setting out to redress this lacuna, creative labour studies concentrated on professional media producers, their lived experiences, subjectivities, pleasures and anxieties of work, as well as on their sense of professionalism (Hesmondhalgh 2002; McRobbie 1998; Ursell 2000; Ross 2000, 2003). Here, the focus of analysis has been on professional media work as it unfolds within the economic and commercial confines of media, cultural or creative industries. For this reason, Hesmondhalgh suggests that this body of research be also referred to as a 'cultural industries approach' (2008:567).

Creative labour studies were the long-awaited critical and empirical re-rethinking of, on the one hand, the political economy treatment of media producers as 'puppets' controlled by media owners and conglomerates (Herman-Chomsky 1997; Murdock 1982; Hannerz 2004), and, on the other, the creative industries policy rhetoric that glamourized creative work (McRobbie 1998). These studies provided ample empirical evidence that, in spite of the enthusiastic policy embracement of creative work as a harbinger of all work in advanced information societies, work in creative industries was precarious – providing insecure and intermittent employment (long and unpaid working hours, long periods of idleness, no health or vacation benefits), and was deeply unequal (with deep-seated gender and racial inequalities at its heart). McRobbie (1998) using a governmentality neo-Foucauldian perspective, has empirically shown that British fashion designers 'self-exploit' – putting up with unreimbursed protracted overtime, poor working conditions, and minimal pay, all in the name of living the dream of a self-expressive and self-realizing job. For her part, Ursell (2000), also drawing on post-structuralist theory, has argued that the desirability of creative work has made, and still makes, producers complicit in their precarious life, and assists British TV production companies in 'the exploitation' of an unremitting stream of young 'hopefuls'. Wittel (2001) and Nixon and Crewe (2004) have demonstrated how the injunction 'to network' with colleagues and audiences 'after work' proves more taxing and isolating than liberating for creative professionals. Gill (2002) has elucidated the gender inequalities in new media work, eventually forcing women, laden with the burden of balancing family life and career in a fast-paced and unregulated sector, out of the workforce.

By focusing on the lived experience of cultural producers, these studies have convincingly argued for the 'relative autonomy' of cultural producers within the commercial settings of the

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[9] This is not to say, though, that some precocious and curious studies of production did not signal the advent of the budding interest in media/cultural production such as the study of a women fashion magazine's editors by Ferguson (1983).

cultural industries. Cultural producers' experience and perception of freedom was found to be not completely squelched by the precarious conditions in, or the totalizing power of, media industries. Although media professions are not professions in the classic sense proposed by Abbott (1988), since they lack esoteric knowledge and strict entry barriers, professional competence is still a tactic by which producers can pre-empt executive control (Elliott 1977:152). These experiences of freedom, as linked to an intrinsic sense of professionalism, have recently been confirmed to be at least 'ambivalent' and 'complicated' (Hesmondhalgh and Backer 2009), 'self-regulated' (Kennedy 2010), and 'in constant flux' (Banks 2004). The producers' relative autonomy is linked directly to the nature of cultural products – they need to be continuously original and innovative if they are to become profit-generating, and thus cannot be completely controlled or structured. Within the institutions of cultural production, producer autonomy is a systemic necessity. Media owners and managers stop short at this ambivalence and are forced to make concessions to creative producers in order to provide the basic conditions for the profitable creation of novelty. Producer's relative autonomy is thus a function of the organization of cultural industries, in that creative managers exercise a lenient control over the creative process, in favour of more stringent control over distribution (Hesmondhalgh 2002).

In Chapters 5 and 6, I confirm many of the findings that the studies of creative labour have put forward. In spite of a widespread popular opinion of its being the work of 'the free and footloose', the work of travel guidebook writers is indeed characterized by high levels of casualization (work that is predominantly, if not exclusively, freelance); low pay but long working hours – especially during the 'crunch time' of researching and writing up; extended periods of idleness or the juggling of multiple jobs; individualized responsibility for constant technological skill development and promotion – all of which happens within an industry that enjoys the benefit of an ever-growing 'labour pool' (Menger 2006) generated by the perceived desirability of a travel writing job. Not surprisingly, I also noted a heightened sense of anxiety, exasperation and disillusionment with the profession, which led many of the producers to devise 'exit strategies,' either leaving 'creative jobs' for good, or resorting to the new digital technologies and going the 'self-publishing' route. Yet, in spite of such a precarious climate, travel guidebook producers cherished a degree of autonomy not least by working at a managerial and controlling distance from managers and editors, but mainly by invoking reference to the immanent characteristics and conventions of the genre they worked and lived in. Thus, I take up the insights from creative labour studies in an attempt to understand how genres mediated the sense of professionalism, conscientious work and quality through producers' protracted and intentional engagement with the genre of travel guidebooks.

These cultural industries studies provided the model for seeing authors as more than 'implied authors', mere 'paper' instances caught in their post-mortem biographies and derived from texts. Drawing on this approach, one can indeed recognize that authors are flesh-and-blood people who feel, experience, and project their future, and who think critically about their working and existential status. Authors are thus not biographical instances, but workers capable of self-

reflection, embedded in industrial contexts shot through with organizational, managerial and economic imperatives. As such, these studies are an important corrective to hermeneutics, whose task was, in Ricoeur's words, 'to reconstruct the set of operations by which a work lifts itself above the opaque depths of living, acting and suffering, to be given by an author to readers who revise it and thereby change their acting' (1984:53). Creative labour studies put 'the living, acting and suffering author' back into the hermeneutical circuit of interpretation, important if nothing else, for acknowledging the 'real' interpretive actions of the authors as workers trying to string together a viable living from cultural production. If hermeneutics and reception studies foregrounded the productive reception of audiences and rendered absent the actual conditions of production, creative labour studies have foregrounded the producer, but in the process somewhat lost sight of the genre-bound dimension of their work.

As hypothesized at the beginning, drawing on Ricoeur's hermeneutics of action and Culler's structuralist poetics, it transpired very clearly from my empirical work that the genre indeed 'governed', that is 'symbolically mediated' the ways producers worked in practice and informed the ways both individual authors, but also the industry as a whole, perceived themselves, their relative autonomy and their work experience. However, creative labour studies did not engage with genres or the textual dynamics of the cultural object, a lack of attention justified by the urgent need to understand the standing of cultural workers in a turbulent time of creative policy enforcement amidst a glaring absence of sustained intellectual and academic discussion. Too much emphasis on professional producers in institutional 'contexts' (though necessary and relevant as a response to reception studies and the political economy) was likely to result in sidestepping the 'texts' themselves, as well as genre as a 'category of production of labour'. Some very recent studies notice this hiatus and propose productive ways to bridge the gap (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011). This is a fertile development that I draw upon, but I also want to add some insights gleaned from the study of the production of a specific, less-researched, popular genre, the travel guidebook.

In their latest study of media work in three different industries (television, music and magazine publishing,) Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) accord genres a certain importance for the understanding of media work. Although not central to their study, they give genres prominence in the analysis of media work, if such an analysis is to be attentive to the distinctive nature or specificity of cultural products. They acknowledge that creative industries, unlike other industries, largely hinge on genres for their organization as a means of linking unpredictable audience demand with predictable creative outputs (Negus 1998; DiMaggio 1987). In such an industrial and organizational context, genres have their own peculiar institutional arrangements which determine the interplay between creativity and commerce (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, pp. 94-95). Against this background, it is understandable why Hesmondhalgh and Baker use genres as a methodological tool: 'a further way of ensuring breadth in our sample of interviewees and cases was to concentrate on three genres in each industry' (p.14). The import of such a methodological stance is useful in that it leads them to shed comparative light on the 'considerable variation

within particular genre cultures' (p. 91, original emphasis) which are at the same time organizational structures. For example, the media work within trade press magazine publishing is considered by their interviewees as less creative, and thus less autonomous, than that found in music magazines. But the consideration of 'creativity', 'authenticity' and 'autonomy' is not derived from autonomous genre principles that are culturally or symbolically patterned, but from the organizational hierarchies and deployment of internal resources. Hesmondhalgh and Baker do not see 'the specificity of creative labour' in terms of genres, but in terms of symbols and 'symbol-making' (p. 18), thereby leaving the relationship between genres and symbols unexamined in favour of seeing genres as organizational categories, within which, as organizational units, creativity unfolds (Negus 1998). Thus, some genres are perceived (by the interviewees) as more or less 'autonomous' depending on that genre's institutional or organizational arrangement: the relationship between advertisements and editorial in each genre, the 'world they report on', the perceived public prestige of the genre, the differences in payment (paid per feature or per word), each of which varies by genre. Consider the following example:

> Some trade press magazines carry more supplements and allow more copy checking, potentially reducing the costs involved in securing stories, but this potentially damages the prestige of magazines and its writers. Meanwhile, in music magazines the genre of music reported on plays an important role, creating a system of music magazines sub-genres. … So-called 'urban' music magazines – those reporting on the 'urban' genres of hip hop, RandB and genres such as soul and funk that feed into them – seem to have less space for such autonomy, perhaps as a result of the economic fragility of the sub-genre, but perhaps also because of a relatively lesser emphasis on notions of creative autonomy (p. 91).

I concur with Hesmondhalgh and Baker that genres are important in the analysis of cultural work with a view to investigating a producer's relative autonomy. I especially cherish their 'going within' each genre when researching the notion of autonomy in cultural work. Yet, their understanding of genres is sociological and teleological, detached most resolutely from issues relative to poetics. The genres are the end product of creative labour that 'changes in response to the practices of creative workers' (p.14) and Hesmondhalgh and Baker, who follow Negus's work on the music industry, take them as already shaped by industry's self-definition and differentiation. In their work, genres are not culturally and autonomously patterned systems that exercise their effectiveness upon production, but are defined by the industry itself. This division between genres as organizationally determined and as semiotically coded represents the reverse fault line in humanities-based studies of production. For instance, Altman (1986:28) notes that film studies have long been plagued by a division between approaching genres as 'derived from the industry's self-promotion' and 'structuralist and semiotic applications of genre'. I think, therefore, that a rapprochement between the two could usefully inform the complexity of cultural production with reference to the notion of genre.

In addition to being a product of institutional units or organizational arrangements, I tend to approach genres as autonomous in themselves by virtue of their specific *modus operandi* which is coded by standards of poetics imbued with the effectiveness to influence cultural work itself, as

well as authorial self-perception and production practice, in the sense of Ricoeur and Geertz. I hope to add to the analysis presented by Hesmondhalgh and Baker, an understanding of producer autonomy as symbolically mediated by the genre's independent trajectories. Thus I will shift the focus from *professional autonomy* (reliance on impersonal codes of conduct, moral rules and obligation, and systemic organization of work and division of labour) to *cultural autonomy*, a sense of autonomy provided by the very structural principles of making, that is poetics, relative to the genre. This is rather closer to the Renaissance concept of the author-craftsman – 'a master of a body of rules, or techniques, preserved and handed down to him in rhetoric and poetics', and for that matter genres, by which he manipulates materials to achieve effects on the audience (Wodmansee 1992). In contrast to Hesmondhalgh and Baker, following Ricouer, I consider the professional autonomy as inextricably linked to imagination: 'without imagination there is no action, we shall say. And this is so in several different ways: on the level of projects, on the level of motivations and on the level of the very power to act' (p. 173). And, imagination is always genre-bound. Such power of genres to structure authorial action and professionalism can be explained with reference to Don Quixote. As Don Quixote chose the genre (the novel of chivalry) in which he would be portrayed, so were his actions (windmill fighting) induced by the genre. It is the genre that is essential to social life and individual imagination: 'he [Don Quixote] knows his genre from inside out. His genre is his fix on the world' (Colie 1973:31). According then to Ricoeur, the genre (especially narrative genres) prefigure individual action and freedom, through the ways users-producers of genre do things with, around and through it.

It is worth mentioning here that the category of genre has gained independently more and more prominence in research on cultural/media industries. In their latest study, Havens and Lotz (2012), for example, position genre as the most important category to shape or 'circumscribe' media producers' autonomy, or what they decide to call 'circumscribed agency'. Media producers, in their view, so thoroughly internalize genre conventions that the genre almost naturally and inevitably 'restricts' their agency (p.16). They write: 'Genre, a French word that simply means "type", is one of the main restrictions, because popular media texts fit conventional genre definitions before they can get made' (ibid.). The degree to which genres restrain producer autonomy is indeed debatable here, as well as the genre's level of institutionalization. Especially, what is left unanswered is how 'media texts' are made 'fit' into the genres, something that requires an examination of the very processes of production. However, the fact that Havens and Lotz accord strategic significance to genre as a category of 'production and labour' (as opposed to an organizational category) in the study of media industries is important. Yet in the way they parenthetically define the notion of 'genre', one can infer the still fresh and hesitant inroad that this category makes in the 'cultural industries approach'.

When seeing the still undefined place cultural industries studies accord to genres in their analyses, it suddenly becomes apparent the hiatus between a more macro perspective on genres, by which genres are institutional and institutionalized categories, and on other, micro perspective, by which genres imbue the daily practices of individual producers. Traditionally, the hiatus that the

studies of cultural industries have just recently started to straddle, has been the preserve of two separate strands of analysis, on the one hand, sociological studies of cultural production (macro perspective) and, on the other hand, media production studies[10], in particular a humanities-based production analysis of television production (micro perspective).

I will first zoom in on the sociological approaches to cultural production, as it was through these studies that my 'literary imagination', through which genres indeed possess agency and power, encountered 'the sociological imagination', through which genres are the outcome of the working of institutions and organizations, and will then continue to elaborate on the media production studies' treatment of genres, to which I openly subscribe.

Sociology of culture/cultural sociology: the shifting causality of genres

The work within the sociology of art and culture has been known since the mid-1970s as a 'production of culture' approach or perspective, also sometimes referred to by its own insiders as a study of 'culture-producing institutions' (Hirsch 1978). In a nutshell, these studies have shown how cultural objects resulted from or were caused by social interaction, organizational arrangements, and managerial imperatives.

Sociological work of this kind has been both insightful and refreshing when juxtaposed with humanities research that has treated works of art as worlds *sui generis*, isolated from wider social or societal contexts, and concentrated on intra-textual or intra-aesthetic analyses that have foregone a discussion of extra-aesthetic factors (Ricoeur 1973, Jakobson 1987, Todorov 1990, *inter alia*). Moreover, what was important for my study was that the production of culture approach elucidated the category of genre as an industrial or institutional category in its causal relationship with social institutions (rather than as an autonomous sign system of culturally patterned codes, as described above). Carefully observing the objectivist *credo* of scientific analysis, the institutional analysis of culture-producing institutions insisted that genres are the provisional products of the production milieu – organizations, and their economic and managerial pressures, legal frameworks, technologies, and divisions of labour (Peterson and Anand 2004). Under the pressure of such objectively measurable forces, genres are infinitely variable, that is pliable and malleable – they are the direct product of 'culture processing' and as such they constantly change in response to external forces (DiMaggio 1987; Lena and Peterson 2008; Childress forthcoming).

As a result cultural products are denied any ontologically autonomous status, and are treated as opportunistic constructs or utilitarian devices. Within the culture-producing institutions genres function as shorthand for marketing, since they operate very much like brands, linking specific textual products with audiences, that is with specific consumer segments. Some studies have shown that cultural products are promoted and publicized through the assignment of genres.

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[10] Media production studies are recently also called 'cultural studies of media production'(see Mayer, Banks and Caldwell 2009)

Given the high level of uncertainty of creative businesses, managers spread the risk, and thus income sources, across a repertoire or catalogue of genres (Bielby and Bielby 2003). Hence, the genre is an instrumental tool, a kind of risk-minimizing and rationalizing strategy, defined variously as a 'corporate portfolio strategy' (Negus 1998); 'corporate rhetorical strategy' (Bielby and Bielby 1994), 'marketing taxonomy' (Squires 2007), or even 'reviewer cooptation instrument' (Hirsch 1978). As it has become common for cultural industries to overproduce (by increasing textual outputs so that their misses could be recuperated through the occasional and eventual hit), the genre has gained prominence as a categorizing and promotional mechanism that brings order to the proliferation in production (Childress, forthcoming).

Interestingly, such studies resonate very strongly with Croce's ideas of genres as arbitrary groupings of texts with practical or pragmatic utility, a tenet vehemently refuted by hermeneutics (see Ricoeur 1973). For Croce, genres should only have a pragmatic purpose (not an ontological status) because 'the books in a library must be arranged in one way or another' (Croce 1913/1995:35). Through this prism genres are variable, dependent on social context and infinitely changeable through social construction (as in marketing or promotion), while their ontological underpinning is elided by the predomination of social forces. However, this is not to say that genres (as corpuses of cultural objects or texts) are omitted in the production of culture perspective, but that they are just treated differently. As such, these studies need not be immediately or quickly written off from an analysis that tries to stay attuned to the role of genres in cultural production (Wolff 1999, 1983:31).

Griswold (1981) demonstrates convincingly how the difference in copyright laws, and the organization of the publishing industry in England and America during the ninetieth century, influenced the genre of the novel in America. And, here she emphatically attends to the genre's specificity – plot, characters, and themes (textural features usually dealt with in 'hard-core' genre analysis, see Altman 1986 or Todorov 1990), although only as an outcome of extra-aesthetic forces. This is an attempt to rationalize and sociologize the 'newly emerging' genre characteristics, empirically deducible after the fact from a corpus of texts by textual analysis, which may seem to come as if from nowhere, 'springing from the head of Zeus' (Altman 1986:28). To counter this, Griswold (1981) tries to establish the causal link between a genre's specificity (in her case, the emergence of the American novel with its differentiated specific attributes) and institutional regimes or organizational structures. As English writers were not covered by American copyright laws, their novels could be freely and profitably imported, reprinted and distributed in the United States. To justify royalty payments, burdensome to publishers, American writers needed to counter the oversupply of cheap English novels. Thus, instead of adhering to topics like love, romantic relationships, women and their sorrows, marriage and middle-class characters of the kind that were central to the English novels, American writers resorted to quirky, non-middle class subjects, like boys and their adventures in the wilderness (unique genre characteristics for which the publishers were willing to pay). Griswold shows insightfully and persuasively how the creation of a literary model is determined by social factors, although she stops short of according that

literary model the capacity to act through its particular autonomy, that is internally patterned aesthetic, logic[11]. She also leaves unexamined how the genre and genre principles were put to use (circumvented, defied, reworked, interpreted) by producers in their practices.

In another landmark study of the social production of country music, Peterson (1997) probes into the commercial success of a particular music genre, that of country music. The main focus of his analysis is on how this genre is made to appear 'authentic', 'traditional' or 'genuine' (attributes that were the main selling proposition of the genre) by the industries producing and disseminating it. Through a long series of industrial interventions (choice of performers, their outfit and appearance, performance conventions such as shaking hands with fans on stage, iconography of promotional posters or concert adverts including barns, plows and cattle), and cooptations of radio DJ and music critics for such influential magazines as *Billboard*, the country music industry 'fabricated' – defined and infinitely perpetuated – the 'dominant characteristics of the genre' tantamount to the main selling proposition:

> Thus, in 1953, the informed outsiders understood the genre as expressing *authenticity*, and that authenticity was not contrived or copied but was based in the history of a people and was drawn from the experiences of those who lived in the everyday work (Peterson 1997, p.210, original emphasis).

Peterson also shows how the sound, rhythm, style, and visual symbols of 'country music' were manipulated by music producers to bestow 'authenticity' and 'credibility' (thus securing salability) on songs and their singers, and so to establish the dominant discourses of country music: music from the South, 'the heart of the country', hillbilly lyrics, close to working man, farm, family, and traditional mores (pp. 4-7). Thus for Peterson, the genre's dominant characteristics are institutionally mediated, that is, they have no tangible existence outside the production milieu.

The production of culture approach is usually criticized on the grounds that 'it is rare that questions of aesthetics are permitted in this discourse or indeed any discussion of works themselves' (Wolff 1999:503, see also Wolff 1993:31-35) and that it sidesteps 'features of the art object itself' (Rosenblum 1978:422). However, a close reading of these studies reveals that the scholars concerned did in fact attend to 'the features' of the object, as subsumed in genres such as the novel or country music. The problem, in my opinion, is that they treated those features as a *variable* in the course of their analyses – that is, as an outcome of production, a function of promotional, cooptation or marketing industrial strategies, rather than as a *constant* with its own laws or regimes, internal codifications and ontological principles. The production of culture approach does not acknowledge the poetics of genres, that is their structuralist effectiveness to influence the process of production and their producers' actions and experiences, on a par with the power of social institutions to define and consolidate genres by controlling producer action.

A recent example nicely encapsulates this vein of critique. Lena (2006) provides ample statistical evidence that market concentration and the organization of firms have a decisive impact

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[11] See my discussion of Gadamer or Ricoeur above.

on the production of the genre of rap. She statistically proves the impact of oligopolistic industrial organization on the content and diversity of music. In order to do so she compares all rap singles that appear on official music charts from 1979 to 1996. Yet she also includes 'a musicological analysis' of genre and style, mainly following Krims's (2000) work on the genre classifications of music in order to devise the categories of statistical comparison. Krims (2000) defines the predominant attributes of rap on the basis of four aesthetic (intra-textual) criteria: flow (rhythmic pattern, meter, off beat accents and similar); music style (instrumentation, scratching techniques); rhythmic style (polyrythmic, multi-source layering of songs); and semantic content (lyrical content, tropes, themes). Based on such 'musicologically' coded data, Lena concludes that, before increased consolidations of majors in the industry in the late 1980s:

> the hardcore rap contained descriptions of sex or violence … featured "a hustler" as a protagonist. … the hustler dominates of victimizes others using force and seduction: hustlers are either "baaadman" who dominate through force and intimidation or pimps (macks or players). The pimp and the baaadman are anti-heroes (2006, p. 486).

After the independent rap-producing labels were taken over by majors who cherished wide market success and a broad audience, the genre changed. According to Lena, this oligopolistic trend affected its rhythm which became fast-paced, and instrumentation which became 'thin', while the hustler protagonist provided for the passage between original rap anti-commercialism and the new corporate incursions: 'the hustler is still an outsider, but one with a comfortable relationship to commercial culture and material success' (p. 489). In the face of market concentration, chart songs were found to share 'a lyrical emphasis on partying, romance, humor and parody' (p. 487).

It is at this point that my 'literary imagination' ran counter to the newly acquired sociological imagination. That literary imagination, informed by a background in comparative literature and hermeneutics, led me to assume that genres are not only social constructs, but still (in spite of being shaped by the industries of cultural production) possess the capacity to inform the very processes of production.

It is obvious that Lena (2006) meticulously charts genre features of rap by employing a musicological analysis for sociological investigation. However the genre features that she identifies are simply caused by market concentration, that is by economic factors. There is no account of 'the action-level' – 'the mediating factor of the actual creator' (Wolff 1975: 54) and the point at which actual creators actually engage with those genre features. Moreover, the genre is not given performative autonomy, a power to act or to function as a resource in the production process, or producer self-interpretation, so that any attempt at a hermeneutical understanding of genres is precluded[12]. Consequently, the genre as a concept is largely left untheorized, although it has played an operational role in such sociological analysis.

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[12] Compare this with Bennett's study of the subcultural production of rap that treated genre features as a resource, as discussed earlier.

This is basically the critique leveled at the production of culture approach as a 'weak sociological program' by cultural sociologists (as opposed to sociologists of culture) who advocate a 'strong program' in the sociological study of culture (Alexander and Smith 2006). They write:

> While the sociological credentials of such an undertaking are to be applauded, something more is needed if the autonomy of culture is to be recognized – *viz.* a robust understanding of the codes that are at play in the cultural object under consideration. Only when these are taken into account can cultural "products" be seen to have internal cultural inputs and constraints (p. 143).

What Alexander and Smith (2006; 1993) propose is to give culture an autonomous status (independent of social determination) in sociological analysis. Culture and cultural objects are autonomous by virtue of their culturally-, semiotically- or aesthetically-patterned logic, and as such they can exercise a structuring influence over social life (and not just vice versa, being determined by social structure, economy and organizations). The strong program should recognize that cultural production is inevitably structured by cultural codes that can be described as formal models with reference to plots, characters, and moral evaluations that 'carry with them particular implications for social life' (2006: 146). Once formal models are determined, the analysis should proceed to specify historical particularities. As such, culture needs to be first given an 'analytic autonomy' (Kane 1991):

> Theoretically, the structural nature of culture must be recognized. This is accomplished by demonstrating analytic autonomy, the empirical identification of specific culture structures. Without reconstructing the cultural system and analytically showing its elements or processes, the social historian has no basis for claiming that culture is a determinative structure in its own right (p. 62).

The production of culture approach has been attacked by Alexander and Smith (2006) as an example of a 'weak program' that treats genres as a causal result of industrial dynamics and structural determinants. In contrast, 'a strong program' is poised to look at genres as formal models, internally and autonomously patterned, having a structural influence on public life.

Smith (2005) applied a model derived from Fry's (1975) genre theory to the analysis of foreign policy intervention and war decision-making in the case of Arab leaders. In his account, genres are shown to shape perceptions of risk and political accountability in situations of crisis, in ways long 'predicted by genre theory' (Smith 2005:98). Smith has found that *the genre* in which Arab leaders (Hussein versus Nasser) were represented or framed in the American media, had a decisive impact on the national response to conflict. During the 1950s, Nasser was portrayed in the genres of romance and epic, both predicated on a poetics of optimism, heroic characters and noble pursuits, which resulted in a 'no-war policy' and thus, 'a happy end'. By contrast, in the 2000s, Hussein was depicted through an 'apocalyptic' and 'tragic' genre, predicated on a poetics replete with tragic error, agonistic struggles, horror of suffering and threat, which sustained, legitimized and justified a violent war intervention and the prosecution of 'the evil'. Genres, in other words, are strategically put to use by civil society members (presidents, public administration, journalists) to achieve certain ends beyond budgets and procedural red-tape: 'the

narrative genre which is applied might work to amplify or diminish the apparent threat to which a nation is exposed' (p. 29). It is through genres, Smith concludes, that culture operates as 'a tool for understanding, a tool for predicting, a tool for evaluating and also as a brake or constraint on action because action is held accountable to narratives' (p. 28). Recognizing the power of genres, social actors try to align their actions and performance with genres. Genres thus provide the possible modes of and resources for appropriate action and interpretation, as consistently hypothesized in Ricoeur's hermeneutics of action.

'The strong program' in cultural analysis emphasizes that genres have a social impact largely because they provide practitioners with available tools, rules or guidelines, for interpreting events, products or actions in a specific way. In other words, one can say that genres possess agency or that they indeed 'work' in this or that way, by exercising a tangible influence over concrete trajectories of interpretation and action. Genre have the capacity to act (*lessen* or *amplify* the threat of war or *define* a professional identity, as is the case with travel guidebook writers).

I suggest recasting the strong program's focus on genres, from the sphere of media events, rituals and policy discourses, to genres in their basic meaning of classes or corpuses of texts produced by tangible and concrete media institutions by active and knowledgeable producers. In a way, what I propose is driving home the analysis of the capacity of genres to act, as a genre's capacity to make possible the production of a novel or a poem, was long predicted by hermeneutics and structuralist poetics. I also suggest recasting the strong program's text-based analysis, in which a genre's influence is reconstructed from text and public discourses, to an empirical focus on genre-poetics as it is engaged with, mobilized or performed in actual production practice. In this narrow empirical framework, one is well placed to investigate *how*, as structural poetics argued, genres govern, underpin and make possible the act of cultural/media/artistic production. In this way, genres will be seen as enabling producer action and industrial self-interpreting mechanisms, but also material institutional arrangements such as commissioning policies, employment contracts, copyright, or editorial control (not only the other way round) – which seems to be a refinement of the 'symbolic mediation' of social life by cultural codes that Ricoeur and Geertz propounded earlier.

Genres are capable of symbolic mediation only by virtue of their autonomous logic. And such logic should be accorded analytic autonomy before being examined in concrete situations. Moreover, genres in themselves will assure the cultural autonomy that Kane advocates, in that structuralist and formalist approaches to genre have already established the basic premises upon which genres can be seen as systems of signs, conventions or dominant characteristics (Jakobson 1987, Neale 1990), and thus work as 'culture structures' in Kane's sense (Rambo and Chan 1990). In short, they have the capacity to mediate action. The next step in the analysis should then be to examine how those codes are employed, deployed, experienced and acted upon in specific events and circumstances by knowledgeable actors so as to become 'cultures structures'. As Kane (1991) advises, the analytical autonomy of culture needs to be situated in 'arenas of action' whereby the

'concrete autonomy' of culture becomes situated in concrete (lived, formulated, emoted) historical processes, and thus visible and researchable on a social plane:

> Arenas of action are the social historian's entrée to the actual formulation of the culture structure. In these arenas historically specific conditions, interests, experiences, and contingences meet, interact, and culminate in cultural formations through "the often contradictory or antagonistic action of a large number of actors and groups of actors" (p. 59).

It is the notion of 'culture-structure' as a performative codification of cultural/textual features that allows for the conceptual resources developed in humanities-based studies of genre to be inserted into social science. Genres are independently coded systems of aesthetic devices and dominants that have 'an organizing' role in the process of cultural production. Drawing on the Russian formalist idea of dominant aesthetic devices, Neale (1990) argues for such an organizing role of genres:

> Particular genres can be characterized, not as the only genres in which given elements, devices or features occur, but as the ones in which they are dominant, in which they play an overall, organizing role (1990:65-66).

The dominant characteristics of genre determine 'the use of devices of expressive language' and help the author navigate through the possible 'sets of techniques' (Jakobson 1987:44). It is the generic dominant 'that rules, transforms and determines' the aesthetic nature of a work of art (p.41). The 'organizing role' of the genres, therefore, is what should be studied 'in the arenas of action', since it is here that the dominant properties of the genre will be grasped as acted upon through use, interpretation, contestation and negotiation by relevant actors/authors. It is only when probing their 'concrete autonomy' that the study can be extended beyond textual or structuralist analysis (which conceived of genres as self-contained and self-referential entities) to see how they mediate, work and act upon those relevant actors, who themselves mobilize, engage with, and act upon those features.

Swidler (2002) has contended that culture provides the repertoires of habits, styles, skills that people can draw upon to devise their own context-specific 'strategies of action' or 'certain kinds of self'. Here, the repertoires of resources that culture offers are in the form of stories, plots, symbols, and world views. In other words, culture has the capacity to enable and constrain action through its own codes and symbols (Swidler 2002:73). Taking Swidler's approach in the analysis of music, for example, DeNora (2003: 134) argues that music structures action: 'music is a medium to which agents may turn, as they engage in their routine, full-time sense-making procedures in real-time daily life'. Thus music offers models of feeling, general attitudes, modes, and lines of conduct, that are appropriate in specific circumstances, such as, for example, in aerobic classes or shopping malls (p. 140). She argues:

> Music comes to serve in some way as an organizing material for action, motivation, thought, imagination, and so forth. It is here that we can begin to talk of music as it "gets into action" (DeNora 2003: 46).

Therefore, DeNora contends that, because music gets into action, the focus can also be on 'music-as-practice' (p. 46); that is, music furnishes the basis for practice and action because various actors mobilize and use music routinely in specific events. And thus, one can speak of 'what music affords', of what 'it makes possible' (p. 56).

I have introduced Swidler's and DeNora's arguments about culture/music as mediators structuring action and self-understanding, because they make a useful contribution to the study of the roles of genres in cultural production. As I have shown, genres have been conceived of by hermeneutics and genre approaches as consisting of devices, properties and features that function as socially shared and accepted ways of doing, acting or behaving. Genres have 'an organizing role' that structures the way cultural objects get made (and are received) (Jakobson 1987; Neale 1990). It is with how 'genres get into action' in practice, to paraphrase DeNora, or how they provide the actual resources or repertoires for action and interpretation (interpretation is always action), to paraphrase Swidler, that I am most concerned in my analysis. Thus, I cherish a focus on genres as mediators in Hennion's sense: 'the mediator acts, operates, connects yet has nothing to do with the result' (1995:235). Thus producer action, experience of work and self-understanding always pass through the genre, while the genre does not completely pre-determine the final cultural object. The genre does something for producers by means of its autonomously coded nature (properties, features or dominants). In order to mediate effectively, the genre as a mediator has to become invisible, although it is reflexively recognized as a condition for action by actors (Hennion 235-236; DeNora 134-135). Genres make people implicitly act in certain ways, but nonetheless can be reflexively interpreted by producers. In parallel with the understanding of 'music-as-practice' (DeNora 2003), genres and what they afford their users can in this manner be approached as 'genres-as-practice'. According to Derrida (1980:56) '"Do", "Do not" says genre, … the figure, the voice, or the law of genre' which forms both the 'nature' and the 'technè' of a specific genre. Underpinning *the nature* of cultural work, genres are on the verge of disappearing, but underpinning *the technè* they are always potentially consciously and self-consciously mobilized in practice (see also Ricoeur 1981). In this view, what matters is authors' relation to generic structures (not the structural patterns in and for themselves), but more precisely how authors use genres in production practice. In this way, the conceptualization of genre ceases to be unitary, timeless or even normative (as its historical specificity is to be reconstituted by empirical analysis).

And this, inevitably leads to a focus on actors (producers or institutions) as they engage with or mobilize the genre dominant features (Derrida's 'law of the genre', 1980) in actual specific practice and events, or what Kane called 'arenas of action' (1991). From this perspective, precedents of such an approach can be found in the audience studies' treatment of genres within subcultural production, outlined above.

The focus on genres as a mediator through which action, feelings, self-understanding are being mediated, entails subscription to what Alexander and Smith call a 'structuralist hermeneutics' (2006:145) – one that sees culture as a text 'that is underpinned by signs and

symbols that are in a patterned relationship to each other' (ibid.), and as such, furnishes people with socially-distributed cultural tools to uphold their own individual action or interpretation. Thus there is a need, first, to establish the 'analytic autonomy' of genres with their dominant (structural) characteristics as inter-textually patterned, and then to examine how producers' modes of doing, interpreting and experiencing take shape in and through those genre characteristics. Along similar lines, Ricoeur had argued that the structural analysis of written corpuses of texts, that is genres, 'is a stage – and a necessary one – between a naïve interpretation and a depth interpretation' that makes possible 'to locate explanation and understanding at two different stages of a unique *hermeneutical arc*' (1973:113). This hermeneutical arch has to connect the guesses of hermeneutical analysis with the methods of empirical validation, intrinsic in social sciences. This is why I think a 'structuralist hermeneutics' does in fact provide a way forward.

However, I want to refine my approach to genre as based on 'structuralist hermeneutics' through the sociology of culture's emphasis on 'a hermeneutic sociology of art' (Wolff 1975) and 'a sociological hermeneutics' (Born 2010, see also Born 2002), by way of Wendy Griswold's proposal for a hermeneutic approach to culture production (1987).

From 'a hermeneutic sociology of art' and 'sociological hermeneutics' to 'structuralist hermeneutics'

For a long time, the production of culture perspective represented the core of the sociology of culture (Wolff 1999). It indeed obeyed sociological requirements with regard to the generalizability, objectivity and reliability of scientific inquiry, and so subscribed to a strictly 'value-free' sociology, one of rigorously weeding out any subjective or evaluative judgments (Zolberg 1990). For the sociologist, there is no aesthetic or artistic value outside what is socially agreed upon in social networks variously defined as 'fields' (Bourdieu 1996) or 'art worlds' (Becker 1982). Through this prism what is art is a matter of consensus, not intrinsic properties.

In response to the dominant paradigm of the sociology of culture and art, several studies made programmatic statements for a more comprehensive sociology of art, one that would take 'the works of art' seriously on their own terms, so as to prevent the object of art from falling prey to different sorts of 'reductionism' (Wolff 1975; Griswold 1985; Born 2010). By offering methodological agendas, they all proclaim to redress the perceived deficiencies in the sociological study of culture and art: the object of art needs to be properly understood and appreciated, and not only be used as convenient shorthand for drawing up sociological laws or generalizations. I myself subscribe to and endorse these studies' advocacy for paying fuller attention to cultural objects in sociological analyses of cultural production. I was mostly drawn to them owing to their explicit invocation of hermeneutic theory and the introduction of tenets coming from hermeneutics to enhance and substantiate 'the attention to the objects of art' themselves in sociological analysis. All these methodological agendas are complex, multi-layered and interdisciplinary, and I am aware that a brief presentation will not do justice to any of them.

However, my aim is rather circumscribed. In trying to understand the import of such methodological agendas, I am most curious about their treatment (or non-treatment) of the category of genre, especially in light of the basic hermeneutical assumption that production and reception are fundamentally genre-bound, or generic in nature.

Wolff (1975) succinctly makes her case explicit:

> In short, I would maintain that the deficiencies involved in any sociological study of art can only be eliminated by a proper attention to the *art* itself. The sociology of art, that is, necessarily includes aesthetics (p. 1, original emphasis).

Proper attention to the art itself would, then, not only sidestep questions relative to the genesis and the nature of art, but most importantly, perhaps, should involve 'evaluation of the products' (p. 4).

In order to defend this theoretical injunction, which runs counter to the sociological value-free stance apprehensive of any evaluation, Wolff proceeds to sketch her defense by championing a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach to the sociology of art (and literature). Such an approach proceeds through the phenomenological understanding of the individual in a wider socio-cultural context, his subjective meaning and experience grasped in an immediate context of his 'total experiential structure' (or *Lebenswelt*) in which he acts and interacts with others (pp. 6-11; pp.134-137). In this view, the 'content of works of art' (p. 3) can be understood not as a pre-given category or data, but as meaningfully integrated in the 'total world'. Thus the task of such a 'satisfactory' sociology of art will be to:

> Describe the origin and creation of cultural products in social life, from the methodological perspective of the social individual, and of the phenomenology of the social world (p. 7).

The conundrum that Wolff tries to resolve is twofold: the epistemological jump from the individual artist's world-view to the world-view of a group; from an individual work of art (always expressing an individual world-view) and a cultural unity of works (always embedded in a supra-individual world-view). This implies a methodological circularity between the parts of a unity and the whole, the social and the individual, and a specific cultural product and tradition. To Wolff, such interrelations are most adequately grasped by means of the 'hermeneutic circle', as most vocally propounded by Gadamer. Through this the research accent would be on 'ideas, values and meanings, and their expressions in art', while analysis would transcend the biographical instance of the artist in favour of 'his-being-in-the-society' (p. 55). The individual artist and his artistic creativity are thus intrinsically social. If art expresses his personal values, then these values are nonetheless social, that is constituted by social factors in social contexts. It is the whole which imparts meaning and experience to the parts, inasmuch as are parts form the meaning of the whole. An important mediator of these levels is language, and language games, that structure thought and experience (p. 66).

Given the importance Gadamer assigns (as does much of the hermeneutic theory) to 'the literary models' or genres, understood as complex signs or linguistic systems, formed by and forming literary (aesthetic) consciousness (supra-individual totalities) to mediate individual action and consciousness (phenomenological comprehension of meaning), it is surprising that Wolff does not make use of such a propitious category which 'already always', as Ricoeur contended, structures and organizes individual action and experience through socially sanctioned norms and symbolic patterns. In my opinion, the consequence of this omission is most acute when Wolff offers what she herself calls 'a sketchy and unelaborated' application of her 'hermeneutic sociology of art' to the case of 'modern dance' (p. 134).

In this she spells out four levels of analysis: first, the world-view of the society in question; second, the nature of the modern dance as a form; third, the perspectives of the actors (choreographer, dancer) involved in the making of that form; and fourth a hermeneutic-phenomenological account of dance in society (pp. 134-138). However, it is difficult to grasp how those levels are interdependent or, indeed, whether the intrinsic, artistic-historical features of the 'modern dance form' will in fact have some influence on the way the dance form has been practiced and lived. In this way, the 'nature of the form' can only be analyzed 'descriptively' (p. 136) and not in terms of 'mediation', in Ricoeur's and Geertz's sense. Thus it is not clear from Wolff's argument how and to what extent the nature or the specificity of form is interdependent (co-constructive of) with the *Lebenswelt*.

What is crucially important is that Wolff opens up the possibility of the artist as the interpreter of his own *Lebenswelt* in connection to the specificity and nature of forms and to the tradition in which the artist is situated in a kind of Zeitgeist or collective consciousness (p.56). This is something that hermeneutic theory had always contended takes place at the level of configuration, but is only accessible through a theory of reading, not a theory of writing (ascribed to poetics). Thus, Wolff is to be given credit for sociological attention to what she calls 'the action-level' or 'the mediating factor of the actual creator' who mediates 'the aesthetic and the phenomenological' through his own (always embedded in a social context) search for meaning (p. 54). The main import of this is that the understanding (also the evaluation) of a cultural product comes about through familiarity with the tradition in which, or against which, that product has been conceived and created. It is here that Geertz (1983b) again proves productive in his argument that culture and cultural tradition should always be understood as 'significative systems' (p. 3) that mediate social life, so that the analysis should always be in search of meaning, not laws, causes or generalizations.

It is here, I think, that the hermeneutic sociology of art (and literature) can benefit from a dialogue with poetics or the pragmatic theory of genre, as a subset of hermeneutics. As we saw earlier in my discussion of Culler, Scholes and Ricoeur, it is a central tenet in poetics that authorial action can only be rendered comprehensible within a genre-related tradition. The genre is recognized by a structure and formal techniques and properties, nonetheless shared in specific

socio-cultural contexts, through which meaning is encoded, that is, expressed in texts, and understood as cultural objects. Genres thus offer repertoires of action and self-understanding (much as the studies of the genre-bound productivity of reception have empirically demonstrated). In a way, this is a shift (but not displacement of focus) from the mediating power of the 'actual creator' to the mediating power of genres (the symbolic mediation they entail).

Once it is recognized that genres play a role in the shaping of producer agency, institutional self-promotion and authorial self-understanding, it is not clear how this in fact happens in practice. In other words, what is still not clear is how genres (constituted by and constitutive of the artistic/aesthetic tradition) are played out in action.

What Wolff seems to be most interested in is Gadamer's acceptance of 'prejudices' or 'pre-judgments', or what he also calls 'foremeanings', as necessary conditions of understanding, although she does not notice that those prejudices are also genre-bound. The interpreter, the cultural historian, or the sociologist of art brings to bear his or her prejudices on the study of cultural products. This is especially important as it gives a possibly satisfactory solution to the problem of value-free sociology. Through constant checking and rechecking, trial and error, the analyst will revise his own prejudices, which will be adjusted and tested in subsequent inquiries. Thus the 'evaluation' of the cultural product is arrived at through a constant verification of prejudices which arise from further penetration into meaning (Wolff 1975: 105). The researcher and the researched (the aesthetics) for hermeneutics are temporally separated, as mentioned earlier. A contemporary researcher tries to understand the production of cultural objects, finished and finalized in the past, on their own terms. However, following Gadamer who trenchantly argued for the 'historicity' of understanding, Wolff introduces the researcher and researcher's own historicity back into the analysis of cultural production, his own prejudices and foremeaning, as well as 'the perspectives of the actual creators'.

Yet the 'prejudices' seem insufficient to express how 'actual actors' and 'the researchers' are constituted by traditions of cultural production, that are themselves generic in nature, especially as the consciousness of the tradition shapes the 'foreknowledge' of understanding (Gadamer 2006:270). But what is this 'consciousness' made of?

It seems to me that Griswold (1987) takes the first step towards the delineation of the practices of actual creators and the researcher as they engage with cultural objects that are traditionally grouped into 'genres', and which in turn are preconditions of both sociological and practical understanding. She proposes a framework for a 'cultural analysis' that is both scientific, but also 'sensitive' to cultural objects: one which does not treat cultural objects merely as 'porkbellies' (p. 3). Such a framework involves, first, the intentions of creative agents; second, the reception of those objects; third, an analytical comprehension of the objects with a view to the genre that they claim to belong to; and fourth, an explanation of the objects, with reference to the experiences of the social groups involved in their making (1987:1-2). At all these levels the focus of analysis is on the interaction between individuals and a cultural object. And the analysis involves

two different types of individuals, 'the social agent' as creator (and his 'intentions') and the recipient (and his 'reception'), so that both creator and recipient are circular phases of agency – the creator is recipient and, vice versa, the recipient is a creator of meaning. The 'analyst' is a special kind of 'recipient-creator'. Every creator's agency is based on intentions. *Intention* is the creator's purpose in light of the constraints imposed by, firstly genres (requests for internal patterning and structure), and secondly, social conditions of production (requests for organizationally sanctioned creative work). The intrinsic requirements relative to genres, and the external requests relative to social production form the authorial charge or brief – the immediate prompts to act. If the 'analyst' is to 'comprehend' the immediate conditions of production and to 'appreciate' its direct outcome, he must first understand the dynamics of the genre, as specified in 'structures, symbols, or patterns' (p.10) but also the historical genre trajectories and frames of reference (ibid.), through which he will be able to acquire 'foreknowledge' of the aesthetic, become aware of his own aesthetic 'prejudices' and thus 'validly' reconstruct a creative agent's probable intentions and likely agency. Only then, the analyst will be able to embed the cultural object in a wider social world and historical consciousness.

The notion of 'genre' thus becomes pivotal for the analytical comprehension of the social agent's intention and agency – why, for example, a particular poem reads the way it does. Drawing on the work by mainly Jauss (1982), but also Hirsch (1967) and Rosmarin (1985), Griswold argues that the analysis needs to elucidate 'the sense of genre' (p.18) which underlies the authorial charge or brief within which the author acts, and the recipient receives, but also within which the analyst comprehends and explains. Creators, recipients and analysts are all enmeshed through their shared sense of genre by means of which they all interact with the cultural object (which, as a result, itself gradually changes):

> [T]he producer (originator, or creator) and the recipient … may be better understood as phases of agency. … The recipient of a sonnet becomes the producer of another sonnet or of a critical essay. The producing agent has some idea of what genre he is working in; that is he intends his cultural object to fit into, or refer to, one or more known classifications having particular characteristics. This sense of genre… constitutes the agent's brief; Piero [della Francesca] knew that the genre of altarpieces implied certain things that all altarpieces had in common. In empirical cultural analysis, the analyst reconstructing the creative agent's brief attempts to understand his intrinsic genre. But, to comprehend the cultural object for his own practical purposes, the analyst makes generic decisions of his own, treating genre as a heuristic in his attempt to get a comprehensive handle on the object in question' (pp. 18-19).

I think this is a powerful proposal, especially as it does away with the 'intentional fallacy' rooted in the humanities, and takes the category of 'genre' to provide sociological access to the aesthetic. In such a way, Griswold allows the category of genre to be at once a variable and a constant in the analysis, and links dynamically the levels of analysis (form, agents and social world that were isolated but left unconnected in Wolff's agenda). The genre exerts some sort of influence on creators who self-consciously work within the frame of reference provided by the

genre, and stipulated by the work's commissioners (for example Piero's religious patrons). The creators *are* active **genre-users and interpreters of genres**, which are shared in a social world by the recipients but also by patrons (and by extension managers, owners, sponsors). It is here that Griswold suggests a reversal of Jauss's 'horizons of expectation' by which a reader always situates a text against his and his readers historical set of references, experience and preferences. So, Griswold suggests that authors are users/recipients of genres, and as such their 'horizon of expectation' should be reconstructed against authorial preferences, experience and knowledge. Every recipient and every creator participates in the social world that shapes and pushes the genre in certain variable directions. On the other hand, it is the analyst who, in order to appreciate, comprehend and explain, needs to analytically recognize the existence of the genre (as it has been recognized by the authors themselves) and treat its characteristics in her empirical analysis as if they were the properties of the cultural object. In other words, the analyst needs to specify them in terms of symbols, signs, and patterns that are valid as conventions in certain local and historical circumstances. Once the genre is given an 'analytic' autonomy in this way, the analysis should proceed by examining social agents' engagement with those analytically stipulated genre characteristics.

However, although it argues for the historicity of understanding, Griswold's analysis remains an *ex post facto* agenda influenced by the very tenacity of literary canons. A cultural object cannot be understood on its own terms, but always with reference to the social agents' and analyst's historicity, that is to their social, cultural and temporal embeddedness. Nevertheless, instead of giving temporal advantage to the producing agent and his interaction with the genre, the analysis is merely an exercise in an *idem per idem* probability. That is, the analyst analytically devises a heuristic genre on the basis of the genre that is supposed to have had an influence on the very production process, and is thus 'a finalized' product of that process. In other words, the analyst explains the same with the same by which the hermeneutic circularity of understanding is once again perpetuated infinitely. It explains the process of genre-bound production by the very principles of the genre thus produced. Indeed this is the criticism all too often leveled against the methodological inadequacy of the 'horizon of expectation' for an empirical analysis (see Holub 1984).

Under these circumstances, it would be more fruitful if, once the analytical autonomy of the genre has been established by way of formal or structural analysis, analysis focuses on the 'aesthetics', in such a way that cultural analysis proceeds by probing 'the mediating level' of the actual creators' (Wolff 1975) with reference to such formally established characteristics or common traits that I will later call 'dominants', following the Russian Formalist School. In this way, the genre becomes an analytical category whose dominant structural properties are acted upon and with, mobilized and engaged with by the producers in their daily working lives and practices. In this way, the genre can be taken to afford, or make possible certain appropriate modes of experiencing, feeling, and most importantly perhaps, acting (writing, researching, composing, revising and so on). In this way, interaction with the genre will be understood not only in terms of

intentions and actions (purposes and motivations), but also as modes of self-interpretation and self-understanding.

Recent publications by Born (2010), building upon her landmark ethnographic studies of two world-class institutions of cultural production IRCAM (1995) and the BBC (2005) have helped my understanding of how cultural production takes place in the context of the genre it produces. Born's work offers a systematic inclusion of (and a programmatic statement for) the concept of genre in the study of cultural production, and as such provides fecund ground upon which to further the investigation of the role genres play in the process of production. Although her work is based on elitist forms of cultural production with high-symbolic capital (in Bourdieu's sense, 1996), Born (2010: 175 and also 192) advocates, following Foucault, that we see genres in their 'positivity', that is, as separate entities of discursive practice that can be positively and constructively described on their own terms (and not just through negation, as is often the case with low-brow culture). As a result, her framework can also be applied without restriction to popular cultural genres such as travel guidebooks.

In her programmatic essay Born (2010) offers a resolution to what she perceives to be an unsatisfactory state of the current 'value-free' sociology of art, which I have described in detail above; namely its inability to 'engage with the questions of form and aesthetics, and with the interpretive criticism, that are central to the humanities' (p.174). Her proposal for 'a non-reductive account of the aesthetic in theorizing cultural production', amounting to 'a sociological hermeneutics', is predicated on what she calls 'an analytics of mediation' (p.172). This, she says:

> Requires reinvention in relation to five key themes: aesthetics and the cultural object; the place of institutions; agency and subjectivity; questions of history, temporality and change; the problems of value and judgment. These themes are deeply connected; each can be seen as ultimately subordinate to the first. (ibid.)

Born argues that institutional ethnographies most suitably weave together all the five elements immanent in 'the analytics of mediation', something that she herself demonstrated in her earlier work on IRCAM and the BBC. First, they allow for a sociological analysis of art or culture (how social relations, such as, for example, an institutionalized and stratified division of labour, enforcement of creative policies, management hierarchies or even charismatic managerial personalities influence what gets produced in its materiality as well as circumscribing a producer's relative autonomy). Second, an institutional ethnography, especially if combined with history, is well placed to offer an interpretation and critical judgment of the cultural object itself (by eliciting producers', as well as influential critics', own interpretations thereof, and by heeding their evaluative discourses, both aesthetic and ethical, which in turn establish the conditions for assessing creativity, as inventive or repetitive respectively) (Born 2010:189-192).

It is this second injunction I am most drawn to. It is here that Born introduces the concept of genre, mainly drawing on the phenomenological hermeneutics of Jauss (1982). By so doing, she ascribes sociological credence to a category hailing from the humanities. In this way, it seems to me that she remedies Wolff's (1976) oversight that genres might be a propitious category in

'hermeneutical sociology'. Born is adamant that 'a sociological hermeneutics' can only be based 'against the background of an analysis of the history of a genre-in-process', which makes it possible 'to assess the degree of inventiveness or redundancy of the cultural object in question' (p. 192). It is only against the account of the historicity of the internal differentiation of aesthetic formations, their 'productivity and genealogical longevity', that authorial agency can be understood as 'creative invention' (p. 188) – that amounts to a producer's capacity of making 'a difference' in the diachronic linage of that specific genre. In this way, it seems to me, Born (2004) centrally upholds the hermeneutical assumption that every act of production is genre-bound, and as such genres must be central to the empirical study of cultural production.

There are two methodological gains here. First, Born dispenses with the *ex post facto* research agenda entailing the reconstruction of authorial probable intentions pertaining to products that are finished, finalized and complete, without throwing history and historical meaning overboard (Griswold 1987). Instead, she argues for the temporality of the relationship between an object, its producer and its genre, by calling for a focus on 'the genre-in-formation' (p.192), rather than consider genres as already stabilized and petrified structures. Second, she argues for a 'post-positivist empiricism' (p. 198), which allows the juxtaposition of producer and critic discourses and interpretations with the historical and ontological trajectories of the cultural object. Thus the analytical task is to review innovation and creativity in relationship to issues of authorial agency, reflexivity and intentionality within the institutions of production, but also the aesthetic systems in which they are embedded and function.

Although she does not include genre among the five dominant themes of 'the analytics of mediation', Born pays heed to it as a category. She justifies its productivity in the study of cultural production by detecting a lacuna in previous studies, which she finds bypass the category of genre as a condition of agency:

> If there is an overriding dimension of creative practice that has been lamentably neglected – by Bourdieu, production of culture and cultural studies alike – and that demands to be studied, it is the insistent, existential reality of the historical orientation of producers by reference to the aesthetic and ethical trajectories or coordinates of the genres in which they work, an orientation that *enables or affords agency* (p. 192, original emphasis).

The accent on genres as frameworks to which producers orient leads Born to conclude with reference to her work on 'genre-specific professional cultures' at the BBC that genres offer 'varying degrees of resistance to the onerous conditions wrought by the managerial reforms' (2010: 192; for a similar argument see Born 2002).

However, although 'the orientation to genres' is enabling, it also *constrains* or circumscribes the margin of authorial freedom by setting, as poetics maintains, the boundaries of what is thinkable or doable in certain circumstances. Thus, as Gadamer (2002) argued, genre can curb 'free invention' and act as 'straitjackets to imagination' (Derrida 1980). In addition, genres are never independent of managerial impositions or institutional arrangements, as genres within institutional settings will always be strategically managed as 'formats' – that is, as rules and norms

sanctioned by the company in the form of 'commissioning briefs', 'editorial briefs' or simply 'product manuals' (Ryan 1991; Altman 1999; Ytreberg 2000). Born (2005:360) shows how the streamlined and market-based commissioning and editorial policies at the BBC represent 'forces of genericism' that safeguard risk-averse aesthetics, which results in less innovative and daring genres, and in turn in disillusioned and alienated producers. So, while genres do have independent and autonomous trajectories and lineages, they always function as 'institutions within institutions' (Todorov 1990). It is with this ambivalent status of genres that producers need to work out their margin of freedom.

By building on Jauss's theory of 'the horizons of expectation' (Jauss 1982), Born (2010) treats genres as 'a background', 'frameworks' or 'condition' (that needs to be reconstructed diachronically) against which a work of art is both conceived and received, evaluated and made sense of. She thus conceives of genres as external diachronic artistic-historical time or stylistic formations – for example 'modernism' or 'social realism' – rather than as autonomously patterned sign systems with formal properties with the power to act. This is in line with the nature of the historical consciousness of 'stylistic' or 'aesthetic' periods: 'the historical consciousness of a given period can never exist as a set of openly stated or recorded propositions' (de Man 1986:58). The style or stylistic period, such as 'classic style' or modernist style', is not necessarily recognized as such by the artist who created it, but has been codified and recognized in their structural form later by historians or historical critics (Godart and White, 2010: 578). In praising Jauss's 'historical model' of the horizons of expectation, de Man (1986) points out the complex interplay between the syntagmatic or synchronic formal properties of the work and its paradigmatic resolution within a diachrony through reception:

> Attributes of difference and of similarity can be exchanged thanks to the intervention of temporal categories: by allowing the work to exist in time without the complete loss of identity, the alienation of its formal structure is suspended by the history of its understanding (p.60).

For de Man (1986) the historical motion of diachronic (historical) understanding of a work ends in synchrony, that is 'ends in the discovery of properties held in common between the work and its projected history' (ibid.). In the final analysis, de Man's 'horizon of expectation' offers a model for articulation between structure and formal properties, and later-date temporal or historical interpretation as well as diachrony and synchrony. It is reception (temporally protracted) that salvages the essentialism of a work understood as 'a self-enclosed structure' hinging formal properties and its outside effect on readers (ibid.). But actually, the same instance of structural properties of cultural objects has an effect on the producers as well.

Along these lines Born (2010) does not distinguish sharply between stylistic that is cultural/artistic periodization (often also called aesthetic historiography), which is modal, inasmuch as it is expressive as a historical paradigm, aesthetic movement or historical

consciousness that may be detectable *stylistically* in a variety of even contrastive genres[13] and genres in the sense of synchronous, even syntactic sign systems or 'self-enclosed structure' (that is, specific formal properties that are nonetheless socially shared that make things possible for both producer and recipient) (Culler 2002). Indeed, following Foucault, Born (2010:192, 2005) treats genres as 'discursive' or 'aesthetic formations' that are embodied in theories and practices, that 'bear the positivity of knowledge' (historical paradigms of stylistic differentiation – see Fray 1953) rather than as systems of structures (with historically prevailing dominant structural characteristics that the writer consciously or unconsciously activates as organizational principles of making and techne in general). Born often calls the locally and historically specific, discursive, social, aesthetic and material modes of judging and valuing art 'distinctive ontologies that inform expressive practices' (2010:186), but it is not quite clear what is meant by ontologies, are those period-styles or genres, if so what is the relationship between them, and their relation with 'expression' or 'composition'[14].

It seems to me that such a wider definition of concepts adds to a somewhat fuller encompassment of the historical and temporal, expressive and stylistic differentiation of the cultural object[15], but subdues the structuring capacity or the effectiveness of genres to exercise a performative influence over producers in concrete events of production and career-long identification with specific genre and genre-worlds (although this may be implicit in Born's analytical framework). This drives Born's accent on producers' role in reproducing or innovating within self-consciously manifest aesthetic movements/genres understood as 'frameworks' or 'backgrounds' of action, but not on the genre's own, autonomous animating influence on a producer's authorship, agency and self-understanding (genres understood as active and constitutive elements of production, as opposed to frameworks and backgrounds). That is, while Born treats artistic objects as objects to be interpreted and adjudicated against a background of a genre, I treat genres themselves as active elements and animating force of production (much in

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[13] See Woodmansee (1994) on literary-historical periods, and how their institutionalization, in turn institutionalizes and infuses producer discourses and literary outcomes.

[14] For example, when praising Gell (1998), Born advocates the rapprochement between history and sociology, 'the aesthetic' and 'the social', a principle incarnated in the way Gell treats Duchamp's oeuvre by paying attention to 'Duchamp's orientation with reference to cubism or surrealism' (2010:184). Indeed, the lynchpin of 'aesthetic movements', one of the many possible embodiments of period-style, is social, be they a decadent movement, realism or surrealism, as they manifest themselves in and within a social group and are often accompanied by program-like manifests. Yet, it is a commonplace in humanities not to collapse aesthetic movements (period-styles) with genres (poetics), but point to their interrelationship. For example, as Moine argues: 'since the constitution and the recognition of a cinematographic genre involve a large number of works that share thematic, formal, and stylistic traits, the notion of genre implies a principle of repetition and quantity. Recognition of "generic formula" is thus contingent on a minimum of longevity and stability in artistic production. Conversely, aesthetic schools or movements, particularly avant-garde and modernist ones like surrealism, often set themselves apart by an ephemeral quality that prohibits all large-scale artistic production that would accomplish their principle. After an often evanescent period of growth and blossoming, these movements exercise a widespread underground influence that has nothing in common with the fundamentally repetitive serial model, although susceptible to variations, that is being proposed by generic formulas' (Moine 2006:98). Through this prism then 'surrealist thriller' or 'surrealist poem' are not genres, but they are genres permeated by a surrealist style.

[15] Indeed necessary steps that will lead from interpretation to criticism, one of Born's scientific desiderata, [2010]).

the same way DeNora and Swidler treat 'music' and 'culture' in general). In Born's own words, the primary goal of 'the analytics of mediation', predicated on ethnography, should be 'to combine sociological analysis of the institutions with interpretation of the cultural object' (2010:191).

For example, when discussing the 'spaces of invention' (2005), that is the revitalization of the somewhat depleted aesthetics of 'social realism' with regard to avant-garde drama within the Drama department at the BBC in the late nineties, Born draws on textually-based criticism of 'good' or 'bad' drama, such as Jameson's own criticism of post-modern literature, but also on high-symbolic capital newspaper criticism and trade press critical coverage of television output. These accounts are blended with her own respondents' interpretation of 'quality' and 'invention' of largely finished and finalized drama productions that come in a myriad of genres and sub-genres. Here the formal innovations are only identified at the level of interpretation against the background of the prevailing aesthetics, but not at the level of their structural potential as specific genre-poetics. 'Bold formal innovation' (p. 366) belongs indeed to poetics (the techniques Born hermeneutically infers from a corpus of finished works for example 'misogynistic male characters', layered story lines, or cinematic techniques such as 'a nervous camera style', 'on-camera monologues'). This is indeed important for a sociological analysis promising to proffer judgment on aesthetic value and artistic merit. Yet, there is still room for empirical investigation and theorization of how such genre-poetics 'get into action', that is how genres themselves articulate the act of possible invention, however infinitesimal. Such approach will not start from a definition of what is innovative or what an innovation may be, but on how the structural properties of a genre are engaged with and used, in actual processes of production and professional self-definition. In this way the accent should be on genres as underpinning (making possible) a producer's 'techne' and 'artisanship', in Ricoeur's sense. By the same token, I prefer to put the accent on the active status of genres (genre do something for the producer), as opposed to genres as objects of interpretation or frameworks within and against which a producer's agency can be measured and judged.

Thus, while Born's interest in 'aesthetic systems' is temporal (with a view to the dimensions of time, and so change and innovation, in discursive formations or ontologies)[16], mine is structuralist and focuses on de Man's second tenet, 'the discovery of formal properties', with a view to their structuring capacity. In her article on the mediation of music and technology, Born (2005a) concludes that 'discourses of time are entangled in and inform [producer] agency' (p. 24), and these discourses are connected to 'the categories of historical consciousness', those of modernism or postmodernism (ibid.). Indeed, such a focus sheds light on producer attitudes towards the history of the aesthetic which inevitably inflects the interpretation and criticism of the resulting cultural object. When Born (2010) praises the work of anthropology in cultural production, she does so on the grounds that in this work 'the exegesis of the object is so roundly

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[16] And, this is an admittedly an important aspect, as precisely the issue of diachronic change and transformation of art is the criticism that literary and art history level at sociological accounts.

elaborated, including aesthetic qualities and their historical conditions, that it envisages or elicits cultural criticism' (2010: 188).

My own focus in this regard is somewhat narrower. It is not on 'a rounded elaboration' or 'the exegesis' of cultural objects surrounded by discourses of time (change and innovation as a corollary) – what Born calls 'a sociological hermeneutics' (2010:172). It is on the structuring capacity or effectiveness of genres, understood as a corpus of textual instances or cultural objects, patterned in terms of their formal properties and on how these properties are used, made sense of, and mobilized in practice by its users-cum-producers – and this is a move towards what Alexander and Smith call 'structuralist hermeneutics'. In this way, I attend to the constitutive role of genres in cultural production while building on Born's insights. Genres constitute production as opposed to, and in addition to, being reproduced or innovated by professional producers. They act as affordances in the production process themselves, and are not only 'protended' by a producer's action whose 'inventive' agency pushes the genre in future directions (see Born 2005a, for such discussion while building on Gell's and Husserl's accounts). Genres themselves, I maintain, have an active character by virtue of their structurally and culturally patterned logic.

Based on her ethnographic work, Born (2010) empirically corroborates that the producers she observed (journalists, television producers) 'were fully possessed of a reflexive and knowing relation not only to the genres and fields in which they operate, but to their imagined audiences and to the potential social and cultural effects of their output' (pp. 192-193). Elsewhere, Born also argues that both audiences and genres feature prominently in 'producers' aesthetic and ethical reflexivities' (2000:416). Hermeneutical studies, had long predicted that this is indeed the case of much cultural production, all of which is inevitably genre-bound (Ricoeur 1981, 1991a; Scholes 1967). Studies in media production had further confirmed this on a spectrum of genres, as I will show below (Jensen 1998; Dornfeld 1998; Bird 1992). However, how the genres influence or inform that ethically- and aesthetically-imbued knowing rapport beyond producers' and critics' interpretation, negotiation, or contestation of genres, is left untheorized in all these studies. What is obscured is an accent on genres in the act of articulating selves and configuring expertise. Still, Born (2010) astutely warns:

> Assessment of the degree of innovation immanent in a particular cultural object, then, cannot be read off the protagonists' discourse. It has to be made on the basis of an analysis, given the prevailing conception of cultural-historical time, of the actual properties and temporalities of the object (p. 196).

Nevertheless, Born leaves unspecified how one should go about specifying 'the actual properties and temporalities of the object' (beyond 'a historical reading of the political, economic and cultural dynamics' immanent in discursive formations 2010: 194). To situate the genre historically (*diachronically*) should indeed be an imperative in the study of production, as it sheds light on the relative stability of formal properties and their intertwinement of institutional forces and cultural traditions. Although my focus here is not on the history of travel guidebooks, I try in this thesis to give an historical account of guidebooks as intertwined with the development of

print and digital cultures and their adjacent cultural institutions – publishing houses but also the rise of a new class of creative labourers, hack writers. Yet, the *synchronous* or the structural dimension of the genre cannot be left aside. Genres also imply specific formal properties that producers continually come to grips with, while employing, deploying or resisting them (as actually hypothesized by poetics, see Scholes 1967 or Culler 2002, but also Todorov 1990, Bakhtin 1984 inter alia). But, in order to understand how generic features 'get into action', to become the propeller of aesthetic, ethical (and thus also political) deliberation in production (Booth 1988, Scarry 1999, Haney 1999, Eaton 2000, Born 2000 and 2002), one first should identify analytically those properties in their organizing and structuring capacity, and then proceed to examine how they are mobilized and engaged with in particular concrete instances of production.

It is important to remind here that a producer's engagement with the formal generic properties will not only concern aesthetic, but also ethical choices and deliberation. This is a view propounded by the proponents of one strand of hermeneutics that of the so-called 'ethical criticism' (Carroll 1996; Booth 1988; Scarry 1999, inter alia).The concern with the ethical dimension of production redresses the structuralist concern with the 'solely' aesthetic dimension of texts.

In the act of production (as well as consumption), 'ethical and aesthetic considerations' (Eaton 2000:150) are inextricably linked to one another which 'implies a kind of merit that is also at once aesthetic and moral' (ibid.). According to Eaton, writers (and consequently their respective novels, a genre she researches) continually deal with ' "mixed choices" – for instance, aesthetic-moral choices, in which an artist must decide between his or her work and parenting or aesthetic-economic choices about making fine art or money' (p. 73). In this regard, Booth (1988) traces the ethical and aesthetic implications of the authorial commitment to doing a work of art as well as possible within the constraints of a particular genre. His contention is that authorial duty and responsibility is both ethical and aesthetic, and that the author is accountable to a range of actors – readers, implied readers, the work of art itself, his own career, the people he represents in the work, the people that provided the labour for finalizing the work, the world, the future, the tradition, and not least the truth (pp. 126-134). He argues that 'the author's ethical duties' are 'indistinguishable from the pursuit of artistic success: skill, craft, technique, formal excellence, emotional power, self-expression' (p. 127). The primary responsibility of any 'good author' is to connect the aesthetic virtuosity with ethical deliberations: how much neglect of family is ethically justifiable when writing a novel? How much can you bend the truth-telling in light of economic pursuit of audiences or career advancement? How much twisting of history is enough? How much should I be engaged in promoting justice and civic freedom? Should I craft characters only with moral qualities? To sidestep these 'ethical' questions in favour of the preponderance of 'aesthetic dilemmas', is to overlook, as Carroll puts it 'the degree to which moral presuppositions play a structural role in the design of many artworks' (1996:233). The genres represent the major 'resource' of such 'ethical deliberations', because as Eaton (2000:167) argues in specific genres 'aesthetic properties combine with the ethical to produce a more vivid, engaged, intimate

experience' (ibid.) of producing and consuming art. As I already argued when discussing Ricoeur's hermeneutics of action, genres mediate the ethical and practical sense of authorial self-understanding and self-definition (Ricoeur 1991 a, b). Genres then help con-figure and re-configure ethical and aesthetic values as meaningful action.

In this 'ethical view' of art, all genres have their own aesthetics and ethics that mediate authorial duties and responsibilities[17]. When discussing genres in film, Nichols (1991: 77) argues that 'there is an indexical bond between an image and the ethics which produced it', and the strength of that bond depends on the genre. The bond is stronger in documentaries for example, than it is in science fiction. The aesthetic of documentaries (as well as travel guidebooks), owing to their factuality (a structural property), will attest to the ethical standing of the producer to a greater extent, than a science fiction director, for example, would be held responsible. Nichols shows how every formal decision, actually makes explicit the 'ethical codes' of the genre that govern the production, a process he refers to as 'axiographics' (p. 78). He shows how particular formal choices are in fact also ethical choices. For example, in a war documentary, a vibrating camera shot as the filmmaker hastens to help somebody wounded, testifies to the documentary filmmaker's ethic of courage; or a passive long shot raises ethical dilemmas about passivity and inaction.

The discussion of the object's properties as simultaneously formally and socially shared in genres indeed opens up ample room for a discussion of *how* genres get into action in the process of production so as to inform the ethical and the aesthetic choices producers constantly and professionally make, gauge and negotiate. In other words, it obliges us to ask on what basis genres actually make possible or limit agency? On what basis do producers comply with or diverge from the genre in text-making? How do genres become not only semiotic resources (conventions) of making, but the very 'categories of production and labour' and thus, resources for acting and work-related self-understanding, as in poetics?

Thus my work both parallels and also tries to expand on Born's fecund introduction of genre into cultural analysis. I propose to approach genres not as a background or horizon of expectation, caught up in a nexus of mediation and against which producer discourses should be gauged, but as active mediators themselves or as a set of affordances that DOES something for the producer and the institutions that manufacture and market those objects belonging to a specific genre. In this sense, the genre will be approached in its ability to 'symbolically mediate' producer agency, discourses and his imagination, and not just as being caused by cultural or social forces (Ricoeur, 1973; Geertz, 1983a, 1983b). For Ricoeur and Geertz, as I have already argued, self-understanding

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[17] This is basically an Aristotelian argument, which holds that in *poetics* there is a complex connection between *phronesis* (associated with practical knowledge of living well with others) and *techne* (of making things in accord with an artist's technique or craft). Since, this argument has been subjected to intense re-thinking and re-deliberation by many hermeneuticians such as Gadamer, Ricoeur, Levinas and so on. It is not at all surprising, then that some Aristotelian philosophers have also developed the conception of 'narrative ethics' (most notably Taylor and MacIntyre).

(of one's position in the world, one's relation to work, and freedom) always passes through interpretation, and interpretation only comes about through culturally coded sign systems, which as most centrally in the case of genre, have the power to imbue that self-understanding and action.

My argument is that, in order to understand how genres play an active, animating and constitutive role in cultural production, producer self-understanding and discourses, the genre should be given an analytic autonomy in Kane's and Griswold's sense of a 'realist' sort of analysis, and that this is only possible through a recourse to structuralist or formalist techniques (for example, Jakobson, 1987 or Neale, 1990), because, as Broekman (1974) argues, they zealously guard 'the specificity of the aesthetic' and 'the properties of the object' (p. 55). In addition, the structuralist/synchronic genre-poetics is what is bequeathed by history and tradition, and thus is actively engaged with by professional producers. Only when the dominant characteristics of genres are identified *as if* they were properties of the cultural object[18] can one proceed to examine the historical variability and local deployment, employment or enactment of those dominant characteristics that now become resources for acting, experiencing and self-perceiving in specific concrete events or *social* situations.

However, this is not to accept uncritically the structuralist credo that sign systems have no reference outside themselves or are timeless. Sign systems are always enacted in practice in concrete social events by social actors who draw upon them to construct meaning[19]. By specifying the genre dominants, one indeed starts off from another basic assumption in structuralist genre theory: that genres are systems of 'repetition and innovation' and 'similarity and difference' (Rosmarin, 1984:47)[20] with which authors consciously and constantly get to grips by proficient usage (Ricoeur 1984; Culler 2000).

In this way, genres are not essentialised, but are understood in their performativity, as they are both outcomes of work, and play an active part in the constitution of that work. And, if approached as a mediator, genres analytically transcend the dualisms between the aesthetic and the sociological, between active human agents and passive objects (Hennion 1995). Moreover, such an approach adds another dimension to the understanding of genres as hermeneutic frames of references, immanent in the conceptualization of the changing horizon of expectation whereby genres play a key function in their establishment (Jauss 1982:22-24). The genre is then understood as a frame of action, in addition to that of interpretation (see Ricoeur's hermeneutics of action). On the other hand, the analytical specification of genre dominants allows the analyst to access and assess producers' self-interpretation and experience of work as performed through their interaction with the genre (Griswold 1987), however unobtrusive, tacit and unarticulated that

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[18] I say *as if* because they will always be indeed inter-textually, and by corollary, inter-subjectively relational.
[19] See Ricoeur, 1973:93-5, who argued that genres and language should be understood as always in use, and thus as enablers of meaningful action – a specific doing by a particular person in some concrete moment.
[20] See also Todorov 1990; Neale (1983: 50) also talks about 'difference in repetition'; while Bawarshi (2008:79) prefers 'imitation and invention'.

genre-knowledge is in everyday practice (Bourdieu 1987). As I showed in the Prelude to this thesis, it was only in the aftermath of a scandal, of deep crisis, that travel writers openly evoked and embraced the genre, and its dominant (ethically and aesthetically desirable benchmarks) as a corrective to (un)conscientious and (ir)responsible work practices. In most of its everyday practices, the genre is obdurately present; it permeates producer discourses so much that it becomes normalized, and thus almost invisible. It is in light of this normalization that understanding genres analytically as mediators which, owing to their specific properties, make producers act or behave in certain ways, enables the analyst to grasp the complexity of cultural production.

In doing so I follow recent approaches that emphasize the artwork as a mediator in its social production (Becker et al. 2006; De La Fuente 2010; Strandvad 2012). I extend this framework, though, by arguing that genre, as a corpus of texts[21], may be seen in the analysis not as passively caused by institutional structures or as cultural-historical backdrops, but as playing an active, co-creative role in the process of text- or object-making (Hennion 1995). Therefore, genres have an active status – by default of their genre-poetics inferable through structuralist analysis – and they furnish probable or plausible lines of action, while not compelling or enforcing behaviour in pre-scripted or pre-determined ways (DeNora 2003; Latour 2005).

I think that it is only by approaching genres as structurally- and formally- patterned mediators that one can understand *how* they can enable agency, enact autonomy, and/or invention or imagination. Cultural production always involves a generic recognition of opportunities as well as limits as to what is possible and plausible; what it is desirable to do, when and how; and these opportunities and limits are inextricably connected to the dominant characteristics of the genre as accepted and sanctioned in specific socio-cultural and socio-historical circumstances. I recognize that this is indeed rather similar to the audience studies' approach to the genre-bound productivity of reception, whereby the genre was accorded an active role in the processes of subcultural textual production, as well as subaltern types of self-exegesis (see Bennett, Kinsella, Jenkins). But this is how I want to work with the category of genre: genres act upon their producers by way of furnishing plausible, desirable and appropriate modes of action and interpretation, at the same time as producers actively work the genre out. Thus, I conceive of genres as systems of formal features or properties that serve as conventionalized guiding or organizing frameworks for the production of media texts, with which producers regularly and strategically, if tacitly, come to terms in expressing knowledge, experience or feelings. These constituent properties of the genre are actively and variably mobilized in production practice, and it is this condition that opens up the possibility for change and innovation, and that has to be studied in its complexity. Thus, I approach genres as an active agent

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[21] This is what Born (2010:184, see also Born 2005a), drawing on Gell, called 'distributed objects' as a way for pointing out to the temporality of the inner relationship between texts, that is a genre's immanent intertextuality (genres are prototypical inter-text)

in ordering and organizing cultural production while producers activate these affordances in production practice.

On the other hand, how genres coordinate complex forms of social action and how they enable professional and individual activities, self-exegesis and writing practices involved in, for example, court trials or tax accounting (Devitt 2004), have long been central concerns for the pragmatic theory of genre as appropriated in rhetoric studies of genre (Miller 1984; Orlikowski and Yates 1994) or linguistic anthropology (Bauman and Briggs 1990; Bauman 2008). This theory holds that genres carry the capacity to influence meaning-production in specific socio-cultural circumstances. The gist of these studies is that genres are 'social actions' because people 'take action through their conceptions of genres' (Devitt 2004:64). This is so because of the very resources immanent in the genre that users draw upon so as to produce meaning.

So genres are the organizational principle of production, since they 'guide' its user-producers under certain conditions of performance and perception (Bauman 2008:3; Bakhtin 1984). What a genre consists of (its properties) is what enables its user-producers to do things with it (self-interpret or excuse, for example), since they perceive those resources in terms of what they mean and allow them to do. I will later argue that here the concept of affordances (Gibson 1973) will prove fruitful for understanding the interplay between the perceived '-ablness' of the genre and what its users-producers intend to do in relation to it (English 2011). In order to capture such dynamics, this strand of analysis proposes a qualitative approach to 'poetics' also named 'ethnopoetics' one that I myself wish to subscribe to, that will study the formal properties of genres as they are negotiated, employed or used within specific events or social worlds of its production, now easily called a *genre world* (see Bauman 2008; Devitt 2004 both of whom discussed 'genre communities'). 'Ethnopoetics' thus studies the active process of negotiations in which 'participants reflexively examine the discourse as it is emerging, embedding assessments of its structures and significance', in such a manner that the 'discourse' pertains to the genre, its poetic patterning, symbols and properties, which in turn affect the social action of the community around that genre (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 69). Thus, 'ethnopoetics' may also be said to study 'the regimens of calibration, that is expectations and values, bearing on the degree to which individual performances should conform with or depart from what is taken to be normative for the genre' (Bauman 2008:10).

This performance, as 'a regimen of calibration', is always based on an interplay between 'the intrinsic qualities' of the genre, and 'the performer's virtuosity' (ibid.). Thus the genre is studied in its capacity 'to move' the performers (as well as audiences) towards appropriate and good performances, but always with regard to the generic discourse relative to its characteristic properties. Therefore I see here a benefit for recasting these studies' focus on speech-genres (riddles or *spiels*, for example that Bauman studied) to one on media genres (such as travel guidebooks) and their production within a specific genre world (within which individual

performance is calibrated as a matter of interplay between a genre's properties and performer's virtuosity).

Hence, it is this line of analysis that I want to further develop in relation to the performative role of genres in the processes of cultural production. Thus, in Chapter 2, I discuss this framework in more detail, mainly through the work of Ann Swidler, literary, film and pragmatic genre theory, and later in the empirical chapters I draw on Alistair MacIntyre, Harrison White, Gerard Genette and Jerome Bruner, who latched onto Ricoeur's ideas of genres as central to the textual and genre-bound understanding of action and identity. In Chapter 3, I offer a genre analysis of travel guidebooks by applying Jakobson's idea of generic dominant properties. In the empirical chapters that follow, I concentrate on how these properties are acted upon, and engaged with in actual production practice, as well as in individual and institutional self-understanding.

Approaching genres as mediators potentially leads from a 'revised sociology' towards some of the earliest work within media production studies (Jensen 1984, 1998; Dornfeld 1998). If the category of genre has received little critical or theoretical consideration in the sociological studies of art and was only just recently influentially revived and reinvigorated (Born 2002; 2005; 2010), it can be found usefully operationalized in the empirical analysis of media production within the 'cultural studies of media production' (Caldwell, Mayer and Banks 2009). There is an important difference here. While Born (2005) intermittently and sometimes in broad-brushstrokes discusses a wide range of genres that the BBC's Drama Department is producing, mainly under the dictate of tight budgets, rigid commissioning policies, employment contracts, such as the hospital drama, historical documentary, satire, thrillers, docu-soaps, even 'rapid-response dramas' (p. 353), and so on, media production studies go straight to the core of the production of a single genre (the educational documentary, talk show, sit-com), so as to vivisect the production procedures as interlocking with a specific genre-poetics. Unsurprisingly, these studies are central to my own study that concentrates on one single genre, that of travel guidebooks, and its production poetics. By going deep 'within the world of the participants' (Jensen 1998:157), media production studies are fully-fledged 'genre world' studies, those social worlds that have the 'cultural material' at its centre (Jensen 1998:45). This would be a world, defined and experienced in and through the very genre it produces, it cares about, and takes professional pride in.

Genres matter: the interpretive approach to media production

In a nutshell, media production studies established that genres are central to the empirical study of media production owing to the dynamics of interpretation, negotiations and practical contestation of genres within social worlds of production. These studies try to shed light on producer meaning- and sense-making processes of media production always with reference to the genre they produce. As such, these studies represent what Bruun (2010; 2011) has recently named 'a genre approach to media production'. I hope to contribute further to the consolidation of such

an emerging paradigm by extending the scope of the concept of genre in the study of media production.

In an article published in *Media, Culture and Society* in 1980, Mortensen and Svendsen offer an analytical explanation of what they observed is a prevailing condition in journalists' working practice within Swedish newsrooms. They were puzzled by the finding that in the face of rigorous editorial supervision the genres provide leeway for individual autonomy: 'the genres ease the carrying out of daily work and we find them built into the total work process' (p.171). They tried to make sense of this by probing into how genres underlie the daily routine of journalistic practices and journalists' discourses. They contended that genres provided the impetus for work and producer freedom by furnishing modes of efficient writing, confident expression and expertise. At the same time, genres were found to impose internal and implicit control over what and how stories got produced. Mortensen and Svendsen conclude that genres are not only integral to the idea of 'good journalism' but that they enable it:

> The "good journalist" has learned to command the journalistic genres. These enable him to produce adequate material, finish to deadline, treat usual subjects with authoritative sources and to present them in an uncontroversial and reader-friendly manner. Control is built into the organization of the working process as internal and implicit (p. 175).

The strength of Mortensen and Svendsen's analysis is that they approach genres as *active ingredients* in and within the social life of the newsroom, as opposed to backgrounds or frameworks. Journalists go about their daily work always in relation to the genre or genres in which they are embedded, and which they are expected to (re)produce. Genres thus help structure daily work and news stories because the journalists actively and strategically engage with the genre. Mortensen and Svendsen, thus, emphasize the power of genres to enable action, but also to exercise control over work practices, or on what 'genres make possible' (Culler 2002).

Such early and revealing accounts of the role of genres in the production process, however, are sporadic, geographically detached, and unappreciated in further production studies. But they paved the way for an integration of the hermeneutical perspective, which traditionally hinged on genres, with production analysis, which was traditionally concerned with media institutions and organizations (Ytreberg 2000). I want here to consider such studies which, for the most part independently from one another, built the scaffolding of a genre approach to media production, with each new study adding to the consolidation.

As early as 1984, Joli Jensen wrote a programmatic article arguing for 'an interpretive approach to culture production', an approach that inevitably hinges on the category of genre. It was central to Jensen's agenda to bridge what she saw as a gap between cultural studies' concern at the time with unveiling the buried meaning of the text, and a sociology of art that disregarded the textuality of cultural products in favour of institutions and organizations. Her agenda thus restored the connection between text and production by calling attention to 'the assumptions, biases and beliefs of producers about their work, the business, the audience, the times, the genre' (p. 110). For Jensen, producers' 'interpretive processes' were always 'evidenced and enshrined in

the cultural material' (p. 111). 'My suggestion', she wrote, 'is that, in studying production, we take the expressive nature of the material as seriously in inquiry as it is taken in actual practice' (p. 114). The goal of her agenda, therefore, was 'to determine and express "what holds true" in the cultural world being examined, since that is what determines the nature and character of symbolic expression' (p. 115). Once one latches onto what 'holds true in the world being studied', judgmental divisions between low and high culture made during the course of the critical debate on mass media disappear. For Jensen, the mediating power of 'cultural material' was to be approached through a focus on 'cultural forms and genres' understood in terms of 'practices and beliefs' (p. 115), not as categories imported from *without*, because they are 'what holds true' *within* the production world by way of being constantly interpreted and re-interpreted by producers. The interpretive approach to production should, therefore, be attuned to the category of genre 'as an arena of negotiation; it is in and through it that ideas, values and beliefs are worked' (p. 114). In this way, Jensen argued, such an approach 'takes seriously the connections between experience and expression' (p. 116) whereby the genre foregrounds the constellations of belief embodied in producers' practice and experience of work.

Interestingly, although initially proposed as an intervention in how television production studies were being conducted at the time, Jensen (1998) applied this programmatic agenda to the production of country music. In this study she focused on a period of deep transformation of the genre (1950s and 1960s), a period when country music was 'in crisis' – shifting from its dominant hillbilly and barn dance style to new commercialized pop style, and producers were accused of 'selling out' and 'going commercial', while the genre was characterized as 'dying out'. In opposition to the classical account of country music by Peterson (1998), Jensen described in detail how the redefined genre *mattered* to the people from within the world it produced. She argued that the shift depended on intimate, interpretive and sentimental considerations about what was ethical and aesthetic about a genre, rather than on structural changes in the industry and technology (television and radio becoming prominent venues for the genre's promotion, leading to professionalization of the trade, central to Peterson's account) (p. 159). In this period, which was associated with changing styles of instrumentation, country music was taken to imply spontaneous and natural music, with 'heartfelt lyrics' 'about real life' (pp. 131-135), 'honest, sincere qualities' (p. 129) which functioned as what might be called historically operative genre dominants (Neale 1990). Such internally coded 'symbolic material' was constantly interpreted, worked and revised in production practice, while producers took pride in getting such a style 'right'. Jensen then gave an account of what seems to me to be a craftsmanship attitude to work with an emphasis on techne and praxis, again in Ricoeur's 'author as artisan' sense. For example, she showed how, in spite of working in organizational and professionalized environments, the country music songwriters she studied devised techniques (and this is my gloss, not Jensen's) to uphold the 'realness' of the genre that emanated 'from the heart' by maintaining contact with 'common folk' such as songwriters going fishing with 'ol' boys' or hanging out in 'small town taverns' (p. 131). In this way, Jensen gives prominence to the link between 'the symbolic material'

and the values, beliefs and practices of the people engaged as producers of that material. It follows, that a producer's interpretations of the cultural material are doubly articulated: they are both an act of (self-)interpretation and a fully-fledged act of production: 'cultural material is not "processed" like soap by organizational, technical and economic factors, it is constructed in and through interpretations' (1984: 110).

Independently, Ytreberg (2000) suggests that 'a basic hermeneutic mechanism' may reconcile the divide between 'text' and 'context' in the study of 'text production' (p.52): 'in production, as in reception, the element of productivity is dependent on an element of interpretation' (p. 56). Whenever producers set out to work on text production, they share a common understanding of the goal, conventions, and expectations of that class of text, that is genre. This common genre-related understanding is constantly 'negotiated and subjected to compromises in a social and professional context' (ibid.), while the interpretive repertoire is acquired through professional training and work, and is enacted in every single instance of production (p. 57). Essentially, what Ytreberg proposes (and where I think he extends Jensen's agenda, which is not explicitly quoted in his work) is the constitutive, constructive nature of interpretation. That is, text production and text interpretation are mutually constitutive (p. 57). Genre producers produce through the interpretation of the genre. They are already always *genre recipients* that *productively* interpret genres within production context – professional cultures, programme policies, resource allocation, and organizational structures (pp. 58-59).

What it seems to me Jensen and Ytreberg propose is a sort of production-as-interpretation approach. On the one hand, this approach counteracts the idea that genres are merely the outcome of industrial structures, and on the other hand, it may be seen as indeed the necessary shift of attention from the roles of genres as predominantly foregrounding the reception to genres as underpinning the production. Here the aim is to view genres as central to, what I called before, the genre-bound productivity of reception in a production context within media organizations. However, the question that arises now is what are these interpretations of? Through this prism, genres are a function of producer interpretation, and thus are shapeless, essentially devoid of any concrete existence. It is the interpretation that makes genres what they are, rather than there being specific genre properties which enable or constrain the possible outlook of interpretation and negotiation. The focus on genres as mediators or set of affordances (the possibilities that they furnish for action, Gibson, 1979; Hutchby 2001) may refine this view. Producer interpretations are an interpretation of the genre's properties, that now become set of affordances: render available different spectra of genre-use. By paying attention to the structural properties of genres one moves from, without losing sight of, accounts, beliefs and interpretive construction of genres, to genres that underpin the possibilities of manifold trajectories of action and thus frame the ways in which genres are involved and mobilized in the production of the final shape of the cultural product. Thus, the analytical focus will be on how producers manage the possibilities of action (and by corollary the pressure on their relative autonomy to maneuver them) that emerge from a genre's affordances. Inevitably then, the focus on genre properties, which afford certain practices

and action, has to centrally accord analytical autonomy to the genre-poetics, that is the norms, compositional strategies, technique that *govern*, without necessarily completely controlling, production. In this way, the genre will be accorded *an active status* with the capacity to exercise influence over actors and production practices, not only being influenced by more structural forces or serving as mere backgrounds or benchmarks against which the artistic value should be measured. Here, the things are getting complicated as the genre-poetics is always embedded within institutions of cultural production. It is then, at the level where the genre-poetics is being engaged with within institutions of production that the co-producing relationship between genres and cultural production can be studied. This is evocative of the co-producing relationship between cultural material and the actors involved in its production, a relationship that Hennion and Meadel (1986) argued needs to be studied 'at the point where they mesh, where they create an entity and are *experienced*' (p. 285).

Some insightful ethnographic studies that concentrate on the actual and institutional production processes of specific television genres come close to such an analytical credo[22], although the analytical import relative to the concept of genre as an *active category* of production, is largely to be extrapolated: Dornfeld's (1998) study on high-brow educational documentary; Grindstaff's (2002) on day-time talk shows and Bruun's (2010) on sit-coms. What all these studies have in common is the refusal to look at genres in isolation from the immediate social settings in which they were produced and consumed or to take the industrial fiats for granted in favour of textual reading of media output[23]. In addition, all these studies treat genres as active ingredients and forces in the production process, not simply upshots of institutional dynamics. By continuing in the footsteps of these studies, and focusing on a specific publishing and popular culture genre such as travel guidebooks, I hope to contribute to a further consolidation of a genre approach to media production outside the frameworks of television[24].

In his ethnographic study Dornfeld (1998) follows the production (especially the conceptualization and decision-making phase) of a high-brow educational documentary titled *Childhood*. Although his main interest is to elucidate how public culture gets mediated by public

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[22] A more explicit genre approach to production, therefore, may be said to have been practiced by researchers of the television industry, an industry that stringently maintains and polices different genre boundaries. This should come as no surprise. As Fiske (1987:109) has argued: 'Television programs appear to fall "obviously" into clear generic categories – cop shows, soap operas, sitcoms, hospital dramas, quiz and game shows, and so on. Television is a highly "generic" medium with comparatively few one off programs falling outside established generic categories'.

[23] This separation has been a commonplace in media studies, as I will argue in Chapter 2 (see Neale 1990; Altman 1986; Mittell 2004).

[24] In a rather sporadic study of the roles of genres outside of television studies, Bird (1992) found that the journalists who produce supermarket tabloids -- a genre that conjures up sleazy images and preposterous, brazen producers – actually take pride in innovating within the genre's formula. They become adept at using leading yes/no questions, recombining info from multiple sources just to arrive at the good intrinsic to the genre: 'the good money quotes'. Bird found that supermarket tabloid journalists (not unlike their 'serious' news journalism colleagues) were more prone to defend their (disputed) ethical stance and professional standing through the formal moral codices immanent in the genre, the skills and techniques required for a proficient production of the genre, and genre-specific professional norms.

service programming and ideology, he nonetheless dedicates considerable attention (see chapter four) to genres and genre-poetics as 'currency' in the production process:

> Much of the aesthetic discourse I heard throughout the production of *Childhood* pertained to genre, though sometimes through metaphorical and analogical language. … Genres have a currency and import even prior to the work of production, influencing expectations critical for setting in motion structures of production. A program is developed (planned, funded, scripted) shot, edited, and slotted into a station's schedule with continual attention to genre: what type of program it is, how it coheres with others of this type and contrasts with different genres, and what textual features are appropriate, conventional, and effective within that generic class (1998:91).

Dornfeld corroborates this with copious evidence. He shows in rich empirical detail how the *generic features* that underpin the educational documentary *poetics* are vigorously interpreted, negotiated and discussed: for example, between the producers and the TV network executives, or between international stakeholders and distribution channels, or between creative personnel and scientific advisors. In this way he grounds his analysis in what I have previously called − following Briggs and Bauman (1990) − an 'ethnopoetics' of the public television documentary, in order to elucidate issues of authorship, authority and production practice more generally. Producer judgments and decisions about the overall shape and scope of the program were grounded always in their assumption about audience desires and attention, as well as in 'the conventions of making "good television" within this program genre' (p. 122). It is with a view to the 'poetics' of the genre − its visual and narrative codes − that producers chose *practically* (or were halted from choosing) appropriate sequences in terms of verbal and visual density, decided in favour or against in-camera presentation or voiceover, sought a balance between entertainment (enjoyable and fun to watch) and scientific representation (factual, didactic and edifying), and strove to be innovative (by introducing, for example, *cinema vérité* style dramatized, staged, recreated scenes) as opposed to orthodox aesthetics of realism (observational unedited sequences), and so on. In meticulous detail Dornfeld shows how *Childhood* producers made use of the genre-poetics with a view to attaining cinematic, dramatic or scientific qualities of the sequences being filmed, edited and scripted. In doing so, Dornfeld (pp. 151-157) documents how documentary producers rigorously judge the morality of techniques and the immanent ethical import of formal (aesthetic) decisions, such as the ethical considerations (regarding racial or national stereotyping of the subjects represented, but also the producer duty to educate the audience) arising, for example, from the juxtaposition of archival and contemporary scenes of a Japanese mother dressing up in kimono; or from, the inclusion of an unedited sequence of an African-American family's Christmas lunch fraught with tension[25].

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[25] A comparison with Born's (2005) shorter but insightful discussion of the editing stage of the documentary film *The Return of Zog* immediately springs to mind (pp. 444-448). Here Born documents the *constructedness* of documentary production by showing how the producers go about the choice, both ethical and aesthetic, of specific sequences mainly featuring Albanian poverty and hardship. However, Born spends much more attention, not on how the ethical and aesthetic choices involved in the making of these sequences are mediated by genre-poetics, but on 'critically interpreting' and judging the 'generic' qualities, that are almost equated with innovation, of the final product. She

Similarly rigorous attention to the active role played by genres in the media production process is Grindstaff's (2002) ethnographic study of the production of daily talk shows. Grindstaff evidences in minute detail how the structural features of the genre of talk shows, predominantly 'spontaneity' and 'live-audience participation', play into the heightened anxiety levels of producers who feel unable to control and manage the direct consequences of these dominant genre features: the unanticipated, fast-paced production events that defy any attempt at scriptedness and the unreliable performance by the audiences, who are in need of carefully-balanced 'orchestration', 'manipulation' and 'rehearsal'. For producers and guest-participants in the show, the fine line between deception and manipulation, exaggeration and distortion so as to obtain 'a dramatic money-shot' (another dominant feature of the genre) in the form of fistfights, weeping and open confrontation, is always mediated through the genre's autonomous logic. Genre permeates producers' commitment to doing 'good television' within the 'genre coordinates', and to upholding their ethical and professional stance in balancing 'the genre's inherent tension', a tension between 'scriptedness' (order) and 'spontaneity' (disorder) (p.78). 'Good television' requires the money shot to be genuine, but also constantly produced (ibid.). This leads Grindstaff to conclude:

> Producers who encourage guests to exaggerate their emotions or prioritize the more sensational aspects of their stories do so in the name not of deception but of producing good television; this *requires* a certain amount of manipulation. For their part, some guests exaggerate or embellish their stories with little or no encouragement from producers, because they, too, know *what constitutes good television within the parameters of the genre and are eager to provide their performative competence* (2002:248-249, emphasis added).

Grindstaff and Dornfeld adeptly introduce the category of genre into their analyses, as it is worked and acted upon in the process of production by the producers. In this manner they both demonstrate the performative and operative force of textual forms, not only their interpretive nexus. In doing so, Dornfeld (1989) closely reads the documentary genre analysis by Bill Nichols, and probes Nichols's poetics of genre in a production setting with organizational arrangements and managerial impositions: 'the documentary poetics offer formal strategies' to manage practical and managerial conflicting goals and demands (p. 139). Thus Dornfeld treats genres not as classifying systems but 'a set of practices that guide, condition, and mediate between production

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reads *The Return of Zog* as a 'foreign report', 'political thriller … with comedic touches', 'mystery' that 'teeters on the edge of parody' (p. 447), all of which complements her effort at criticism-infused sociological hermeneutics, which does not preclude issues of 'value'. Instead of probing further how the genre itself with its formal properties guides producer ethical and aesthetic action on-the-go (immanent in a structuralist hermeneutics or what Dornfeld calls 'documentary poetics of making'), Born engages in orthodox genre theorizing to the effect of classifying and making an editorially and writerly completed textual instance 'fit' or 'misfit' in a particular set of 'mixed, complex of hybrid' genre (see Derrida 1980, Altman 1999 inter alia), easily inferable from the decision to title the presentation of this particular empirical episode as 'Which genre?'. Here the underlying assumption is that hybrid or what Hutcheon (1980) called 'self-reflexive genres', those mixing for example documentary representation and comedy, historical presentation with melodramatic pathos, and so on, are more innovative, thus qualitatively better, in both ethical and aesthetic sense.

and reception – historically, discursively and practically' (p. 92). For her part Grindstaff (2002) provides a detailed description of genealogical trajectories of talk shows from nineteenth-century freak shows to the renowned 'hard-core' sensationalism and 'dirty-laundry-airing', within the political economy of modern media organizations. She argues that genres are good to think with when it comes to the empirical studies of media production. Producers forge both their production strategies, but also strategies of resistance and irony in relation to genres, and genres, then, need to be incorporated as active participants in the production. She writes conclusively that the genre makes possible a critical distance to the work: 'I noticed that much of the humor is self-reflexive: producers make fun of the genre, the guests and their own pursuit of the money shot' (2002:85).

Indeed, the negotiations around the genre bring to the fore the inner working mechanisms of the genre and its tangible impact on the final product (which as a member of that class of text will further relationally intervene in the future definitions of the genre of educational documentaries or talk shows).These, then, are studies that take the genre seriously, according it analytical importance on a par with the importance that producers (emically) ascribe to the category (given that every act of production is inevitably and self-consciously genre-bound). Genres matter in the analysis, because they matter in the production process. By following empirically the interplay between genre trajectories and production practice, Dornfeld and Grindstaff open up the possibility of genres to offer guidance for action and professional self-interpretation, although the broader analytical import of their empirical analysis is largely to be teased out from their rich accounts. What gets blurred in these two accounts is the role of genre as 'institutions within institutions' (Todorov 1990). Both Dornfeld and Grindstaff concentrate so much on micro-level consideration of how genres imbue production practice that they steadily lose sight of more macro-level industrial mechanisms, that Born (2010) argued are equally important for a comprehensive analysis of cultural production[26].

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[26] Independently and recently, genre-centered studies of media production burgeon so as to shed light on why media products are shaped the way they are within an institutional context. Recently, Cottle (2004) has elucidated convincingly the dramatic changes in and the evolution of the *wildlife documentary genre* that may be linked not only to a changing 'production ecology' (globalized and fiercely competitive commissioning markets, consolidation of the industry, the growing importance of cable and satellite TV distributors, the diminishing production budgets, and so on), but also to the relatively self-sustaining dynamics of the genre itself. Cottle describes how the production forces are actively addressed and negotiated by programme-makers, and thus the outcome of negotiations become interpreted and 'professionally inscribed within the forms of wildlife programming' (p. 99), so as to produce new interpretations and negotiations. Drawing on original interviews and trade press accounts, Cottle depicts the complex negotiations, tensions and creative agency behind the genre's shift from representing spectacular animal behaviour in 'timeless' natural habitats untouched by human intervention (p. 83), to diversified genre strategies (always made in reference to the genre's historical trajectory) geared towards securing the widest audience and ratings possible, strengthening producer reputation, and coping with tight budgets. This involved incorporating celebrity presenters in front of camera (p.91); themes of sex, violence and death becoming central to make the genre focus on deadly predators and killing (p.94); introducing emotional storylines and dramatic tensions between human actors that are cheap to produce (p.95). In addition, Elana Levine (2009) has conducted a similar study of the production of *daytime soap opera* and in it argues that 'generic change' was an outcome of institutional forces, as well as 'intra genre dynamics'.

The most recent theoretically and empirically rounded pro-genre argument is put forward by Hanne Bruun (2010). She has argued explicitly for 'a genre-sensitive approach' in production analysis (p. 723). This approach will study centrally the media products or the texts in addition to institutional arrangements and conditions of production, and will thus amount to a 'middle range' theory. 'A middle-range' theory can only be predicated on genres, as the genre represents 'the missing link between humanities and social sciences' (p. 723), between structure and agency, text and context, micro and macro (p.728).

To this end, her long-term ethnographic study of the production of sit-coms or satirical sketch comedy produced by the revered Danish public broadcaster Denmarks Radio (DR) centers on the ways producers go about the genre's dominant characteristics enshrined in 'political cabaret and revues' but also 'topicality' as connected to 'poking fun at' the daily news agenda (p. 731). In order to explain the producer relationship with the genre, Bruun proposes the adoption of a socio-cognitive reception theory (commonly used in reception studies) in the study of production. Socio-cognitive theory defines genres as mental or cognitive schemata, that indeed do something for its users because they provide specific communicative tools – for joking or apologizing, for example. Genres schemes are not ready-made recipes, but frameworks of reference for 'interpreting and organizing experiences, expectations and understandings' (p. 727). It is through this concrete understanding of genres as cognitive schemata, that Bruun tries to analytically concretize Jauss's vague 'horizon of expectation' as 'unstructured and undifferentiated background' (see for criticism de Man, 1986). Genres *function* as *orienting frames* of production: they contain typical and conventional spots to be filled in by the author. For example, 'SF schemata's' slots are 'spaceships, rayguns, robots, time and space travel' to which an 'SF' author orients himself or herself (Stockwell 2002:79). Producers orient to genres by means of the mental schema, the memorization and cognitive capture of such professionally and socially sanctioned genre specific array of spots. In other words, the genre schemata of an individual producer are structured by social and organizational constraints, professional norms and expectations, and individual's own interpretations and sense-making of these constraints. Genres enable such schematized connections within a specific domain (Stockwell 2002: 154). The framing of genres in this way allows Bruun to view media professionals 'neither as objects of structural forces and framings, nor as powerful change-producing human agents' (p. 735), but as 'knowledgeable, skillful and powerful participants in the professional construction of media output' (p. 731). This leads Bruun to conclude:

> The focus on genre as a mental and materialized schema in the theoretical approach seems to be very much in accordance with the way media professionals are thinking, organizing practices and verbalizing the many professional competences involved in specific productions (p. 734).

Thus, what Bruun accomplishes is to elucidate the values, beliefs and professional experience of satire producers, enacted both in production cultures and in the actual programmes with reference to the genre they produce. This is indeed evocative of Jensen's call for an

interpretive approach to production or Born's 'sociological hermeneutics', although – once again – no overt cross-pollination of ideas is revealed.

Where I see Bruun's approach as being most productive is in its shrewd and rare attempt to operationalize the category of genre as an analytical category in a fully-fledged theoretical argument, and thus contribute to fine-tuning of genre as a concept in the study of media production. Where I respectfully disagree is in its concrete solution. While genres taken as mental schemata are useful for revealing actual negotiations of production, such a definition privileges the interpretation of meaning and values over the hermeneutics of action in Ricoeur's sense. As I will elucidate in Chapter 2, it seems to me that a better way forward would be to grasp genre as resources that get into action at the level of practice (Swidler, 2000; DeNora 2003). Genres do something in the production process, only by virtue of their structural properties, that is affordances, not mental or cognitive schemes. Genres can be brought into operation so as to facilitate the production tasks by way of their properties being engaged with, both consciously and unconsciously, in the production practice. This is why I prefer an accent on genres as mediators or affordances (rather than as mental schemes). Affordances are functional inasmuch as they enable or constrain the producer in the carrying of some genre-related task[27]. The emphasis on mediators privileges genres as action schemata in their formative relationship with work and the autobiographical or market positioning of creative producers, that is with their overall quest for self-understanding and self-interpretation (a broadly ethical injunction): what I am doing here, what is there for me to do, what to do next, what could I have done, through, and within the genre I produce and identify with (a broadly aesthetic injunction) (in Ricoeur's sense again).

Conclusion: genres as an analytical category

All the approaches that I outlined as part of my (hurdled) intellectual Odyssey seem to agree that genres and cultural/media production are inextricably linked and interdependent. Hermeneutics has long argued that there is no text outside a genre. There is no 'genreless' work (Deridda 1980:65; Hirsch 1967; Ricoeur 1991), so by default every producer works in and from within a specific genre. Genres then impose themselves as propitious categories for a holistic analysis of cultural production that purports to encompass both the dynamics of cultural objects, and the social relations and institutions surrounding them. By their very nature genres are well poised to straddle the practical, but also the disciplinary divide between authors (and by implication cultural producers), texts (by implication cultural products or objects) and audiences. Most of the approaches nominally establish that the actual cultural producers are aware of the enabling and constraining influence the genre exercises over their work and their professional or subaltern self-understanding. Yet, it also transpires from the overview that genres are relatively

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[27] Indeed Gibson (1979) developed the theory of affordances in direct opposition to the gestalt theory of cognitive mental schemata.

untheorised despite the fact that they have been put to various descriptive and analytical aims in the study of the professional production of specific genres (documentaries, sit-coms, country music and so on) and the sub-cultural production of genres (hip-hop, rap, science fiction, adult manga and so on). There seems little critical rumination over the basic schism of the category of genre: genres 'a backward-looking category' that is descriptive, interpretive and taxonomic of 'finished', past cultural objects; and genres as 'forward-looking categories' that are oriented towards future authors, as in poetics, furnishing modes of 'fitting' in or 'matching' 'an object to become' with 'appropriate' modes of conduct and composition (see Guillen 2000: 33-35). In my opinion, this fuzziness results in little explanation as to how to turn a descriptive and taxonomic 'backward-looking' category into an analytical 'future-oriented category' category for the empirical studies of cultural production. Perhaps more tellingly, this also amounts to a little explicated leap from poetics (genres *structurally* bear on production) to production (genres *actually* bear on production).

Nevertheless, there is one overriding convergence in analytical focus. Given the fact that the category of genre is fundamentally a category based on a set of familial or common traits derived from a corpus of individual textual instances, and then a category of reception and interpretation (a pivot of humanistic analysis), there is an attempt in the approaches I outline, and from which I benefited immensely, to develop an explicitly hermeneutic (Wolff 1975; Griswold 1987; Born 2010) or interpretive approach to cultural production (Jensen 1984, 1989; Ytreberg 2002; Bruun 2010). Yet the epistemological and analytical leap from genres as hermeneutic categories (Ricoeur 1991a,b,c), to genre as categories of production, or the jump from 'implied authors' to empirical cultural producers, is rarely fully elucidated. This results in an often too straightforward appropriation of hermeneutical concepts into sociological analysis. For example, one concept recurrently drawn from hermeneutics and applied with approval is Jauss's (1982) 'horizons of expectation' which he himself borrows from Gadamer (2006). Griswold (1987) and Born (2010), for example, independently of one another build on this concept so as to introduce the category of genre into their analyses. This is indeed a valuable convergence, as the appropriation of this concept, at least tacitly, implies circularity (dialogism) between production/configuration and reception/refiguration through an immanent prefiguration of meaning based on genres.

'The horizons of expectation' idea offers an inter-subjective understanding of the value of a work of art. Such understanding comes about through a 'fusion of horizons of expectation' owned by the producers, texts and readers. The fusion is contingent on 'genre poetics' (Jauss 1982: 79), that enshrine a historical tradition and thus exercises a special kind of function in 'the aesthetics of reception' and 'the aesthetics of production' (p. 78). What is indeed made possible through this category is to see the producers as first-order interpreters of genre, who always work within and from a specific genre-related tradition and against their own 'horizon of experience', yet are enmeshed with the horizons of expectations as entailed in 'genres' and expected by readers. Indeed, by corollary, it permits us to see the actual analyst/historian as a meta-reader with his

own sets of references and preferences, as well as prejudices; thus the horizon of expectation mediates between emic and etic understanding of genres. However what is obscured is that this category does not refer to an empirical or even individual reader, let alone producer. The horizon of expectation is simply abstracted from a literary period's fundamental model for a specific genre and its social function (see Jauss's, 1982 discussion of vernacular Medieval genres). Genre-related values (as exercised by a genre's social function in a certain literary period) come to be expected by a specific audience in a specific point of time, which indeed warrants the minimal communicability of a text. With no coordinates delineated by a genre system, there is no communicability, as the frame of reference, that warrants intelligibility, is relinquished. Yet, above this minimum communicability, the more a text defies a reader's horizons of expectation, the greater the aesthetic value of the work (as opposed to the mastery of its creator and the mere information value of a text). Through its defamiliarising effect, the aesthetically valuable text broadens and enlightens a reader's perception of the world and the self. Therefore, the category of 'horizon of expectation' is a negative concept – it exists as a dis-appointment, dis-turbance or dis-sonance of a stable common or collective (not individual) background. The 'dis' signals that the horizon of expectation the readers bring to the work is available neither to the author nor to contemporary or historical readers in any objective or conscious manner (see de Man 1986). The criticism so often leveled at Jauss is how one can go about determining empirically the defamiliarising effect or how one can 'positively' measure the degree of 'deviation' or 'disappointment' of the existing horizon of expectation when the focus is on the outcomes of reading (broadening, enlightening), rather than on the actual reader's engagement with the text (see Holub 1984). Moreover, Jauss's hermeneutics rests on the premise that readers not authors create a work of art, and, hence openly militates against any author or production essentialism immanent in the biographical approaches to literature, and in this manner risks lapsing into author and work nihilism. Thus, it is still not clear how such a category can be applied, without much effort at justification, to the empirical study of cultural production.

Jauss's analytical impasse was redressed by Iser (1989) who argued that readers always engage with specific textual properties or elements which are structural and formal and belong to a genre, not backdrops of expression and style as in historical literary periodization or aesthetic movements (Iser 1989). The understanding comes about through the processes of 'concretisation' in which specific textual properties (such as belonging to genre poetics) are engaged with in the process of reading, whereby the reader connects these properties to his own world experience. It is this engagement with concrete textual properties that enables human flourishing and broadening, and it is accessible through 'a literary anthropology': the study of how texts get into action (indeed reminiscent of DeNora's [2003] argument that music gets into action to enrich, broaden or, even simply, to entertain human lives).

Iser, in my opinion rightly specifies the act of reading as concrete engagement with textual properties. But what if his analytical credo is reversed and instead of reception we talk of production? Then the producers will be seen to produce from within the genre poetics, as it offers

structural devices, sets of techniques to propel authorial action because they underpin the authorial techne and craftsmanship. To such an analytical task, I have argued that Ricoeur's hermeneutics of action, that sees human action as symbolically mediated through culturally coded systems of genres, seems indeed more appropriate. Every producer action is geared towards fitting into the genre as a minimum condition of communicability. There is no cultural production outside genre systems or genre poetics. The genre poetics, which is structurally patterned, offers the resources for appropriate authorial conduct, and this is so because authors engage daily with specific properties of the genre, an engagement that often becomes implicit and tacit yet obdurately present. On the other hand, the genre offers resources also for professional self-understanding and perception of autonomy by the way it is applied to action in practice (see Ricoeur 1991). Here, an accent on genres as mediators is indeed also appropriate, as authors do (compose, self-interpret, negotiate) in relation to the genre dominant properties, inasmuch as it is the genre that does something for the producer.

I reiterate here that in order to probe how the genres, as systems of symbols and signs inter-textually patterned, inform the way producers and institutions self-interpret themselves and structure their work, one has to establish the analytical autonomy of genres first, and then proceed to examine its effects in concrete social worlds (Kane 1991, Geertz 1983, Griswold 1987). In this way the 'cultural material' as patterned in genres, will be placed at the center of a social world, with certain types of implications on it, and this social world can also be called 'a genre world' (Jensen 1998). Only by providing an account of a genre's structures and codes, can the genre become both a corpus of objects to be explained and interpreted (*explicandum*) and the explanation itself (*explicans*). By pinpointing the dominant features of a genre one describes 'a nonmaterial structure' which represents 'a level of organization that patterns action as surely as structures of a more visible, material kind' (Alexander and Smith 1993: 156). One important kind of 'a nonmaterial structure' that gets 'materialized' in concrete events of production is indeed the genre.

This is aligned with the injunction of 'ethnopoetics' as defined by socio-linguistic and linguistic anthropology theories of genre, mainly by Briggs and Bauman (1990): social agents engage with and use actively and consciously generic dominant properties and internal structure in the act of performance and production practice. This amounts also to studying the 'genre in practice' (see for one such argument Bauman, 2001: 51) and genres as a set of affordances, that imbue a producer's notion of authorship, and by corollary autonomy, agency and self-interpretation. Thus, the structural differentiation of a text needs to be contextualized in the social world of its performance or production practices. In this way the 'symbolic mediation' of culture and genres can be studied as it happens in a specific genre world with its local context or chronotope (Ricoeur 1991; Geertz 1982). People, groups, societies and institutions imagine and self-reflexively interpret themselves through various genres – tragedy (MacIntyre 2011, Alexander 2012); science fiction (Jenkins 1995); utopia (Ricoeur 1991). In the case of travel guidebooks, I will argue that this relationship between genres and self-understanding is probably nowhere more

visible than in the field of cultural production where the people producing the genre, at the same time use it to self-define and self-interpret themselves. Cultural producers deploy genres to craft autobiographical selves, but also conscientious and aesthetically valuable work practices, and those are indeed concrete instances in which 'the genre' gets into action, that is these are acts in which genres articulate selves and practice. Thus, the thesis makes use of multiple methods which encompass the analytical injunction of a 'structuralist hermeneutics' (Alexander and Smith 2006).

Methodological approach

Formal properties: identifying genre dominants

I have argued for the importance of establishing the analytical autonomy of the genre of travel guidebooks, as a precondition to examining the role of genre in cultural production. To establish the analytical autonomy of genres I propose first to establish the structural features of a genre through textual analysis describing textual features in varying degrees of generality that tend to become dominant or defining conventions over time. As such these features are empirically inferable from a corpus of texts as ahistorical (synchronic) invariants (Scholes 1967). Although, the proverbial problem of the chicken and the egg becomes immediately transparent. Are different texts grouped together because they pertain to an already defined category of texts or genre? Or is it that the genre definition arises afterwards, after the empirical analysis of the structural properties? This aporia has been much discussed with no clear resolution other than the immanently ambivalent acceptance of genres as frameworks of classification of complete, finished and finalized products (see Altman 1999, Todorov 1984, Derrida 1980). As I am interested in how the genre actually informs the production of 'the object in formation' (Born 2010; Ingold and Hallam 2003), I follow the path trodden by the Russian formalists, mainly Jakobson (1986), but also (Neale 1990) and Gerould (1991) and their characterization of a specific genre's dominant properties or dominants:

> the dominant may be defined as the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines and transforms the remaining components. It is the dominant that guarantees the integrity of structure' (1987:41).

This theory of dominant characteristics sees a genre's properties in certain historical circumstances as exhibiting an organizing and structuring capacity over the reception (and one can reasonably expect the production) of texts. The compilation of dominant features, however, is not completely arbitrary, as it is governed by an ontological assumption of an immanent structure that makes the differentiating elements in a text cohere. This is why, for example, Iser (1989) talks about genres as 'sets of structural techniques' (p. 222) which 'make plausible description of the subject matter; … and also facilitate description of the production of meaning (p. 223).

The textual analysis of travel literature and travel writing sees the genre of travel guidebooks as a sub-genre or sub-category alongside travelogues and travel journalism (Barthes 1973; Fussell 1982; Young 2002). Within post-colonial studies, scholars such as Koshar (2000), Pratt (1992), Said (1978) and Behdad (1994) have conducted superior analyses of the discursive formation of the genre of travel guidebooks, as the most prominent discursive artifact of the 'contact zone' – the space of encounter between travellers and natives – in a historical perspective, meticulously charting the 'sets of techniques' that characterize such textual instances as opposed, or in relation to other travel-related genres. It is here also that Bourdieu's (1996) relational conception of the field of cultural production is helpful, in that every occupant of a structurally defined position in the field (genres included) is relationally defined to other occupants mainly through struggles or tension. Genres are always defined as inter-genres (Derrida 1980). Thus the travel guidebook genre's dominant characteristics are defined as inter-genre, in relation to the similar yet different neighboring (sub-)genres of travelogues and travel journalistic accounts. On the other hand, several reception-oriented studies have extended and strengthened the text-based research agenda of travel guidebooks, by systematically gleaning the basic constructional principles of the genre and their impending impact on the reader (Lew 1999, McGregor 2000, Jack and Phipps 2005, Bhattacharyya 1997).

I have profited immensely from these textual studies of the genre of travel guidebooks. They have found that the genre is highly conventionalized and formalized, and compiled a list of dominant features, fundamental techniques and principles of composition, and the kinds of effects these have on the reader. I draw on their findings in order to probe further how the genre's dominants are engaged with and mobilized in the act of production and professional self-understanding. Hence, I start from the premise that genres are self-contained systems of reference with forces, purposes and telos of their own. But I go a step further, and probe their effectiveness in concrete local and historical circumstances of production through interviews with authors and participant observation.

Life story interviews

Travel guidebook writers, for various reasons, were eager to talk to the obscure researcher. I solicited informants through open calls posted on three private travel guidebook writers' mailing lists. Some 45 responded to the call, while others were snowballed. Five writers contacted me independently, volunteering for an interview. In total, I interviewed 65 writers, out of whom only 21 were female. All the writers were contractors or freelancers working prevalently for the companies that dominated the English and American travel guidebooks markets. In order to protect their privacy and identity, I have assigned them pseudonyms, as well as disguised their personality by obscuring their destination- or niche-specific expertise, intimate information and personal peculiarities.

Where possible, I met the interviewees in Scandinavia, throughout the Balkans, the UK and California. Remaining interviews were conducted via Skype or telephone. As the freelancers were scattered across the globe, and only five of them were members of trade unions, I made use of online occupational communities conducive to such 'itinerant professionalism', such as mailing lists and forums, which afforded access to current and heated occupational debates. The interviews lasted from one to three hours. I have conducted repeated interviews with ten writers.

In order to understand how cultural producers professionally self-define and interpret, I elicited autobiographical accounts from travel guidebook writers focusing squarely on professional development, and career paths, as well as on personal experience of work. I resorted to life-story interviews: 'the use of life story involves a focus on biography and background and demands that the participant make connections between historic past, present and future' (Belk 2006: 160). Such a narrative method allows for access into personal and experiential insights, subjective version of reality and the construction of self as a unitary subject. The life stories valorize subjectivity and autonomy (Denzin 1989: 2).

Such an approach is not without problems. Goodson identifies the pitfalls of life story interviews: first, they are individualized 'beautified' self-portraits and thus isolated from social and cultural context, second, in spite of appearing individually constructed, they are socially scripted by rules and forces; third, they are de-contextualised from and ignorant of institutional structuring (Goodson 2012: 31). Therefore, life stories need to be put into cultural, social and historical context. Goodson proposes then a transition from life story to life history: the life history explores interface between the individual representations and the social and historical forces impinging on these representations' (ibid.). Following his advice, I try to situate the autobiographical account within the historical trajectory of the genre and the diachronic lineages of the travel guidebook publishing industry. In this way, the autobiographical accounts are enmeshed in historical, cultural and institutional trajectories, and interview data are not read as an immediate and direct translation of reality. As Denzin has trenchantly argued 'a self story' 'is literally a story of and about the self in relation to an experience' and those experiences are always connected to a group, an institution or social context more generally (1989:43)

On the other hand, the focus on life stories as stories of subjective experiences of life, work and careers turns the subject who professionally defines himself as an author into an 'author of oneself' who is already always 'entangled in genres' (Ricouer 1992). According to Ricoeur, the genre (and he concentrates mainly on the genre of narrative fiction with the sub-genres of 'epics, tragedies, dramas, novels', 1991b:32) plays a vital role in personal self-understanding. People apply and mobilize the concepts, features, plots and characters of the genre they intimately know and which have been handed down through culture. People project into stories, plots, characters while reconfiguring their own lives. In life-story interviews 'the life story turns the subject into an author. … this means the author has an authority in the text that is given by the very conventions that structures the writing or telling of the story in the first place' (Denzin 1989:42).

It is at this point that the structuring role of the genre could be examined in the autobiographical accounts of professional authors, which are ultimately producers of genres. As Born (2010: 193) proposes, producer discourses need always to be held up against the 'aesthetic and ethical' requirements of the genre. Therefore, I tried not to succumb to 'the authority of the author' and resisted taking producers' autobiographical stories at face value. I interpreted the interview data always with reference to the compiled genre dominants. This helped me confidently describe some of the producers' accounts, which drew on and mobilized the genre of travel writing, and travel guidebooks, as hyperbolic, self-promotional, self-exonerating, nostalgic, allegoric and so on (I dwell on this in detail in chapters 5 and 6).

And this is all the more important in the realm of cultural production, a realm that itself overproduces autobiographical accounts for promotional and advertising purposes, and which may portentously mislead the analyst (Moeran 1996: 28-9; Caldwell 2006). Caldwell argues that the authenticity and success of 'any player' in the media industry 'is established not simply through the accounting department's numbers, but rhetorically, through a process of storytelling, one involving short term anecdotal "chunks"' (p. 129). In my research, I was constantly reminded that producers' 'self-portraits' are permeated with what Caldwell calls 'pitch aesthetic' – a self-aggrandizing 'elevator speech', that freelancers use to convince editors, producers, and directors of the value of their work, and not least fashion a conscientious and discerning work-ethic in front of the analyst, while concealing details that may induce a less flattering image. In this light, the etic, or analyst's interpretation has to be conducted always in relation to the properties of the genre, which producers produce and whose worlds they professionally inhabit (see Caldwell 2006, pp. 128-134).

Yet there is one big limitation in the interviewing technique, that the accounts of experience are already interpreted and textualised in that they are made sense after the fact. As post-rationalized accounts, the interview data are less about lived experience and more about interpretation (see Kvale 1996). Therefore, I complemented the interviews with participant observation.

'Fieldwork on foot' while 'thinking aloud'

I observed the on-the-ground work of two writers commissioned to complete a guidebook. By tagging along with these writers, I was able to grasp a lot about their daily work in destination places. Protracted correspondence followed their periods of write-up, manuscript preparation, and marketing.

Participant observation allows an approach to the experience of work as it is lived, since it entails following actors as they go about their everyday duties, in addition to heeding their discourses (Moeran 2005). Thus cultural producers' attitudes, behavior and practices come to the forefront through participant observation (Jensen 1998).

As much of the work involved in researching the production of travel guidebooks entailed writing while walking, I followed the methodological proposition set forth by two anthropologists Vergunst and Ingold (2006) about 'fieldwork on foot' – which involves 'participant observation in the form of sharing walks with other people' (p. 68). According to Vergunst and Ingold, ethnographers are much accustomed to carrying out their work on foot as 'everything takes place, one way or another, on the move' (Vergunst and Ingold 2008: 3). In their opinion, this approach is useful as 'sharing and creating a walking rhythm with other people can lead to a very particular closeness and bond between the people involved' (p. 69). Such an approach provides an insight into how environment and the place to be professionally described in a travel guidebook are sensually experienced, since the 'walking ethnography' is the entry point into embodied sensual experience, while also binding together practice, thinking, doing, feeling and not least, writing (Vergunst and Ingold 2008:2). By walking together it is thus possible to partake in the same embodied practice and learn the 'tacit knowledge' (Polanyi 1998) often involved in cultural production, such as making ethical and aesthetic choices in practice (Bruun 2010; Fine 2008). This, therefore, serves as a background for more thoroughly understanding producer discourses and practices relative to concrete production circumstances.

The closeness and intimacy with informants that fieldwork on foot entails, coupled with the notoriously difficult access to studying media/cultural production and the sense of obligation and indebtedness it produces once granted, may have compromised the ethnographer's willingness or ability to critique the practices of informants (Radway 1989:10). The relationship of indebtedness for being granted unrestricted access to their homes or lodges, and a deep reverence for the accomplished travel writers indeed sometimes, I confess, resulted in 'an overraport' – my views merging with theirs, and also cancelling out the critical distance required for critical analysis (see for a similar experience Dornfeld 1998). Wacquant warns that such identification with informants can put forth 'truncated and distorted accounts' in such a way that they 'articulate even celebrate the fundamental goodness – honesty, decency, frugality' of the investigated subjects (2002:1469). According to Wacquant, then, one is tempted to 'sanitize' the accounts and practices by 'downplaying or suppressing information that would taint' the desired image (ibid.). However, very much aware of such pitfalls, I used my knowledge of genres and hermeneutics as a critical lens through which to observe and frame, and not least to interpret once again, my informants' discourses and practices. According to Bruun, taking the genres producers produce and interpreting their accounts in terms of the products they produce allows for identification with the informants but also helps maintain a critical distance from their professional knowledge (2011:30). This is so because the genres play a dual role – they are used by the producers in their self-understanding and action, but also by the analyst in her own endeavor to make sense of producer discourses and practices (Bruun 2011: 33)

On the other hand, while some writing activities involved in guidebook production were fairly externalized (thus rendered accessible for observation) – such as taking notes, revising, taking pictures of published texts 'on the go' such as posters or menus, correcting an existing

edition, – others were 'already an enduring part of the person's disposition' such as what a writer is 'contemplating, considering, or eliminating' (Bazerman 2012:96-97). This internalized behavior was observable through 'thinking aloud'.

As Wolfgang Iser (2000) admonishes, 'doing ethnography' as part of 'literary anthropology' is nearly impossible. The writing process usually takes place in solitude and silence, or as Iser contends, citing Geertz, it is situated in the hearts and minds of the people involved (p. 159). In Iser's view this produces 'an insurmountable gap of understanding'. If this is so, how is one to go about researching the writing activity? How is the silent process of writing to be accessed by the observer? Should one resign oneself to the fact that this 'gap' is indeed insurmountable?

'The think aloud' method, developed in psychology mainly to investigate knowledge processes and creativity in expert thinking, proved to be extremely helpful. This method has been applied, for example, in the study of design architects (van Someren et al. 1994) and nurses (Fonteyn and Fisher 1995) as they go about their own work in practice. What is more important for my study is that this method is prominent as well in psychological studies of compositional cognitive processes among professional technical (Lewis 1982), academic (for a review see Horning and Becker 2006) or workplace writers (Bazerman 2009).

As such it has been applicable to expert and professional travel guidebook writers at work. The 'think aloud' method, is extremely useful to elicit expert knowledge *while the subjects perform a set of tasks* since it makes some of the 'compiled tacit knowledge' and embodied problem-solving behavior visible (van Someren et al. 1994: 43, emphasis added). In addition, Horning and Becker argue in their study of academic writers, the think aloud method is especially valuable for elucidating a writer's relationship to implicit audiences, but also their 'metalinguistic' and 'rhetorical awareness' with regard to genre conventions that are the mainstay of professional writing (2006: 210). Over the years professional writers develop 'an intuited awareness' of the genre, and 'the think aloud' is then appropriate to make that intuition explicit (ibid.). And the genre here is important since it is through 'the genre' that professional writers on the job 'imagine their audiences' and manage 'the pragmatic constraints of the workplace' (Shriver 2012:294). According to Beaudet et al., the think aloud method reveals how genre conceptions and conventions are reactivated in the writing process (2012:109) and how choices, both ethical and aesthetic, are made in relation to genres in the act of writing (Bazerman 2012:90) as they shed light on 'different skills, modes of expression, action stances, and processes of production' (Bazerman 2012:93). The 'think aloud' method operationalizes 'ethnopoetics' (Briggs and Bauman 1990).

Given my interest in how genres inform the guidebook production process through writers mobilizing the genre properties in the act of actual composition, this method indeed proved appropriate for gathering data heuristically related to 'genre awareness'. In the process, I prodded my informants to think aloud, that is, to verbalize the stream of thought while walking and writing. I was permitted to stay in front of the computer while my informants drafted parts of the travel

guidebook to be. In the process, I probed for more explanation as to feeling, thinking, behaving, deciding while recording the discussions.

However, as this method involves a combination of introspection and structured prodding by the observer (van Someren et al.: 1994: 40), it is not without immanent pitfalls. It is open to cognitive disturbances (the observer altering the 'natural' state of cognitive processes and inducing the subject to behave more rationally than otherwise), incompleteness due to synchronization of cognitive processes and verbalization, and disruptions of 'the usual flow' of thought since verbalization is in itself a cognitive process of post-rationalization (see van Someren et al. 1994). I took these disturbances into consideration as much as possible when analyzing the data, and was explicit about the limits of this approach especially in chapter 7.

Paratextual analysis

If freelance writers were forthcoming, the same could hardly be said of the publishing companies, which were extremely reticent about revealing their own dynamics and, for a long time remained inaccessible and secretive. In the summer of 2009, however, I was -- miraculously -- invited to visit Lonely Planet's Head Quarters in San Francisco, although not allowed to conduct fieldwork there. I did manage, though, to interview six commissioning editors, two online community managers, and two financial managers working for mainstream English-language guidebook publishers.

In light of the impossibility of following the organizational dynamics through ethnography, mainly drawing on the work by Genette (1997), in Chapter 3 I conduct a paratextual analysis of the travel guidebook publishing industry. Paratextual analysis allows for following the institutional self-exegesis performed with reference to the genre produced, circulated and marketed by those institutions. During work on the thesis I consulted more than 20 nineteen-century, and around 40 contemporary guidebooks, paying a special attention to what Genette (1997) calls 'a paratextual surround' – prefaces, postscripts, disclaimers, author biographies, publisher slips – in a word, all the textual instances in which the industry made sense of itself on the edges of the printed book. During the period of research, I entered two writing competitions for Lonely Planet. Winning one of these allowed me close observation of editorial and managerial work behind the contests. Trade press, company archives, websites and their archives were also perused regularly, together with publicly available official documents. I provide more specific details of the practicalities and pitfalls of a paratextual analysis in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 1

CULTURAL PRODUCTION: THREE PARADIGMS

The 'grand tradition' of cultural production

In this chapter I present three dominant approaches to cultural production – the sociological, anthropological and socio-cultural – paying special attention to how they deal broadly with cultural objects and with the notion of genre (specifically), a concept largely subdued or obliquely tackled. This is an attempt to chart the background of a larger field of investigation in which the emerging genre approach to cultural/media production is situated as it straddles these disciplinary boundaries. The choice of theorists is based on what I regard as their indisputably significant place in my study and represents what may be called the 'grand tradition' in the social sciences analysis of culture and art (DeNora 2000:1). This contrasts with, what DeNora (2001:4) called 'the little tradition', which I presented in the introduction and upon which I grafted the analytical framework that foregrounds this thesis.

Bourdieu and Becker form the classical lynchpin of the sociological study of cultural production which has advocated the demasking of 'the aura' of aesthetic objects by placing them in a network of social forces and institutional determinants. It is thus understandable why these writers have also become a sort of bête noir and serve as a backdrop against which new 'progressive' work is carried out. The majority of writings in the 'revised', 'non-reductionist' or 'new' sociology of art are crafted in direct opposition to Bourdieu's and Becker's theoretical agendas. For example, Hennion's 'art-sociology' in 'a post-critical time' (1995, Hennion and Grenier 2002), 'the new sociology of art' (De La Fuente 2007), and Wolff's (2008) 'post-critical aesthetics' are all built in direct response to Bourdieu's 'critical sociology'. Born's (2010) programmatic essay explicitly and systematically pronounces 'a post-Bourdieuian critique'. Critiquing Bourdieu, Entwistle (2009) develops an analysis of what she calls an 'aesthetic economy' and so on. These 'reworked' sociologies of culture and art, in their crudest, set out to redress the absence of 'the aesthetic' and 'cultural objects' in Bourdieu's sociological framework, as well as his rigid structural determinism by which 'the aesthetic' is merely determined by social factors or functions as a symbolic resource for distinction.

Becker and his towering *Art Worlds* (1982) is the cornerstone of the production of culture perspective, and one of the most inspiring studies of micro-practices of cultural production. Every 'good work' involves, if looked at a practical level, moral considerations and aesthetic choices relative to some sort of genre-related conventions (see Fine 2008:177, 183; Faulkner 2003:94). Similarly, Becker's art world approach represents the contrastive foil of much 'innovative' sociology of culture – in the work of DeNora (2000) and Hennion and Grenier (2002), for example,

which most influentially marked the move from the treatment of cultural objects as objects to be explained to cultural objects as active in (as opposed to determined by) social life. I brought Bourdieu's and Becker's towering frameworks together in order to compare and draw parallels between them, but also to tease out useful avenues about how best to proceed with the study of genre as an active constituent in the process of cultural production. As their respective legacies are currently under scrutiny and revision, I here also find it productive to draw on Bourdieu's practice theory (mainly detached from his analysis of art) and Becker's recent embracing of a Latourian version of cultural objects as active agents in the art worlds, something that I think was practiced, although implicitly, much earlier in Faulkner's analysis of Hollywood musicians and Fine's of chefs.

Besides these sociological approaches to cultural production, the most influential approaches are those by anthropologists, something recognized early on by Wolff (1975:137) who suggested that anthropology could offer a corrective to sociological approaches to culture because of the ethnographer's immersion in culture, language, rules of behavior, practices and institutions so as to gain 'an inside position' from which to describe art in its social context. Recently, too, De La Fuente (2010a:8) has argued that 'the new' sociology of art has much to learn from anthropology, in particular from the material culture studies with their injunction to 'follow art-objects through society'. Born (2010) also contends that a corrective to the limiting determinism of the sociological theory of art and culture is to be found in anthropology, and has systematically engaged with anthropological scholarship in material culture studies by Daniel Miller, Chris Pinney, Steven Feld and Fred Myers on the grounds that it 'focuses on the cultural object and the forms of mediation through which it is constituted and which in turn it inaugurates' (Born 2010: 183). Born also praises Gell (1998) who offers a way forward 'by focusing on art's material, social and temporal mediation, pointing in this way to a conception of the cultural object as an assemblage of such mediations' (Born 2010:183). The combined effort of Gell and the material culture anthropologists, in Born's view (2010), leads to the treatment of 'the exegesis of the cultural object' as 'roundly elaborated, including their aesthetic qualities and their historical conditions' (p.188), the necessary move from sociological analysis, which is preoccupied with external factors and contexts, to 'cultural criticism' which proffers judgments on aesthetic values and artistic merit. Following in Born's (2010) footsteps, I also concur that anthropological studies have much to offer by way of a comprehensive analysis of cultural production, especially in their linking of authorial subjectivities to the materialities of the art work. Yet, unlike Born, I do not read Gell (1998) or Pinney's (1997) analysis of the genre of Indian photographic portraiture, or Moeran's (1997) study of the genre of mingei in Japanese ceramic art, as a contribution to the 'fuller' 'interpretive treatment' or 'exegesis' of the value of cultural objects, and, by corollary, genres, that represent assemblages of cultural material, social or temporal mediation. Rather, given my interest in genres as active constituents or animating forces of cultural production and the ensuing accent on genres as mediators, I am more inclined to read the anthropological studies of art for their focus on the agency of cultural objects, rather than as a nexus of mediation that elicits 'cultural criticism'. In

doing this, my reading of Gell parts ways with that of Born, and coalesces more with De La Fuente's reading of Gell, which, in opposition to Born's 'analytics of mediation', suggests an emphasis on 'art-as-agency' and 'mediators' (2010: 223). Against this backdrop, De La Fuente reads Gell's theory of art as a theory whereby 'art-objects "enthrall", "arrest" and, generally, make us do things' (2010:223; see also 2010a). Such a reading indeed liberates cultural objects, as well as genres understood as a corpus or body of texts and objects diachronically dispersed, from their imputed projection or mirroring of discursive formation or social conditions, and treats them as having agency, purpose and effectiveness of their own. In addition, suffice it to say, Gell's anthropological account of the aesthetic is embraced rather enthusiastically by scholars from the humanities: in archeology and art history (see Tanner and Osborne 2007), as well as in visual culture (see Moxey 2008). Both Pinney and Moeran also openly set out to develop and refine 'an anthropology of aesthetics' therefore, so that they represent an important touchstone for reviewing the convergence between the humanities and the social sciences.

In the third section, I dwell in on Adorno's and Williams's socio-cultural approach to cultural production. Neither Adorno nor Williams is a sociologist in any strict sense. Yet each developed a sociological analysis of the genres he had studied: Adorno music genres such as the fugue or jazz, and Williams drama, especially Elizabethan drama. Adorno and Williams are the most influential authors within the study of media production. If, as Hesmondhalgh (2006) has contended Bourdieu's field theory has only been hesitantly used in media studies, then Adorno and Williams hold sway. Williams's idea of cultural materialism has been most commonly appropriated. Hesmondhalgh (2006) finds Williams's sociological work superior to that of Bourdieu on the grounds that Williams provides a comprehensive analytics of cultural production with reference to the historical development of the institutions of cultural production and the complex division of labour they entail (2006: 219-220). Ryan (1992) introduces Williams to his sociological analysis on similar grounds, while Garnham (1983) finds Williams's work on culture as part of the means of production to be central to the political economy of culture. My interest in Williams's sociology of culture is as much in his account of 'social formalism', which largely hinges on an account of genre, as it is in his 'cultural materialism'. On the other hand, Adorno has been re-thought and re-interpreted within the 'new' or 'revised' sociologies of culture, most influentially by DeNora (2003) and Hennion (2003) who found his 'immanent criticism' (that is, a study of culture that sees social and societal issues through a works' technical and aesthetic mediation), as a starting point for a non-reductionist sociology of art and culture. My own interest in Adorno's sociology of music, in light of the central scope of this thesis, is his account of genre as the primary site in which the mediation between the universal and the particular happens as a precondition for innovation and novelty (genres permeate artistic virtuosity), an idea he develops in his aesthetic theory (1997). Interestingly, Williams draws on Adorno's ideas to argue that culture is a formative force in social life. Much indebted to reflection theory, their respective arguments converge in that music and literature play an important function (they are culturally operative) in society by virtue of their aesthetic and ontological status as made manifest in genres and genre processes.

Sociological paradigm of cultural production: fields and art worlds

The two most influential sociological approaches to cultural production as developed by two towering figures, Bourdieu and Becker, diverge wildly yet also overlap and complement each other. The common ground is that what comes to be named *art* is a result of social interaction, a matter of consensus within fields and art worlds respectively, and not some transcendental aesthetics. Both Becker and Bourdieu are equally flabbergasted by how a mere urinal comes to be appreciated as the most influential piece of art of the 20th century, and thus set out to demystify the myth of the lone creative genius and unfettered artistic autonomy in favour of sociological explanations.

Given the extensiveness and complexities of their oeuvre, juxtaposing directly Becker's description of art words and Bourdieu's abstract theorization of fields, necessarily entails a large dose of generalization and simplification. Yet I believe that a succinct discussion of these parallel sociological agendas leads to an enriched understanding of the possibilities of cross-pollination for a non-reductionist analysis of cultural production. 'Fields' and 'art worlds' are simply two ways of thinking autonomy in cultural production, that differ in their research stance and intention: the one philosophical-sociological, and the other empiricist and symbolic-interactionist, deeply suspicious of theory. Yet, both 'fields' and 'art worlds' are spatial metaphors that stand metonymically for the *social dynamics* of cultural production that make art appear valuable.

Bourdieu (1996, 1993) theorizes the field as structured objective position-taking by creative 'agents' (both individual producers and institutions like galleries or publishing houses, but also genres and oeuvres) that are in ever-lasting competition for the accumulation of scarce field-specific resources -- capital, either symbolic in the form of prestige, fame or recognition; or economic in the form of financial rewards and benefits. Being conflictual, the field is thus *relational*: an outcome of 'struggles', 'revolutions' or 'coups'. Every artist's and institution's position in the field, together with the genres they produce, is 'socially instituted' in opposition to other positions (1996: 229). The aim of the position-taking (as informed by an agent's habitus, a system of socialized dispositions -- schooling, upbringing, social background, family and as consecrated by the restricted 'inner sanctum' of cultural intermediaries -- art connoisseurs, critics, academics, reviewers) is the acquisition of cultural legitimacy. This is the right to overturn the dominant condition of the field (symbolic violence) and consequently to re-define 'the system of possibles' (stylistic choices, generic conventions, rhetorical devices) which determines, in turn, what is thinkable or doable in the field at a certain moment in time. As a result, the field is developed out of historical processes of internal differentiation or autonomisaton. For Bourdieu, the autonomy of the field of cultural production can be gauged through the degree of independence from the economic and politica – but also, in certain circumstances – aesthetic forces. Thus, Bourdieu introduces the field of power as a benchmark against which the cultural field's autonomy is measured. The greater the distance from the market and politics, the greater

the autonomy of the field and the freedom of producers. The degree of autonomy can be measured through several instances: firstly, by 'the effect of translation or of refraction' (p. 220) – social, economic and historical determinants are always refracted through the field and the field has a transfiguring effect on political and religious representations (the higher the transfiguring effect, the higher the autonomy); secondly by 'the effect of reflexivity' which is 'critical turning in on itself, on its own principle, on its own premises' (p. 242) and which negates denotative discourse naively oriented to a referent' (p. 138), entailing a production 'free with respect to morality and society', 'relieved of the duty to signify something', and 'free of any external instruction or injunction' (p. 139) (the stronger the negative sanction or reflexivity, the greater the autonomy); and thirdly, by the 'epigone or naiveté effect' (p. 253) evident in production based on the routinization or banalization of proved procedures and uninventive use of successful inventions (the stronger the epigone effect, the weaker the autonomy).

It is in this attempt to reconcile the external and internal approaches in relation to the field of power that Bourdieu still remains fruitful. The battle for cultural legitimacy is propelled both by external factors (societal dispositions, economic impositions) and the autonomous evolution of the field in its entirety (the space of possibles is in constant need of internal differentiation), directly observable in various 'effects' produced in certain historical and local circumstances. This means that every social or historical determination is refracted by the autonomous logic of the field. As occupants of positions in the field, cultural producers must adhere to a set of presuppositions and postulates on which the field is predicated: that is, 'doxa' - 'tacit belief' taken for granted or sheltered from debate, and thus actively reproduced in the very process of the cultural production of value. The field's dominant doxa is the conviction in the value of autonomy or the belief in the origins of creation (the Kantian credo). For Bourdieu, a work of art is a product of such collective belief that he calls *illusio*: 'the anti-economic economy of pure art' (1996:142) or 'denied economy' (1996:148). The belief in autonomous creation allows producers to temporarily *pose* as disinterested agents, disavowing economic, while accruing symbolic capital, to be later converted into economic capital again and the right to impose the dominant re-definition of the space of possibles. It follows that the Bourdieuian sociology of cultural production is actually an analysis of the social production of value (collusion in *illusio*) at the expense of the material production of art -- the work of art is an object of belief as opposed to made or manufactured. By conceptualizing the field as the actual producer of the value of the cultural object, Bourdieu underplays the specificity of the cultural object, and abolishes the producer's agency. The individual producer only strives for autonomy as a means to achieve consecration, and thus instrumental goals. Autonomy is a camouflage for the more pecuniary interests, whereby cultural producers are profit maximisers who are denied subjectivity and thus become yet another incarnation of *homo economicus*. Individual producers are hence caught in the biographical trajectories circumscribed by their habitus – each being assigned a determinate place, either central or marginal, elevated or humble, in the field from which the battles for symbolic capital are either doomed to failure or predestined to success (pp. 260-261). Instead of offering an account of

how cultural producers transform and enact 'the effects' of autonomization, Bourdieu offers a mechanistic and deterministic tale of class differentiation and profit accumulation.

On the other hand, Becker (1982) concentrates at least declaratively on the material production of art. He conceives of art worlds as arenas where 'participants', mainly 'flesh-and-blood' people (in contrast to impersonal positions), equipped with shared conventions and principles of doing things, come together with a view to making art. The art world consists of a network of *cooperating* people who adhere to the division of labour immanent in the art world. There are 'core personnel' (artists, creators) positioned at the center of the network and 'support personnel' (secretaries, administrators, janitors, but also publicists and critics) who assist the artist in the making. The art work consists not only of ideas and beliefs, but also of prosaic matters related to real people (core personnel) trying to get things done in their materiality largely by delegating tasks to *others* (support personnel). Unlike the functioning principle of the field (the doxa), the functioning principle of the art world are the conventions, which are not pre-given and static but constantly negotiated occupational ideals. Agreed-on aesthetic principles, arguments and judgments, what Becker calls 'institutional aesthetics', define what are 'quality' and 'good art' (p. 131). Aesthetics is 'an activity rather than a body of doctrine' (p. 131) which helps stabilize value, and more importantly regularize practice. As such, aesthetics is operationalized as a cooperative working mechanism. For Becker, therefore, the art world is organized and institutionalized on the basis of some sort of 'aesthetic theorizing' (p. 156) which influences the way producers 'persuade' *others* in the art world (dealers, buyers, audiences) about the art-like status of their work. A producer's margin of freedom is not structurally determined, as it is for Bourdieu, but is discernible in the day-to-day small decisions, judgments and attitudes towards and about the work executed within the organized world. Yet, the social organization of art worlds prevails at the expense of the engagement with 'aesthetics' and how the latter possibly exerts a subtle, immanent, patterning influence on the art world. What Becker shows is not how the aesthetics guides a producer's action, but how it is merely socially constructed in an ongoing process of interaction: an interaction with *the other* -- the other members of the art world or even only anticipated audiences. Artists shape their lines of action in accord with the imagined responses of *others*, not some structuring properties of the aesthetics or genres. Nevertheless, such a stance has powerful consequences for the conceptualization of work identities especially against any kind of alienation. Even the most routinised work environments can be given purpose because meaning is generated in the interactions (symbol exchanges) between people within the commercial 'media-oriented' world, not so much in the interaction with the 'dull and repetitive' actual work or cultural object (Becker 1982: 161).

In line with this, 'the integrated professionals', whom Becker, with covert condescendence, calls 'hacks, competent but uninspired workers who turn out the mass of work essential to keep the world's organization going' (p. 232) – represent the mainstay of the art world. In spite of their 'uninventiveness', the integrated professionals enjoy a restricted, yet operational, dose of

autonomy. Being proficient in the conventions of the art world, in possession of technical skills and abilities, they take pride in producing 'recognizable, understandable and repetitious' work on behalf of *others* -- customers or clients (p. 230). Such work is indeed deemed valuable within a specific institutional aesthetics that emphasizes technical knowledge and competences necessary for expedient, efficient and competent cultural production. For an art world to function properly, therefore, it needs to secure a steady supply of integrated professionals capable of churning out its products, without remorse or misgivings (as is the case with the eccentric 'mavericks'). Though valuable, the art world treats integrated professionals as 'interchangeable as though their distinctive differences and unique abilities nevertheless allowed them to be substituted for one another without harm' (p. 231).

Here Bourdieu and Becker diverge considerably, and importantly. If Becker recognizes the work of integrated professionals as full-fledged, though uninventive, cultural work, then Bourdieu rejects it in favour of 'the charismatic producer', with the ensuing game of *illusio*. For Bourdieu, once the system of producing the belief disintegrates, then automatically the field of cultural production disappears, regardless of the presence of any form of material production. In other words, according to Bourdieu (1993), if there is nothing special or sacred about a field and the named producer is undermined by an anonymous individual who can produce cultural objects, then the field ceases to exist. That is, 'If any Tom, Dick and Harriet can read the Gospel or make dresses, then the specialist field is destroyed' (p. 38). Hence, through Bourdieuian lenses, when the field resembles more 'a bureaucratic field' (Bourdieu, 1993) -- organised in a way that it relinquishes specialization and secures succession by rendering agents 'radically interchangeable'-- it possesses a very low degree of autonomy and becomes a heteronomous, and not artistic field, in whhich the agents should be 'radically irreplaceable' (p. 136).

Becker's analysis of cultural production remains incurably anecdotal, verging on speculation or personal opinion, rather than providing any systematic study of actual production practices. Art-making is merely another profession, institutionalized and normalized. The art world not only provides the artistic theories that all members tacitly assume to define art (Danto 1998), but also collective occupational norms. But Becker never ventures into detailing how such supposed aesthetic theory actually unfolds in practice and possibly influences occupational codes of conduct, save by inferring such workings from historical (paradigmatic, normative!) examples collated in art textbooks. Occupational norms and practitioner's careers are leveled out in the interactionist credo that every type of paid work, even artistic paid work, involves similar symbolic processes of relational identity creation like any other; working in the laboratories of some famous institution or in the messiest vat room of a pickle factory is ultimately the same thing (Hughes 1971). Therefore, Becker's sociological approach to cultural production is again strongest as a theory of the social production of value (not far from, though admittedly less sophisticated than, Bourdieu), and not as a theory of artistic agency. Aesthetic quality is arbitrary in essence and

everything can potentially be turned into art by social agreement. For Becker art is simply 'a matter of christening' (1982:155).

In contrast to the Bourdieuian structural theory, which is ideological and distal, and frequently normative, the Beckerian perspective on art worlds is specifically micro-sociological, practical and proximal (DeNora 2003), and consequently profoundly agnostic and descriptive (in the sense of value-free sociology). Even if approaching art-making as an occupation may sound reductive, it helps alleviate the deterministic cast, and the elision of agency and normativity in the Bourdieuian theory of cultural production. Bourdieu and Becker put forward considerably different, yet in the final analysis similar, conceptualizations of autonomy and agency especially at its 'heteronomous end' of production (Bourdieu) or in 'the commercial arts' (Becker), in which broadly speaking, the production of travel guidebooks has been traditionally ascribed (as we saw in the Introduction).

It is this divergence yet complementarity in Becker's and Bourdieu's sociology of cultural production that I discuss in the next section.

'A good player' and 'good work': practical mastery
Bourdieu's theory lacks any conception of aesthetic quality in general, and is devoid of a substantive explanation in particular of what he calls 'heteronomous' cultural production – large-scale production, characterized by *short production cycles* -- fast turnaround, rapid circulation of 'pre-established ephemeral products', and intense marketing in order to capitalize on here-and-now, predictable, mass consumer demand (1996:142-148). According to Bourdieu, heteronomy consists of cultural production which completely succumbs to 'a mercenary interest in economic and political profits' (p. 218) through a 'cynical calculation' of audience ratings and research (1993: 144). Cultural producers engaged in such production are 'mediocre or failed writers and artists' (1996: 347). This stands in stark opposition to autonomous production, geared to a small restricted, refined audience of fellow producers; characterized by a long production cycle, not immediate or cynical, but 'intuitive', correspondence between consumer demand and genres, and by 'serious', 'durable' artistic products and charismatic producers. The heteronomous pole is 'an inferior position in the field of production' which is inhabited by 'proletaroid intelligentsia' working within 'technically and socially differentiated production units' (1993:131). Heteronomous producers are 'locked in the role of pure technicians' (p. 126) and denied the charismatic personality of the creator. Alas, Bourdieu does not home in further on the specificity of work executed by these 'pure technicians' except when hinting at *the virtuosity* of their métier (as the substitute for *charisma*):

> The more a certain class of writers and artist is defined as beyond the bounds of the
> universe of legitimate art, the more its members are inclined to defend the
> professional qualities of the worthy, entertaining technician, complete master of his

technique and *métier*, against the uncontrolled, disconcerting experiments of
'intellectual' art (p. 130, original emphasis).

This failure to engage affirmatively, that is not as a negation to high art, with the *métier*
within 'production units' has to do with another problem in Bourdieu's theory: that of institutions.
Bourdieu treats institutions as 'analogous to individual actors' (Born 2010:179), as position-takers
who occupy an objective position in the field, which is itself generated by the opposition between
art and money. Those institutions that are 'mercenary' and 'commercial' in nature such as 'the
cultural bureaucracies' – Bourdieu's rudimentary term for cultural industries – are qualitatively
inferior and less venerable:

> In editorial rooms, publishing houses, and similar venues, a 'rating mindset' reigns.
> Wherever you look, people are thinking in terms of market success. … Audience
> ratings impose the sales model on cultural products. But, it is important to know
> that, historically, all of the cultural productions that I consider … the highest human
> products – math, poetry, literature, philosophy – were all produced against market
> imperatives (Bourdieu 1998:27).

Little surprise, then, that Bourdieu describes large-scale production through homologies
between supply and demand, rather than in terms of their effectiveness on aesthetic formations,
genres or organizational complexity. Within these institutions that cater to audience preferences,
the 'quality of the works' equals 'the social quality of their public' (1993:130). By assuming a
structural homology between the field of production and the space of consumers, Bourdieu
portrays cultural producers as irredeemably caught in the automatic structural correspondence of
(bourgeoisie) social class and (bourgeois) art, of proletariat and proletarian art. The work that is
'entirely defined by its public' does not possess independent ontological existence, but 'is
objectively condemned to define itself in relation to legitimate [autonomous] culture' (p. 129).
Commercial art can not possess any descriptive or reflexive qualities since it exists solely as a
negation of autonomous avant-garde art.

In such fashion, Bourdieu relapses back into the objectivism of structure, returning to the
dualistic social ontology that divides solipsistic individuals and aesthetics, on the one hand, and
objective structures and economy or politics, on the other. If the field is objectively structured,
then the heteronomous producer is stripped of any agency and autonomy, since he is merely an
uncritical bearer of market forces. Heteronomous producers express *amor fati*, a love of destiny,
by interiorizing the objective positions in the field (habitus). They are pre-destined to mediocrity
and artistic failure. A condescending essentialism thus plagues Bourdieu's theory. By being
normative and elitist, especially with regard to cultural industries, he perpetuates the fallacy of
illusio; erring too much on the side of structure when de-masking the Kantian 'pure gaze' and
veering away from his self-avowed Spinozian credo: 'Do not laugh, do not deplore, do not detest,
just understand' (1996:272).

Yet, if Bourdieu's treatment of institutions hampers the analysis, then his theory of practice may provide a gateway to encompassing both producer agency and subjectivity. At high levels of virtuosity of the métier, heteronomous producers develop *practical mastery* as an additional extra to their homologous adjustment to audiences and employers. Their virtuosity is an outcome of 'the practical mastery of the field' or 'the feel for the game', understood as 'practical apprehension' or 'sense of practice', an ability to:

> feel and foresee … what is to be done – where, when, how, and with whom to do it, given everything that has been done, everything that is done, all those who do it, and where, when and how they do it (1996: 165).

That 'sense of practice' is most usefully explained by Swartz (1997) as a 'fundamentally nonformalized, practical dimension of action' where actors are 'not rule followers or norm obeyers but strategic improvisers who respond dispositionally to the opportunities and constraints' (1997:100). This notion of improvisation exonerates the pre-determination of individual agency. Autonomous creative agency for Bourdieu is strategic and improvisatory, informed simultaneously by the habitus and the field's forces. However, as Born also argues, despite the centrality of improvisation for cultural agency, Bourdieu does not elucidate 'the improvisatory valency' of cultural work, not even when he discusses restricted production (Born 2010:181).

If one is to accept that heteronomous cultural producers are in possession of practical mastery, then one needs to turn upside-down Bourdieu's entrenched assertion that the field of power – that emporium of money and impremium of politics – exerts full and coercive structural conditioning on cultural production. One needs to redress his contention that heteronomy is nothing other than an ordinary economic enterprise. In contrast, the theory of practice holds that practical taxonomies, instruments of communication and cognitive schemes, which have an 'objective' *modus operandi* separate from power structures, exert their structuring efficacy on and orchestrate a group's practical activities oriented towards practical outcomes (1977: 96-97). Such an approach allows us to divest artistic autonomy from the somehow trite tension between art and money that so often led to normative and elitist conclusions, and to recast it as an issue of practical mastery: how producers in concrete circumstances practically engage with the abstract, formally codified, cultural autonomy of perceptions schemes or language. A producer's action will then involve a mastery of formal codes of making and a deep understanding of rules, all of which afford a margin of 'practical' freedom. Here, in the spirit of Chomsky's generative grammar so preferred by Bourdieu, practical mastery refers to an infinite number of moves, strategies and tactics to be adapted to an infinite number of situations, which are essentially not reducible to, or dependent on, rule-scripts as mere epiphenomena of structure, but their independent capacity to structure action.

In his theory of practice, Bourdieu (1977) argues that social agents are 'virtuosos' (p. 79). They acquire schemes of thought and expression scripts which form the basis for an '*intentionless invention* of regulated improvisation' (ibid., original emphasis). Here he stresses the pre-linguistic, unconscious and unreflexive nature of habitus, which is embodied in actors' non-formalized, routinised practices and bodily hexis (gestures, deportment). Actors have habituated 'the schemes' of perception, appreciation, and action so well that they unintentionally act upon, and do not merely reproduce them, in their daily practice.

Elsewhere (1990), using football and tennis players as examples, Bourdieu states that 'nothing is simultaneously freer and more constrained than the action of the good player' (p. 63). The actions of 'a good player' are unmediated by calculative or mental doctrines, for he acts instantaneously : as the tennis ball flies into his head, he does not strategize, but reacts 'intuitively' and is prepared to momentously resolve a variety of practical conundrums. This intuitive momentary reaction is nevertheless a product of painstaking training, knowledge of the history of the game, and calculative analysis of exemplary tactics, which although unconsciously, constrain a good player's action. Practice in Bourdieu's sense does not follow a 'logical logic' because of its relation to time and efficiency – in urgent practical situations the unconscious schemes operate as skills and competences.

If this explanation is to be translated to the field of cultural production, then it follows that cultural producers do not completely conform with market or institutional exigencies or uncritically succumb to *amor fati*, since their immersion in and habituation of the rules of the game enable them to adequately yet instantaneously react to practical problems of art-making. Cultural producers improvise and invent on the spot within field-specific constraints (art-historical rules, oaths to ethical behavior, genres). Agency is thus made tangible in specific contexts as specific practices of making, which can and often are unarticulated and under-theorized.

Such extrapolations from Bourideu's practice theory for cultural production have been to a certain extent continued by Becker's analysis of craft worlds as a subset of global art worlds.

Instead of lamenting over the commercialization of culture and the imposition of external-to-the-art-world requirements on the autonomy of cultural work (as does Bourdieu), the art world approach views the process of marketization at a micro level as art turning itself into craft, into a world of practice. In craft worlds, however, cultural work is not executed in response to autonomous impulses of creation intrinsic in the historical development of the art, but in a hurdled setting of *hic and nunc* institutional and organizational forms of control. Within craft worlds, the emphasis shifts from expressiveness and autonomy to 'good work'. At a high level of technical competence and skill, the commercial artist starts acting 'like a craftsman' (Becker 1982: 292) – possessing physical, psychic, and mental skill, discipline, and judgment outwardly oriented towards clients and employers. As Becker put it:

an artist who has more interest in the display of virtuosity than in expression of
personal ideas or emotions is more open to suggestion, influence, or coercion and
more prepared to take on any of a variety of assignments proposed by others (pp.
291-292).

Although commercial artists (who think, talk and act like craftsmen) comply with business
and economic exigencies, they actually take pride not in the aesthetic content or the beauty of
their work, but in high quality as judged by utility and functionality, as well as in responsible
service to their audience, not least employers. As cultural producers inevitably operate in
institutional settings, they work with and act upon independent occupational norms. In this sense,
the standards of making, quality codes, and craft mores underpin the logical justification of
commercial art.

It follows that in his conceptualization of art worlds, Becker does not define the commercial
art world *via negativa* but accords commercial art its own immanent logic. Commercial art is not
the negation of autonomous art which is inferior or low-grade (as it may appear in an idealistic
comparison overridden by radical autonomy). But, it has its own *modus operandi* that is distinct
and distinctive, and hence needs to be judged, evaluated and delineated in its own terms. Becker
insists that participants in an art world do not succumb to malicious commercial imperatives, but
are guided by agreed-on and negotiated craft standards of excellence which mediate even the
most mundane aesthetic choices of forms and materialities. Yet, in contrast to Bourdieu's practical
mastery that excludes distance, perspective or reflection, Becker's craft attitude to work is
reflexive and conscious, though often unarticulated. Such an unarticulated aesthetics has nothing
to do with anything inherent in the medium or form, but with obligations generated by the art
world – choices must be defended (made to appear valuable) in front of *others*:

Among the things they [producers] keep in mind in making the innumerable small
decisions that cumulatively shape the work is whether and how these decisions
might be defended. Of course, working artists do not refer every small problem to its
most general philosophical grounding to decide how to deal with it, but they know
when their decisions run afoul of such theories, if only through a vague sense of
something wrong (p. 133).

With a view to practical theory, Bourdieu and Becker converge surprisingly in that they both
accord primacy to specific practices of making, which are not abstract but local, and situated here
and now. Therefore, autonomy in commercial/heteronomous cultural production is driven by a
practical mastery, but also by craftsmanship reflexivity about quality performance. Practical
mastery is interspersed with and propped up by producers' internal standards of excellence and
virtuosity. Yet understanding the partial and indeterminate logics of practical action still leaves
unresolved what appears to be a double bind of agency, which is both routinized and formalized,
habitual and reflexive.

Much in the spirit of micro-analysis, Becker's overemphasis on individual producers' imbrications with the actual materials or techniques of production results in an analysis concentrated on decontextualized cases (often textbook examples) lacking any sense of periodization or historicity.

In turn, Bourdieu never tries to introduce practical mastery to the field of cultural production, and thus never empirically pursues a practical analysis of cultural production. As a matter of fact, besides early anthropological work on the Berber house and Kabylian community, Bourdieu never gets closer ethnographically to the art field; rather he generalizes insights derived from elsewhere in spite of his own declarative acknowledgement that all fields follow their own specific logic (*nomos*) impenetrable to the agents of alien fields.

 A more promising strand of analysis in this regard is pursued under the auspices of the so-called Chicago cultural studies school, by scholars who refine and study ethnographically some of Becker's speculative findings. Faulkner (1985, 1983) and Fine (1992; 2008) have empirically demonstrated that the loss of autonomy in creative industries (as gauged by the opposition between art and money) is regained through a vested interest in doing the job well in accordance with profession-specific aesthetics and ethics. By analyzing the day-to-day practices of heteronomous cultural producers, Faulkner and Fine argue that Hollywood studio musicians and chefs respectively develop practical mastery of achieving good quality work in a stylistic and formal sense, that is not only utilitarian or functional, let alone subversive. When committed to doing good work, commercial producers carry out 'the aesthetics of work' (Fine 2008: 177) in accordance with their top expertise, individual sense of quality, and institutionalized formulas that form the basis for a no less 'expressive production' (p. 197). In Fine's explanation, when doing good work the worker and the work are intimately and inextricably linked, a fact which provides for operational autonomy:

> Work matters to workers, and workers have craft standards by which they judge
> work products and performance that transcend the narrow goals of producing
> things efficiently and to bureaucratic specification (Fine 2008: 178).

Beyond and above the institutionalized managerial audit procedures and customers' evaluations (power structures), cultural producers are themselves the principle judges of work outcomes and everyday choices. Sociological studies drawing on Becker, in what has come to be known as 'the production of culture perspective', have trenchantly argued that cultural objects are the product of social enterprise, sponsoring institutions, elites or advertisers, constructed through interaction and organizational constraints (Peterson 1985; Blau 1989). Yet what Fine and Faulkner bring to bear on the analysis is much of the understanding of cultural autonomy in Kane's sense (see the Introduction): the individual feeling for form, style and formal coherence, which are internally differentiated and as such affect, structure and organize, work and occupational ideals. Only in this way are commercial cultural producers not denied a sense of craft: that is, a sense of

identity. Such a stance remedies Becker's somewhat reductive view that art is like all work, nothing but another occupation, nothing but an outcome of the interaction with others.

Although aesthetic and ethical choices are practically executed on the whim of the moment (as Bourdieu also argued regarding practical mastery), and thus are devoid of immediate calculative logic and almost come naturally, theory is not completely absent: it 'flickers around the edges of the consciousness of workers' (Fine 1992: 1272). Faulkner details how composers of film music are expected to and consciously try to 'fit' into the 'dramatic style' – by not calling attention to their music, enhancing what is being screened, stressing the mood, making a philosophical point, invoking a time period, and by surprising the audience (1983: 92) in order to produce good work in accordance with the rules specific to the medium (aesthetic logic), but also earn a name for themselves and thus to keep working (calculative logic). Aesthetic theory informs quality either in the product or in the performance, but aesthetic decisions are made in practice here and now, as an everyday practical reflexive, and not least calcuative, affirmation of theory. Therefore, much in line with Bourdieu's 'practical theory', the aesthetic concepts are fuzzy and vague, yet obdurately present and post-rationalized.

By bringing closer together, Bourdieu's theorization of the field of cultural production, and Becker's model of the art world, I here tried to explicate the possibility of examining commercial cultural production on its own term, that is its immanent *modus operandi*, and to restore agency and subjectivity to cultural producers. Yet, as already hinted, Becker and Bourdieu do not address the specificity of the cultural object or its aesthetics, and thus remain short of a holistic understanding of cultural production. Yet, if Faulkner and Fine subsequently established the fact that good work is premised on the identification of workers with the product of their labour, they leave much to be desired in terms of specifying how formal stylistic models influence practical making and are not infinitely malleable to social interaction.

Negligence of the cultural object
Field and art world approaches are not just remiss in their approaches to the cultural object. It is actually their *reason d'être,* to disentangle issues of aesthetic (subjective) quality from social (objective) qualities of creative work. Sociological approaches, as exemplified here, have stopped short in front of the inner workings of cultural objects (rhythms, melody, tropes, poetics, cinematography) on the grounds of their empirical boundedness or impossibility to be empirically examined. To satisfy the scientific criteria of generalization, validation and replication, they treat cultural objects as no different from any other consumer product, except perhaps for probably their aura and their ability to bestow social distinction. A cultural object is a social object and does not exist outside social relations.

The closest Bourdieu comes to discussing the inherent, that is autonomous, properties of the cultural object is when he discusses 'the space of possibles' – a substantive ensemble of probable

constraints and possible uses of genres, thematic or stylistic options, and manners of expression (1996:235) which producers interiorize 'as a sort of *historical transcendental*' (p. 236, original emphasis). When an individual producer enters the field, he needs to acquire the '*specific code* of conduct' and acknowledge 'the finite universe of *freedom under constraints*' offered by the space of possible (ibid. original emphasis). The space of possibles is like a grammar (again in Chomsky's mould). It defines the space of what is possible, conceivable, doable, thinkable with a view to styles, themes, topics, rhythms and so on. Yet, there is a double bind. The space of possible constitutes and constrains choices (*ars obligatoria*), yet it also allows for the invention of a spectrum of acceptable solutions within the limits of what is proscribed by grammar (*ars inveniendi*) (1996: 236).

Bourdieu never takes up the possibility he himself accords here for genres and forms to influence position-taking in the field, rather than vice versa. Instead of unpacking the practical mastery of combining *ars obligatoria* and *ars inveniendi* in practice, Bourdieu explicates the space of possibles as ultimately identical to production-consumption homologies and denied economies. Thus he develops a pyramidal hierarchy of genres based on commercial profit – theater, as the most popular, at the top, followed by novel and poetry, as the most disinterested in commercial pursuits; and a hierarchy based on prestige – poetry at the top, novel, and theater at the bottom (pp. 114-115). The choices enabled or halted by the genre are merely camouflage for instrumental, cynical calculation, while genres are socially differentiated and hierarchised according to social class, social origin and gender (an outcome of structural homologies). Therefore Bourdieu again develops a *relational* account of genre differentiation – one based on structural positions occupied in the field and the properties of their occupants, rather than on the autonomous properties of cultural objects. Just consider this conclusive passage about genres as 'natural places' for certain social classes (Bourdieu 1996: 269):

> For example, within the popular novel which (more often than in any other category of novel) is abandoned to writers coming from the dominated classes and to the feminine gender, the different manners, more or less distanced, of treating this genre – in short the position within the positions – are themselves linked to social and educational differences, with the most distanciated, semi-parodic treatments (of which the prime example is *Fantomas*, celebrated by Apollinaire) being the prerogative of the most privileged writers. By the same logic, … among boulevard authors, who are directly subject to the financial sanction of bourgeois taste, writers coming from the working class or petite-bourgeoisie are very strongly underrepresented, whereas they are more strongly represented in vaudeville [the most heteronomous genre of the heteronomous theatrical genres], which as a comic genre allows a greater role for facile effects or funny and scabrous scenes as well as permitting a sort of half-critical freedom.

For Bourdieu, autonomous genres are those genres that are premised on deviance from the entrenched norms of the field and negation of capitalist instrumentality, and are the preserve of

the privileged classes. Heteronomous genres, on the other hand, succumb to the logic of stasis and repetition, and are complicit with capitalist requirements ('facile effects', 'scabrous scenes' that attract mass audiences), and thus in turn attract dominated classes as their producers.

As already discussed earlier in this chapter, Becker (1982) shies away from 'the aesthetic' and its power to influence action. When he ponders upon what he calls 'editorial moments' – the moments when producers actually make choices or devise lines of action such as what colour to use, what instruments to write for – he openly repudiates the idea that choices are made with a view to some immanent autonomous logic, but with a self-conscious anticipation of how *other people* will respond, emotionally and cognitively, to what they do (p. 200). Yet, by assigning merely to interaction 'non-communicative' statements about what feels right or wrong to do in a certain situation, even interaction with an imagined audience is most resolutely deceptive.

In a rather sloppy study from 2006, Becker is finally, though fruitlessly, in search of the cultural object – especially, I think, in relation to such 'editorial moments'. In the preface, in a somewhat embarrassed and vacillating manner, Becker invokes the cultural object back to the sociological analysis:

> OK, now we know all about artistic innovations. We know about their relations to their environing societies, we know how their making and reception are affected by class and all these other things. But what about – you know – what about the artwork itself? (2006:xiii).

Yet echoing considerably the phenomenological understanding of art, the answer Becker gives to this question is negative: 'it is impossible in principle, for a sociologist or anyone else to speak of "the work itself" because there is no such thing' (p. 23). The work of art is *made*, not in the act of production, but through reception. The work of art does not have an existence outside diverse and sometimes conflicting interpretations. It exists only as an object in an audience's or scientist's head and, therefore is unsuitable subject matter for sociologists.

So Becker suggests circumventing this gridlock by turning attention to 'the career of the work itself' (p. 6) as it becomes 'when it is viewed' (p. 5). As a result, for Becker the work itself is characterized by 'the principle of the fundamental indeterminacy' (p. 24) and it is this principle that is to be subjected to empirical study. The work itself is not exhausted in its physical nature, but is always work-in-progress, variable and defiant of definition, since it is recreated in every act of reception. In other simplified words, for Becker, the work of art is a process, a gradual string of small decisions, and a happening. It is a series of choices made here and now from a range of suitable, but available possibilities in the spirit of 'editorial moments' which make the 'contemporary' account no less interactionist. To understand the work itself one needs to resort to 'a genetic approach' to finished works of arts and discover backwards how the work was made and remade with regard to an audience through sketches, revisions or versions (p. 26).

For Becker, the work of art is not a matter of christening anymore, but a matter of a continuum of choices being made, actions taken by producers within organized worlds of common cultural production practice which constrain or enable the very process of choosing. To study the formal qualities and principles of the work itself is not 'sociological' since a singular instance is not generalizable. It cannot generate social insights or laws of human behavior because the principles and practices of art-making are not replicable given that every 'real' artwork is unique. For the same reason, they cannot be subjected to validation (validation, generalization and replication are the three scientific *desiderata*). It is precisely this anxiety of not being able to satisfy the conditions of science, that creates the pitfall of the genetic approach Becker proposes. The concentration on isolated, single, individual cases as an *a posteriori* (temporal) rationalization of the work of art (examining finished objects with hindsight, or when the value is already stabilized) does not really bring the cultural object back into analysis. Once again, it only perpetuates the extraordinariness of great art and great artists, and exaggerates yet again the role of the social practices, which enable art making, in isolation from the ontological patterns and logic of the work. Such an approach allows for a post-rationalization of creative production, instead of an *ad hoc*, momentous practical mastery of making. In addition, when Becker posits the study of the work itself as the study of 'the constitution of the range of possibilities' (p.26) from which the choices are made, he hopelessly and unconsciously relapses into the structural constriction of what Bourdieu calls 'the space of possibles', which is socially, not formally, constructed, and masks the eventual material and symbolic profits.

If one wants to figure out why and how the work matters to the producers themselves, one needs to make use not only of genetic but also of generic approaches. The understanding of cultural production in and through the formal logic of genres will embrace 'sociologically' the cultural object *sui generis*. The notion of genre is itself predicated on a multiplicity of attributes, formal qualities and principles, which possess the capacity to structure and constitute the work, through the ways by which the producers draw upon the genre-specific resources in their practice. Genres principles are socially distributed resources, yet internally structured, employed and mobilized in, thus conversely also structuring, individualized production projects. As such the genres oscillate between social and individual, textual and non-textual, inside and outside, plan and spontaneity, and finally autonomy and heteronomy. Bourdieu was right to feel intuitively that the first, though not the only avenue towards treating the cultural object sociologically was through the genre, which either enables or curbs producer agency. And it is only here, I would argue, that 'the fundamental indeterminacy' of the work itself needs to be studied, not in isolated subjective instances of finalized works of art (Becker et al. 2006): how participants in a specific genre world mobilize the genre resources as arising from its formal properties so as to craft their autobiographical selves and vindicate their expertise. It is only in this borderline area between social sciences and humanistic scholarship that the cultural object, and the genres as a corpus of cultural objects, as structurally patterned, become central in driving the work and actions of creative practitioners, especially within the historical development of institutions, who themselves

traditionally and systematically deploy the genre resources for institutional self-understanding. Such effort, would accord genres an active role in cultural production. Indeed this comes closer to the recent call Becker et al. (2006:6) extend for the treatment of the work of art itself as *an agent* in the processes of cultural production.

Therefore, the genres should be first accorded an analytical autonomy in Kane's sense (1991) which will encompass its formal patterning or poetics, and then proceed to examine producers' practical work, craft and mastery, both conscious and tacit in Bourdieu's practical sense (1987), of genre dominant properties. In other words, such an approach would allow us to challenge Bourdieu's and Becker's reduction of 'writing "industrial literature"' as 'an activity like any other', that is, as nothing but 'industrialized work' for material remuneration.

Yet there is divergent opinion and practice about how cultural objects can be brought into social science analysis. If embracing the work of art itself was a daunting task for the sociologist, it is central for the anthropologist. I will now detail why and how cultural objects matter to the analysis by presenting what can be called an anthropological paradigm of cultural production.

Anthropological paradigm of cultural production

The near complete disregard of cultural objects in sociological analysis reverts to a near total obsession with then in anthropological approaches to cultural production. In this way, the cultural objects are not taken to be the bearers of meaning, representation or significance (as semiotic approaches would have it), or social class or distinction (as sociological approaches proposed), but as mediators of social action entailed in their production. In other words, art is implicated in a complex web of agency or connectedness whereby the object of art is a full-fledged actor, not merely involved in confrontational position-takings (Bourdieu) or rituals of christening (Becker) in which the object exists only as a function of social dynamics.

One of the most prominent anthropologists of art, Alfred Gell (1998), insists that the central task of anthropological studies of art should be the social relationships in the vicinity of objects that mediate social agency (p.7). Cultural objects are not merely the end product of certain action, but a distributed extension of authors situated in a determined stage of their biographical lifecycle. As such, artistic objects are in fact social agents enmeshed in a web of intentionalities, will, cognition, consciousness, and projections. A producer's intentionality and agency, as causal antecedents to the finalized object, can be inferred or 'abducted' by recipients from that object. By the same token, producers' intentions, will and scope are inscribed in the object. For Gell, artworks are 'indexes' that betoken intentional agency, analogous to the boiled egg that presupposes the desire of eating a boiled egg and the act of boiling. The object motivates inferences or interpretation of a producer's agency and intentions. In this view, agents (authors) and objects (artworks) interpenetrate and permeate one another. Objects stand for persons who inflict their intentions on objects; objects contain and reveal the producer's agency. Hence, objects

and agents exist not in and for themselves, but relationally and causally. And these objects are precisely the kind of objects that an anthropological theory should engage with; those objects that 'have the capacity to index their 'origins' in an act of *manufacture*' (1998: 23, original emphasis).

Cultural objects are able to mediate social relations, and not just vice versa as I have shown in my discussion of Becker's and Bourdieu's approaches. In other words, objects act upon the world; they exert an 'agentic' and 'artistic' influence; they 'enchant' their recipients. An object's capacity to enchant (awe, confuse and even terrify) is the result of a technical virtuosity entailed in its making. Objects are capable of ensnaring or captivating recipients in the network, 'the trap' of intentionalities owing to their formal prowess, craft excellence and quality of execution encoded in their making, 'the act of manufacture'. Recipients are 'captivated' when faced with their formal/technical complexity because they are made aware of the incommensurable gap and inadequacy between their own artistic capacities and the superiority of the artistic technique. Recipients cannot effortlessly reconstruct or decipher the process of how the object came into being and thus cannot replicate, even vicariously, the physical gestures of making themselves. Excellently made objects appear to exceed the human domains of the thinkable and doable, so as to resemble the magical. If objects do not mystify their origin, their agency is undermined. Then, as Gell put it, 'nobody attends to their making as a particularly salient feature of their agency' (Gell 1998: 68). To corroborate the captivating power of cultural objects, Gell discusses the agency of the colorful, bright and complex optical illusions emblazoned on the canoe prow-boards used in Kula exchanges in southeast New Guinea. The prows dazzle the exchange partners, inducing them to discount the value of the exchanged goods. The aesthetic properties of the prows are irrelevant insofar as they are exquisitely executed so as to be rendered effective and exert influence over social relations (they enable producers to demoralize, intimidate or tame their foes). This vein of thinking led Gell to conclude that it is precisely the status of artworks as 'made objects', as 'products of techniques', that distinguishes them from other objects: 'art objects are the only objects around which are *beautifully made*, or *made beautiful*' (1999: 163).

What I found to be extremely fecund in this approach is that it imputes agency to objects: they *do* something for you. This makes it possible for cultural objects to exert influence over the act of production, rather than merely vice versa. As I have already argued, sociological approaches sometimes overzealously set out to disguise why and how art appears and is valued as such, at the expense of any concern for the cultural object, and the adjacent issues of 'aesthetic theorizing'. The answer is that the institutions of production (be they fields or art words) have implications for the outlook, status, value and shape of cultural objects. In Gell's anthropology of cultural production, on the other hand, objects have the capacity to index their origin and in turn actively to shape their own history. Objects have their own social lives, with careers and biographies that are embedded in, and constitutive of, an agent's biographical projects. Agents' and object's biographies are thus interwoven. They exist relationally, with reference to one another, in a

complex web of causalities. As Gell suggests, there is 'an insensible transition' between objects and agents (1998:153).

This is especially important in the face of the evidence that artists intimately identify with the products of their labour and deeply care about what they produce. Objects are an externalization of their producers' inner qualities (standards of excellence, know-how, expertise). By implication, an object *objectifies* its producer's biography. To this end Gell writes: 'the person is thus understood as the sum total of the indexes which testify, in life and subsequently, to the biographical existence of this or that individual' (1998: 222-3). Therefore, cultural objects span linkages, lineages and connections across time and space and are a constitutive part of each producer's oeuvre. They embody 'retentions' (memories of the past) and 'protentions' (anticipations of the future) – traces of earlier works and hints of future works are always inscribed in the object. In turn, the producer makes herself through and in the objects she produces.

Equivalent to the producer's oeuvre, which represents a composite collective object, or network of retentions and protentions, is the style or the genre, which is the ensemble of individual objects integrated under some aesthetic, formal, structural or genealogical unity. The genre maps out a web of retentions and protentions distributed across temporal and spatial confines. Each singular object bears the stamp of and projects characteristics common to larger unities. Cultural objects are members of aesthetic categories or genres, which Gell defines, but largely fails to elaborate upon, as 'a culturally and historically specific art-production system' (1998: 153). Objects and people interact relationally within this system. As such the genres (and the oeuvre) are distributed objects across time and space (they remember and conjecture generic similarities and differences) and the producer is a distributed person (whose biographical instance is linked with the web of retentions and protentions implicated in the genre/oeuvre). Ultimately, it is the genre as a distributed object that exercises the same type of agency that Gell ascribed to singular objects (the canoe-prows, for example). Genres embody the art-producing system, insofar as cultural producers act enchanted by (or work as if in the spell of) the art-producing system. Cultural objects are manifestations of the genre, and the genre is the condensation of cultural objects. By extension, genres are able to mediate social relations of production, from which, it follows that they influence the very act of manufacture.

The idea that genres are mediating objects needs to be extended to encompass also the institutions of cultural production, if one is to arrive at a comprehensive understanding thereof. Gell sidesteps any discussion of cultural institutions responsible for mediating, producing, distributing or consolidating genres, by dissociating cultural objects from wider historical and aesthetic paradigms, and thus denying the efficacy of objects to influence the social organization of cultural production. Cultural institutions possess their own biographies and agency which are inseparable from individual agents and objects. They attest to the process of manufacture and fabrication, and in turn inscribe their own agency in manufactured objects. It is at the intersection

of author, object and institutional biographies that the act of manufacture needs to be studied, as I argue in Chapter 4, 5 and 6.

Although Gell does not accord agency to the institutions of cultural production, it is very symptomatic that that he refuses to engage more profoundly with the actual practices and contexts of production, when the pinnacle of his anthropological theory of cultural production is build around the act of making (manufacture and technical execution of objects) as the enabler of agency. Other than incidentally concluding that objects that exert agency (shields and prows) 'seem to have been *composed* in a mood of terror' (1998:31), Gell refrains from probing into how 'such composition' was enacted in practice, and in fact linked to the technical expertise and specialization of the producers. In so doing, his theory comes to resemble reverse engineering: it reads or abducts agency from the finished object backwards, in the form of technical sequences of making, in order to arrive at an understanding of its workings, effects and operability. In reverse engineering objects have agency only by proxy. They allow for access into other people's brains, dexterity and craft. In this way objects are equivalent to persons. Yet, any subjectively expressed intention, will or scope (producer's subjectivity) is precluded in such analysis. Paradoxically, Gell's analysis of agency seems to obscure the producer's agency writ large and deny the work-in-progress status of objects that become. Agency can *only* be inferred from 'already made' objects. Agency is an inherent property of neither objects nor producers. It is the task of *the recipient* of the object to play out mentally the story of origin, to recount an object's history as a string of actions performed by the author, and to probe the producer's dexterity as he sees it transpires from the completed object. Nothing is said about the act of composition, how actually the objects are made 'terrifying', or what is the technique that gave rise to 'the products of technique' (p.163). The answer to the issue of composition, or how a cultural object happens, inevitably involves the discussion of aesthetic properties that underpin technique and thus authorial agency and intention, as I argue in Chapter 3.

Too much 'anthropological' emphasis on the social relations in the 'vicinity' of cultural objects results in losing sight of the object's aesthetic specificity and properties. When Gell identifies technical virtuosity detached from any aesthetic considerations as the precondition of an object's agency, he reifies the act of making as 'magic' and the creator as 'a genius' (p.71). The more an object conceals its origins, the more it resists comprehension and, by implication, the more artistic it appears. Technical virtuosity cannot be taken to exceed human understanding or in isolation from the aesthetic or genre's properties. In the act of making these properties assume the status of devices, techniques of doing or tools with which the producer *does* something (makes cultural objects). And these techniques are relational because they are collective, handed down by tradition, part of larger generic regimes, and thus learned, compared to others, practiced by trial and error, refined, ultimately historicized, and socialized, mostly in the form of poetics (the rules of making). In this way, technical virtuosity ceases to be 'mystical' or 'miraculous', as Gell wants us to believe by echoing a very Romantic belief in the *ineffable* origin of the work of art.

In addition, the technical excellence of execution that triggers fascination (accomplishes a social task) is not particular only to the products of cultural production. Thus object agency is not strictly speaking limited to cultural objects, but applies to a whole range of well-designed and technically and superbly engineered objects such as sport cars or Iphones. The technical virtuosity implicated in the production of cultural objects follows an independent, relatively autonomous, logic of making which is vested in genre-poetics, paradigms of significance, artistic traditions, which largely exist outside immediate relationships of social interaction as supra-individual, transhistorical, but always actualized in individual practice (the possibility that Bourdieu allowed with the interplay between *ars obligatoria* and *ars inveniendi* within genres, but never fully elaborated on). Oddly enough, the supra-individual prerequisites for action (in addition to individual agency) bring us back to the division between structure and agency, subject and object, base and superstructure, that I fear Gell, in spite of his claims, fails to redress. Anytime a producing agent acts in relation to a cultural object, she brings experience, knowledge and interpretation of genre-poetics, (that is her authorial intentions), to bear on that interaction. To infer only individual agency from cultural objects is deeply flawed. A history of relating to objects (traditions, ideologies, and belief systems: in a word, genres) is inscribed in the act of making, and reproduced in every single individual instance of practical making (see for similar criticism Born 2010:183-185).

Empirical study of genres
Pinney's (1997) ethnographic analysis of the social life of Indian photographic portraiture is, in my opinion, an exemplary case of how the genre as a group of textual instances dispersed in time and space inflects the making of popular photography in the central-Indian town of Nagda. By according cultural autonomy (in Kane's sense of analytical autonomy) to the portraiture genre – its formal, discursive and aesthetic properties – Pinney comes closer to elaborating how culture (internally patterned genre) structures photographic practice (cultural autonomy in Kane's concrete sense). Pinney argues that, in contrast to Western portraiture which values 'realistic' and 'documentary' resemblance to the sitter, Indian portraiture 'is prized for its ability to record idealized staged events characterized by a theatrical preparedness and symmetry' (p. 142). Such an aesthetic is not only socially constructed, but also mediated by autonomous cultural systems such as Hindu cosmologies (the disjunction between outward appearance and inner qualities) and popular culture (desirable imageries derived from Bollywood movies and TV series). It follows that Indian sitters have a pronounced genre-related predilection for 'inventive posing' to the effect of 'coming out better' (p. 179) – exhibiting an idealized sense of self through impersonation and imposture. Such aesthetics presupposes (organizes and structures) the techniques of montage, overpainting or multiple printing, action shooting or adoption of gestures, the use of backdrops, the deployment of props – all sites for identity exploration, metamorphosis and contradiction immanent in the Indian non-essentialist worldview. At the same time such an aesthetic affects the studio division of labour, day-to-day management, and spatial arrangements that render studios

'chambers of dreams where personal explorations of an infinite range of *alter egos* are possible' (p. 175). To this end, for instance, studios stock collections of costumes available for the use of their clients – for example, costumes that index regional or caste identity, or supply T-shirts for the use of a 'college girl persona', as seen on film. Yet this creates practical problems for studio management in terms of the maintenance of collections, provision of fitting space, and handling of successive customers. Pinney illustrates, for example, how the need to dress-up in a small studio affected its opening hours. It was an imperative not to turn out customers when a woman was already usurping the small studio for changing, forcing the jaded photographer to wait outside for a long time and annoyed clients to leave. To address this (implied) loss of profit, the photographer redesigned the opening hours – assigning the mornings to men, and the evenings to dressing-up women.

Such an understanding of the structuring agency of the genre of the portraiture requisites the exegesis of photographic practice, which in turn, can be empathetically screened for evaluations about the meaning and significance of aesthetic acts. In this way, the genre of portraiture provides the means for interrogating particularities. The social life of the studio is thus understood through inter-textual interpretation. Consider this example that illustrates lucidly how photographic practice (action shooting) is intertextually structured:

> Govardhanlal has several frames full of photographs. In the center of one of these is a quarter-length portrait of him twirling his mustache with his left hand. What may seem a casual pose is to everyone in Bhatisuda and Nagda a mimetic invocation of a great freedom fighter and a statement by Govardhanlal of his own resilience and independence. The freedom fighter is Chandra Shekhar Azad, who died in a shoot-out in Allahabad in 1931. Azad is nearly always depicted in this posture: he rolls his mustache with his fingers and wears a wristwatch on his left arm. … Bhatisuda residents know little or nothing about Chandra Shekhar, beyond his name. However, his attention to his mustache lives on as part of a repertoire of signs offered up to the camera (pp. 176-77).

As opposed to Gell, Pinney approaches photograph-making as a work-in-formation, caught in a web of intentionalities, rather than as a finalized object. More importantly, Pinney shows empirically not only how studio social life influences popular portraiture, but how the autonomous, culturally structured logic provides 'the repertoire of signs' that powerfully affects the act of composition. It is within these circumscribed bounds that invention and novelty, no less a sense of identity, is rendered possible.

Another anthropological study that recognizes a certain dose of cultural autonomy of genres, though in a tacit manner, is Moeran's (1997) study of Japanese folk art pottery. Moeran reconstructs by 'thick description' the codes, narratives and symbols that created the social life of Onta pottery. In a way, he resurrects the dead points of Becker's sociological theory, by explicitly probing how what Becker called 'aesthetic theorizing' (1982: 162) is embedded in potters' working

practices as justifications for their routine action, failure to live up to spiritual ideals or market strategizing. *Mingei* folk art theory or genre is worked upon through the daily choices and identity formation of Onta potters. Unlike Pinney, who called for intertextual exegesis of photographic practice, Moeran heeds potters' self-hermeneutics – their own relations of harmony and tension, in the context of an the already institutionalized and normalized genre of *mingei,* as national cultural heritage.

In a nutshell, the ideals of *mingei*, as meticulously elaborated by its ideological father Yanagi, center on ethical (how folk arts are made), rather than on their formal aspects. These ideals, here grossly oversimplified, consist in the use of local and natural materials for clays and glazes, reliance on traditional technology not modern machinery, by unnamed craftsmen who work in a spirit of cooperation with one another, without incentive for personal gain or profit (p. 181). Although Yanagi isolated certain 'good' qualities that made a pot aesthetically beautiful, such as lines, form, and colour, it was not the qualities in themselves that were important, but how these qualities (properties of the object) affected the way the potters worked while producing beautiful objects. For the potters, *mingei*'s ideals were not only abstract spiritual/aesthetic concepts; they could also be successfully practiced even when the potters openly challenged them or lamented over the practical obstacles in attaining them. For example, according to Yanagi's theory, in *mingei* the spiritual attitude of the craftsmen was what produced good work. Great works were produced when the potter's heart was imbued with love: he lived in the pot and the pot lived in him (p. 188). This he called the principle of 'direct perception' or unmediated experiencing – 'you enter into the thing; the thing communicates with your heart' (Yanagi, as quoted in Moeran, p. 30). To practice direct perception, to feel the clay, the potter must be uncultured and unlearned, so that pots spontaneously flowed from love, and love flowed from pots. While every potter, whose work Moeran followed, believed intimately that good forms exuded a craftsman's character and thus contained his 'heart', it became nearly impossible for them to throw pots 'unconsciously' (as the genre prescribed) given the amount of time and concerted effort by critics, connoisseurs, museum personnel to interpret *mingei*: 'they had learned to see their pots differently (i.e. they had been educated), and were now more conscious of their work: it was not surprising that people said it had got worse' (pp.187-88). As *mingei* supposedly consisted of objects for everyday use, the genre instilled the idea that good forms were the result of and contributed to functional pottery, and that functional pottery was beautiful. Onta potters continuously and consciously strived to reconcile this ideal in practice with the *mingei* injunction to stay 'local and 'close to nature, which provoked a feeling of failure or even anxiety. Owing to the character of the locally dug clay, certain forms were not possible while chemically enhanced clay or procuring clay from elsewhere, for example, was abjured by the very genre's ontology:

> The nature of Onta clay dictates to some extent the final form of its pottery, a form
> which cannot always be consistent with function. For example, to be functional,
> pickle jars should be made as cylinders. The pickles will then sink to the bottom of
> the pot, and they can be easily weighted down. However Onta clay does not permit

this shape for larger pots, for the clay tends to crack at the base. Consequently, most pickle jars must have a narrow base which, while it often gives the pot a streamlined shape, does not guarantee stability in use (p. 190).

Moreover, in light of a national boom in demand for *mingei*, potters could not completely become oblivious to economic demands given that *mingei* was a way for them to make a living. Aligned with *mingei* genre, the need to make a living was inevitably seen to lead to a deterioration of the work. Potters enacted *mingei* aesthetic ideals by not experimenting with shapes and glazes, eschewing the use of electric-kilns in favour of 'natural' kick-wheels, yet inevitably produced non-traditional pots to satisfy new industrialized urban demand for coffee cups, for example. Paradoxically, at the same time, potters made strategic use of *mingei* theory to counteract the chaos of market demand and to ward off bizarre orders for 'statuettes of drunken badgers or for double-spouted tea-pots' (p. 206).

Such anthropological studies are in the last analysis studies of *a genre*, which is locally produced, appreciated and consumed. The anthropologists accord effectiveness to cultural forms – such as an object's forms, shapes, or qualities to influence the social organization of cultural production, and to inform occupational norms and standards of excellence. These analyses are paradigmatic because they focus on the materiality of a photograph or a piece of stoneware as embedded in specific genre trajectories that afford certain aesthetic techniques of making, or action trajectories, to the producer. Only by attending to the very act of making –the act of composition in Gell's words, one can understand how discursive and aesthetic properties (inferred *ex post facto* from an object) actually gain an agentic status as devices, tools and operational means that afford action.

The richness in detail of such anthropological studies of cultural production reveals the complexities of social relations, local contexts, inconsistencies and even irrationalities in the making of cultural objects. Yet, they resist generalizability since, unlike the sociological studies of the kind put forward by Becker and Bourdieu, they refuse to deal with typified categories, and instead concentrate overwhelmingly on concrete instances of genre-production. Although, as I indicated, it is in the messy detail the anthropological studies provide that the genre emerges in all its complexity and ambivalence, yet it is also difficult to see how the import of such analyses can be transposed into the study of genre-centered production within the commercial and corporate creative/cultural industries. In other words, this begs the question of whether and how the genre can become, an analytical, rather than interpretive or heuristic category. To this end, I now turn to Adorno's and Williams' generative legacies in viewing the notion of genre as both a social and formal category, but also as constitutive of cultural production, rather than being completely determined by social dynamics or by reception.

Socio-cultural analysis: generative legacy of Adorno and Williams

A catachrestic, in a way a distorted and misused rather than straightforward and confirmatory reading, of Adorno and Williams, will reveal the possibility of a simultaneous social and aesthetic analysis of cultural production: that is, an analysis, which is potentially alert to the interrelationship between social and institutional arrangements and the aesthetic and formal properties of the cultural object. Through my own readings of Adorno's sociology of music and Williams's sociology of culture, I intend to lay the groundwork for a composite understanding of cultural production, one that is as attentive to cultural objects as well as to cultural institutions.

Both Williams and Adorno are not generally considered mainstream sociologists. The work of both languishes in semi-obscurity and is, in principle, absent from sociology, with some notable exceptions of course (DeNora 2003). Yet, Adorno, the musicologist, and Williams, the professor of drama, gave a very sophisticated, compelling and interdisciplinary model of socio-cultural analysis of creative work and cultural production.

Adorno: musico-technical approach

No one takes Adorno seriously these days (Hesmondhalgh 2002; Banks 2007). He is an unhelpful pessimist, reductionist and elitist.

Yet, some scholars recently started extolling Adorno's 'thorn half' and his propitious heritage – his insistence on the inclusion of art's formal properties into sociological analysis (Born 2003; DeNora 2003). It is the specificity of the cultural object that forms the basis for leveling criticism at the culture industry, and not some ideological and pre-set cultural assumptions about quality, so swiftly imputed to Adornian cultural critique.

If, as Adorno (1976:xii) claims, the cultural object (music) is more than 'cigarettes and soap in market', then sociological study will inevitably require 'a full understanding of music itself, in all its implications'. It is only through the analysis of how a cultural object is put together in its formal materiality that one can assess how culture is related to and inflects consciousness, both subjective and collective. It follows that the way composers compose, that is, their mode of praxis: how they handle and deploy musical materialities, such as timbre or tempos in specific arrangements – is influenced by the social order. However, at the same time it inculcates that same social order. The intrinsic form of art is socially mediated, but also exerts a social effect (reminiscent of Gell's enchantment agency of cultural objects) -- Wagner's music has an ideological effect (Adorno 1997: 315), while the Ninth Symphony a mesmerizing one (p. 319). This has two implications. One for Adorno's elaborate theory of the listening subjects – formal properties play a crucial role in shaping audience's subjectivities and behavior; and another for a less-developed theory of composition -- the task of the sociology of music is to accept approvingly 'the precedence of production' (1976:198). Cultural products exert influence over their audience (enlighten or barbarize) insofar as they evince a certain mode or technique of composition, which

itself is socially constituted. For late Adorno, even commercial music is not completely commodified, because it preserves its relative autonomy in an adherence to formal principles of making, which themselves are mediated by social relations of production. Cultural objects are thus dialectical – autonomous and commodified at once:

> the customary invectives against commercial mischief in music are superficial. They delude regarding the extent to which phenomena that presuppose commerce, the appeal to an audience already viewed as customers, can turn into compositional qualities unleashing and enhancing a composer's productive force (1976:208).

One can arrive at an understanding of how formal properties are socially mediated and in turn mediate social order through an immanent criticism (Leppert 2002) or what Adorno (1945) himself called a 'musico-technical', or elsewhere 'a micrological' approach to music (1976:202). So, when Adorno discusses (critiques) jazz music, he locates its putative 'banalization effect' in the simplicity and reiteration of musical schemata, tonality and harmony: that is, its 'sterotypology' (2002: 472):

> beneath the opulent surface of jazz lies the – barren, unchanged, clearly detachable – most primitive harmonic-tonal scheme with its breakdown into half-full cadences and equally primitive meter and form (p. 430).

Therefore jazz is a demeaned genre because it replicates the mechanistic structures of capitalist society, observable in formal constituents - trite rhythms, repetitive sequences and predictable atonality only illusorily disguised in individualized expression. As such, musical structures mediate subjective relations to society and human consciousness of freedom. This is why jazz adds up to 'the regression of audiences'; it arranges rehashed tricks and clichés which deter deeper comprehension and engagement by uncritically connecting audiences with the dominant logic of the social system. The Adornian critique of jazz or radio music is thus, not negative but deeply positive, in the sense of according *sui generis* status to cultural objects. In this way, the aesthetics and the social are indissolubly interwoven. Yet, in emphasizing culture's effects, Adorno forgoes the discussion of how the act of composition unfolds in practice in favour of reception (listening!) studies.

Nevertheless, there are potentially productive guidelines in Adorno's sociology of music for the empirical study of cultural production that I would like to take up here. Every artist is rooted in a socio-historical process, in what Adorno calls 'the spirit of a time'. The social penetrates the aesthetic through a unity of spirit, shared historically-specific and situated forms, materials, métier and modes of doing art (1976: 211). Cultural producers 'assimilate' social modes and internalize the circumstances of production as generative productive (aesthetic) forces. It is here that Adorno calls for the study of 'social labor' (p. 198) – that involves 'the work of living reproductive artists' and their own relation with the intramusical-compositional procedures (p. 219).

I underline here 'living artists' because in a revealing chapter, *Conductor and orchestra*, in his sociology of music (1976), Adorno draws on his own experience of orchestra participation, and situates producer autonomy in the 'performing' moment. Orchestra playing is dull and repetitive under a conductor's dictate. Yet, those musicians who abandoned the Utopian dream of music, for set working hours and pay schemes, valued 'expert dogmatism' or 'technical competence' in the 'musical form': 'from beautifully sounding chords, to precise entrances to the ability to beat more complex rhythms in comprehensible fashion' (p. 115). Much sounding like Fine (2008) and Faulkner (1983), Adorno observes that orchestra musicians are like tight-rope walkers 'who for meager pay learn the most foolhardy tricks for the tricks' own sake' (p. 115) and compensate for 'the disappointment with the trade' (p. 113) with 'recalcitrance' in the form of 'sadistic humor' and 'jokes' (p. 112) which arise from the music form.

'The ideal of the métier' – the technical standards – merge with producers' own predispositions through painstaking apprenticeship in 'technical superiority' (p. 216). The *living* artist, his métier and the spirit of the time all intersect in the realm of the genre. It is at this point that Adorno (1997) – insightfully though tangentially brings in the notion of genre (*Gattung*) as a dialectical, yet mediating category. The spirit of the time is objectified in genres, and 'whoever creates authentic forms fulfills them' (p. 264). Genres are universals that mediate the particular – 'the authenticity of individual works is stored away in genres' (ibid.). In order to understand the act of composition, Adorno advocates a melding of the ontological view of genre with pragmatism: the genre is effective; it provides the modes (tools) of the prevailing praxis and work's immanent lawfulness (p. 266). Composers are steeped in the genre by tradition or schools; the genre provides an objective spirit, which entails specification and subjectification for its own realization – the *principum individuationis* or individual idiosyncrasies. It makes possible the specific mastery of universal and historical artistic material (*Materialbehershung*), which refers to the personal, inner feel for raw materials (language, colour, tonal systems), adeptness at compositional and stylistic procedures, but also, as discussed above, the margin of resistance, and thus of freedom which underpins paid artists' jokes and irony. By extension, Adorno posits an aesthetic commonality, which is guaranteed by *a universal* mediating *the particular* labour of those who work in the same genre:

> A meager and impure idea of this dialectical unity is given by the way in which artists
> of a single genre perceive themselves to be working in a subterranean collective that
> is virtually independent of their individual products (p. 45).

The genre works upon artists through the historical sedimentation of a collective form of action/reaction, as an interplay between the universal and the particular. Artistic idiosyncrasies are unconscious and hardly theoretically transparent at first, yet reflexivity is requisite so that the artist can articulate his relation to 'the sedimented form' and 'the collective'. In this sense, the genre becomes a tool for investigating the particularities. Although Adorno posits 'the single genre', where social and formal forces intermingle inhabited by 'living artists', as a valid site of

analysis of producers' autonomy, he unfortunately does not elaborate on the genre's embeddedness in 'consciousness- and subconsciousness-industries' (p. 219) in which the artists 'go on duty' (p. 114). To understand how genres, work within the institutions of cultural production, both as formal and social categories at once, we need to look elsewhere.

Williams: social formalism and cultural materialism

That cultural production, in all its complexity as a material and formal phenomenon, cannot be studied in isolation from the institutions of cultural industries is the central tenet of Williams's sociology of culture (1995). All artistic production takes place within capitalist economic structures and advanced technologies of reproduction, but this in no way elides the specificity of cultural work. Williams outlines four historical phases in social relations (types of employment, contracts, for example) between artists and the institutions of cultural production: the artisanal, the post-artisanal (including patronage), the market professional, and the corporate professional phase (including new media – cinema, television). For Williams the issue of artistic autonomy is thus not so much about the tension between markets and culture, but about artistic agency within newly organized production, which itself, for market purposes, cherishes individual autonomy and authorship. Within corporate cultural industries, 'fundamental questions of cultural autonomy and purpose are raised in quite new ways' because, although all creative workers are employees of owners and managers, 'this is of course never only an economic relationship' (p. 116). And cultural production is never only reducible to the economy precisely because of the specificity, aesthetics and history of the cultural object. To this end, after having charted the historical institutional phases, Williams, reminiscent of Becker's recent amusement (2006), asks thoughtfully: 'we now have the sociology, … but where is the art?' (p. 119). In contrast to Becker, who eventually indifferently dismissed cultural objects from the sociological analysis, Williams advocates powerfully and convincingly argues for 'a conceptual shift' to 'the works of art themselves' (ibid.).

The attention to the works of art themselves does not hypostasize 'superstructure' merely as reflection, ideological expression or social representation, but as intertwined with specific historical incarnations of 'the structure of feeling'. It is here that Williams introduces, however timidly, the notion of genre as an analytical tool and a potential enabler of sociological empirical work attentive to 'the works of art themselves': the genre is a concrete instantiation, local and historical, of the structure of feeling. It indicates the social aspects of the formal logic of the cultural object because it *organizes* the common characteristics and empirical consciousness of a group of writers who create in a particular historical situation (1980: 22-3). As such, the notion of genre displaces the non-sociological analytical pivot from isolated individual works and authors (unique, idiosyncratic) to certain 'real' and 'actual' (as opposed to abstract) 'communities of form' which *practice* (*perform*) the injunctions of the genre (p. 25). Even within the institutions of cultural production, genres remain nonetheless 'very general, and their reproduction is at least relatively autonomous' (1995: 194). The genre furnishes an autonomous sense of generation or of

a period (above and beyond economic relations of capital) through the provision of characteristic material elements or aesthetic devices such as tone, impulse, and tropes. In turn, the genre underpins the 'practical consciousness' visible through specific trajectories of action – it structures and organizes the individual uses and deployment of these materials. For Williams, certain formal 'devices', 'dispositions', 'modes of compositions' are in effect genre-bound: 'available to the artist as a received way of making his work, and available to others as a set of defined expectations and perceptions' (1995:197). And at this very juncture, Williams approximates Adorno's ideas about the genre's mediating power and its reciprocal relation to the 'spirit of the time'.

Yet, Williams more explicitly links the genre's mediating power to producer agency, and thus equates the cultural object with practice. Genres are not supra-historical, but historically situated and locally produced. To this end, Williams argues that socio-cultural analysis must do away with the nation that important literature is past, and take into account the relationship between the cultural object and 'its real process – its most active and specific formation' (1980:29) whereby the producer agency is inculcated by the genre's collective modes of making. Hence, although implicated in relations of capital and capitalist institutions, cultural producers preserve a margin of autonomy on the basis of the genre's relative autonomy and its power to autonomously influence 'practical consciousness'. Therefore, Williams argues, it is vital to discover 'the other level, at which the cultural producer defines, to himself, the nature of his own work' (1995: 45). For Williams, a producer's experience of relative autonomy is to be found at the level of practicalities of active composing or doing within the bounds of a genre: 'the move to "autonomy" is often no more than a kind of compositional emphasis' (p. 138). Congruent with this stance, Williams argues that even a 'bad' novel can be professionally executed and skillfully composed, for there is 'skillfully executed nonsense' or 'professionally brilliant hokum' (p. 125).

At an epistemological level, cultural materialism and social formalism undergird Williams's cultural production paradigm.

In the first place, cultural materialism presupposes that the production of cultural meaning is a matter of 'practical material activity'; it is a 'social creation of meanings through the use of formal signs' (1977: 38). In other words, it entails social-ized uses of material means of production, which for Williams includes anything from language to technologies of writing, but also electronic tools and communication systems.

It is because of this that Williams conceives of works of art as practice, and not as objects. The role of sociology is not to dissect the components of a work of art, but to discover the nature of compositional practice because the social relationships of production are evident or discoverable as:

> immediate conditions of practice – the signaled places, occasions and terms of
> specifically indicated types of cultural activity – and those which are so embedded
> within the practice, as particular formal articulations, that they are at once social and

formal, and can in one kind of analysis be treated as relatively autonomous
(1995:148).

This is the essence of Williams's social formalism: the formal standing of a work of art is profoundly social, and the social is formal. The soliloquy – a man speaking aloud to himself on stage – is historically one of the most distinct formal devices of drama. It is a common compositional mode that helps writers compose, and readers understand, but at the same time it is inseparable from the then new social conceptions of individuality, personal expression and the redrawn boundaries between the private and the public in the Renaissance period, when it first become consciously used. By habituation, such social order crystallizes into a structure of feeling. Yet, it is only in dramatic practice that such social relations immanent in the structure of feeling, could be practically composed in the form of a man speaking publicly as if to himself. In this way, the formal device, which internalizes social relations, becomes 'technical procedure' and 'working convention' (p. 147), or more precisely, 'a device of plot, to make intrigue explicit' (p. 145).

It follows from this, that Williams's sociology of culture stands at the intersection of the practical material activity of production taking place in specific institutional and historical contexts (cultural materialism), and cultural objects understood as practices, the internalized and internally developed sociality of genres (social formalism) that raises itself to the level of shared working convention.

Adorno-Williams: 'positive mediation'

What is strikingly similar in the arguments of both Adorno and Williams is the mediating power of genres on cultural production. The notion of mediation is where they both converge, in their effort to overcome the crude materialism and economic determinism of the base-superstructure model, by which the superstructure is reflective of or controlled by the base, and denied a social effectiveness of its own. In the Adorno-Williams conception of mediation, genres mediate cultural production in the compositional moment.

Adorno elucidates the notion of 'positive mediation' (*Vermittlung*) as central to the project of the sociology of music and constitutive of 'the works of art themselves'. When Adorno defends the tenets of his inchoate sociology of music, he most explicitly advocates aesthetic mediation as the task for sociological analysis:

> What I mean in other words, is the very specific question aimed at products of the mind, as to how social structural moments, positions, ideologies and whatever else, assert themselves in the work of art themselves. I brought out the extraordinary difficulty of the question quite deliberately and without reducing it, and thereby the difficulty of a sociology of music which is not satisfied with external arrangements, not satisfied with the position of art in society, with the effects it has in society, but wants to know how society objectivates itself in works of art (Adorno 1972: 128).

For Adorno, mediation is processual, a constant interaction between the subject and the object, the person and the world. As such it resides in material, formal properties or structures, which are handed down historically to producers in the form of genres or poetics, and with which they engage in a craftsmanship manner.

Williams argues for a 'positive understanding of mediation' sympathetically quoting from Adorno:

> "Mediation is in the object itself, not something between the object and that to which it is brought." Thus mediation is a positive process in reality, rather than a process added to by way of projection, disguise or interpretation (Williams 1977: 99).

The mediation can thus be observable in the formal properties of cultural objects and in producers' practices. It follows that cultural producers (composers or orchestra musicians in Adorno's case, and playwrights or actors in Williams's) are endowed with agency. They deploy, choose and rework specifically aesthetic devices immanent to the object that are conjectural and constellational. For both Adorno and Williams, mediation refers to the necessary processes of composition, which are a practical matter mediated by the genre. Unlike Gell and Becker, who advocated reading a producer's agency backwards – by inferring the production practice from the finished cultural object, the Adorno-Williams conception, in a way, looks forward – at the product in its becoming with reference to a genre. By linking mediation to genre, such conception, makes Bourdieu's ideas about practical mastery and improvisation researchable in their specificity pertinent to the field of cultural production itself. The genre is the historical and local incarnation of the spirit of the time and the structure of feeling, which permeate cultural production. The genre provides the inherited and handed-down (hence social) resources of making that influence the producers' subjectivities and trajectories of action – concrete choice of compositional devices, and critical reworking of formal elements (as incorporated in poetics). In this way, the genre and its poetics can be seen to articulate the social, at the same time as the social defines what is the locally and historically predominant form of the genre-poetics.

The Adorno-Williams conception of mediation largely abstains from empirical study. I draw on this composite conception of mediation, in order to understand genre-as-practice, as a constitutive rule that affords cultural production, understood both in its materiality and aesthetic dimension. To this end, I borrow the idea that genre furnishes modes, regimes, medium, schemes that organize and structure action, agency and activities. As such, it mediates the experience of production. This experience is not abstract or a-historical. On the contrary, it needs to be discovered empirically through a focus on the daily practices of production. Therefore, I extend the Adorno-Williams conception of mediation to encompass cultural producers and the way they not only interpret cultural objects in their making, but also make use of the genre and its properties: how producers interact with, act upon and are acted by genres in the process of

making. Therefore, genre-poetics is not mere stimulus, effect or cause, but what emerges as a cultural object is intentionality, or intentional relations between producers and genre-poetics.

It is important that Adorno-Williams's idea of mediation presents an analytical model of how to go beyond micro-social interactions within an art world or objective social relations of the field. Taken as a composite, the Adorno-Williams notion of 'positive mediation' (*Vermittlung*) lays the basis for an investigation of the formal or structural properties of cultural objects, and their function in the act of composition or production more broadly. It seems this is a first step towards according genres an *active status*, as opposed to merely objects of interpretation and explanation, in the processes of cultural production.

Yet, if Adorno and Williams posited the notion of genre as an analytical category, it is still not clear how it can be operationalized as a category with a performative or active force, a category that autonomously structures producer agency and intentions. To opertionalize the category of genre, one needs to consider the internal structural patterns of genre, to accept that the formal properties of the genre as encompassed in its poetics have the capacity to influence the way producers work and self-define. This means getting a comprehensive handle on the inner properties of cultural objects as socialized in genres, for which the need to look closely at insights from genre theory becomes inevitable. It is this operationalization of genres as both analytical and performative categories that I take up in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

GENRE IN ACTION

How are agency and authorship conceptualized in relation to genres? How do genres structure and mediate action? In order to elucidate the complex interplay between agency and genre, I draw on recent work within cultural sociology on 'culture in action' (Swidler 2001), also known as the Cultural Repertoires (CR) perspective (DeNora 2003). Such research focuses on how culture furnishes 'repertoires' or 'cultured capacities' out of which people build strategies for action, feeling or perception. The insistence on repertoires shifts attention away from genres as normative and static categories that exert a deterministic influence on cultural producers by providing a pre-scripted ways of doing (Adorno 1975). At the same time, understanding genres as resources for action does away with the long-held view of genres as mirroring the social order and class hierarchies (Bourdieu 1996). More importantly, such an approach brings cultural objects squarely back into the focus of the analysis.

In order to develop an understanding on how genres influence cultural production through the provision of appropriate, poetic and ethically responsible, ways of doing, perceiving and acting, (rather than merely serving utilitarian, managerial and marketing purposes), I take up here a wide range of scholarship. The aim is to arrive at a possible way of using genres, not as a heuristic device, but as a performative category – as something that not only classifies, but also acts (in the process of cultural production). At this point, the focus is not so much on what genres are or on their meaning as such, but on what they do, or enable producers to do. Therefore the purpose of bringing occasionally disparate scholarship into dialogue is to show (and learn from) how different disciplines have indeed theorised with various terminologies and methods '*the genre in action*'. Such grounding then allows us to ask what those who use genres do in practice. In other words, how do cultural producers produce genres (and produce themselves) through active use (engagement with, deployment and mobilization) of genres? In this respect, genres and authors, as well as genres and institutions, are co-constructive of each other, producing while using each other.

The idea of culture as a 'tool-kit' for action

I here will elucidate the idea of culture as a resource for action by drawing on Swidler's and DeNora's (who also builds on Swidler) insightful accounts.

One of the most prominent figures of the CR perspective, Ann Swidler (2001), conceives of 'culture' as consisting of 'equipment', 'resources', 'tools' or 'means' for action. Her premise is that people develop lines of action rooted in what they already know or are familiar with. In other words, people produce strategies for action because they are active 'culture consumers' (p. 93) of popular culture, religious rituals, symbols and so on – all of which provide the cultural materials that shape personal styles, skills and habits. Therefore, culture informs and sustains personal 'self-forming' – a certain type of self is maintained, constructed and refashioned by way of using or mobilizing cultural materials (p.71). Culture provides the larger worldview with which people justify their own choices, identity-formation, and desires.

For example, Swidler describes how one of her respondents, a co-pastor of a liberal Protestant church, 'happily borrows' from Eastern mysticism, Christianity and the pop culture of the 1970s to justify his 'reinvented' sense of self, the shift in his attitude towards parishioners, and newly developed managerial habits. Hippy culture, Swidler argues, provided a global style of optimism, candour and care for others with which he treated his parishioners; Eastern mysticism grounded his conviction that he was responsible for everything, since everything was him; Christianity posited a benign world based on eternal good, and so played into his cheerful approach to problem-solving. In this way 'culture' provided repertoires of action and 'allowed him to enact new ways of being in the world' (p.75) and 'to become a certain type of self' (p.79).

This perspective is a highly useful one since it elegantly does away with the sociological dichotomy of agency-structure and the deterministic political economic model of base-superstructure. In this view, social structure is itself constituted by culture. Through this prism, media or popular culture consumers are neither passive nor active agents, but they self-consciously act upon and act with cultural materials to attain certain ends in their daily lives. Culture structures even conditions action, in so far as it is self-consciously, critically, calculatively and mostly ironically worked upon in the process of routine, habitual, embodied or tacit everyday sense-making practices.

Yet Swidler's account, and more generally the CR perspective, have been criticized for failing to grasp the relationship and hierarchy among diverse cultural practices (DeNora 2003). Although there is potentially a wide range of available resources for action, some practices are more significant than others. As a result, some cultural resources overtake others, interconnect or disconnect. Swidler herself addresses and redresses this criticism by developing the concept of anchoring practices.

The core *anchoring practices* are those around which other practices revolve. This has to do with the stylistic and discursive properties of certain locally and historically situated contexts of interaction, which anchor or order associated practices. In this view structures or institutions, be they military power, educational systems or marriage, are anchored, performed and reproduced in and through everyday local practices. Structures are not abstract or conceptual entities, but

specific and lived experiences or actions. Therefore structure and practice are mutually co-constructive. According to Swidler, structure is enacted through the ways in which actors draw upon cultural repertoires, and cultural repertoires are patterned and conditioned by structure. To put it differently, culture is no longer only a structure of meaning or text to be decoded through reception, but a structuring medium, tool, or means of action that anchors practices. As a result, the question shifts from what *culture* does to or for people to what *people* do with culture.

What is here important for my study is that, in order to illuminate this point, Swidler (2000:89) takes up an example of an anchoring and structuring medium that is essentially a genre: 'the architect's plan'. To Swidler, if looked at through a Parsonian 'cybernetic' lens, the architect's plan is high in information (as it exerts a controlling influence over house construction), but low in energy (it is neither material – it does not provide a shelter – nor causal – it does not get the house built). In contrast, Swidler argues, the blueprint does not simply control action, it is also controlled by taken-for-granted assumptions and prior practices. The architect brings into the blueprint learned and socialized knowledge about available designs, materials, and landscape; a deep understanding of how a house is used as a home; techniques for attaining aesthetic effects; and finally his economic acumen – the size of the house, the complexity of design and quality are all fitted into a budget the client can afford. Moreover, the blueprint is incomplete as it leaves unspecified, but presupposes, yet another set of practices - the workers' craft, their communicative know-how, design literacy, and experience with materials. Swidler concludes:

> in short, the whole set of practices associated with a capitalist market economy are necessary to make the architect's plans a meaningful document that could mobilize or direct activities in such a way as to produce a house (2000:89).

The architect's plan both constrains and enables the practice of house-building, and in doing so is mediated by and mediates the relationships of production (relationship between architect and client; architect and design; architect and bricklayer, and so on). The architect's plan *anchors* (organises, governs) the practice of house-building, which is the same as saying the whole set of practices relative to house-building revolves around the architect's plan. Moreover, the design of the architect's plan is not only a matter of inter-subjective negotiations, but a reflexive dialogue with a range of materialities, proportions, city policies, client demands, and users' expectations -- all of which 'talk back' to the architect who is prepared to listen, as Yaneva (2005:871) contends in her ethnography of architectural design.

Swidler's account may well be translated into an account of how people interact and engage with genres as concrete and situated embodiments of culture. In this case, the genre (for instance the architect's plan, joke or a travel guidebook) is a set of larger – sometimes even implicit but enduring – 'constitutive rules' which anchor an elaborate practice such as that of house-building, an informal conversation or travelling. The genre, then, enables, or for that matter, constrains, a particular line of action. It furnishes modes of appropriate and inappropriate conduct in specific

local and temporal circumstances. Conduct fits into the poetics of the genres, as structurally patterned synchronous systems, that diachronically come to be expected by the audiences (see Jauss 1982; Todorov 1990 but also Iser 1989).This is what DeNora (2003:132), borrowing from social psychology, calls a 'fit' between culture (music in her case) and conduct. Action is fitted to ambience which is itself anchored by music. Music is made *appropriate* to a certain ambience, which in turn enacts *appropriate* action (O'Donnell, forthcoming).

The hypothetical example DeNora gives is that of a fast-food aesthetic that entails brisk service/consumption and sham cheerfulness. Such an aesthetic eschews, for instance, the genre of a funeral march written by Chopin to be played in the background since it would spawn slow, sombre and grave connotations that may put off consumers who have come to except brisk and cheerful service (action *anchored* in the quasi-genre of fast-food). According to DeNora (2003), to investigate such 'situated activities' of music means investigating how 'music gets into action'[28] that is how social agents 'do things with music' (p. 39). Therefore for DeNora, who also draws on Swidler, music is an active component in social practice, as it is 'a formative medium in relation to consciousness and action' and 'a resource for, rather than medium about world building' (p. 46). The recipients of music engage actively and strategically with music's properties which 'offer their recipients materials for types of responses, for building role relationships and their adjunct subject positions. … When they do this music can be said to "do" things, in this case to "get into" (inform, lend form to, structure) subjectivity' (p. 44). What I found extraordinarily inspiring in DeNora's approach is the analytical accent on culture's power to organize and structure social practice by probing the active status of music at the level where it is actually culturally operative: in the moment in which the music is drawn upon and deployed by recipients in their everyday lives. And, this is undeniably a shift in focus from interpretation of music (or hermeneutics more generally) to music as 'it makes things possible' – that is 'what music affords' (p. 46).

What implications for the analysis are there if one is to replace 'music' with 'genre', as genres are most obviously structurally or formally patterned cultural entities? First, DeNora's focus on music recipients has to be substituted with a focus on producers of genres (and every author is a producer of genre, inasmuch as there is no text outside a genre); and second, the focus on engagement with music properties is to be recast as a focus on the mobilization of genre properties or dominants. Indeed, DeNora's focus on 'what music makes possible' is highly resonant with the structuralist focus on genres as making textual production possible by virtue of their structural properties. Culler (2002) argued the activity of writing 'is made possible by the existence of the genre' (p.135), and Todorov similarly argued that genres with their 'secrets and formulas' 'make it possible to give what is written the reality of a book', but also that 'authors write in function of a genre' because the genre 'makes the writing possible' (p. 13 and p.18).

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[28] DeNora builds the 'music in action' argument drawing on Latour's 'science in action'

In what follows I will try to cross-pollinate ideas from literary and film genre theory, but especially socio-cognitive and pragmatic approaches to genres, as well as linguistic anthropology that had long treated genres as *resources for performance* and *animating, active forces* in the act of writing or speaking, with the possibility of sociologically investigating the genre as an active constituent of cultural production.

The genre takes the lead

In summary, according to the CR perspective, culture stands in a causal relationship to action because it provides the patterns and principles that guide action in specific local and historical circumstances. This is indeed the premise also of 'structuralist hermeneutics', as propounded by Alexander and Smith (2006), which I see as a propitious way forward in understanding the animating and active force of genres in cultural production.

The rhetorical theory of genre has long argued that people make use of learned and observed socio-linguistic tools, which are essentially genres, as a response to recurrent (that is, institutionalized) rhetorical situations (Miller 1984). Just as people make use of jokes in order to lessen tension in conversation, so do they use guidebooks to facilitate travel. Hermeneutical genre theory long contended that interpreters understand 'with genres' (see my discussion in the Introduction). Genres provide that sense of the whole: they are the means by which the interpreter/user arrives at a 'correct meaning' (Hirsch 1976:66). Just as people understand the sexual banter in a conversation as harmless because it happens within the genre of the joke (and not within that of a greeting, for example), so do they understand 'the realness' of travel through the 'objectivity' of the guidebook (guidebooks are expected to be objective and factual). Therefore, a gamut of diversified genres enables specific trajectories of action depending on recognizably familiar social situations or expectations. These genre-related strategies are honed over time so as to become full-fledged strategies of action. Paraphrasing Swidler, we may say that the genre provides action's schemes that constitute the day-to-day routines of its users. One can easily detect the overwhelming accent on genre users at the expense of producers. Nevertheless, it is a logical outcome of rhetorical and hermeneutic approaches to genre that users of genres (writers comprised) re-*produce* the genre while drawing on its resources so as to attain either appropriate expression or correct understanding. As a result, the genre is both the source and the outcome of action.

Therefore, rather than follow Swidler and DeNora in their discussions of users, I regard cultural production as constituted by a distinct set of practices furnished by the genre for *producers*. This is especially important because both the resources and the outcome of labour in cultural production are genre-bound (Ricoeur 1991). Therefore cultural producers deploy socially distributed genre-related resources (which are nonetheless based on a genre's structural properties) in order to make the institution of genre work – that is, to *do* author-reader interaction more generally, and to shape personal professional identities more specifically. Extending the CR perspective beyond its traditional focus on cultural/media users/consumers to the producers of

culture, I approach the genre as an anchoring device of professionalism and occupational sense of identity, as well as of industrial self-reflexivity. Cultural producers are simultaneously both users and producers of genres, and as such it is important to grasp their own categorisation and understanding of what actions constitute or contribute to distinct genre-related practices. The question is then, how does the genre govern and organise production activities in such a way as to produce a travel guidebook?

Recently, some media scholars have resorted to the CR perspective's focus on users and related practice theory as a way of conceptualizing media consumption. Couldry (2004:121), for example, usefully suggests approaching 'audiencing' beyond texts and media industries as 'a media-oriented practice'. Yet, he also suggests that a practice-led research agenda is more suited to 'heterogeneous' and 'unordered' consumption than to 'media production [which]is different, since it is generally a rationalized work practice' (p.126). Here I would take issue with him, since seeing media production as 'a rationalized' and thus pre-ordered, pre-controlled and pre-conditioned work practice is to fall back on the political economic assumption of media workers as mere puppets in managerial and commercial hands. Such an assertion reveals a failure to engage with the product-genre of cultural production, and what it means to be competent, professional *practitioners* of genres for the actors themselves. If *audiencing* is conceptualized as a media-oriented practice, can one see *producing* as 'genre-oriented practice'?

While the institutions of cultural production (such as publishing houses) are involved in stabilizing and consolidating them, as independent trajectories genres are the means through which the structures (of cultural production) are worked out and performed. Thus, genres are dual, even in Giddens's sense: they are both the medium and the outcome of practices (1991:27). For this reason, the genre needs to be explored in all its complexity, not just as an instrumentality of action. It is precisely in the context of cultural production, which is generally based on genres (think music, literature, painting, film) that the genre *takes the lead* (DeNora 2003:126). In such contexts it affords or permits (not only *causes*) the producers of genres (both individual and institutional) specific autobiographical possibilities – new ways of being and doing. What cultural producers do, think, feel or imagine takes place in and through the genre that they help produce. It is at this point that one can theorise the genre as an autonomous mediator of action, and not just as a medium or technology of control. It prescribes action, but only incompletely and collaboratively and in so far as it configures its users/producers as members of a specific, local and historical genre community which I will henceforth refer to as a *genre world* (Jensen 1998). The way a genre is appropriated by actors in practice is *dialectical* in the pure Adornian sense: it is both individual and collective, constraining and liberating, universal and particular.

Cultural producers not only orient themselves to, read or interpret a genre; they *do* things with, around and within it. In this sense the users of genre become producers who materialize that which is structurally patterned in the genre. In this sense, the genre is enacted structure. That is, the genre is not reproduced through norms and rules alone. The latter are anyway insufficient to

account for the enactment of the genre. The way people use these rules – working around them, cutting corners, despairing about, cherishing, or mourning them – enacts the genre in practice. Yet, this enactment does not need to be always conscious and calculative, which it often is, but is equally also intuitive, unobtrusive and implicit (in a very Bourdieu's 'practical sense'). Thus, genre-bound action is not always deliberate or designed to solve problems, and thus describable in terms of strategies, skill or causalities (the CR perspective conceptualises cultural action just as such). With protracted genre usage, user-producers embody the genre to the extent that their interrelationship becomes tacit, sensual and habitual. And this is all the more important when we focus on professional producers of culture who are bound by their occupational ideals, to do things professionally with genres and so produce texts/books that inevitably *ought to fit* into pre-expected (marketable) genres (Squires 2007).

Now the question is: how do actors draw upon genre-related resources so as to make commercially viable products? How do they *fit* their appropriate action into the genre? This again intersects with the idea of genre as a system of differences and familiarity (Rosmarin 1985), which is implicated in the ubiquitous process of product differentiation (Ryan 1991). Such a system constitutes a genre-related repertoire, which in turn is invoked, as actors tinker with, act upon and adjust their conduct to what seems appropriate in particular circumstances. It may be said that actors orient themselves to the genre, which modifies, frames and anchors the producing conduct. 'A good fit' is established when producing behaviour is aligned with what producers perceive to be different enough, but *necessarily* similar. They recognise the constraint of 'familiarity' and act upon it so as to produce 'differences'. In this way, the genre becomes a foundational structural force of action. And such a conception is far removed from the simplistic idea that genre pre-conditions and controls media production. The producers must remain attached to and comply with formulae, even institutionalized, which are pre-fabricated and constitute patterns of genre-bound action. At the same time, however, they ought to maintain a distance, and a sense of detachment and difference. At this juncture, one re-evaluates the collectively and institutionally sanctioned ways of doing as both constraining and enabling. Actively drawing on insights from genre theory, I will now try to elucidate this counterintuitive interplay in what follows.

Effectiveness of genres: genres as an institution

Even a cursory glance at the scholarship developed from within genre theory reveals that there are 'good' and 'bad' genres. In Rosmarin's rhymed gloss: 'a "good" genre describes, and a "bad" prescribes' (1985: 50). Bad genres *prescribe* lines of action *a priori*, and good genres describe the producing procedures *a posteriori*. In other words, a bad genre prescribes how to produce *familiarity*.

Genre criticism has long argued that the more a work defies the expectations of its audience with regard to familiarity, the greater the work's aesthetic value. To the degree that the distance between an audience's expectations of familiarity and the work decreases, 'the closer the work comes to the sphere of "culinary" or entertainment art … it satisfies the desire for the

reproduction of the familiarly beautiful' (Jauss 1982:25). For Jauss, works that succumb completely to the horizon of expectation are dying. The need to theorise the good genre's *deviance* from familiarity enticed genre criticism to furnish conventional specifications for 'good' composition grounded in typologies of 'good' procedures (a principle widely known as *poetics*). The techniques and recipes thus derived have gradually become the property of commercial literature, in the form of 'low genres' such as romances (Jameson 1975: 136).

It is precisely the notion of genre as a system of familiarity and similarity that Adorno claimed provokes 'pseudo-individualism' (1945:216) – an illusion of novelty amidst total standardization. In this sense, the genre is a rationalising, controlling device. The institutions of cultural production respond to the uncertainties of audience demand through institutionalization of genres, a process that Ryan (1991) insightfully calls 'formatting'. Formatting channels the performance in desirable directions and drives production towards predictable, that is familiar outcomes. In other words, it 'transforms the usual rules of a form into *necessity* in the workplace' (Ryan 1991:172, original emphasis). Within the institutions of cultural production the genre becomes 'a format' - company-advocated rules and creative policies enshrined in plans, memos, proposals, house-style manuals, rule-books which nonetheless operate at the level of stylistic variation and form. In formatting, *differentiation* becomes a systemic necessity, as much as the quest for familiarity. However commercial it may be, a cultural product must display a certain degree of 'difference' and 'novelty' so as to compete in the cultural marketplace (be recognised by its audience as different and thus worth paying for). The autonomous 'constitutive rules' of the genre are turned into a template for creation. Paradoxically then, the demands of commercialism are deeply embedded in autonomous trajectories. As Ryan puts it (1991:173, original emphasis):

> As naturalised commonsense of professional producing, this combination of antagonistic practices represents a set of unobtrusive controls operating through the embeddedness of the rules of the house, reflecting how the vast proportion of activity in large, established organisations goes on without personal directive and supervision – and even without written rules. … While the format proposes a desired outcome and prescribes the performance rules to achieve it - in a way that a script, for example, contains dialogue, set directions and so on, - it does not – nor *cannot* – tell the performer *how* to perform. The plan, [format] therefore, also represents the *limits* of rationalised control over cultural workers. ... the format still involves spaces within which cultural workers stand beyond direction.

Ryan's account is extraordinarily productive in the light of the sociological conceptualization of culture as a tool-kit of action. The genre's role within large-scale organisational domains is doubly articulated. It is both commercialized (the genre, with its capacity to link audiences, corresponds to specific cultural markets) and autonomous (it becomes a 'naturalized' professionalism). The genre's rules do not control action. It is the cultural professionals who self-reflexively act upon them within the scope of their professional ideals. At this juncture *a fit* is established between genre and appropriate conduct because the genre *is being performed* in

practice by professionals who recognise shared ways of doing things. Therefore, the genre and its rules are not completely pre-established or managerially imposed, but are re-formulated each time the producers engage with them. The genre is thus re-worked in the moment of performance. The genre-in-performance is actually a practice in the very narrow sense of a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several interconnected elements: 'forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge' (Reckwitz 2002: 249). In this sense, cultural producers are 'the carriers' of the practice – carriers of the routinised, both conscious and un-conscious ways of understanding, knowing, feeling, perceiving and most importantly doing (ibid.). By deploying certain genre-related devices, actors try to accomplish or 'subjectively carry out' particular institutional arrangements, that are themselves anchored in genres. Cultural logics are always anchored in institutions (Swidler 2000:205).

But what is the relationship between genres and institutions? Why is it possible that cultural producers become autonomous carriers of practice? And, how does the genre come to furnish a margin of differentiation, and thus individuality and autonomy?

Genre theory has long theorized, though never fully empirically researched, the genre as an institution. The structure of *genre as an institution* poses practical difficulties of action, to which the genre as an autonomous ontology gives multiple, rival or just partial solutions. As such the genre furnishes not only rational and deductive, but also emotive and intuitive, devices through which action is structured. The repertoire of cultured capacities available to cultural producers constrains the institutional order. Conversely, the pragmatic and practical strategies of action at the producers' disposal are oriented towards the institutional pattern itself. It may be said that the genre as a social institution is embedded within the institutions of cultural production in a kind of intricate *mise-en-abyme*. That is, the logic of the genre as an implicit *contract* between readers and producers is contained within the organisations of cultural production. How is this mise-en-abyme conceptualized?

Those scholars who no longer perceive genres in negative terms (as deviant or nonconformist) claim that all texts – even all literary works – participate in genres. In this view, the genre becomes the inevitable socio-cultural context in which readers and producers interact. It follows, that the genre is an interrelational category that links together the reader, cultural object and producer, and thus functions autonomously as 'an institution'.

Wellek and Warren (1948/1956) were the first to define the genre as an institution or as an 'institutional imperative': genres are neither principles of classification nor legalistic prescriptive systems of classical genre theory, but autonomous cultural/poetic realm which they nevertheless say does exert an effect upon writing (p. 226). Genres regulate production, yet are rooted in an independent logic of text-making, by which they become 'real, i.e. effective' (p. 262). According to Wellek and Warren the genre delimits, in an immanent fashion, the boundaries of what is

thinkable and doable for the writer in certain historical circumstances. A set of unwritten rules becomes insitutionlised, that is recognizable to and valued by the members of an institution (fellow producers, readers, publishers). In turn, writers, by way of an autonomous action, *use* genres to produce texts, and vindicate their institutional membership: 'one can work through, express himself through, existing institutions' (p.226).

Similarly, Dubois and Durand (1988) argue that all the activities of writers are genre-bound, and give rise to 'a separate genre world' (p. 144). By provisioning 'generic injunctions' the genre affects the division of labour within the genre world (p. 145). For Todorov (1990), the genre is a kind of *arena*, *a forum* where producers and consumers meet, rub off each other and jointly co-construct, intentionally or not, the 'generic system' within which texts are bought and sold, produced and consumed: 'It is because genres exist as an institution that they function as "horizons of expectation" for readers and as "models of writing" for authors' (1990: 18). To this end, Todorov, in a somewhat revised scholarly stance, argues that genres are not merely 'theoretical constructs' (clusters of common textual features deduced *ex post facto* through *meta-discourse*), but the recurrence of certain textual properties institutionalized as *a discourse* which forms the inherited 'generic system' or 'discursive institution' (p. 162). The genre is thus a product of the intersubjective interaction between writers and readers on the basis of codified, and learned, inherited discursive properties. It institutionalizes production and reception as historical and local interactions:

> On the one hand, authors write in function of (which does not mean in agreement with) the existing generic system and they may bear witness to this just as well within the text as outside it, or even, in a way between the two – on the book cover; … On the other hand, readers read in function of the generic system, with which they are familiar thanks to criticism, schools, the book distribution system, or simply by hearsay; however, they do not need to be conscious of this system (Todorov 1990: 18-19).

If one approaches genres as an institution (world, arena), then the genre reveals itself as a professional system that maintains genre-specific values based upon a contract with audiences and verisimilitude to its inner-workings. As a result, genre worlds establish what constitutes 'innovation' and 'good work' with respect to those generic boundaries (see Jensen 1984; Dornfeld 1998; Grindstaff 2002; Born 2010). Therefore, regardless of the level of adherence to generic rules, a successful generic production is never 'predetermined', nor is the genre necessarily restrictive.

Yet, literary genre theory, however useful in explaining that every textual production is genre-bound, remains coloured by an incurable structuralism. The 'writer's model of writing' and 'the reader's horizon of expectation' are ultimately an abstract construct inducted by the means of textual, not empirical analysis.

It was film, rather than literary genre theory that ventured into explaining the genre as an institution within the institutions of cultural industries (and not just within the elusive *institution of literature*). Largely owing to the unconcealed and unambiguous connection between the film and entertainment industry in an American context and the post-war pervasiveness and popularity of film genres spurred on by the widespread expansion of cinema and television, it was film scholars who first latched onto the idea of genre as an institution within cultural industries, on the assumption that the genre was not a critically or theoretically constructed term, a result of detached conjectural induction, but *an active entity* which was institutionalized by and itself institutionalized actively the film industry.

The key figures of modern film genre theory, Rick Altman (1999) and Steve Neale (1990), conceive of the genre as a dynamic category that offers institutionalized modes of action. Through this prism, the genre and the genre system proffer cultural tools that link production, exhibition and reception in a circular loop. The industry mobilizes the genre for promotional and definitional scopes, as it is the genre that unassumingly yet powerfully links cultural products to audiences. According to Altman, 'genres can serve as institutions only because they are in turn backed up by other institutions, far more material in nature' (p. 91). Among those material institutions are: production companies, exhibition institutions, governmental agencies and critical establishments. The means that these institutions utilize in the process of *institutionalizing genres* (regulating the audience-text-producer triad) are both criticism constructs (coming from journalists, film schools) and industrial self-reflexive discourses (embodied in ads, posters, trade videos, iconography, company catalogues, repertoires, and self-referential promotional materials). Therefore, Altman argues that genres are endowed with a 'generic agency' (p. 99) that structures and organizes the intuitional, mainly promotional and marketing actions. All the different uses to which the genre is purposively put either by producers (while creating in accord with formats) or the audiences (while consuming in agreement with formats) is reflected in the 'discursivity of the genre' (ibid.). Altman's views reverberate closely with Neale's (1990) study of film genres where he argues that the film genre (western) is located in the 'industry's inter-textual relay' or 'the various verbal and pictorial descriptions' (p. 49) by which the industry makes use of the genre for self-definitional purposes. To this end, Neal makes an argument for incorporating the 'industrial and journalistic discourses or labels' (ibid.) in the analysis of film genres. Neal declaratively contends that 'mass-produced, popular genres have to be understood within an economic context, as conditioned by specific economic imperatives and by specific economic contradictions – in particular, of course, those that operate within specific institutions and industries' (p. 64).

Yet, although film genre theory championed a processual and dynamic concept of genre, it hardly did away with the notion of genre as a heuristic category. Its proponents focused not on how genres enable institutional processes of self-reflexive production, but on how they are presented to appear as commercially viable products. This is largely due to the fact that film genre analyses read industrial practices from cinematic texts, and not from empirical investigation.

Eventually, they fall prey to cultural pessimism and utilitarianism: the industry rationalizes production through the genre. As the genre entails constant reiteration of familiarity, the production of familiar/similar genres allows for effective redeployment of resources (props, costumes), labour and intellectual property.

To understand how genres are used in practice within institutions, one needs to look elsewhere than literary and film genre theory, to the rhetorical conceptions of genre.

Genres as tools and resources: enacting genre worlds

Although the traditional literary and film genre theory made room for understanding genres as developing culturally and socially, and always at the nexus between production and consumption, it did not give any empirical evidence for how this happens in practice. The compositional or rhetorical genre theory approaches genres as purposive and functional, whereby the purposes and functions are activated within a community. This scholarship showed ethnographically how genres actually sustain and institutionalize genre worlds. In this view, genres are considered mediators of social activities (Bazerman and Prior 2005). Genres are mediating tools that people use purposefully and intentionally to achieve certain communicative aims. In other words, genres play into the structuring and maintenance of social interaction and social organization because they underpin human activities and practices, which are themselves part of larger webs of social activities.

For the proponents of composition theory, the genre is a 'tool' with which producers achieve certain ends: 'eulogize, apologize, recommend one person to another, instruct customers on behalf of a manufacturer, take on an official role, account for progress in achieving goals' (Miller 1984:165). This approach offers a performative specification of genre which is predicated not on substantiative textual matters or even structure, but 'on the action it is used to accomplish' (p. 151). Through this prism, the genre is understood as a recurrent social action that 'fits' into recognizable rhetorical situations. The main upshot of this argument is that the genre is consensual, a result of the activities taking place within specific discursive community, which recognizes and values, the genre. When people use the genre as a tool in specific communicative activities, then they engage in genre activities or genre practice. All social activities can be viewed as genre practice inasmuch as the genres shape and structure the social activities by way of people strategically putting them to use.

Drawing on cognitive psychology, Devitt (2004) argues that in genre activities, genres enable writers to make choices, rather than enforcing them to conform. In order to be creative, the 'creative mind' must first recognize and follow the patterns (what psychologists call convergent or vertical thinking or 'fitting') and only then depart from already existing paradigms (divergence or lateral thinking). Lateral thinking revises, requalifies and remakes the observable patterns, while vertical thinking helps the new knowledge fit the pattern again, thus making it intelligible and

interpretable. Genres contain within themselves the seeds of convergence and divergence. 'A good writer' must recognize a genre by converging disparate textual instances into a single entity, a genre indeed. By seeing how the new text appropriately diverges from the pattern helps create a unique text that in turn fits into the genre (p. 152). According to Devitt, this interplay between convergence and divergence is almost naturalized when it comes to professional users/producers of genres. Professional writers, in their expert practice, routinely concentrate on what is unique to a particular materialization of a genre. In this way, the expert practice is underpinned by genre practice – a specific consideration of audience, time and space, structural textual models and techniques, and not what is pre-established. Experts have already habituated the genre in their actual practice. In other words, genres are constitutive of social arrangements and expert practices, which relay on genres for their own reproduction and competence.

In this line, the most insightful studies of this kind shed light on how genres are actually put to work within organizational institutions by genre practitioners. As such, genres anchor institutional arrangements, and impose structure on action through the ways in which practitioners do things with the genres on behalf of their clients. The gist of the argument is that genres play into profession-building and profession-maintenance while underpinning conscientious service to clients. Once the professions are institutionalized, the professionals maintain their membership of the profession by competent usage of genres (Bazerman & Paradis 1991: 4-5). In other words, the genre shapes the daily actions of individuals through its operational or agentic capacity. Devitt (1991) brilliantly shows how genres (the types of texts written by tax accountants such as research memoranda or tax protests) furnish lines of expert conduct in a tax accounting company, if only because the practitioners themselves acknowledge and cherish the authority of these genres for 'doing' their professional relationship with clients. Accountants perform 'quality work' on the basis of what they have learned constitutes the 'generic ideal' (p. 353) of tax accounting: new accountants are clued in the profession by learning the 'tricks' of the 'genre system' which will result in past 'residual' texts influencing the creation of future genre-bound texts. Novice accountants concentrate on generic convergence, so as to become adept at recognizing the importance of the genre (copying or rewriting past texts) for a particular communicative situation. Only afterwards do they learn the salience of divergence for their professional success. Hence, Devitt (ibid.) concludes that genres constitute professional communities: 'each text functions to accomplish some of the firm's work; together the texts describe a genre system which both delimits and enables its work'.

Another piece of research, conducted by Doheny-Farina (1991) on business proposals, underlines the genre's effectiveness to provide a structured environment within which professional behavior is constructed. His research shows how a business plan shapes organizations by mobilizing the activities of investors, software developers, and the company's founders themselves. The business proposal activates the day-to-day management of the company. This study demonstrates how action is fitted to genres, which themselves anchor the founding

practices (fund-raising and administering) of the start-up company. Thus, Doheny-Farina states that creating the business plan (by adhering to its generic requirements) actually at the same time creates the company itself (p. 307). This is an important point since it alludes to the genre's effectiveness not only to structure subjective action, but to constitute the institutions that enshrine them as well.

Interestingly, research in organization and management studies latched onto rhetorical approaches to genres and focused on the communicative practices within a professional community. It contends that the genre is the primary mode of social action that is constitutive of and constitutes a professional world (Yates & Orlikowski 1994:542). It functions as an organizing structure that never fully determines action and works in a particular way upon its practitioners not only to inflect moods and attitudes but also interaction. In this way, organizational genres such as memoranda *anchor* the organization. The members of the community fit their actions in these genres that delimit conventionalized proper or appropriate behavior. It is this that Devitt calls 'genre etiquette' – 'following generic etiquette enables one to "fit in," to be marked as belonging to the group' (2004:147). In order to follow, and most importantly to innovate within, the generic etiquette, one must acquire the appropriate modes of doing thus prescribed. Genre users' identities are constructed through engagements with genre etiquette.

Similarly but yet perplexing, given that these scholarships do not communicate with each other, linguistic anthropology, or 'the ethnography of speaking', as it is commonly known, conceptualizes independently genres as regular and regularized tools that organize the discourse and co-produce social arrangements such as marketplaces, for example. Similarly to the compositional studies of genre, the ethnography of speaking focuses on the dynamics of performance and practice relative to genres in specific social circumstances such as tea drinking ceremonies or healing sessions. In an early account, Richard Bauman makes a programmatic definition of genres in the ethnography of speaking, by which 'genres' ought to be understood both as 'a ready-made way of packaging speech' (1987: 5) and 'as a resource for performance, available to speakers for the realization of specific social ends in a variety of creative, emergent, and even unique ways' (p. 6).

In this latter work, Bauman (2001) details ethnographically how genres (the spiel and call) accomplish 'a routine marketplace task' in a local Mexican outdoor market -- the call *shapes*, and not just depicts, the sale of staples such as watermelons, whereas the spiel *shape*s more luxurious products such as pantyhose (p.74). For Bauman, as for Swidler, genres are 'resources for the accomplishment of social ends in the conduct of social life' (p. 59) in a poetic or cultural-ized way. The formal and pragmatic features of the generic framework are variably 'mobilized' by actors in marketplaces in their 'daily practice', thus enticing poetic differentiation -- the particular textual expression is never fully reducible to the generic model by virtue of diversified usage/function.

Taken together, these approaches emphasize the genre's mediating role in social life. By focusing on non-literary genres within communicative/discursive communities, this strand of analysis convincingly shows that the genre is not an antonym to creativity and professional autonomy. The genre user is bound to, yet free to choose from, an available *spectrum* of genres at her disposal (what Devitt calls 'genre sets' and Yates & Orlikowski 'genre repertoire'): the genre that most properly fulfils the intended social function in a particular social/professional context (say for example a job interview or business proposal). It is not difficult to infer from this that an incurable functionalism hovers over these approaches. The genre contributes to a wider social function, such as profession-building or social integration (understood as functioning wholes). The social function determines the genre choice (although some users are more and other less proficient or productive in the choosing process). Every genre is associated with some domain of activity, which in turn prescribes appropriate genres. Yet, if one bears in mind that the rhetorical approaches to genre are pedagogical – used in teaching students of English to link particular types of writing or speaking to social purposes – then such functionalism becomes a pragmatic device. Again, then the genre has been associated with 'learned templates' 'writing schemes' or 'patterns' to be emulated by students in social situations of communicative anxiety and uncertainty.

Yet, what I want to take from these empirical studies of genre use is that the genres are formal models, obeying their own independent logic, but which only make sense when used within 'genre worlds' or communicative practices. Genres indeed furnish appropriate modes of conduct by which producers fit their action and behavior into professional communities. However, I want to depart from the implied functionalism and utilitarianism by seeing genres not as a gamut or repertoires from which one chooses with a view to fulfilling some social function or achieving personal goals, but as resources that shape the practical doing and self-understanding in an immanent fashion. The genre prescribes but does not enforce producers to act in certain ways. Genres are not categorical cultural frameworks generated by functional necessity, but they supply an autonomous sense of shared style, aesthetics and ethics, and by the same token, as sense of belonging and expertise.

But, how is a process of cultural production squarely centered on one particular genre to be theorized while keeping an account of the genre-specific *modus operandi*? Can one develop an understanding of genre as developing in *one* specific genre world, such as that of the travel guidebook? Is it possible to argue that the genre not only accomplishes goals or ends, but helps producers clearly delineate those goals and ends in the process of production? In a rarely precocious study Colie (1973) explains how, by constant and appropriate use of the resources of 'the unwritten genre rules', Renaissance writers fashioned themselves as professionals. Colie makes an argument for 'the social importance of generic systems for writers as members of a profession' that 'governed (- a vile phrase) and contributed to (- an O.K. phrase) writers and writing' (p.8). 'The conventional variations' are programmed by, and can only be recognized and valued within, the generic system in which they operate. Slevin (2001), who has taken up Colie's

ideas, argues that Renaissance writers employed genres not as codification of stylistic variation; they simply *inhabited* the genre: they thought, felt, perceived in available 'kinds' learned through community participation in reading and composing. Therefore, the genre is not only understood or embedded within communities, but more importantly genres make possible the activities of the people participating in the community, that can now be called 'a genre world'.

Such thinking leads me back to the inspirational conceptions of genres as the *positive mediation* of 'structures of feeling' (Williams) and 'brotherhood of forms' (Adorno) which I discussed in Chapter 1. Because genres embody social experiences, local communities and a historical relationship between producers and audiences, they provide tools for the realization of the *practical consciousness* of difference and familiarity in historical circumstances, collegial relationships of production, feeling of tones, devices, forms, and kinds. In a word, through their functioning in practice (that equals poetics, as discussed in the previous chapters), genres enact genre-specific professionalism and as a result give rise to locally and historically situated genre worlds, which are institutionalized within the institutions of cultural production. These in turn sanction the producer-cultural object-audience relationship.

Now that I have established that genres function as a *mise-en-abyme*, an institution within an institution, and thus both commercialized autonomous, differentiated and familiar, we need to discuss how this works in practice. How do they proffer resources upon which cultural producers can draw? How do genres afford ways of doing, reflecting, and perceiving the process of text-making? How do the cultural institutions of genre function within economic and social institutions of cultural production? How does the genre proffer modes of professionalism? How does it actually afford the construction of a specific historical and localized genre world? The practical deployment of genres in production practice is left untouched by traditional genre theory.

Genre as a set of affordances

Now I have come a long way from the understanding that the genre in cultural production is a straitjacket or a plain mechanism of control that *prescribes* action, as Adorno had it; and even further away from the idea that genres 'reflect' or 'mirror' social class and distinction, as Bourdieu maintained. The genre-producer relationship is not causal, but relationally interdependent. The genre exists through usage (its pragmatic force), which in turn enacts competent (professional) genre producers. It does something for those (cultural producers) who appropriate it, and are professionally bound to do things with it, around it and through it, and for whom the genre *matters*. I suggest that the genre can be seen as *a set of affordances,* that is affords specific, possible and plausible, action trajectories. In arguing for the importance of the notion of affordances in the study of the role of genres in cultural production, I here bring together James Gibson's (1977) theory of *affordances* and Alfred Gell's (1998) somewhat unarticulated, but nonetheless obdurately present and powerful, idea that a ' "corpus" of artworks' can be viewed as a distributed object (p. 221). That a 'corpus of artworks' or a 'corpus of texts' refers to genre can

be seen in earlier scholarship on genre theory (Mittell 2004:18; Nichols 2001:20; Neale 2002:43 inter alia). The idea of genres as distributed objects has since been taken up by Born (2005a:28).

Such a rapprochement will help me *materialize* the *action* afforded by what has already been determined as '*unwritten* poetics' of genres (Colie 1973:4), '*unspoken* models' of reading and writing (Todorov 1990:18) and '*subtle* and *silent'* rules of the genre' (Devitt 2004:213). The notion of affordances is potentially useful in explaining the opportunities and constraints inherent in genres that become manifest and articulated once producers actively engage with the structurally patterned immaterial logic of the genre-poetics.

Gibson developed the concept of affordances in psychology to describe the interaction between animals (and people) and the environment. Crudely put, the affordance of an object is a combination of its physical properties (substance, surface) taken with reference to the people (or animals) that utilize them: 'the affordances of the environment are what it offers animals, what it provides or furnishes, for good or ill' (1977:68). Objects afford people activities: offer ways of living and being, or simply modes of behavior (nutrition, for example). People recognize the affordances or the lack of affordances which are thus directly perceivable. In other words, the physical or material properties of an object (those properties that are tangible, audible, visible, or odorous) are positive, that is real, but only *in relation to* the people who perceive them as affording or furnishing possibilities of doing. This Gibson describes as '-*ableness*', which puts en emphasis on what object's properties can do rather than on how we can define them (English 2011:78). The affordance is neither an objective nor a subjective quality or value of an object. Affordances emerge in the interaction between the subjects and objects. Therefore, as Gibson contends, physical properties are not an issue for classical physics, but for ecological physics that studies 'the meaningful environment' (p. 67). They exist relationally as *invariable* facts of the environment: that is, always *in relation with*, but not *as a function of*, interaction. For example, water being *substantial* (property) affords drinking, but also drowning; being *solvent* affords bathing and washing; being *fluid* affords pouring, but does not afford support or a prop (p. 71). That is the same to say, the water is drink-*able* or wash-*able,* that is, it affords the distinct possibilities of action – washing or drinking. Thus, the material properties of water can enable or limit the range of possible interpretations of it and can configure the uses to which it can be put to use by active subjects that always judge what water (or any other material feature) is good for.

What are the properties of a genre? These are not physical in the sense of properties immanent to *things*, but *distributed* properties that are nonetheless material. A genre's properties are invariant, real and, thus relatively autonomous in that they do not entirely depend on the observer's point of view or attribution of meaning, let alone managerial impositions. They do not belong to texts or to producers, even less so to media owners. They are neither semiotic nor proprietary. Rather, they exist *relationally*, as inter-textual and inter-subjective.

But, where do these properties come from? If the genre's properties are relatively invariant and real, then how can one account for individual difference, innovation or even historical change writ large? It is precisely because the genre exists in a web of textual and subjective relations that it generates invariances. These invariances act as a kind of 'social glue' (Latour 2005) that holds together the specific arrangements of texts, institutions and subjects of cultural production/consumption across spatial and temporal distances. It is the invariances that provide the necessary degree of permanence against which change and differences can be gauged. But this is not in terms of an inventory or classification of common themes, recurrent topics or semiotic patterns abstracted from texts, as classical genre theory so adamantly argued. The genre is made up of ties between animate and inanimate instances (Latour 2005). As such, they form a corpus of texts or 'distributed objects' which possess distributed properties that afford agency dispersed in space and time. It is these distributed properties that shape the *ableness* of the genre, that is what a genre can do or what it is good for. Because of the intersection of difference and familiarity connected to genres as distributed objects, genres do something for their users/producers: they provide the means for professionalized action that is *appropriate* action or performance. This is indeed shifting the attention from genres as taxonomic labels or classificatory backgrounds to genres as active elements of production. As Latour argued 'we must learn to attribute – redistribute – actions to many more agents than is acceptable to either materialist or the sociological account' (1994:33). If understood as a set of affordances genres can be seen in their mediating role, and as participants in the distributed activity geared towards the production of art (Hennion 2003). However, much in the spirit of Latour's (1994:33) 'hybrid actor composed of gun and gunman', the active role of genres can be grasped only in relation with the concrete, historically and locally situated cultural producer, who engages with a genre's affordances for the fulfillment of this or that goal, scope or professional task.

Contemporary genre theory superbly provided a theory, although by no means empirical 'action' evidence, that each textual instance provides links to past texts and builds connections with future texts. Biological metaphors of genres as organic units that have relatively circumscribed historical existence in time and space (they are born, mature and perish) are not only recurrent but somewhat entrenched in genre theory (see Fowler 1971; Jauss 1982). It is probably Bakhtin (1984) who most succinctly captures the 'organicist' relationship between genres and individual texts which account for genre's historical vigour:

> Genre is reborn and renewed at every stage at the development of literature and in every individual work of a given genre. This constitutes the life of the genre. … A genre lives in the present but always remembers its past, its beginnings. Genre is a representative of creative memory in the literary development. Precisely for this reason genre is capable of guaranteeing the *unity* and *uninterrupted continuity* of this development (p. 106, original emphasis).

Within a genre the text bears familial resemblance (genetic inscription) to other prior and anticipated texts through the invariance of certain properties (Iser 1989). The interrelationship between tangible textual instances and people dispersed in time and space, forms what Gell (1998), following Husserl's phenomenology of time, described as 'distributed objects'. Gell identifies the oeuvre (of Duchamp) or the stylistic tradition (Mori meeting houses) as distributed objects through the 'notion of "corpus" of artworks' (1998:221), which, as noted above is, strongly reminiscent of genre theory's commonplace definition of genre as a 'corpus of texts'.

Born (2010; 2005a) suggests that in the same way that Gell thought of the artist's *oeuvre* and stylistic tradition, one can approach genres as distributed objects. According to Born, the Gellian approach to artistic oeuvre and stylistic traditions works 'at an individual and a supra-individual level- for a corpus of works, or for styles over time (or genres) that integrate particular instances of creativity into a higher-order unity' (Born 2005a:21). This is how Born further summarizes this point: 'an oeuvre (or genre), Gell concludes, is an object distributed in space and time, where the relations between individual artworks map out a web of retentions and protentions' (Born 2010:184). Similar to the *oeuvre*, a genre is a corpus of works, produced at different times and places and glued together by invariant material properties. Taken together, they form a macro-object or temporal object that evolves over time (Gell 1998:233), indexing a distributed person (collective authorship of that specific genre world). Each material instance of the distributed object points backwards (retains memories and traces of past texts or what Gell calls *retentions*) and jumps forward (anticipates future texts or *protentions*). And, this is indeed the point that structuralist scholars made in contradistinguishing genres as 'backward-looking categories' and genres as 'forward looking categories' (Guillen 2000:33-35). Moreover, the theories of writing or composition and the ethnography of speaking, I described earlier, had indeed shown empirically that genres must be understood as 'distributed' among all, past, present and future, participants in the genre world, and that genres are, thus emergent from a historical network of connections between people, tools, systems of activities, workplaces and so on. In Bazerman and Prior's (2005) words, genre practices 'are distributed' since they involve 'learning to act with other people, artifacts and environments, all of which are in an ongoing process of change and development' (p. 145). As I have already argued in the introduction, it is the genre, now defined as a distributed object with its own set of affordances, that furnishes, historical and socially sanctioned, possibilities for future action within a specific genre through its structural properties that have to be studied as they get into action.

The crucial contribution that Gell (1989) makes is that the totality of, for example, an oeuvre is a cognitive process, a movement of inner, biographical *durée* (Bergsonian idea of lived time), as well as an arrangement of materially existing external objects. If transposed to the realm of genres, then it may be said that the specific material arrangements immanent in genres duplicate and reproduce collective consciousness and agency through an adherence to shared generative

genre/stylistic properties, by reference to which one assigns work to genres[29]. In the purest Latourian sense then, genres and producers mutually co-construct each other. The genre and its properties are not to be understood as determined by social interaction or institutions, but as full-fledged actors who 'make a difference in the course of some other agent's action' (Latour 2005: 71). Genres possess animating power in the act of cultural production. In fact, in Latour's 'sociology of associations', the properties and effectiveness of any entity can only be thought of *relationally* as embedded in networks of relations that mediate and transform those properties in every individual instance of action it enables. In this sense, objects delegate action or make other agents do things (p.79). It follows that genres are entanglements of objects and humans, and the continuity of genre-related action zigzags from one to another (p. 75).

As a result, a holistic analysis of cultural production must incorporate the genre's properties back into analysis. Genre properties, as invariable and relational, have been theorized by Jakobson (1987) as 'generic dominants' and by Derrida (1980) as 'the law of genre'. Building on such an understanding would signal a return to materiality, and rule out the reducibility of the aesthetic to socializing and historicizing forces in the analysis of cultural production. In this sense, the genre appears as a *mediator* that overflows its makers. As such, the process of creation is not seen as individualistic and original, distant and unfathomable, but 'just more distributed' (Hennion 2003:90). According to Hennion, a cultural object *happens* as a result of the 'work of a work of art' (p.82), which is a collective work in a 'distributed' sense, taking place in 'interstices', 'events' and 'happenings', between material, non-human and human actors -- gestures, bodies, media – and not in 'the slightly crazy position of attributing everything to a single creator' (p. 90). This accent on dominants allows us to approach the cultural object in its collective, historical and diachronic character, yet also in directly and synchronously experienced individual usage of artistic devices, aesthetic functions, modes, styles, and tropes (that I have defined as genre-poetics).

To accept that genres are sets of affordances (on the basis of their being a corpus of texts dispersed in time and space) is to eschew the causality between genre and action. Genres do not enforce or control action, inasmuch as they are not determined or controlled by institutional forces. The affordances that emerge from the genre are relational, and happen only in relation to how the object's properties are being handled, acted upon and incorporated in daily practice by user-producers, who in turn are actively constructed by that very same appropriation of genre's properties in practice. Being a competent practitioner of genre requires knowledge of and adeptness at using the resources (possibilities of action) afforded by the genre. In this way, through the notion of affordances the notion of genre can become an analytical tool that transcends the view of genre as dispersed textual instances, and activate it as an animating force of production.

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[29] The reference to human agency and action is removed from genre theory in favour of genre anthropomorphism, see Bakhtin above.

Once it has been established that genres possess affordances, one can say that they encourage but also obstruct the course of cultural production. As such, genres furnish cultural producers *distributed, historically protracted and intersubjective tools* for text-making that are ethically conscientious and aesthetically sound, but also calculative and economizing. In this sense, the genre shapes and activates a specific genre world, which recognizes the salience and authority of the genre's affordances for professional agency. At the same time, these tools are not mere instrumentalities. Since they act as the genre's dominant properties, and parameters of action, they are also simultaneously the end of, but also the impetus for, production of cultural objects.

Genre's properties: dominants or the laws of the genre

The concept of the genre's properties or dominants was first put forward by members of the Russian Formalist School. Russian Formalists have principally defined the dominant as a positive and material principle of the text by which texts are culturally and historically operative. The generic dominants are a set of identifiable traits which span time and space, and which specify the genre, in terms of its prevalent embodiment in specific spatio-temporal contexts. Dominants in the narrowest sense represent *a functional device* that *functions* as 'the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components' (Jakobson 1987: 41). For Jakobson 'the dominant' organizes literary functions, artistic devices and/or literary practices. The dominant determines the value and not least the hierarchy of artistic devices. As such, it acts as a 'mandatory and inalienable constituent' of genres (ibid.) within social relations by producing multiple discourses and differences.

Similarly, for Derrida, generic codes or identifiable traits function as 'the genre-clause' – 'a clause stating at once the juridical utterances, the precedent-making designation and law-text, but also the closure, the closing that excludes itself from what it includes' (one can also speak of 'a floodgate [*écluse*] of genre' (1980: 65). Generic codes authorize the adjudication of generic propriety or what is to be included or excluded from the domain of a specific genre. The remarkable traits or the dominants are not, however, a sign of belonging to already finalized or pre-determined genre categories, but a manifestation of, and participation in the process of genre formation. In Derrida's perspective, the genre is not only a taxonomic enterprise (identifying classes of textual corpuses) but a mode of working within and beyond the laws of the genre. However, Derrida does not subscribe to a normative idea of genre - the genre imposes the rules to be obeyed – but conceives of the roles of the genre as a resource that provides paths for action:

> As soon as the word 'genre' is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one
> attempts to conceive it, a limit is drawn. And when a limit is established, norms and
> interdictions are not far behind: 'Do' or 'Do not' says 'genre' (1980: 55-56).

Derrida thus propagates the idea of genre as *doing* something for producers on the basis of 'genre-clauses'. It is in this way that the genre outlines lines of appropriate and inappropriate

conduct. And that is a question of respect: 'one must respect a norm', but not too rigidly (p. 56). Cultural producers perceive and readily identify the laws of the genre or the dominants, that in Gibson's terms do not change as the observer and users change goals or ends. The generic dominants are always there ready to be perceived (and learned), by both audiences and producers. Producers gauge and experience the value of generic features by the standards of their own bodies, cognition and competences, and yet within a historical and localized definition of genre-poetics which outlines what it is possible to do at that specific time and in that specific place (see Culler 2002, Todorov 1990).

Let me clear about one thing. The dominant should not be taken to imply an intrinsic component or inner property of a singular textual instance. It is not an exclusive feature contained or identifiable in the deep structures of an isolated text. Nor does it reside ontologically within the discursive bounds of single texts, let alone in hidden meanings buried under the linguistic surface. Rather, it exists 'in *the interstices* between texts'; that is, in 'an exterior articulation' and 'positive manifestation of joint and recurrent categorical properties' that run through and float across texts, while never fully belonging to any of them (Mittell 2004: 13-14). This is what Derrida calls the law of genre: 'the law of participation without membership' (1980:63) which amounts to dominants 'belong[ing] without belonging' (p.65). The dominant 're-marks' the distinctive traits which help adjudicate the participation of a text in a generic corpus, since there is no genre-less text, in the same way that there is no text-less genre.

The methodological import

Against this backdrop the question arises: If the dominants 'belong without belonging' (the gist of structuralist approaches to genre), then where is the site of sociological analysis of the role of genres in cultural production?

One possible answer is through an accent on how the genre's dominants or laws are deployed and worked with in producer practice. In this way the focus will be on genre dominants as a set of affordances that make possible production practices, or in other words that serve as the very groundwork for actual producer work. This is how genres work *in situ*, here and now, both for individual professional self-understanding and 'industrial self-reflexivity' (Born 2002; Mittell 2004; Caldwell 2008). And this *work* consists not only of a producer's interpretation or negotiations of the genre properties[30], but of how they are used, appropriated, deployed and mobilized in production practice. It follows that *the working of the genres* can be followed at two levels: first, at an institutional level, by focusing on institutionally-instigated 'surface manifestations and common

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[30] See the discussion by Born 2010; Dornfeld 1998; Grindstaff 2002 in the Introduction.

articulations' of genre (Mittell 2004:13); and second, on an individual actor level, by focusing on what producers do with, around and through the genre properties (DeNora 2003; Swidler 2002).

First, at an institutional level, Mittell (2004), following Foucault, argues that genres exist not as *a priori* classificatory schemes, but through 'discursive instances surrounding a given instance of generic process' (p. 25) identifiable at various sites of analysis that help 'define, interpret and evaluate' the genre (p. 16, p.36). These definitional, interpretive and evaluative practices include texts and audience responses, but also scheduling decisions, press releases, behind-the-scenes features, and channel or network branding – all of which enunciate the genre. The dominants in this regard may be taken to account for what Altman (1999:99) has called the 'multi discursivity' of genres, and consequently the genre itself may be understood as 'discursive process' (Mittell 2001: 8-10): everyone who uses the genre may be said to 'speak' and 'write' the genre. The many diverse, not always harmonious, discursive constructions of generic knowledge (producer definitions, evolutions, assumptions and judgments) are what Neale (1990:49) has called 'inter-textual relay' that hinges upon 'industrial-cum-journalistic discourses' which bring together a body of texts into a generic unity, and production practices into a distinctive genre world. The working of the genre is thus observable empirically in documents, working practices, ethical assumptions, worker self-definition and quality judgments, as well as in company policies, trade press coverage, promotional materials, general press interviews, or what, following Genette (1997), I will later refer to as 'paratexts'.

However, unlike Mittell, Neale and Altman, I approach the paratextual rendering of the genre not as an institutional imposition, definition or control over the meaning and significance of genres. Closely reading Genette (1997), I approach the paratext as enacted and constituted by the genre. The institutions of production indisputably try to define the genre and regulate desirable interpretation through the paratext, but it is also through their engagement with the structural properties of the autonomous genre-poetics that the institutions self-define and self-interpret themselves as moral and responsible agents. In other words, the paratextual surrounding is the arena in which the genre is activated and where it animates institutional self-reflexivity. Through their dominant properties, genres afford generic self-theorizing and self-monitoring institutional practices. I make a detailed study of genre-bound paratextual institutional self-reflexivity in Chapter 4.

Secondly, at an individual actor level, the accent should be on how the genre affords cultural producers ways of *fitting* into the genre, understood both as a professional-ised genre world and an institution within commercial institutions. The modes of fitting are contained in *authorial intentions*. The intentions themselves are shaped by individual competences and professional attitudes. As a result, the genre is explained by reference to authorial doing *something* (writing, painting) with its properties in practice.

According to MacIntyre (2011), a moral agent, however unconscious or oblivious of her action, is nonetheless endowed with *intentions* that render each and every practical action intelligible, or appropriate, and not just a result of an often inarticulate state of mind. Therefore, to characterize what a moral agent is doing, to pinpoint his or her contradictory behavior, we need to become familiar with that agent's intentions and beliefs as situated in the history of the practice. An intelligible action, which is nonetheless geared towards achieving professional or aesthetic excellence needs to be grasped as 'flowing intelligibly from a human agent's intentions, motives, passions, and purposes … as something for which someone is accountable, about which it is always appropriate to ask the agent for an intelligible account' (MacIntyre 2011: 209).

Even when authors are not completely aware of the aesthetic and ethical choices they make in practice (see Fine 2008; MacIntyre 2011), they tend to post-rationalize the decisions made. Probed about why they do so, authors are prone to resort to the genre as a resource for explaining, justifying and defining their practical actions. This in a way is an outright perpetuation of the exclusionist 'intentional fallacy' – authorial intentions are irrelevant for the understanding of a work of art (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954). Yet, by propelling the intentional fallacy, one can reveal the author's *practical* attitude to her work – the feelings, experiences and quality judgments pertaining to the act of producing the cultural object: what the author intends (plans, designs, is obliged) *to do* and ultimately *does*. The focus on authorial intentions allows us to grasp the cultural object as appropriated in practice by the actors from the point of view of 'the various gestures, bodies, habits, materials, spaces, languages and institutions it requires to exist' (Hennion & Grenier 2002:346). Only in this way can one grasp how the genre becomes meaningful for these actors who regularly and professionally engage with it, although not always in a conscious or systematic manner (Bourdieu 1987).

By following what and how agents do things with the genre – that is, by following how they engage with and draw on the generic dominants – we may examine their everyday production, techniques, routines and habits as situated in a specific genre world, a world that has cultural material implanted at its heart (Jensen 1984; 1998). In addition, when using the genre, agents engage in 'self-forming' endeavors (Swidler 2001), and thus offer genre-related autobiographical accounts of how they became, and how they maintain the image of, certain types of writers, make a living, relate to colleagues, and develop professional genre-specific identities. Only in this way can we examine the genre as a resource for agency, authorship and, not least, industrial self-reflexivity. Thus, genres, producers and institutions mutually co-produce one other (Latour 2005). I will describe these genre-bound autobiographies in Chapter 5 and 6.

On the one hand, authorial intentions and self-forming cannot be understood without taking into consideration the concrete ways in which subjectivity is instantiated through no less discursive entities: that is, through 'physical traces of his [artist's] previous mental activities' (Gell 1998: 236) in the form of 'preparatory sketches', 'provisional technical studies', 'unfinished plans' that testify to the biographical existence of the author (p. 232-3). It is precisely these authorial

procedures that Becker et al. (2006) argue constitute 'the fundamental indeterminacy of the artwork' necessary for a sociological analysis of art. Such an analysis attends to all the things that happened in a text's making (p. 5) – sketches, versions, revisions (p. 26) which in fact perform the work of art. In Chapter 7, I will look closely at how genre-related production choices, both ethical and aesthetic, are made in practice, while concentrating on *the editorial brief* and *preliminary versions* that pre-date and shape the finished guidebook, and offer insight into authorial genre-related action unfolding in time and space. The genre enables choices precisely because its properties are temporarily stabilized and placed within a framework of both calculation and expressiveness framed in discursive idioms, writing mediums, or inscriptions (Barry & Slater 2002).

On the other hand, cultural producers need to know their material and object. The greater the bodily and technological understanding of genre properties, the better the job the producer is likely to do. Hence producers develop a craftsmanship attitude to work: a passionate and special relationship with their materials by learning how it feels, acts, and talks back. Rules are adhered to until a certain skill is so well-rehearsed that it becomes habituated know-how. This makes room for expert and professional idiosyncrasies that make possible creative work to be conducted in an ethically and aesthetically appropriate manner, while equally embracing economic calculability and utilitarian values. In chapter 7, I present a detailed ethnography of a travel guidebook writer at work: how she goes about daily production choices, how she relates to and acts upon generic dominants, so as to configure herself as a professional and conscientious agent. I show empirically how the genre serves as an organising force of work, craftsmanship orientation, motivation and imagination.

Before proceeding to the empirical, concrete investigation of the genre in action, as mobilized by individual and institutional actors, I want next to briefly outline the analytical autonomy of the genre of travel guidebook by identifying its prevalent dominant properties (Kane 1991; Alexander 2012).

Conclusion

The type of reasoning elaborated in this chapter has two main consequences. The first is for the more sociological-anthropological paradigm of cultural production. Although the social processes surrounding the act of production are important for the shaping of a cultural object, the genre's properties need to be installed back in the analysis in order to enable us to arrive at a more holistic understanding of cultural production. The second concerns the socio-cultural paradigm of genres, and literary and film genre theory. The analysis of the structural properties of genres does not suffice to explain how the properties are put to work in cultural production: how they are worked and acted upon in actual production practice within industrial contexts.

The argument presented in this chapter is that producers of genre gauge the quality of their work and the success of their career in and though their engagement with generic dominants, as

so well demonstrated by socio-linguistics, pragmatic theories of genre and linguistic anthropology. In this way the genre's properties penetrate authorial selves so as to inform, structure and anchor producers' autobiographical accounts and underpin their authorial intentions. In turn, the genre exists in and through producer involvement with its dominant properties, inasmuch as producers' careers are either empowered and imagined by or entrapped in the genre of their labours. On the other hand, given that genres function as institutions within the institutions of cultural industries, the genre's properties get into, lend form to and organise institutional self-reflexivity as well, as much as the industries institutionalize and capitalise on genres. The institutions of cultural production *do* things *with, around and through* the genre: they interpret, define, advertise and exonerate production practice. And all this engagement is possible if one approaches the genre as a set of affordances that always manifest themselves in relation to an active subject.

CHAPTER 3

PROPERTIES OF THE GENRE: GENRE DOMINANTS

To identify the material properties of a specific genre, one needs to pinpoint the devices, functions, or constructive principles that dominate, organise and override its other features. Such properties differentiate the genres within the field of travel writing from travelogues and travel journalism. The dominant elements of the genre are not exclusive or restricted to only that genre; indeed, they are also properties of other genres. However, the dominants refer to the presence of dominant devices or techniques to which all of the others are subordinate in a given historical moment for a specific generic textual instance. Thus, the dominants that I will outline are not limited to the genre of travel guidebooks[31]; however, the latter shape the form of the former within a specific spatio-temporal frame. Thus, travel guidebooks have close relationships of difference and similarity with two adjacent (sub-)genres that belong to the overarching or supra corpus of 'travel writing': travelogues and travel journalism. Together they constitute the field of travel writing.

The dominants organise and govern the trajectories of action and the experience of working with genres within specific genre worlds. Moreover, they are constitutive of both producer and institutional practices of genre-centred cultural production. The members of the genre world acknowledge and accept the authority, salience and indispensability of certain features of the genre in the ethical, aesthetic and professional pursuit of genre-making. Although the presence of dominants facilitates the resilience of genres, it does not reproduce transcendental rules of creation or clustering mechanisms for specific corpuses of texts. These dominants are simply a function of the cultural, social and industrial adherence to historically prevalent features. As a result, the dominants cannot be judged in the abstract because they are a historically specific bundle of discursive instances that define what is 'right and wrong' or 'good and bad' in the process of genre-making. The dominants, therefore, reveal an aesthetic that is deeply rooted in ethical values and a sense of responsibility among both the producers of and the intended audience for the genre. The dominants set the standard and the technical/craft requirements for a genre at a particular time and place from an idealistic and moral perspective.

Every dominant is associated with textual micro-instances and discursive enunciations that articulate generic knowledge and situate the genre in a historical context (Mittell 2004:35-38).

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[31] For example, travel guidebooks share certain devices and techniques with other cognate genres, such as the genres that roughly may be said to belong to the 'how-to' generic cluster (do-it-yourself books on gardening, cooking or medical self-help); another cognate genre is that of news and investigative journalism, yet also ethnographic writing.

According to Mittell (2004:36) 'a generic dominant functions as the primary connotative implication of generic terminology'. The generic dominants underpin the existence of a professional genre world within which 'generic terminology' imbues professionally shared generic knowledge, assumption and discourse. As a constitutive part of a genre world, the generic dominants are always actively negotiated and interpreted among professional producers and among critics, interpreters, and scholars (Jensen 1998; Dornfeld 1998; Ytreberg 2001; Born 2002; Bruun 2010). The dominants underpin both the conscious and unconscious engagement with the genre within a specific genre world in which the preoccupation is as much with the definition and meaning of the genre and its ontological or commercial vigour as it is with how to achieve quality, autonomy, responsible work and pleasure within that specific genre-poetics (see Booth 1988; Eaton 2000).

There are two distinct dominant inter-textual, relational and typical traits – techniques, devices, principles, construction – to which all the other traits of the guidebook are subsidiary, *non-fictionality* and *didacticity.* These fundamental constructional principles (poetics) imbue predominantly the scope, in both ethical and aesthetic sense, of the travel guidebook genre. With the cumulative effect of protracted producer exposure to genre-poetics, these dominants, with varying valence or potency, circulate in the genre world as craft and professional practices, quality assessment devices and ethical values, and even economic value that audiences recognise and are willing to pay for. Although the dominants are invariable as relatively stable structural features, they are not predetermined or fixed; rather, they are experienced, acted upon and manipulated by producers (and users) in practice within the institutions of cultural production, and they generate a system of action based on intentions, professional tendencies and calculative economising agencies.

The *dominant of non-fictionality* or *referentiality* refers to a generic practice that must always be authenticated. It requires travel with an extra-linguistic component that is factual, real, and verifiable. The *dominant of didacticity* is a generic constructional principle that has a clear instructional and performative function or purpose. The dominants are historically the basic premises upon which the genre as an institution is erected and in accordance with which the verisimilitude of the genre is construed. In Todorov's (1990:18) words, the dominants underpin the institution of the genre by profiling 'models of writing' for authors and 'reading schemes' for audiences. For instance, in travel writing, verisimilitude includes faithfulness, loyalty and pertinence to the inner rules of creation – 'the rules of the game' (Jauss 1982) – in this case, *non-fictionality* and *didacticity*. These two dominants have a bearing on the choice of specific constructional (or poetic) means or methods that will help create a 'verisimilar' effect of factuality and performativity for the reader-traveller. The display of factuality (objectivity, accuracy of travel-related data and description) and the exercise of pedagogical power (guiding, steering, way-finding) are central to a guidebook's structure.

The dominants of the genre are expected to remain consistent across time and space. As I will show in Chapter 4, with the advent of the publishing industry and then the accelerated conglomeration of the industry, the dominants became institutionally stabilised and consolidated. The generic properties, once autonomous inter-textual features, were transformed into market property and value. Only within a genre world organised around dominants (rather than in the abstract) is it possible to determine what represents 'good work' without undermining the vitality of regulated genre-poetics based on durability, sameness, reiteration and recurrence. Revolving around the dominants, the genre world lays out the self-reflexive or self-theorising, yet not always readily conscious, *standards* against which the quality of work and the resulting texts (not the least of which is the producer's autonomy) can be gauged.

One can only determine the quality of work and of cultural products by examining the dominants that link diverse, often disparate texts under a taxonomic cluster through shared constructional methods, means and strategies. By pinpointing the genre dominants my aim is to present the autonomous logic of genres (in Kane's sense, 1991). Industrial practices do not completely define genres. Genres themselves carry an autonomous animating force to influence and imbue industrial practices and an individual producer's self-understanding. Cultural producers, both individual and institutional, actively and regularly engage with, mobilize, invoke and act upon, with or against the genre dominants. By following a producer's engagement with the dominants, one will attend to the mediating power of genres, capable of influencing a producer's actions and value judgments about what constitutes good or bad choices in the process of the genre-making, but also industrial and professional self-definition and self-understanding.

Moreover, non-fictionality and didacticity in travel writing generate the foundation upon which the generic hierarchy (among travelogues, travel journalism and guidebooks) is erected. It would be misleading and dogmatic to draw strict boundaries between different sub-genres of travel writing because non-fictionality and didacticity work in unison through a complex interplay; any separation between them serves an analytical rather than a descriptive purpose. In other words, non-fictionality and didacticity are different incarnations of the same generic entity, and the distinction between the sub-genres is a matter of degree rather than a strict opposition.

In the section that follows, I will home in separately on each of the two dominants and the constructional principles and practices they imply. I will draw on a variety of sources from both the humanities and social sciences to depict as clear and robust a picture as possible. I examine the dominants as both inter-textually and relationally, culturally and institutionally operative without attempting to extract the genre from its applied contexts of production and consumption. At the very end, I attempt to chart out the consequences and the implications of those guidebook-specific dominants on travel guidebook production.

Non-Fictionality: factuality or reference to actuality

Many scholars, particularly within the humanistic disciplines, are wary of positively defining the generic bounds of travel writing. They describe travel writing principally with antipathy, aversion and even insults. Surprisingly, few scholars have defined travel writing with reference to the genre's dominant aspects.

Borm (2004), Behdad (1994) and Fussell (1982) attempted to generate a definition of travel writing that is grounded in *non-fictionality* as the overriding goal and purpose of the genre. All techniques, styles and constructions in travel writing are subordinate to *non-fiction,* which connotes accuracy, objectivity and factuality. Non-fictionality is the governing principle that unifies the field of travel writing and its various sub-genres: travelogues, travel journalism and guidebooks. The distinction between fiction and non-fiction is inherent in the hierarchy of these sub-genres and, as I will also show in Chapter 6, their markets within the field.

Fussell's study (1982) of British inter-war travel writing juxtaposed travel books (travelogues) and travel guidebooks (guides) with novels and romances. In contrast to fiction, which builds on invention and imagination, travel writing 'arises from the *speaker's encounter* with distant and unfamiliar data, and in which the narrative - … claims *literal validity by constant reference to actuality'* (1982: 203, emphasis added). For Borm (2004), non-fictionality is sanctioned in *the tacit but voluntary contract* between audiences and producers. This contract elucidates the mutual agreement regarding the dominant, authoritative property of the genre: it presents a 'journey or journeys that the reader supposes to have taken place in reality while assuming or presupposing that the author, narrator and principal character are but one or identical' (p. 17). Behdad (1994) contends that 'the informational nature' of the genre of the travel guidebook involved historically a resolute shift from narration of past journeys (as in travelogues, for example) to an empirical description of actual journeys, that is a move from experience of past travels to information about actual trips that references future travels, and in such way interpellete the reader as a potential traveller.

For Fussell, Behdad and Borm, *non-fictionality* or '*the constant reference to actuality*', the act of referencing the mundane and practical specifications of travel through actual geographic space, is *the dominant* of travel writing. To warrant non-fictionality, travel guidebooks make an extensive use of mainly two devices: quasi-scientific authorial voice and non-linear mode of presentation. First, travel guidebooks dispense with the unitary and unifying voice of the author-traveller or the authorial 'I', in favour of all-knowledgeable and all-powerful presentational 'coming as if from nowhere' voice; and, by consequence, second, they present the empirical data, defined 'by the accumulation of informative statements' (Behdad 1994:43), in dispersed, fragmentary, tabulated, stringently organised manner, a mode of presentation that is not linear but successive, circular and pragmatically classified. According to Behdad (1994), the 'informational nature' of the genre is rendered most manifest in its 'tendency to specify' – that is, the overproduction of details, excessive use of charted information in the form of maps, tables, diagrams and itineraries (p. 45-

46). Furthermore, what Fussell (1982:214) identifies as an invariable or generic constant that is prone to discursive calibration in the process of genre production and reception is authentication based on actualities (the actual topography and mobility of travel) and the constant recourse to the locatable, which both contribute to 'gross physicality'. In generating *actualities* and *the locatable*, the genre of travel writing presupposes a reality that can be accessed and assessed using specific presentational and representational instruments and modes of empirical investigation, including observation and the recording, analysing, categorising, triangulating, and testing of empirical data.

Such delineation of genre specificity has a direct bearing on production and reception. The audience surmises and expects that an actual journey, travel that took place in reality and in a physical and tangible time-space rather than in the imagination, preceded the creation of the text. 'Real travel', with its practicalities, expediencies and contingencies, reigns supreme over the process of genre-making. A meticulous and truthful rendering of the facts and practicalities of 'real travel' by a 'quasi-scientific authoritative voice' is what producers are held accountable for.

But, as such non-fictionality predicated on an actual journey is already a *differentia specifica* of other subgenres of travel writing, the question that arises then is to what extent are guidebooks and their production different from other subgenres of travel writing and their production?

The differences between the travel writing sub-genres are premised on a gradation scale for non-fictionality. The gamut of travel writing genres (travelogues, journalistic accounts and guidebooks) authenticate themselves to varying degrees through constant references to factual data. Travel guidebooks possess the maximum degree of referentiality, which influences the ways in which they are produced (and consumed) from an aesthetic, ethical and financial perspective. Travel guidebooks are squarely referential, eschewing even the slightest imbrications of fiction. Travel journalism can build on fiction strategies as long as it is transparent in separating fact and fiction and as long as it is accountable in this respect. Travelogues are most akin to fiction, as they can autonomously determine their degree of adherence (creative license) to the principle of non-fictionality.

It is precisely because of its inability to fully embrace the devices of fiction that travel writing in general and travel guidebooks in particular have been considered less prestigious and more low-brow. Travel guidebooks are the lowest-status category of the field of travel writing. Although guidebooks and travelogues are part of 'the literature of fact' or 'the literature of argument' (Fussell 1982:213), they differ in the degree of their freedom to fictionalise. Unlike travelogues, travel guidebooks 'are not autobiographical and are not sustained by a narrative exploiting the devices of fiction. A guidebook is addressed to those who plan to follow the traveller, doing what he has done, but more selectively' (p. 203). Guidebooks are premised on an actual journey through locatable geographic spaces; the journey is supposed to be replicated and enacted in actual practice by travellers. In this sense, guidebooks are not substitutes for the actual experience

of travel; rather, they are catalysts that help readers to navigate, carry out and experience travel through how-to (didactic) accounts rooted in factuality. In contrast, as Fussell argues, although travelogues refer to actual travel, they are a "creative" mediation between fact and fiction' (p. 214). For Fussell, travelogues cater to 'those who do not plan to follow the traveller at all, but who require the exotic or comic anomalies, wonders, and scandals of the literary form *romance* which their own place or time cannot entirely supply' (p. 203, original emphasis). Through mediation, travelogues sustain the realistic screen on which to project their parabolic, metaphysical, aesthetic, ethical, philosophical and political re-interpretation of facts. By translating facts about travel through the devices of fiction, travelogues address an armchair traveller to whose desire for vicarious enjoyment they appeal. Travelogues do not possess the obsessive factuality of guides but are also not completely fiction. Based on their genre, travelogues cannot be free of the imperatives of the real and the actual, just as guidebooks cannot resist the narration or the opinionated interpretation of the real and the actual.

Within travel writing, the guidebook fulfils an obvious communicative purpose (Miller 1982). It addresses the need for *authoritative, referential*, *informational*, *regularly updated and revised travel-related texts* in a *standard format with standardized design layout.* Guidebooks as such were separately invented by Karl Baedeker in Germany and by John Murray III in England (in 1835 and 1836, respectively) and became an institution in Europe. Indeed, from their first appearance, guidebooks vowed 'referentiality', and, as Koshar (2000:326) noted, guidebooks soon began to exude 'clarity, precision and "scientific" accuracy' through communication that was supposed to be transparent, direct, and unmediated. In this established genre, the occasional, deliberate or inadvertent incursion into fiction gains a reputation for deceit, dishonesty and mendacity (as indeed happened in the TK affair I presented in the Prelude).

There is no consensus regarding where precisely to locate the boundary between fact and documentary truth on the one hand and fiction on the other. In fact, this is a long-standing philosophical issue that has yielded unabated epistemological debate regarding the status of truth-claims. A philosophical discussion of the representation of the reality through language lies beyond the scope of this work. In discussing the genre of travel guidebooks, I accept the truism that every act of description is by default an act of discursive representation and a sub-species of fiction. Thus, I largely concur with the Rortian (1989) pragmatic stance that the truth is made rather than discovered and the truth-seeker is no different from the truth-maker. Nevertheless, I believe that the fiction/non-fiction distinction stems from a generic contract between producers, texts and audiences that can be established within social worlds with varying degrees rather than as an absolute. Non-fictionality is thus socially agreed upon within the genre world. As a result, it cannot be analysed in isolation. The genre world (with its technical, institutional, material and human resources) affects what facts are to be represented and how they can be represented most appropriately. The calibration of facts and fiction within the genre world is now occurring through professional self-regulating performance measurement devices that function operationally rather

than conceptually: they consider what the producers need *to do* and *to what extent* they must do it to justify the claim that the product of their labour is objective, accurate and factual.

In Rorty's words, truth is 'made rather than found' because 'languages are made rather than found, and … truth is a property of linguistic entities, of sentences' (p. 7). For Rorty, in the world, referentiality is mediated by language rather than by correspondence with facts. Once inserted into the hermeneutic circle of interpretation, a fact ceases to be a fact and bears the limits and the influence of the observer, the speaker, the thinker, the writer, and the reader, who are engaged in the endeavour of 'truth-making' and thus of 'world-making'. *Facts* result from the classifying and ordering of representation. This idea runs counter to the realist conviction that there exists a reality that is independent of language and mind; it also invokes the constructivist or mimetic approach to reality, which suggests that words do not and cannot picture reality but rather construct it. As a consequence, fictionality is manifest in every instance of narration or discourse, including non-fictional ones. All writing involves some degree of discursive contrivance, and there is no pure, unmediated representation of referents or extra-linguistic facts.

Therefore, even epistemologically, every speech-act or communicative event is ultimately on par with fictional discourse. According to this pragmatist, anti-realist and constructivist view, literary narratives are paradigmatic because they expose their make-believe status and render the fictional devices that they generate transparent. In contrast, referential genres obscure or conceal their inevitably manufactured nature, claiming a truthful or objective description of reality 'as is'. The value of literary narratives is assessed with regard to *verisimilitude:* to the internal logic of world-making (plot construction, narration, etc.), whereas non-fiction is evaluated on the basis of *the verifiability* of facts, and the rigorous methods used to properly represent what is 'out there' in a world that is discovered rather than invented become paramount. Thus, the construction of facts (including their objectivity and accuracy) in travel guidebooks is never disassociated from the circumstances (the methods, norms, and techniques) of its production. As I will show in Chapter 4, institutional self-reflexivity hinges precisely on this genre-related concealment/disclosure of production methods, inasmuch as the genre serves as the basis for self-defining subjective autobiographical accounts in Chapters 5 and 6.

However, despite the seductiveness of the idea that there is no distinction between fact and fiction because fiction is detectable in every speech-act (i.e., truth is manmade, both conceptually and linguistically), the distinction between what is real and what is fictional must not be abandoned entirely. It is of importance not to deny the solidity of facts but, rather, to arrive at an understanding of how, why and where the facts in the genre of travel guidebooks are constructed. It is interesting to compare this matrix of questions with corresponding issues in a similar non-fictional genre.

Hayden White (1973), for example, suggests that history books use the narrative strategies of fiction to arrange and represent real events (reference to actuality). Since real events do not

reveal directly themselves as narration (the way the reality offers itself to perception), their narrativisation, in turn, does not, by definition, force fact to collapse into imagination. According to White, history books resort to the devices of fiction to order historical or 'real' events that are specific to a particular point in time and space out of a 'desire to have real events display coherence, integrity, fullness and closure of an image of life' (p. 27). However, White does not imply that the historical record is itself fictional, a product of the imagination. Rather, he hesitates to equate a made-up or imagined event with a historical event. Time-space historic events are not fiction *au fond*; rather, the arrangement of those events into a narrative is fictional. Historiography is *in ultima linea* the *fiction of factual representation*. To position real events in a sequence, or as White terms it, 'to narrativise reality'(ibid.), prevents historians from claiming to present an 'objective', 'serious' and 'realistic' representation of reality despite references to actual events that occurred in specific, locatable time and space. However, White also notes that recounting a concatenation of real events implies that the act of representing fact is ultimately an act of self-regulating moralisation: 'narrativising discourse serves the purpose of moralising judgments' (ibid.). The supposed vow of objectivity, according to White, is manifested in a failure to apprehend moral aspects through the dynamics of the aesthetic and thus in the failure to capture reality adequately beyond the differences that exist in the modes of empirical perception.

Similarly, travel guidebooks authenticate themselves through constant references to reality, actuality, and factuality, but they incorporate facts into a subjective perspective or interpretation without ruling out non-fictionality as inauthentic or spurious. The adherence to the dominant of non-fictionality guarantees neither actual truth nor absolute pragmatism; on the contrary, it signals the standards, norms, and assessment criteria to be employed in performance measurement or quality of evaluation for the text. If, as White (1973) has argued, non-fictionality is an act of moralisation, then the system of fact-gathering and truth-telling is as much an ethical as an aesthetic principle of guidebook making. Travel guidebook writers must therefore take immediate responsibility for the validity, reliability and 'truth-claims' of the facts. They require a working notion of non-fictionality that conceptualises the presentation of facts as an ethical virtue of and a professional standard of 'truth-telling' (i.e., a commitment to accuracy, precision and consistency with actual facts). Such a self-regulating, accountability-focused ethical stance would eliminate or at least minimise the pressures of deadlines, financial constraints, libel suits, and audience and editor criticism.

Likewise, Gaye Tuchman (1978), who researched the non-fiction genre of news and its production, argues that fact-checking does not simply involve a collection of facts that already exist 'out there'. Facts are determined organisationally and, I would contend, according to the genre. Facts are 'pertinent information gathered by professionally validated methods specifying the relationship between what is known and how it is known. In news, verification of facts is both a political and a professional accomplishment' (1978:82-3). Today, it is becoming increasingly important to take into consideration travel writers' understanding of what 'facts' can be selected

and incorporated into the text, their tacit knowledge and subtle judgments regarding what constitutes a good or bad guidebook beyond the standard organisational formatting for the genre and its market requirements for profitability. Tuchman (1972) argues that the journalists ritualistically employ news-making procedures as formal, textual strategies through which they protect themselves from claims of fabrication and invention. This does not mean that they are entirely factual and objective; rather, they demonstrable evidence that they have attempted to ensure the maximum degree of objectivity by working with an operationalised notion of what constitutes fact.

In this regard, the real journey undertaken by the writer, as a real event (an event that is not made up), is presented as mediated by the writer's senses, intellect and mind. The facts are reported and clinically documented, but they are arranged and interpreted in a way that generates a personal and opinionated vision. 'Facts' are a function of interpretation, and interpretation is by default evaluative. This dynamic has been understood as a prime instance of empiricism. Lamarque and Olsen (1996:177) described the primacy of the real event as follows: 'a real entity is an object the existence of which is made known to us by one or more of our five senses'. Once they are empirically engaged with the referent (the trip or travel), travel guidebook writers instruct their readers on how to replicate the journey (they steer their readers toward specific referential destination-specific points of interest) and teach them how to employ what seems like reverse empiricism (they experience, perceive and come to know the place through their own senses). In guidebooks, the journey and the destination are presented '*as they are* in reality' – a personally mediated assemblage of real time-space-specific events (with the potential to be catalysed through reception and enactment, as in the author's experience). Travel guidebooks are thus not authorly (they are not self-sufficient or circumscribed imaginary worlds or '**as if** it were real' representations) but instead are readerly; they make constant reference to actuality, and the facts presented are applicable to and performable by readers. Guidebooks are vulnerable to verification, confirmation and refutation by readers during active reception. Therefore, in the act of creation, the guidebook genre invokes the rigors and methods of science – research, observation, triangulation, presentation, and testing – while cherishing the cult of personality and style.

Moreover, because of their meticulous attention to factual detail, travel guidebooks are *forensic* in nature (Hulme 2002). Thus, travel writing in general and travel guidebook writing in particular have been associated with investigative journalism as an intermediate between subjective investigation and objective reporting that is enhanced by clear references and documentation. Peter Hulme (2002), a travel literature scholar, claims that travel writing is 'indistinguishable from – investigative reporting. Even where the stakes are not as high, most travel writers would expect to be taken at their word' (p. 99).

Robert Foulke is rare among travel guidebook writers in having attempted a sporadic but insightful scholarly analysis of travel guidebooks as a non-fiction genre. Electrifyingly perceptive

and knowledgeable of the industry surrounding the genre, he contends in a short scholarly article entitled *The Guidebook Industry* (1992) that a 'good' travel guidebook keeps its vow to objectivity through diversified work strategies:

> Good ones [guidebooks] must be up to date, accurate in detail, responsible in using sources, authenticated by the writer's direct experience, selective yet reasonably comprehensive, clearly focused, analytic in structure, organised for quick reference, and easy to read. The best also have a style that sharpens seeing and encourages imaginative reflection' (p. 95).

Although Foulke readily acknowledges that guidebooks are not 'many-splendoured' thing, he praises the set of standards for 'good work' that have crystallised in the field over a period of stasis and that now make it possible to judge the quality of texts and professional work ethic. These involve 'accuracy of detail, a refusal to crib from other guides, few overblown descriptive passages, some control over the amount of information presented, clear organisation for reference, and a lively but unaffected style' (p. 105).

How to manage travellers' needs for information and guidance is a main source of concern. At first glance, the task of providing information that is accurate and up-to-date regarding the practicalities of travel (e.g., lodging, local transportation, food, climate) might seem mundane. However, this task is in fact also 'the trickiest' (Foulke 1992:99) and requires resources. How to cope with massive overhead and administrative issues in financing and organising the 'actual travel taking place in reality' is a pervasive worry within the genre world. Therefore, third-party subsidised or sponsored travel has become a point of debate among writers, editors, and readers. This point is especially acute if we consider the performativity of guidebooks, through which the didactic power of the genre becomes an issue. The relationship of travel guidebook publishing to tourism or to the destination's economy and politics more generally renders the contract between the producers and audiences of the genre prone to constant scrutiny and re-evaluation.

It is obvious from Hulme's and Foulke's accounts that the dominant of non-fictionality informs the ethics and aesthetics of guide-making. In addition, the requirement of non-fictionality ensures that guidebooks are information-laden and, thus, labour-intensive. No single author could self-sufficiently generate a large quantity of non-fictional data and keep a guidebook up-to-date (i.e., accurate and authoritative), forestalling its impending obsolescence. To adequately curb the issue of information intensity, guidebooks are produced by a network of cooperating agents – 'travel experts' who work together and organise their work around a joint knowledge of generic conventions (Becker 1982: 25). Nevertheless, no matter how strenuously 'experts' try to represent the reality of a travel destination, creating a paper guidebook remains challenging due to the ontological impossibility of capturing a versatile, multifaceted reality in language. It is no surprise that the *ephemerality* of the truth in this regard constitutes a major source of anxiety as the individuals involved grapple with the pedantic task of collecting and presenting facts that are on the verge of becoming ever-obsolete. Simultaneously, however, the pleasure of attaining

excellence is a key motivator for professional travel guidebook writers who devise various strategies for countering these challenges.

In a sense, guidebooks are an assemblage of discourse, idle talk and gossip. They 'institutionalise word-of-mouth' (Hutnyk 1996: 29), attempting to string together a coherent narrative from myths, legends, history, gossip, clichés, stereotypes, anecdotes and jokes. Behdad (1994) identifies exactly such an 'informational' assemblage of discourses to be the central differentiating principle of the genre of travel guidebooks. He contends: 'the guide quotes the statements of previous travellers, incorporates them as part of its informational apparatus, and then acknowledges them as truthful representations' (p. 38). Travellers' stories, voices, discourses, anecdotes, centrally uphold the genre's claim to actuality and not least totality. Such dispersed discourses are processed through the genre's 'informational apparatus' which sanctions them as 'truth-telling'.

Like ethnographic researchers, travel guidebook writers who are researching destinations converse daily with a number of people, duly recording the stories, opinions and tastes of a myriad of travellers, tourists, residents and random strangers. Moreover, writers maintain a network of informants who supply up-to-the-minute content. Thus, guidebooks activate and authenticate idle talk, defined by Heidegger (1996) as a typical everyday manifestation of the inauthentic life that distorts the individual's fundamental authentic connection with the world-workshop or the world of labour. In Heidegger's view, there is a deeply entrenched antagonism between labour and idle talk. Idle talk takes place among those who share a common affiliation, but it is groundless and useless. It arises out of boredom and the superfluous need for chat that 'spreads in wider circles and takes on an authoritative character. Things are so because one says so' (Heidegger, 1996: 158).

However, idle talk, whether in the form of 'chatter' or of 'scribbling' on digital platforms, becomes a pivot of immaterial or semiotic production. Digital platforms make idle talk active, visible and profitable, thereby effacing the boundary between expert labour and idle talk and that between author and reader. The advent of new technologies that concretise the conversational capacities of a multitude of users and that supercharge word-of-mouth has proven to be a long-awaited boon for the guidebook genre.

Didacticity: emancipatory role or performativity

The second dominant of travel guidebooks, which complements that of non-fictionality, is *didacticity*. Didacticity presupposes that guidebooks are produced and consumed with a view towards affecting behaviour. Guidebooks have an agentic effect because they are performative by nature in the sense discussed by Austin (1975): they *act*; they *do* something rather than merely stating or saying something. The guidebook instructs (steers, drives, points) the reader and arouses the productive endeavours of travellers. As a dynamic genre that exerts a performative

influence on its readers, the guidebook is embedded in the economy and politics of tourism and travel services (the entities 'out there'). Again in the Austin's sense, guidebooks cease to be true or false (given their ontological obligation *to describe* the reality that is 'out there' in its entirety) and become a matter of 'infelicity' or 'ethics' (p. 14). *A deed,* an action by a person who does something through speech, can be fortunate or unfortunate, not true or false. A deed can be or can go wrong (when the desired effect is not achieved; when the deed is ineffectual or mishandled). The smooth and happy functioning of the performative requires that doing things with words become an ethical affair among those who are 'taken at their word', such as travel writers, as Hulme (2002) contended. As Austin suggests, 'accuracy and morality alike are on the side of the plain saying that *our word is our bond* (p. 10, original emphasis).

How does the guidebook genre instruct the reader? What are the 'deeds' of the genre?

Owing to their didacticity, guidebooks have traditionally been considered 'apodemic' literature. Stagl (1980:130, as cited in Jack & Phipps 2005:78) defines apodemic literature as 'work that provides systematic rules useful for travel and observation'. As didactic literature, travel guidebooks are simultaneously 'materially' and 'affectively performative' (Jack & Phipps 2005:78), and thus they exercise an 'emancipatory potential' and 'a clear agentic effect' over the readers (p. 79)

The dominant of didacticity includes a bundle of various generic functions and 'apodemic' rules for *navigation*, *representation* and *brokerage*. Guidebooks are a traveller's aides and companions. They furnish travellers the means for 'instrumental leadership', which facilitates easier, more efficient and safer navigation of less-known places, by functioning as reliable 'pathfinders' (Bhattacharyya 1997). Detailed physical maps as well as verbal maps and itineraries that describe navigation through words are an indispensable part of the guide. To this end, every guidebook has a specific design layout and is broken down to functional compartments such as: country-specific facts including environment, food, history, tradition, itineraries grouped under the heading of 'getting there and around', and 'lodging' (see Lisle 2008:160).

In addition, as a type of do-it-yourself handbook, a guidebook serves as the 'middleman' that facilitates the interaction between the destination and the traveller in a cost- and time-efficient manner. Cronin (2000), who charted the historical development of the guidebook genre as didactic literature, argues that the global publishing companies freed travellers from their reliance on the oral translation of the ninetieth-century, when they hired servants and guides for this purpose. However, guidebooks have also imposed a set of must-see, must-do global itineraries on travellers: 'the autonomy of the printed guide (no local interpreters) produces another form of heteronomy (global interpreters dictating itineraries)' (Cronin 2000: 86). In addition, guidebooks operate as 'cultural brokers' (Bhattacharyya 1997). Through various evaluative instruments (e.g., asterisks, superlatives, affective emphasis, descriptive parentheses) guidebooks mediate the relationship between travellers and what is worth seeing (sampling, experiencing, or tasting).

Resorting to reviews, guidebooks advance particular 'desired' and 'appropriate' attitudes. They establish standard prescriptive value systems for selection, readerly judgments and plans for action.

The guidebook genre therefore produces guidelines while also offering emancipatory prerogatives that 'tutor the travellers' gaze' (Urry 2002) and influence their actions. McGregor (2002:47) who empirically researched guidebook usage *in situ*, argues that guidebooks foster the formation of place-images through which the genre 'provide[s] lenses for viewing the world'. For this reason, to McGregor, guidebooks are not merely texts; rather, they are 'dynamic texts' that 'influence tourist experiences, ways of seeing and perceptions of places' (McGregor 1999: 29). Guidebooks generate reader knowledge and impact readers' expectations for and experience with the destination (with the latter influenced by the former). Although they may be far from gullible or innocent, readers voluntarily employ the discourses presented in guidebooks, reading either approvingly or critically (ibid.) By way of providing scripts for action, a guidebook inspires and channels spending and consuming, which in turn affects tangibly and measurably the economy and the politics of the destination in question. As such, guidebooks are capable of exercising a performative influence, which makes them function as 'devotional' texts – 'a kind of ritual insurance, investment against "an act of god"' (Jack & Phipps 2005: 81). Enjoyment, safety and protection in travel require a certain preparatory knowledge and expectation management. In this sense, a guidebook offers security, mitigating the unknown or the unexpected by supplying reliable, authoritative and, most importantly, referential information, tips, guidelines, and moral instructions for travel. Enzensberger (1974: 135) also identifies the travel guidebook genre as 'palliative' – a risk-minimising textual artefact. For this same reason, Cronin (2000:86) compares the travel guidebook to a 'divining rod' that directs the traveller towards places to eat, sleep, and visit: places that are worth travellers' attention, time and money. Therefore, by exerting a performative (palliative, risk-minimising, and devotional) effect, guidebooks are capable of generating profits and influencing the economy through travel-related services such as those provided by hotels, restaurants, tour companies, and cruises.

What are the implications of didacticity for the actual processes of production? How, in principle, does didacticity inform the composition of travel guides?

The two fundamental implications are the effect on the productivity of the reader-cum-producer and the legal sanctioning of the genre.

The performative capacity of the guidebook may be pinpointed in its power to turn a leisurely tourist into an active co-creator of meaning and interpretation of travelling. A tourist carries out guidebook-instigated travelling practice, even when his practices are self-consciously guidebook- defiant or resistant. Jack and Phipps (2005:88) following Foucault argue that guidebooks as apodemic literature may be seen as yet another part of 'the technology of the soul'. This technology operates not through coercion or direct force but instead via normalisation and

self-regulation. Through a Foucauldian prism, technologies or disciplining genres render the body docile, creating a body that may be used and transformed. As Foucault (1991: 26, cited in Jack and Phipps 2005:88) further explains:

> the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; … the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body.

Travel and writing have always been inextricably intertwined. Travelogues in general and guidebooks in particular inspired and stimulated various types of travel throughout history. This travel, in turn, was an impetus for the proliferation of a wide range of accounts of 'sojourns among aliens' (Buzard 1990). Travel guidebooks are thus just one of many examples of a *productive* technology of self.

It is worth mentioning again at this point that both performativity and factuality contribute to the genre's open encompassment of user productivity. As a body of factual, informational knowledge, a travel guidebook 'borrows its authority from a claim to verifiability, not from the experience of the speaking subject' (Behdad 1994:43-44). What is revealed here through 'a claim to verifiability' is the artifice or the constructedness of the genre. According to Behdad, the 'guide encourages its readers to check, confirm, or deny the validity of information it provides, because it is precisely this acknowledgment of the possibility of error that makes the tourist believe what the guide claims, while perpetuating of course, a circular system of exchanging information' (1994:44). What Behdad contends is that travel guidebooks present themselves structurally as ephemeral and error-prone systems which rely focally on the 'representational' and 'discursive' productivity of its users to redress systemic failures. By exercising a performative influence over their readership, guidebooks strategically interpellate their users as active productive subjects. Users' productivity is a constitutive element of the genre. The genre makes the reader-traveller 'feel almost morally obliged to become an information collector and join its mechanisms for revision and reproduction' (ibid.). User involvement in the actual guidebook revisions warrants the genre's claim to truthfulness and actuality by means of empirical corroboration of facts, amplification of details and modification of exiting data.

In the process of genre use, guidebook reader-travellers undertake what de Certeau (1984) called 'the silent production' of reading. The creativity of everyday practices such as reading represents *the economy* of writing: reading entails not only the act of reading itself but also talking, dwelling, shopping, cooking, and travelling as a set of vernacular practices that require the use of products in a practice of prescribed consumption. Reading is primarily an act of consumption but paradoxically begets 'silent production':

In reality, a rationalised, expansionist, centralised, spectacular and clamorous production is confronted by an entirely different kind of production called "consumption" and characterised … in short, by its quasi-invisibility, since it shows itself not in its own products (where would it place them?) but in an art of using those imposed on it' (de Certeau 1984:31).

In this process of productive consumption, 'a different world (the readers' world) slips into the author's place' (de Certeau 1984:xxi); the reader becomes active in creating meaning and content and transitions from the consumption of cultural artefacts to discursive productivity; the genre 'becomes habitable, like a rented apartment' (xxi). A text is divested of its proprietary author as it is borrowed and temporarily inhabited by transient users-cum-producers. The performativity of the text is evaluated by readers who assess its truthfulness. Every time readers employ travel recommendations in practice using a guidebook's didactic matrix, they determine the guidebook's level of accuracy. With each act of consumption, readers determine the quality of the text, while gaining the skills and confidence necessary to produce amendments to the guidelines provided. This transition heavily shifts the imbalance and tension between readers and producers.

The guidebook user's actions (both travelling and writing) are influenced by the types of disposition and knowledge that he acquired through the recurring use of guidebooks. It becomes 'semiotically productive' (Fiske 1989) and able to convert experiences that have cultural and narrative power into 1) *vernacular productivity* in the form of talk and discursive artefacts – 'scribble' and 'chatter' that are not immediately associated with labour and/or creativity, including stories, advice, jokes, albums, images, tastes, norms, blogs, and websites; and 2) *genre world literacy*, which includes guidebook updates, tips, recommendations and personalised advice. Therefore, guidebooks inspire a 'producerly' or 'writerly reading' as popular texts that empower the reader and turn the pleasure of reading into productivity (Fiske 1989: 102).

The advent of new media technologies has certainly amplified and enhanced guidebook user productivity turning them into what Behdad (1994) called 'information collectors and verifiers', on which guidebook publishing companies have often attempted to capitalise. However, the tactic of harnessing the productivity of readers in the production of travel guidebooks has its roots in an ancient convention of travelling and narration that dates back to the periods when the word of the traveller (i.e., word-of-mouth, chatter or scribbling) was the only source of travel information. Thus, Enzensberger (1974: 134) concludes that in the travel industries (including travel guidebook publishing), 'the production is identical to its advertisement: its consumers are at the same time its employees'. Quite expectedly, such traditionally porous boundaries between readers and producers united in 'an all-inclusive process of revision' (Behdad 1994:44) engendered feelings of anxiety, angst and insecurity among professional guidebook writers.

A genre that makes constant claims regarding its factuality but that also exercises performative power over its readers, inserting them in a web of increasingly complex economic

transactions, is also easily made legally liable for its content via lawsuits (the courts being the gatekeepers of the ultimate truth). Because of their performative dimension, guidebooks do not merely report on travel; rather, they also catalyse action. Because their discursive action has material consequences (which according to Austin may be fortunate or unfortunate, happy or unhappy), the producers of guidebooks are held responsible for their actions: their 'words'. Unlike any other communicative genre, guidebooks are imbued with 'nuclear power' whose words can devastate or resurrect everything they write about. Guidebook discourse 'becomes commodified, as commodities become semioticised' (Lyotard 1986: 7). As such, the guidebook discourse is actually economically lucrative and worth being contested in court if it is deemed not to make an 'objective' reference to actuality or especially if it is interpreted as misrepresenting a touristic establishment (Mandelson 1985).

The 'economisation' of travel writing and its discourse and their embeddedness within this field of power have led many humanities scholars to doubt the legitimacy of guidebooks as a full-fledged literary genre. Huggan and Holland (2000:3), for example, mock the non-autonomous status of travel writing in general and trenchantly note that 'travel writing sells while also helping to sell holidays'. They continue, 'Contemporary travel writers, whatever their status or their institutional affiliation, are continuing to provide a sterling service to tourism … even when they might imagine themselves to be its most strident adversaries' (ibid.).

Quite expectedly, the fear of being prosecuted for words or actions has resulted in a range of elaborate and sophisticated production techniques in this field. At the same time, the seductive and potentially profitable nature of the tourism industry has sharpened and tested the professionalism and ethics of producers.

The dominants and production practice
Emphasising didacticity and non-fictionality, guidebooks eschew the 'purposelessness' that is inherent to fiction, which is not necessarily obligated to moralise, guide or delight. However the genre's dominants indicate what matters to cultural producers taken on its own terms. Here, truth-telling and the obligation to provide responsible guidance to the reader are genre-specific. However, it is impossible to develop a generalised evaluative account of the genre and the adjacent genre world. A worker's perception of autonomy cannot be understood as a set of absolute or abstract systemic rules or duties (e.g., formats that writers should use) that are institutionally imposed in practice). The genre-specific aesthetics and ethics that emerge in the practice of guidebook-making cannot be understood simply as managerial impositions. Because what is good practice or good work is genre-specific, guidebook-making can be evaluated only as a historically based activity with internal standards of excellence framed by generic dominants. Producers' self-reflexive or self-theorising claims must be compared with the generic dominants. Indeed, only in a production context with specific generic features can the degree of

inventiveness, redundancy, or stasis or the value of the work practices be assessed. The generic dominants both facilitate and limit producer agency and overall self-reflexivity in the industry. Faced with practical production problems, producers invoke their genre-related expertise and judgment, which enable them to responsibly and rapidly assess the 'facts' – what is 'important', 'relevant' or 'interesting' and their 'responsibilities' to the reader. I discuss this in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The genre's dominants also influence how the industry reflects upon itself and organises production. Non-fictionality and didacticity render the production process information-laden, ephemeral, and thus, *labour-intensive, time-sensitive, legally liable* and ultimately *costly*. These factors have influenced how the institutions of cultural production have 'rationalised' and 'controlled' the production process, especially amidst historically changing patterns of ownership, conglomeration and technological advances, which have encouraged new concepts such as collaborative authorship, revised payment and copyright models, commissioning and quality assurance procedures, and promotional strategies. In the next chapter, I touch upon the complex interplay between the genre of the travel guidebook, its diachronic development and the travel guidebook publishing institutions.

CHAPTER 4

GENERIFICATION OF THE INDUSTRY, INSTITUTIONALISATION OF THE GENRE

This chapter addresses the genre of travel guidebooks as embedded in broader social and cultural relationships and in independent, autonomous diachronic genre trajectories. The chapter also addresses the connections between guidebooks and markets, patronage and firms.

Here, I argue that the dominants of the genre underpin the self-reflexivity of the industry. The institutions of cultural production define, evaluate, and re-think themselves through the genres they produce. Genres and cultural institutions are inextricably linked. However, genres do not merely serve organisational, classificatory or marketing purposes, as the institutional approaches to cultural production have reductively suggested. Genres and institutions are interdependent and co-produce each other. In fact, the genre and the related institutions are intertwined and form constellations of mediation: a heterogeneous web of relationships through which they both develop as complex entities (Deleuze & Guattari 1988; Law 1999). The genre influences how institutions perceive and understand themselves (agency). In turn, institutions legitimise and consolidate genres. I would suggest that institutions are embedded in specific genre trajectories that, as Adorno and Williams argued, are deeply dialectical: both supra-individual and individually practiced, ahistorical but locally situated, and aesthetic but commercialised. The institutions are moulded by the specificities of the genre, and the genre enables institutional self-making.

Things have biographies (Kopytoff 1986). Genres, as distributed objects, have biographies as well. Thus, genres are anthropomorphised in genre theory (Fowler 1971). They are equivalent to human agents or biological species. They come into being, thrive, mature and eventually die off (Jauss 1982). It is here that the genre ontology gains prominence as a form of temporal and spatial existence because genres are circumscribed in time and space. However, how genres are institutionalised and how an industry such as the travel guide publishing industry (however niche-like) comes to be defined through the product or genre it produces is not well described. This is not a question of translation (Law 1999), of making two heterogeneous things equivalent; rather, it is a question of how the links between genres and institutions are constructed and enacted in practice.

In this chapter, I will provide an historical overview of the mutually reinforcing relationship between travel guidebooks as a genre and related institutions such as publishing companies and firms. I will trace the historical trajectories of the travel guidebook as a genre whose origins and development (its biography) are interwoven with those of the institutions connected with it.

However, whereas institutional settings shift in response to structural changes resulting from shifts in technologies, consumer preferences, travelling habits, and labour markets, the genre itself has stayed remarkably stable. This stasis results in a regular genre dominants upon which the historical self-reflexivity of travel guidebook publishing institutions hinges.

In charting the mutually constitutive relationship between the genre and the industry, I discuss what Gerard Genette (1997) identified as 'paratexts'.

Paratextual analysis: betwixt and between

Paratexts are simultaneously literary, aesthetic, discursive and commercial devices that mediate the relationship between the text and the institutional sphere of publishing. Genette assigns a liminal status to paratexts, suggesting that they exist at the border between the formal character of the cultural object and the economics of the publishing industry, between the text and its context, between the object and meaning, and between the producer and the user: 'now the paratext is neither on the interior nor on the exterior: it is both; it is on the threshold' (Genette 1997: xvii). As such, the notion of the 'paratext' nicely captures the complex pragmatic relationships between industries, writers, books, texts and audiences. Therefore, the paratext (like the paramilitary or paranormal) is profoundly ambiguous, resisting all previous classifications or ideologies: it is 'neither here nor there, between and betwixt' (Turner 1975: 232). In a way, the key dynamics of interrelationships occur within the paratext. As such, the paratext can be understood as an 'interface' that makes it possible to understand genres not as *a priori* systems of classification but instead as modalities that are constantly adjusted, combined and reinvented (Caliskan & Callon 2009:389).

Paratexts include *peritexts* (which are materially appended to books in the form of prefaces, postscripts, notes, disclaimers, blurbs, and the like) and *epitexts* (which lie outside and circulate around the book in the form of public interviews with the author and/or publisher, promotional materials, press releases, Web IDs, 'about us' sections, private correspondence, diaries, oral confessions, autobiographical notes, and other materials related to the author). Paratexts may be understood as making the text a manufactured cultural object – a book (or 'e-book' or 'app'). They attest to the object's production within a commercial context regardless of its physical appearance. The cultural producers (authors and publishers) officially accept a degree of responsibility for and authority over the generation of the text through paratexts (Genette 1997: 8) while also attempting to ensure its successful and profitable reception (ibid. p.3). No paratext exists independently of the intentionally of its producers; thus, the former can function as the latter's 'statement of intent' (p.221). Conversely, no paratext exists without reference to audience expectations. Therefore, it embodies the genre contract that mediates the relationship between industry, text and audience. As Genette argues, 'the genre contract is constituted, more or less

consistently, by the whole of the paratext' (1997: 41). The pretext, in other words, ponders, theorises, analyses and makes sense of the genre contract.

The notion of the *genre contract* implies a transition from cognition, speculation and representation to legal, political and economic authority. The non-fictional, factual genres rest on a quasi-legal, largely unspoken but regulatory pact that governs the relationship between the text, its producers and its audiences (see Lejeune [2009] regarding the 'autobiographical pact' and Winston [2000] regarding the 'documentary contract with the viewer'). Thus, the contractual component of factual genres is grounded not in shared themes or in semantic, topological or representational similarities and differences but rather in speech-act tropes. Once the speech-act is presented, it is the reader rather than the author who becomes the 'judge' or 'the policing power' and verifies the extent to which the producer 'respects or fails to honour the contractual agreement he has signed' (de Man 1979:923). Obviously, producers and institutions self-reflexively, promotionally and vigilantly manage the genre contract, forestalling any potential deviation from the contractually stipulated norms of conduct.

From this perspective, it is possible to claim that the genre possesses an inherent effectiveness (as opposed to agency). It performs an 'illocutionary act' (the performative dimension of the speech-act) and thus mediates the social relationships generated by production and consumption. Following the philosophy of language approach, Genette uses the term 'illocutionary act' rather than the concept of agency to describe the role that a genre ontology plays in the institutional production of cultural objects. Genre, Genette is adamant, has an 'illocutionary force' (1997: 7) that functions as the horizon of expectations and interpretation, helping to ensure that the text is read properly (essentially saying, 'Please read this text as a guidebook, not as a novel'). Genre also expresses a commitment (i.e., 'I commit to tell the truth and not to compromise the truth by accepting freebies'), exhorts readers to use it in a certain way ('Follow me'), and provides pre-emptory advice to eliminate the possibility of legal action (saying, 'Please do not be foolish enough to take for granted everything I say').

In my analysis, I chart the deployment of paratexts as traditional and strategic and as an ambiguous way of managing the genre contract. I see paratexts as an institutional extension of the text in the same way that Gell (1998) saw the artwork as an extension of the author. Thus, I accord agency to paratexts from which the agency of manufacture (the act of production in the 'workshop') can also be inferred. In addition, in the case presented here, the paratext is primarily centred on and constitutive of the genre contract, which is itself based on the generic dominants. It is through paratextual declarations linked to genre that institutions self-theorise and self-observe while presenting and promoting their product to the audience, which in turn harbours specific genre-related expectations. Therefore, the paratext, with all its discourses and intentionality, whether official or semi-official, institutional or authorial, is positioned at the threshold of the text and thus adjusts the point of completion of the text. The paratext attests to the provisional yet institutional character of cultural objects, offering, in Genette's words, 'a more

or less organised tour of the "workshop" uncovering the ways and means by which the text has become what it is' (1997: 401). This concept is very similar to what Becker (2006), not without a dose of indignation, called the 'fundamental indeterminacy' of cultural objects.

Industrial self-reflexivity as genre-enabled self-definition

A close examination of industry-specific textual practice has been undertaken by several scholars, including Caldwell (2006a, 2008) and Gray (2010). Caldwell argued that institutions within creative industries regularly engage in what he terms 'critical textual practices' (p.102) or 'low theory' (p.105), self-analysing, self-theorising self-reflexive textual practices that are predominantly corporate strategies for audience maximisation. Making-ofs, DVD commentaries, and video press kits are just a few examples of the industrial proclivity to deconstruct and rethink the inner workings of its own media-making. Similarly, Jonathan Gray (2010) appropriates Genette's ideas about paratextuality in interpreting the hype and advertising generated by the film industry as corporate attempts to influence the meaning and significance of media texts. Both Caldwell and Gray see the surrounding textual production as focused on the media text in that it affects how the audience uses, interprets or relates to the latter.

It is important to note that once one discusses institutional or industrial self-reflexivity and self-definition, one has bestowed anthropomorphic properties (e.g., agency, mobility and cognition) on industry institutions. That institutions are 'persons' capable of self-presentation and reflexivity has long been established in the same way as personal identities have been approached as social institutions. The concept of the organisation-as-person is not simply a juridical metaphor. According to Czarniawska-Joergen (1997), organisations are 'super-persons' that are usually personified by a leader or mythical founder and that engage in self-presentation through 'autobiographical acts' (pp.40-41). As such, an institution will work diligently to preserve its 'autobiographical pact' (Lejeune 2009).

In reviving the interest in paratexts, I would like to argue that these textual 'thresholds' are mainly genre-related in travel guidebook publishing. Furthermore, I would suggest that industrial self-reflexive autobiographical acts can be understood as genre theorisation: they are meant to serve as a self-interpreting attempt to make sense of instable, ambivalent and changing processes of genre-making within tumultuous and transforming industry settings. The most decisive step in this direction has been made by Jason Mittell (2004), who argued that genres and industries are interdependent, suggesting that industrial practices such as scheduling, syndication, network positioning and producer unionisation have impinged on the redefinition of the generic discourses surrounding the cartoon genre. Taking this approach further, I suggest that genre practices also reciprocally impinge on industry practices of self-reflexive self-definition. Such paratextual analysis, which is positioned at the intersection between genre practice and institutional practice, insists on the recursive relationships between products, institutional projects and careers.

According to this approach, industry self-reflexivity occurs when the institutions that are part of such an industry appropriate and rework genre practice or poetics while engaging in production practices for the purpose of self-definition. In this way, paratexts enact the genre contracts between the industry, the text and the audience; they are not just a hermeneutic element.

The guidebook is a contractual genre. In that it is contractually binding, it resembles a deal proposed by the producer to the reader. The contract is ethical inasmuch as the producer is obliged to accept responsibility for the generic dominants. In turn, the contractual character of the guidebook is the basis for industry self-reflexivity, which takes into account the convoluted history of various firms, the biographies of eccentric founders, and advances in travel, transportation and media production technologies. The contention that the nature of the products (that is, their genre) is deeply implicated in the ongoing reproduction of industry practice actually echoes practice theory, which contends that the social is embedded not in interactions, discourses or mental structures but rather in the enactment and reproduction of practice (Reckwitz 2002). By implication, this approach makes it possible to view genres as embedded in their industry context and as including habitual and even historical industry practices of self-reflexivity and self-definition. Therefore, to a certain extent, industry practice always involves the appropriation of genre practice, which is inseparable from the reproduction of the industry itself. My focus here, then, is on historically and locally contingent processes that are based on the interplay between individual, product and institutional biographies.

Whose origins?

Karl Baedeker, the German author-publisher, is not simply the 'prince of guide-book makers', the man who refined the genre 'to the level of fine art'. He is also credited with the invention of that **'class of work'** contained in the small red vade-mecums (1889: 1), as solemnly noted in an article from August 1889 printed in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

In response, John Murray III, the son of the revered English publisher John Murray, immediately penned a treatise contesting this explanation of the genre's genesis. The 'author, creator and originator' of **'this species of Literature'** was not Baedeker, Murray suggests. Rather, Murray contends that he and his 'publishing house' were the 'inventor' of the genre (Murray [1889]1919: 39).

The names Baedeker and Murray both became synonymous with the genre of travel guidebooks towards the close of the 19th century in Europe. Their names embodied the *non-referentiality* and *didacticity* of the guides as fundamentally objective, reliable, methodical, no-nonsense books that functioned as companions and friendly aids for travellers on their journeys.

How, then, was an unambiguous genre-enabled publishing agenda both shaped by and active in shaping 'this species of Literature'?

Institutionalising the genre: proto-genres and the publishing industry

The travel guidebook as devised by Murray and appropriated by Baedeker did not appear *ex nihilo*. What became known as the modern guidebook is a natural and logical product of a long history of literary *ars peregrinandi* and of the changing patterns of, purposes of, and motives for travel, to which the genre is inextricably tied. Diachronic shifts in travel narration, which was semi-fictional and pragmatic, preceded the appearance of guidebooks and indelibly influenced the status, character and ontology of the genre. At the same time, travel writing in general and travel guidebooks in particular are linked to the power dynamics, economics, and politics of travel. Therefore, the history of the genre and the history of economic and political change are intertwined in the inner workings of the travel guidebook industry. Culture and commerce, publishing and tourism, are indeed intertwined in guidebook publishing. Travel guidebook publishers acquire content and produce certain types of cultural commodities based on the speculation that they will appeal to travellers' whimsical tastes, sell sufficiently, and generate profit.

In the Middle Ages, so-called ***pilgrimage itineraries*** circulated widely in Europe as a means of facilitating spiritual voyages. Produced by the church, these early guides referred only in passing to important historical sites or relics that happened to be found on the pilgrimage route. Nevertheless, in addition to their religious import, these guides for pilgrims proved useful to travellers driven by motives other than piety. In the sixteenth century, ***the itineraries*** broadened in scope and were enhanced by additional descriptive and narrative material. They thus catered to a wider audience that included travelling scientists, explorers, soldiers, merchants, antiquarians, spa visitors, and even vagabonds. These new-fangled travelling cultures facilitated the proliferation of a wide variety of literature on travel and exploration that commonly fell under the descriptive heading ***advice to travellers***. Within the framework of fictional narrative, this entertaining sub-genre promoted vigilant travel and helped travellers to keep from exhibiting signs of provincialism on the road.

The costs and convenience of travelling steadily became a concern among travellers, who were no longer satisfied with letters of introduction by friends, autobiographical travel stories, subjective travel accounts, or earlier travellers' journals or diaries. ***Local crypto-guides*** appeared on the market that were designed to supplement the anecdotal information from earlier guides with more practical hard data about the location in question, all while claiming 'to be of interest and use to natives and as well as to foreigners' (Harris 1984: 45).

With the accelerated spread of printing technologies in the late 17th century, a new breed of publisher-entrepreneur catered to the popular market by experimenting with down-market local crypto-guides and thus producing 'hybrid guides' - a mix of miscellaneous pamphlets, almanacs, catalogues and diaries. The market for informational pocket manuals flourished as literacy slowly increased and the number of travellers exploded. As the audience for such local hybrid publications expanded, advertising revenue also increased proportionally. The market value of

such low-key publications was further enhanced by the near impossibility of determining copyright. Since such hybrid work was not *de facto* understood as 'original', the hybridisation, recompilation, and mash-up of existing content was permitted. Thus, production was a rapid mechanical process rather than a time-consuming and expensive process of content creation. The commercial or market value of guide production at the turn of the 17th, and into the 18th, century can hardly be disputed. Guidebooks became 'a useful staple to sections of the London book trade, fitting in to various types and levels of output' and assumed 'a considerable commercial importance' (Harris 1984: 60). They performed a social function by playing a part 'in the transmission of practical information through society' (Harris 1984: 61) that otherwise would not have had appropriate channels for dissemination. Regarding the guide's hybrid pattern, Harris concludes that as a genre, early prototype crypto-guides were meant both to instruct and to amuse. This crypto-genre drew on a wide variety of traditional textual forms. The first input source was historical and antiquarian in nature, focusing on the exploration of the central urban area on foot using maps or topographic views for practical guidance. The second source that informed the 18th century guides was literary texts, including both ballads and literature about 'spies' and 'cheats' in which writers warned of the dangers of mugging and harassment by strangers. The third strand of guide-related material was the tabulated information contained in almanacs.

This socio-cultural context led to the appearance of a range of low-grade publishers who wished to profit from the popular demand for local and general guides and to harness the opportunities generated by blurry copyright boundaries. Simultaneously, the guide genre became a haunt for 'hackney writers', 'hack writers' or 'writers for hire'. Harris (1984), who researched the London guide book trade before 1800, notes that guide writers formed a conspicuous percentage of hack and aspiring writers, for whom the genre offered a sanctuary. Hack writers practiced 'starvation scribbling' (Bonham-Carter 1978: 28), living off piecework in Grub Street 'from hand to mouth on the proceeds of their (often considerable) talents' (ibid.). 'Grub Street' thus became a metaphor for any type of commercial writing or hackwork or, in general, any attempt to try one's luck at writing for profit, including (and most predominantly) guide writing, proofing, indexing, and compiling.

The proliferation of guides that were different in both content and success in the market can be seen both as a manifestation of expanded reading and travelling practices and also as an index of the growing number of writers who wished to depend on their writing for their livelihood. John Vaughan, in what is the most comprehensive bibliography of travel guides and similar proto-forms from the 17th and mid-19th centuries, concludes that their readership was historically a prosperous but undoubtedly not aristocratic class of purchasers given the price of the earliest guides as compared with the average wage during that time. On the other hand, most guidebook authors fell into two categories of anonymous authors or, as Vaughan calls them, 'perished names' – hack writers willing to publish anonymously and ready to 'turn out a suitable text to meet current demands' (Vaughan 1974: 122); and 'local worthies', such as schoolmasters, antiquaries, medical

practitioners and clergymen with no literary talent who 'devoted their leisure hours to scientific and historical investigation in their areas' (Vaughan 1974: 125).

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Grand Tour came into prominence. Affluent elites were willing to spend months and years on the Grand Tour as part of their educational formation and acquisition of culture. At that time, several publishers were producing **road-books,** which were actually maps in a written format. The road-books methodically charted recommended routes for Grand Tour voyageurs with a meticulous emphasis on cultural, artistic and historical landmarks. However, as the well-to-do traveller of the Grand Tour could afford and invariably brought with him servants, governors or cicerones who planned the journey, assisting and guiding their masters on their travels, road-books swiftly became superfluous. Only towards the close of the 18th century, when travel became associated with the search for an inner self rather than a signal of social class, did travellers pursue voyages into the 'unknown' as part of a journey towards greater self-awareness. This period gave rise to **picturesque guides** that emphasised the romantic and sublime nature of travelling. These guides had explicit artistic pretensions and tended to function more as poetic literary texts than as comprehensive guidebooks.

The coexistence of several different types of travel guides was a signal of the overcrowding of the guide market at the beginning of the 19th century, when the two most prominent publishing houses, Murray and Baedeker, entered it. Because 'most guides of the time were hastily compiled by local hacks for a quick profit' (Gretton 1993: x), Murray and Baedeker were able to leverage the symbolic capital of their publishing firms and counterbalance the hack writers with their cohort of gentlemen-authors. In their diversity, guidebooks reflected class differentiation through both production and consumption.

By the mid-19th century, travel had been democratised and had ceased to be an exclusive prerogative of the rich or hardy. Advances in such forms of transportation as steamboats and railways made travel affordable, and changes in industrial labour relations put more leisure time in the hands of the middle classes, giving them the right to vacation. The popularity of guidebooks grew to such an extent that they become indispensable travel accessories during this period. Guidebooks provided practical, accurate, detailed information regarding all aspects of travel, from preparation to life on the road and after the trip. Indeed, the growth in the number of vacationers in the mid-19th century is directly reflected in the proliferation of guidebooks (Palmowski 2002: 106), the production cycle of which accelerated as travel gained in popularity and frequency. For example, according to Lister (1993: lx), handbooks to Switzerland 'were selling like hotcakes', as illustrated by Murray's publication of his first guidebook for Switzerland in 1838 and the 18th edition in 1891. Similarly, Baedeker had published the tenth edition of his English language guidebook for Switzerland by 1883. By the end of the century, Murray's Handbook series covered 60 different destinations, and according to Gratton's quotation from an 1885 traveller's account, 'Since Napoleon no man's empire has been so wide. From St. Petersburg to Seville, from Ostend to

Constantinople, there is not an innkeeper who does not return pale at the name of Murray' (Gretton 1993: ix).

As travel became widespread, the guidebook market diversified while remaining fundamentally uniform. Murray and Baedeker maintained their pre-eminence at the high end of the market, which was directed at an educated middle class readership. 'A tourist guidebook' was devised as a down-market alternative. In 1845, Thomas Cook set up the world's first travel agency, the epitome of the tourism industry, and generated another intense period of inexpensive disposable guidebook production, this time targeting low-income mass tourists rather than well-to-do individual travellers. In the mid-19th century, inexpensive, low-capital, popular editions crafted in the mould of Murray and Baedeker followed suit, often published by the operators of pre-packaged tours, who used them as extras or memorabilia. Thomas Cook embarked on publishing the 'tourist's handbooks – practical information for tourists' about travel 'on the cheap'. Henry Gaze composed guidebooks on experiencing places 'for five guineas'. In America, the first guidebook that appeared was authored by Davison – 'a consummate entrepreneur' rather than 'a gentleman-author' (Gassan 2005: 52-53) who made guidebooks for 'fashionable tours' throughout the continent. In his history of the guidebook in America, Gassan (2005: 67) concludes that this proliferation of guides testifies to a dynamic period of authorship and print culture during which aspiring young writers sought to make money on writing and were eager to break into guidebook publishing, whose seasonal publishing cycles and transitory content promised continual engagement.

Instead of undercutting Baedeker's or Murray's cultural supremacy, the burgeoning phenomenon of down-market guidebook production further magnified the market superiority of the former texts. Thomas Cook flattered Baedeker by copying extended passages verbatim from Baedeker's texts, with or without acknowledging their original author. Though he provided abridged descriptions of place, Gaze duly referenced Murray's pages for further reading, and Davison copied the structure and generic patterns from Murray that had so significantly facilitated the writing process.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Fodor's and Frommer's aimed to offer a 'revolutionised' type of text in accordance with the needs of the pre-War travellers. Attempting to outdo Murray's and Baedeker's guidebooks and their 'ineffable accuracy' in discussing accommodations, transportation and lodging, the twentieth century promised 'more accuracy' regarding background information, culture, and local history.

With the rise of backpacking tourism in the seventies and eighties, new self-professed "alternative", 'modern' guidebook publishers such as Lonely Planet, Rough Guides, and Moon catered to the exigencies of hippie travellers and their countercultural ideals of adventurous, frivolous and independent travel. The first modern guidebooks were 'self-taught', 'self-stapled', 'self-typed', 'mimeographed notes' and were the product of a 'labour of love' – a response to the

people 'we met at a party' who were curious about 'our trip to Australia', confesses Wheeler (2005: 39), the founder of Lonely Planet. Much of the initial modern guidebook publishing was a hit-or-miss affair, embracing bold experimentation rather than a clear business vision. The words of Rough Guides founder Mark Ellingham recall the old hack-writing adage of travel guidebook writing: 'Back then, guidebooks were so journalistic, all of us starting had a chance to take a new journalism approach. We didn't have any expectations at all. It was a wonderful stroke of luck' (quoted in Mantell 2006). Many of the self-professed 'veteran' travel writers I interviewed nostalgically referred to this period as 'the golden age' of travel guidebooks. In 'the golden age,' writers personally knew the owner, company offices were convivial and fun spaces for rest in between travels, and everyone was interested in travel and culture first; money came second.

Countercultural travel guidebook publishing was formed in the image of its owner-travellers. As such, it was a cottage industry – a small-scale, highly personal and convivial enterprise by and for a restricted community of countercultural reader-travellers and producers.

Towards the end of the century, in an era characterised by rapid global flows across vast distances (i.e., 'hyper mobility') (Urry 2002), travel, at least for the affluent global North, became easier, more frequent and more widespread due to more rapid and less expensive transportation (planes) and efficient communication technologies (e.g., the telephone). The market for guidebooks expanded as a result, and publishing companies experienced unprecedented growth. Their success fuelled entrepreneurial aspirations, and the number of guidebook publishers mushroomed. As a result, the guidebook market became cluttered; companies overproduced titles and thus ignited fierce competition and a battle for brand recognition. As their audiences increased, publishers were obliged to move from a narrow, loyal target audience of countercultural readers to a broader range of mainstream consumers. This led to an emphasis on the provision of service-oriented travel content. Corporate demand for profit and bottom-line pressures inundated editorial policies. The business became streamlined, systematic, and governed by managerial decision-making based on in-depth audience research, ratings and market analysis. Content with surging guidebook sales and afraid that they might be cannibalised if book contents were moved online, travel publishers were hesitant to fully embrace digital technologies.

The turning point came in the aftermath of the September 11th events. Travel in general and travel guidebook publishing in particular suffered irreversible losses as a result of the menace of terrorism (Mesquita 2009). Guidebook sales plunged and have remained stagnant or have even continued to weaken ever since (Mesquita 2009). Simultaneously, digitisation has intensified. Independent publishing companies faced severe cash flow problems in attempting to invest in new titles and experienced difficulty attracting the capital that they needed to keep abreast of digitisation. Distribution channels such as bookstores dwindled, and vast amounts of travel-related content became available free of charge online. The need to secure market share and to build economies of scale, combined with the lack of digital know-how, forced family-owned small companies to sell to publishing conglomerates. In 2001, Frommer's was purchased by Wiley;

immediately afterwards, Fodor's was purchased by Random House/Bertelsmann. In the middle of the first decade of the new millennium, Rough Guides and Dorling Kindersley were acquired by Penguin/Pearson, and BBC Worldwide took over a majority stake at Lonely Planet. Again, this shift was merely part of an overall trend in the publishing industry, although the takeovers began slightly earlier in the latter. Travel guidebook publishing simply followed the general trend of conglomeration and digitisation that the publishing industry as a whole had experienced several years before.

Mediating power of genres: the myth of origin

That the boundaries of an industry are directly linked to the nature of the product it produces is taken for granted not only in economic theory but also in the sociology of industry (Granovetter and McGuire 1998). However, the question of how industrial agents interact with their objects of production and the actual ways in which the nature of the product exercises this structuring influence are largely unspecified in the realm of cultural production. (For ideas about such interaction in scientific laboratories, see Law 1999; Latour 2005). Paradoxically, the institutionalisation of a genre – the structural and economic forces that control the dissemination and consolidation of a genre – is tightly linked to the mediating power of the genre itself, which, by virtue of its formal logic predicated on dominants, influences industry self-reflexive action and practice.

The institutionalisation of 'the invention of the genre', similar to other 'object inventions', involves the issue of 'mobilisation': if one goes out of one's way to acquire avant-texts that will become the foundation of a genre-related publishing empire (as Murray, Baedeker and modern traveller-publishers did), the 'things' that you have displaced and gathered must be 'presentable all at once to those you want to convince and who did not go there' (Latour 1986: 7). It is here that the objects, according to Latour (ibid.), must possess the necessary properties so as to be rendered 'mobile', 'presentable', 'readable' and 'combinable' with one another if one is to muster and align allies, including establishments of all types (press, within academia, etc.). I will now elaborate on how the properties of the genre – referentiality and didacticity – provided resources for institutional self-definition. Travel guidebook publishers made all of their actions accountable in references to the dominants in paratextual inscriptions. These inscriptions made the genre mobile, presentable, readable, and comprehensive, all with a view towards persuading the public – audiences, competitors, allies – of the genre's authority and relevance.

Which institutions are associated with the travel guide(book) industry is thus not simply a result of existing, tangible market conditions, available technologies of production and wider socio-cultural changes. Rather, the agency of the founder-authors also plays a role within locally and historically contextualised spaces, as do the autonomous genre trajectories that influence the form and shape of the industry and its adjacent institutions. Quite understandably, then, the shaping of the industry by the genre and the genre's commercialisation occurred together. As I will eventually show, a set of agents, company leaders endowed with self-avowed quasi-mystical

powers, assessed certain market lacunas, critically interpreted the resources of the genre and identified specific technologies that would link the two. These agents employed these techniques, which are essentially genre principles, in a highly visible, proficient and profitable manner.

I will now trace the historical usage of genre-related institutional definitional practices based on the firm origin myth. These are the most prominent paratextual inscriptions – and the most diachronic.

The origin myth reflects the institutional need to sanction the genre and appropriate it for its own definitional purposes. In this context, industrial self-reflexivity is embedded in genre practice or ontology through self-professed founding tales that pinpoint travel as the explanation for the creation of the publishing company as a genre-enabled entity. The mythologisation of the company's (auto)-biography reflects the industry necessity to promotionally fashion accounts of first-hand, hands-on experiential involvement with the subject matter as posited by the genre's dominants themselves. Most guide publishers, from Murray and Baedeker to Frommer's and Lonely Planet, are essentially self-publishing pet projects in which the publishing entities are profoundly implicated in both the historical trajectories of the genre and the subjective biographies of their founders. In a way, the institutionalised story of origin mirrors the genre practice, in which a subjectively experienced actual journey, an assemblage of discourse and a degree of performativity oriented towards the audience are required. To trace the foundation of an institution to the mythical figure of the founder serves to justify and valorise guide-making as production practice governed by autonomous genre principles embodied by human agency.

At the outset, guidebook publishing might seem nothing but a personal 'quirk' of a publisher (Lister 1993:xii) who had confessed having been 'possessed by an ardent desire to travel' (Murray 1919: 40). In 1828, John Murray III first visits the continent without a guidebook, as there were no guidebooks on the market at that time – only literary accounts, personal narratives and travelogues, which were not of any 'pragmatic value':

> I set forth for the Northern Europe unprovided with any guide excepting a few manuscript notes about towns and inns, &c., in Holland, furnished me by my good friend Dr Somerville…. These were of the greatest use. Sorry was I when, on landing at Hamburg, I found myself destitute of such friendly aid (Murray 1919: 41).

John Murray III promptly realised that a book might assist him during his travels. He aptly recognised the large and potentially lucrative lacuna in the English book marketplace. During his first trip abroad, Murray duly registered his personal observations regarding the facts and events as they occurred, while gradually building up the content groundwork that would later serve as the basis for the first modern guidebook: the *Handbook for Travellers on the Continent – Holland, Belgium, North Germany* (1836)[32]. Murray explicitly expounds on the practice-led, quasi-scientific

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[32] All guidebook references are cited in-text

method of content creation – that of noting facts as they occur -- as a precondition for his new entrepreneurial endeavour:

> I set to work to collect for myself all the facts, information, statistics, &c., which an
> English tourist would be likely to require or find useful. I travelled thus, note-book
> in hand. And whether in the street, the Eilwagen, or the Picture Gallery, I noted
> down every fact as it occurred' (Murray 1919: 41).

The notebooks would eventually become the central pillar of the publishing project that the elder Murray, the venerable publisher of Austen and Byron, would approve of as a promising business venture (and to which he would appositely ascribe the code-name 'Handbook') (ibid.)

Murray's guides managed to conquer a sizable English audience, which embraced the authoritative, prescriptive travel advice and voluntarily embraced the performativity of the genre. In September 1859, *The Times* published a glowing review, noting the growing popularity of *the Handbook* and its 'convenient and explicit information':

> Into every nook which an Englishman can penetrate he carries this distinctive red
> parallelogram … [The Englishmen] trusts to his "Murray" as he would trust to his
> razor, because it is in the main English and reliable; and for his history, hotels,
> exchanges, scenery, for the clue to his route and his comfort on the way, the red
> Handbook is his *guide, philosopher and friend* .... the red Handbook has been
> deposited at the bottom of his carpet-bag as *functus officio*, together with his
> passport (reprinted in Biography and Criticism 1860:230).

In the face of extraordinary business success and the influence of the genre on traveller behaviour, Baedeker took advantage of the loose application of the copyright laws in that period and used Murray's business and genre strategies as a framework for his own series. The first red vade-mecum by Baekeder, *The Handbook to Belgium and Holland* (1939), was explicitly modelled on Murray's Handbooks. The Preface includes a gentlemanly acknowledgement of the latter and indicates the indebtedness of the author/editor to 'the most admirable traveller's handbook that has ever been published' (ii). Nevertheless, Baedeker's company boasts publicly of having most resolutely defined the genre in terms of practicality. James F. Muirhead, one of Baedeker's English guidebook authors and later a founder of Blue Guides, asserts that Baedeker was the first to clearly formulate the difference between a 'book of travels' and a 'guide-book' by crystallising the genre's emphasis on practicality and unfailing exactitude:

> The first is written to inform and amuse readers who may never leave their
> armchair; the latter is prepared for use on the spot, and so omits much that is
> unnecessary to a logically complete account, leaving the eye of the traveller to fill
> up the gaps (Muirhead 1906: 230).

It was Baedeker's goal to free the traveller from the personal guides and cicerones that accompanied the Grand Tour travellers. In advocating 'independent' travel and positioning the

guidebook as a loyal travel confidante, Baedeker vowed to take his readers by the hand, serving simultaneously as a loyal travel companion, 'a friend' and 'a philosopher'. In supplanting the personal guide, Baedeker carved out a profitable niche, becoming responsible for the production of a reliable and authoritative, practical and infallibly accurate 'guide-book' in which the personal subjectivity of the 'guide' would yet be scrupulously preserved. Baedeker's entrepreneurial drive thus inspired him to replace human agents with the agentic power of guide-books:

> The principle object of the following volume is to render the traveller as independent as possible of landlords, coachmen, and guides, and thus enable him the more thoroughly to enjoy and appreciate the objects of interest he meets with on his tour (Preface, 1836).

At the beginning of the 20th century, a new breed of guidebook companies was created in response to the needs, desires and aspirations of travellers as identified first-hand through meticulous observation during actual journeys. In parallel to their historical predecessors, Fodor's and Frommer's were established by traveller-founders who hoped to fill genuine, tangible market lacunae.

The cult of the founders increasingly became the mainstay of institutional/industry self-reflexivity. The surrounding paratexts explicitly fashioned the founders as omnipresent: as the authors, those who oversaw and took individual responsibility for the guide-making. The genre also afforded institutional self-reflexivity, and thus the genre, the author-founders and the companies all became one. The narrative of the mystical, mythical and heroic founder was the pinnacle of institutional self-representation. This institutional self-understanding made sense only in relation to the genre because the institutional biographies mimicked genre practice and ontology.

Fodor's publishing company reified his biography. Fodor's self-mythologising paratextual definition reads 'Fodor - the spy who loved travel', and Fodor's writers are mystically represented as 'undercover spies'. The images of the owners, the genre and the related institutions are intertwined and co-produce each other. The genre mediates both the industry and the personal auto-biographies. Thus, claims of genre 'reinvention' and 'revolutionisation' inevitably abound:

> Eugene Fodor revolutionised guidebooks in 1936 when he published *On the Continent* about prewar Europe. Fodor, a native of Hungary who spoke five languages, wanted to make guidebooks more entertaining by going beyond the dry facts and figures of a destination and bringing to life its people and customs. *On the Continent* became an instant bestseller when it was released in the United States in 1938. With a passion for interacting with the local peoples and traditions of a destination—Fodor writes that, after all, "Rome contains not only magnificent

monuments. . . but also Italians"—he was the first to focus on the modern culture of a locale[33].

> Fodor immigrated to America during World War II and went to work for the intelligence branch of the U.S. Army. Following the war, Fodor moved to Paris and began publishing a series of guidebooks to individual European countries. In 1964, he moved back to the United States and began publishing books about this country[34].

It was necessary to establish institutional authority by validating traveller credentials. The number of travels is used to signal institutional competence in addressing the genre-imposed requirements of production. The more travels, the stronger the expertise. Such founding stories instil authority and strengthen the firm's image of autonomy and originality. They help the publishing institution to appear rationally rooted in genre practice, yet independent even in the face of major restructuring, conglomeration or managerial restructuring.

Charismatic counter-cultural leaders were profiled in connection with mid-twentieth century publishers such as Lonely Planet and Rough Guides. By promoting their personal travelling legacy, the founders-authors facilitated the mythologisation of the companies they stood behind. To maintain the consistency and efficacy of the origin myth, the founders-authors were represented as 'the progenitors' of the genre that 'invented' and 'propelled' 'independent' travel.

'The story of Lonely Planet' is commercially exploited across a range of paratextual surrounds. The hippie trail across Asia, the 'penniless' arrival in Australia, the composition of the first 'self-typed' guide at 'the kitchen table', and the company's eventual emergence as a self-declared 'global brand' - 'the world's most successful independent travel information company' – is recounted in every new book edition, on websites and in promotional materials for book fairs. Rags-to-riches narratives and biblical and mythical references are pervasive self-reflexive and self-promotional paratextual devices. Lonely Planet becomes 'the yellow Bible' and Wheeler 'the trailblazing Patron saint of the world's backpackers and adventure travellers' (cited in Lonely Planet Prefaces). Even more telling is the role of the mythical founder in preserving genre practice and assuring the reader that the guide has fulfilled the obligations stipulated in the genre contract, asserting that the guide in question is a 'good work' to be emulated by future authors. The origin myth testifies to the genre-related shared values epitomised by the figures of 'great' men or women. Therefore, the 'good work' of genre-making is deployed via paratextual devices by the founders:

> At Lonely Planet we like to say that our writers go to the end of the road. And they had damn well better. Because I go to the end of the road. – Tony Wheeler[35]

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[33] http://www.fodors.com/about-us/eugene-fodor/
[34] http://www.fodors.com/about/us/ftp_fast_facts.cfm
[35] http://www.lonelyplanet.com/about/company-history

Similarly, Rough Guides boasts of its founder's travelling credentials and represents the company's career as a journey from rags to riches.

> In the summer of 1981, Mark Ellingham, just graduated from Bristol University, was travelling around Greece and couldn't find a guidebook that remotely met his needs. … Published in 1982, the first Rough Guide – to Greece – was a student scheme that became a publishing phenomenon[36].

The insistence, both promotional and marketing, on origin stories focused on mythical travels by founder-author-travellers. By concocting and symbolically investing in autobiographical stories and presenting them as factual history, the publishing companies actually make use of genre principles that give meaning and structure to their business activities and commercial imperatives. Such stories reveal the inner character of the institutions associated with a genre that obliges its producers to respect the norms of referentiality (factuality) and didacticity (performativity), as argued in Chapter 3. In this sense, the institutional autobiographies reflect the industry values and belief systems that are embedded in the genre, which themselves have functional consequences for the act of guide-making. The founding origin myth thus codifies, enhances and justifies the definition and rules of the genre.

However, the origin myth is not the sole paratextual strategy of self-interpretation used in this context because the industry constantly comments on itself as a genre-fuelled endeavour. To safeguard the generic contract, the industry discloses the truthful and responsible procedures through which guidebooks are produced.

The constitutive *modus operandi* of the genre

In viewing its convoluted history, we can see that the origin of the genre is intertwined with the institutional histories of the publishing business. Whereas the trajectories of the genre follow their own autonomous logic of diachronic development, it is the heteronomous quest for audience maximisation and profitability that generates the genre's vigour across time and space. Thus, the autonomous trajectories of the genre-poetics are also profoundly connected to commercial interests. Genre and business are interlocking and mutually reinforcing, as evidenced by the paratextual inscriptions used. These paratexts attest to the agency of the producers in counterpoint to the independent dynamics of the genre-poetics and the business strategies of the relevant cultural institutions. The paratextual self-interpreting passages illustrate how the institutions that the genre shapes also influence the genre (to paraphrase Miller's dictum 'objects that people make, make people') (2005:38).

Despite early public haggling over their right to self-definition as 'the originator' of 'this class' or 'species' of literature, neither Murray nor Baedeker actually claimed to have fathered an

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[36] http://www.roughguides.com/website/aboutus/default.aspx

absolutely original genre. Both publishers saw the editorial and financial success of the genre as tied to a continuous process of reworking, revisioning and upgrading pre-existing material. Guide-making is an unremitting, cumulative process of derivation and augmentation rather than one of imagination. Self-reflexively, both publishers pondered guide production as an incremental invention rather than as a radical novelty or a disruptive innovation. In marketing terms, this stance provided a sense of tradition and embeddedness while developing the intertextual standing of the genre. Production-wise, it revealed guide-making to be a labour-intensive and time-consuming enterprise. In the preface to the first *Handbook on the Continent* from 1836, Murray candidly concedes,

> The work has not, indeed, much pretension to novelty, and a great part of the information contained in it is, of course, derived from books, modified by actual observation …To this have been added the results of the writer's personal inquiries; and he has taken much pains to acquire the most recent information from the best authorities, and to bring it down to the present time' (1836: iv).

Along the same lines, in an interview from the *Pall Mall Gazette* from 1889, John Muirhead, the principle English editor of Baedeker, retorts:

> A guidebook is not made at all - it grows. There are none of your Minerva-births in the history of guide-books. No expenditure of capital and energy, on however large a scale could make a Baedeker's guide-book at one go-off. The guide-book of to-day is the result of a longer process of improvements from the guide-books of the past. 'Go, little book, God send thee good passage' is the motto on the title-page of 'Baedeker', and each little book *crescit eundo*, gathers momentum as it goes' (1889: 1).

If a guide is not simply produced at once but instead grows and progressively gains momentum, no author can claim ownership or responsibility for its production. The guide is accorded genuine agency that supersedes singular authorial intentions and the simple act of production in that it is disseminated across minds, time and space (Gell 1998). The genre exercises an illocutionary influence on the ways in which companies practice and make sense of guide-making. The genre requires incremental change rather than outright innovation. Therefore, it is not invented every time an author sets out to write a guide; instead, it is improved, extended and augmented. It is because of this genre-dominant form of agency that the authors working in this field were not considered full-fledged authors who invented and originated material; rather, they were seen as compiling and regurgitating information. *Mutatis mutandis*, the genre does not promote innovation, as it is uninventive and lowbrow. This reputation has haunted the travel guidebook genre throughout its lifecycle. As I have demonstrated, the hack-work-aura of the guides is essentially inherited from the proto-genre's association with Grub Street.

By setting industry-wide standards of excellence for guide-making through hands-on involvement in the production process or by involving authors with high symbolic capital (e.g.,

Richard Ford or Ruskin), Murray and Baedeker added prominence to the genre. Praised for their accuracy, consistency and steadfastness rather than their imagination, playfulness or fiction, the early publishers worked painstakingly to formulate, disseminate and impose the genre contract as a specific instrument that singularly and specifically (rather than generally and invariably) mediates the relationships between the industry, the text and the audience. This genre contract regulated the expectations and judgments associated with the genre. To judge a guide as 'good' or 'bad', specific genre-related benchmarks must be used in place of general or generalised norms (usually derived from fiction genres). Twentieth century publishers such as Tony Wheeler and Mark Ellingham also embraced the genre contract. The publisher-founders were authors whose personal involvement in the guide-making process allowed them to vouch for the authoritativeness and trustworthiness of the guides.

Next, I will outline the interplay between the genre dominants as sanctioned in the genre contract and the institutional production to explore how genres influence identity-building among institutions.

The vow to 'perfect accuracy': an implicit contract

As I have already demonstrated, the first genre dominant or principle is non-fictionality, factuality or referentiality. The main characteristic of the travel guidebook is that it offers an objective account of the world rather than illustrating, recreating or speculating on reality. Correspondingly, the guidebook audience expects accuracy and 'truth-telling'. In turn, the producers commit to upholding this implicit *contract of truthfulness* during the production process.

In a wide variety of correspondence, especially with potential writers whom Murray III asked to participate in 'the Handbook' project, he strategically outlined the principles of the genre as *a posteriori* institutionalised requirements. The commissioning letters sent to potential writers are, in fact, self-reflexive interpretations of the nascent institutionalisation of the genre-poetics. Both a requirement for and a means of promoting the 'innovative project', the commissioning letters specify the autonomous principles of production in this genre and the economics of the genre.

For example, Murray III explains to a contributor in a letter quoted by the publishing house's historiographer, Carpenter (2008: 169), that the commissioned content must be confined to 'plain matter of fact and practical information … not a mere compilation from other works, but the result of personal observation'. In another letter to a potential writer, Murray explicitly centres the rules of the genre on the attempt to 'produce a work once practically useful to strangers … and preferably readable as a book of entertaining information, & anecdotes connected with the remarkable Localities & Buildings' (in Carpenter 2008: 173). Authors such as Ford equate referentiality (the principle guidebook dominant) with truth and genre-making with truth-making. In the preface to the *Handbook on Spain*, Ford explains, 'the author whose object is *truth*, and

whose wish is to have his views disseminated, must feel much flattered to find the *good use* his pages have been of to many authors, gentlemen and ladies, too' (1855: 6).

Similarly, Baedeker earnestly vowed to write strictly 'from personal experience' (a byword that was plastered on every new edition of the Handbook). Baedeker was keen to reiterate that he himself researched, edited and corrected the guides personally. In the preface to the *Handbook on the Rhine*, Baedeker vouches for the never-ending quest for 'fresh information':

> The entire contents of the book have been compiled from the personal experience
> of the editor, and the country described by him has within the last few years been
> repeatedly visited by him solely with the view of gathering fresh information. …
> Railway, Steamboat and diligence time-tables, as well as information respecting
> telegraphic communication … are issued monthly during the summer season.
> Implicit reliance, however, cannot be placed on such publications, notwithstanding
> the care with which they are compiled, and the traveller is recommended to obtain
> the necessary information from the local time-tables as he proceeds with his
> journey' (1861:iii).

Lonely Planet even explicitly frames the implicit genre contract of truthfulness as its main offering. Almost a century and a half after Murray and Baedeker first 'promised' 'perfect accuracy' and 'fresh information' culled from 'personal and subjective involvement', Lonely Planet still makes the following avowal in every guidebook:

> Our promise: You can trust our travel information because Lonely Planet authors visit
> the places we write about, each and every edition. We never accept freebies for
> positive coverage, so you can rely on us to tell it like it is.

'Truthful' content - referred to as 'plain fact', 'practical information', 'factual description' or 'like it is' description based on 'personal observation' and 'actual journeys' - is an institutional pillar of the genre, indicating its non-fictionality or referentiality. As previously discussed, to make the generation of content contingent upon an actual journey renders the business of guide-making labour- and resource-intensive as well as logistically complicated (it requires the organisation of trips, lodging, and time and resources management). In addition, because of the ontological status of guidebooks as non-fiction, the continual transition of 'plain fact' into obsolescence compromises their 'accuracy', which in turn makes the costly and laborious process of updating their content through additional travel a continual necessity. The long lead times involved in the publication process (between manuscript preparation and product launch) exacerbate the ontological issue. Essentially, when a guide hits the shelves, it is already outdated, and the content is stale instead of 'fresh'. Nine years lapsed between Murray's initial continental trip and the first edition of the guidebook. Currently, the lead time has shrunk to between nine and twelve months, a period that is long enough to compromise the immediacy and the truth status of the content.

Murray self-reflexively grapples with the business consequences of the genre ontology in what appears to be an early example of a disclaimer included in the preface to the *Handbook on Southern Germany*:

> The Author feels that, in spite of his endeavours, he can scarcely hope to have attained perfect accuracy; and he has therefore only to rely on the indulgence of his readers to excuse, as far as possible, the mistakes which must necessarily creep into such a work (1857:iii).

Even more tellingly, in the Preface to the 1836 edition of the *Handbook to the Continent*, Murray expounds on the quasi-scientific standing of 'a book of this kind', which, due to its referentiality, is liable to be constantly evaluated against real referents:

> A book of this kind, every word of which is liable to be weighed and verified on the spot, is subject to a much more severe test and criticism (v-vi).

Suggesting an incapacity to fulfil the obligations of the genre contract (whether because of a failure to update a guide in a timely manner, to withstand the intensity of the work, or to secure the necessary means of production) delimits the scope of the obligations implicit in the voluntary contract between the producer and the audience. This concession provides a defence against critics and pre-empts criticism and even legal action that could arise from potential claims of defamation. This is what Genette calls 'preventive autocriticism' (p. 208). By critically explicating the *modus operandi* of the genre, publishers hope to minimise the impact of the breach of the implicit contract on the audience (as was made manifest by the TK affair). Toward this end, irony and even sarcasm are employed in self-reflexive commentary within the industry. Again, the audience is called upon, through instructions about how to use the genre most appropriately, to reconsider the contract terms and contribute to making the guide 'more accurate'. Lonely Planet warns in every new edition,

> Things change - prices go up, schedules change, good places go bad and bad places go bankrupt - nothing stays the same. So, if you find things better or worse, recently opened or long-since closed, please tell us and help make the next edition even more accurate and useful. Lonely Planet thoroughly updates each guidebook as often as possible – usually every two years.

Modern publishers use disclaimers to waive their contractual obligation to referentiality and to prevent any harm or injury that may result from the failure to 'attain perfect accuracy'. Thus, the duty of care on the part of the reader is invoked in the institutionalisation of this non-fiction genre. This is all the more important if we recall the performativity and effectiveness of the genre in producing what it describes. The duty of care minimises the possible risk associated with 'good use' of the guide (i.e., the use of its content in action). Even the e-book editions published by *DK Eyewitness* bear the following disclaimer:

The ontological boundedness of the genre, the genre contract, and the publishers' response to it seem to be remarkably stable. Even new media technologies (those that facilitate e-book publishing, for example), so eagerly hailed for their power to restore immediacy, shrink geographical distances, and dismantle the professional paradigm of cultural production (Bruns 2008; Jenkins 2006), do not appear to have altered the genre contract.

Given the ontological boundedness of the genre, the producers are always in violation of the implicit contract. Once the ontological boundedness of the genre was acknowledged and influenced the publishing business model, a diverse range of strategies (mainly involving self-interpretation, self-criticism and self-justification) were devised to remedy the loss of immediacy and counteract the impending obsolescence of the texts. These institutional strategies are modelled upon the genre contract of truthfulness and thus are geared towards securing trustworthiness and authority, which in turn govern production.

I trace the historical, ambivalent yet stable institutional strategies geared towards mitigating or alleviating the impact of genre dominants on production practices. Inevitably, technological changes are discussed as part of this interplay.

Configuring credibility, authority and expertise

The most value-enhancing antidote to the inability to maintain the contract of truthfulness involves restating the method of manufacturing and thus enhancing the impression that guide-making is in fact the product of a knowledgeable, in-depth, and ethical type of expertise. The pragmatic and philosophical unfeasibility of the contract of truthfulness recasts the relationship between producers and audiences not as stabilised and unchangeable but rather as a continuous process of becoming. In demonstrating that the production process was executed in accordance with highest norms of excellence and that every precaution has been taken to ensure good work, the company suggests that the only factor left to blame for the failure of its content is the sheer nature of the genre. This type of exonerating paratext influences social relations, building trust between audiences and good/good-faith producers and guaranteeing quality. In addition, the communication of such *modus operandi* necessarily presupposes a healthy dose of self-interpretation about the method of production. No single author could possibly claim sole authorship of this type of '*crescit eundo*' genre. Collaborative authorship helps to alleviate the labour-intensiveness of guide-making.

When author-publishers could no longer claim 'personal involvement' in every single act of production, convincing their readerships of institutional expertise became paramount. The emphasis on a method that involved 'being there' (Geertz 1988) – that is, systematic observation, meticulous fact-checking and rigorous on-the-ground revision – is intended to imply expertise. In addition, the self-promoting emphasis on expertise enhances producer authority by painting guide-making as a professional, ethical, conscientious and aesthetic endeavour. The aura of expertise and 'good work' is intended to substitute for the ontological impossibility of 'perfect accuracy' that is inevitably ascribed to 'such a work'. Therefore, both Baedeker and Murray made extensive use of specialists, subject experts, and university professors as authors who were well positioned to leverage their reputation as experts. Guidebook production became professionalised and was entrusted to elite members of high society. Many of Murray's guidebooks were written by his very close circle of friends, including the members of the Atheneum club, the British Alpine Club, and the Royal Geographical Society, members of the British diplomatic corps, itinerant clergymen, university professors, and historians such as Ruskin, Palgrave or Richard Ford. Similarly, as the publishing empire expanded and the genre gained in importance, Baedeker heavily relied on specialists – particularly university professors, philologists, philosophers, Egyptologists, and medievalists – as deemed appropriate to the specific location of interest.

Extensive fieldwork under the guidance of local guides; exhaustive research trips and temporary residence in the company of good friends and fellow travellers that would combat loneliness on the road; a local network of correspondents who would supply intelligence about on-the-ground changes; on-the-spot criticism, verification and testing of unpublished material by friends or random travellers; detailed interviews with local luminaries and meticulous (inter)personal observations were among the most elaborate strategies for the 'good work of guide-making' as devised and described by Murray (1919:19-20) in almost every preface to the Handbooks.

The most powerful explanation of the principles of the genre and the craft of executing good guide composition can be found in Murray's solicitation letters to local authorities and eminencies, who apparently required a clear explanation for people uninitiated in the trade of writing. In a letter from 1889, with the *Handbook to India* in the pipeline, Murray wrote to the local authorities in India in hopes of securing their authorial assistance or an expert intervention in the work on the Handbook:

> In order to secure as great accuracy as possible in statements relating to a country of
> such extent, I am circulating the book in proof slips in order to secure the assistance
> of local authorities regarding the district in their own neighbourhood, and mark on
> the margins any mistakes or omissions you may detect, and then return them to
> Messers Thacker, Spink and Co., of Calcutta. SELECTION is the principle on which
> Handbook should be constructed, not aiming to include every building, painting,
> institution, or other object in a place, but only *all that is worth seeing*, especially

those things which cannot be seen so elsewhere. Detailed descriptions of scenery
and elaborate accounts of edifices are superfluous to a traveller who has the objects
before his eyes; yet he should be told what he ought to look for, what best merits his
attention, how he can see it more easily, and what time he ought to devote. History,
Archaeology, Architecture, Scenery, Sport, may each in turn be the special attraction
of some locality, and those who are familiar with the spot are the best judges of the
subjects to which prominence should be given. *In all cases information as to means
of locomotion, and hotel and other accommodation for travellers, is of the utmost
importance*. If you have not the leisure to give the matter your own attention, might I
ask you to hand on this letter and enclosure to any of your neighbours who would be
likely to take an interest in it[37].

Lonely Planet discusses the inner workings of guide-making under the heading 'Behind-the-
scenes' on its official website. The company represents itself as a righteous producer of guides
that upholds the highest standards of excellence via a mixture of competent authors, specialists
and readers.

They [editors] research a destination from top to tail to see what travellers are
looking for - what's hot and what's not. Then they read all your feedback. (We told
you we read everything.) CEs [commissioning editors] also get input from specialists
and regional experts. Once we called upon the deputy prime minister of Tuvalu to
write on global warming in *South Pacific 3*[38].

In addition, the work of the editors, the degree of authorial agency, and the team's hard
work are also discussed such that the guide-making process appears systematic and knowledge-
and research-based. The failure to live up to the implicit genre contract is thus attenuated by
transparency regarding 'proper' methods:

They revisit the old, discover the new and aren't afraid to share their thoughts and
opinions. Lonely Planet authors know the destination. They visit hundreds of points
of interest, meet the locals and put in long days and late nights. They are researching
and reviewing from sun up to sun down - the breakfast joint, the gardens, the
galleries, the hostels[39].

By emphasising the diligence, conscientiousness and ethical stance of its authors, Lonely
Planet presents a self-aggrandising promotional paratextual self-analysis. It is its writers' penchant
for objectivity and immediacy that Lonely Planet insists on in every foreword:

Why is our travel information the best in the world? It's simple: our authors are
passionate, dedicated travellers. … They travel widely to all the popular spots, and
off the beaten track. They don't research using just the internet or phone. They

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[37] Murray, John, Letter from 30.09.1889 MS. 42615 (436B2) in the John Murray Archive at the NLS
[38] http://www.lonelyplanet.com/about/how-to-make-a-guide
[39] http://www.lonelyplanet.com/about/our-authors

discover new places not included in any other guidebook. They personally visit thousands of hotels, restaurants, palaces, trails, galleries, temples and more. They speak with dozens of locals everyday to make sure you get the kind of insider knowledge only a local could tell you. They take pride in getting the details right and *telling it how it is* (Prefaces, emphasis added).

Similarly and most recently, Rough Guides defines itself with reference to 'first-hand', 'personal' expertise with travel. Most important, however, is the company's attempt at self-theorisation across platforms in which it leverages the 'good work principles' of the 'genre' with old and new media (through apps, in print, or in ebooks):

Rough Guides have been part of the collective traveller psyche for nearly three decades – *synonymous with hard facts and fantastic trips*. As travel changes and fashions revolve, we're proud to be a *trusted constant for travellers*. We've never diluted our *'tell it like it is' ethos* and whether you access our information in *print, online via ebook or in app*, you can always expect that same Rough Guide quality[40].

The claims regarding 'telling it like it is' nicely capture the paradox of the factual genre. Owing to the ontological boundedness of language, this paratextual autocriticism draws a line between legitimate practices and mendacities within guide-making. The quest for 'perfect accuracy', 'hard facts' or 'like it is' description can be compromised by the general realities of production – essentially, it is impossible to record, visit, and review 'first-hand' everything that has been written about. Thus, the genre contract is being recast to include a distinction between 'opinionated description' and 'honesty', a sort of moral injunction regarding quality. Many of the techniques that are employed to overcome the limits on the attempt to represent reality are commonly accepted across the industry in a sardonic grammar of guide-making. In the wake of the fakery scandal described in the Prelude, Lonely Planet removed from its paratext the long-standing self-mocking commentary on its production procedures that referenced the paradox of representing reality:

No, [the writers] don't stay in *every* hotel mentioned, because that would mean spending a couple of months in each medium-sized city and, no, they don't eat at *every* restaurant because that would mean stretching the belt beyond its capacity. Many of our authors work 'undercover', others aren't so secretive: *none* of them accept freebies in exchange for a write-up[41].

In addition to their emphasis on the moral questions surrounding content quality, 'good work' strategies institute the collaborative nature of the genre and, by implication, the complex division of labour and the expertise associated with the guide-making. By augmenting the supply

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[40] The Rough Guide to Rough Guides, 2010, accessed in January 2012, original emphasis, http://www.roughguides.com/images/others/brandpack/pdf/rg_brandpack_2010.pdf
[41] http://web.archive.org/web/20000511043042/http://www.lonelyplanet.com/faq/faq.htm (retrieved with the WayBack Machine)

of fodder for content-creation, which can include anecdotes, gossip, local histories, tips, corrections and additions to previous editions, multiple authorship is well poised to counteract the impending obsolescence of the genre and add substance to the management of labour. Based on the genre ontology, guidebooks must be a collection of discourses, the efforts of multiple authors working under the autonomous guidance of the genre practices and that of editorial guidelines, which are aligned with bottom-line imperatives.

Lister's bibliographical work on the Murray publishing dynasty revealed some two hundred official authors/editors/contributors who were on the company payroll and thousands of what he calls 'anonymous authors' who painstakingly toiled away over the revision of the Handbook editions and whose names never succeeded in transcending the company's obscure ledgers and giving the authors credit for their work. Baedeker's and Murray's names assured readers of the existence of a personal author for their guidebooks while disguising the uniquely corporate actual authorship of the texts. This institutional authority substituted for the idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies of personal authorship. In his work on Baedeker's publishing house, Mandelson (1985) argues that despite the wide range of authors and contributors involved in the preparation of the guides, an unswerving generic structure and steadfast style resulted from Baedeker's firm administration of the operation, exercised through in-house editors who enforced a consistent style and level of research rigour (p. 5). Interestingly, strict editorial briefs (contractually binding documents enforced on writers by companies) institutionalise genre principles even (and probably most stringently) today, in an era of media conglomeration and digitisation.

Collaborative authorship and the promotion of institutional expertise under a strong publishing brand at the expense of individual authorship are deeply ingrained in the history of the travel guidebook publishing industry but are probably even more pronounced amidst the accelerated conglomeration and digitisation of the last two decades. Nonetheless, such structural changes are also embedded in genre ontologies.

The pro-conglomeration arguments promulgated in the business press (not least in corporate mission statements) following the accelerated conglomeration of the travel publishing companies in the last decade rest on the premise that within media conglomerates, content is disembodied from the constraints of any particular media vehicle so that the content (together with the loyal audience) can be parlayed into multiple cross-platform formats and tie-ins (travel TV or radio programming, travel magazines, travel photo stock, syndication and licensing, in-flight entertainment) and thus generate manifold revenue streams from what basically represents a fixed cost of production. According to Murdock and Golding (1977:40), the fundamental principle of media conglomeration is squeezing 'maximum mileage out of single cultural products'. Multimedia conglomerates redeploy and recycle across distribution channels whatever intellectual property they already own to forgo expensive capital investments in creative labour (Meehan 2007:25). The effects of conglomeration and the importance of possessing intellectual property have been further enhanced by digital technologies. As a binary digital code, media content is

inherently predisposed to intersect and be cross-referenced and moved across platforms, a predisposition that Murray (2005: 417) conceptualised as 'streamability' – the liquidity of content that can be moved between media formats. In attempts to capitalise on content streamability, intangibles such as publishing brands and copyright over content, rather than warehousing or stock, became the industry's biggest 'digitisable asset' (Thompson 2005:9). As a result, the author, the key provider of content in the publishing supply chain and, according to publishers, the most troublesome to coordinate, has been refashioned into a contractor, a hired executor of assignments that are devised by the company, and not as the original creator. At the turn of the millennium, publishers had begun to arrange to obtain all possible rights to content exploitation under their brand by replacing royalty payment models with work-for-hire contracts in which the author is stripped of his or her copyright, dissociated from the work, denied authorship, and paid only once. Work-for-hire has allowed the involvement of a multitude of less experienced, less expensive writers on the speculation that strict editorial policies will compensate for their lack of expertise.

With the impending danger of obsolescence, travel guidebooks transitioned easily to digital media and embraced the prospect of immediate, constant updating. Not least significantly, digitisation made it possible to free travellers from the weight of voluminous guidebooks, which were cumbersome during travel. This shift also allowed guides to expand exponentially in volume, further exacerbating the '*crescit eundo'* trend of the printed era; guide-making became ever more labour intensive and resource demanding. As the demand for incessant content provision increased, so did the need for collaborative authorship. Hence, guide-making became a joint effort by many content updaters operating under the umbrella of the publishing brand rather than the work of a sole idiosyncratic professional author. In full possession of content rights and with no accountability to individual content producers, publishers have strengthened and leveraged their brand recognition online. Not wishing to compromise the quality of content by delegating guide-making to scattered, diverse production teams, publishing companies have ever more intensely self-promoted institutional/brand credibility, authority and visibility. To vet quality and ensure consistent style and accuracy, companies have institutionalised their genre guidelines into editorial briefs: contractually binding documents writers are legally obligated to follow. Strict editorial policies carefully guard the collaborative process of guide-making with the aim of compensating for any shortcomings of freelance work executed on work-for-hire terms. Because they possess all rights to the content, publishers can freely manipulate and experiment with the digital repackaging and recycling of travel content that comes in different formats and produces other revenue streams than printed books do, including downloadable pdf chapters, podcasts, audio walking tours, augmented reality e-books, mobile apps, and apps with locative media.

The transition from royalty to work-for-hire contracts legally sanctioned collaborative authorship, which implied the existence of an anonymous author. Anonymity, in turn, enhanced the paradoxical commitment to 'perfect accuracy'. The established truth and objectivity of facts is

guaranteed by the quasi-scientific standards vigilantly scrutinised by publishers rather than by the grounding of the text in subjective experiences. Long before Murray, as Foucault (1979:150) argued, anonymity ceased to be a prerogative of 'literary' texts and became a marker of 'scientific texts'. It is the systemic whole of corporate anonymity that legitimises factual texts, not the reference to individual producers. Thus, in Foucault's author-function scheme, the lack of individual authorship re-establishes the link between the text and quasi-scientific expert discourse that exists independent of idiosyncratic experiences.

The names of the authors are removed from the cover page or the spine of the physical guidebook. The long list of credits appended to the last page of every Lonely Planet or Rough Guides edition testifies to the collaborative yet anonymous nature of the genre (as Faulkner, 1983, argued is also the case with Hollywood film making). Long lists of individuals, 'a motley crew' (Caves 2000) of friends, acquaintances, travellers, and random interlocutors, are all duly acknowledged alongside readers who responded favourably to the producers' call for collaboration. For instance, seventeen officially recognised writers penned the 2011 edition of the Lonely Planet's guide to India. Other publishers trumpet the expert status of their freelance writers. For example, Footprint writes on its website:

> From the first edition of our first book in 1924 to the books that we publish today, one thing has remained consistent: every guide is expertly written by authors with first hand knowledge of the areas they write about, enabling us to create titles which are rich in cultural and historical content and which offer a level of detail simply not offered by other guidebooks. ... Books written by a small team of experts with an intimate knowledge of the regions they cover, resulting in books which are accurate, insightful, practical, and rich with places and attractions simply not covered by other guides[42].

It is interesting to note that the drive for authorial anonymity under the guise of corporate collaborative authorship runs parallel to the insistence on individual author's biographies as a marker of local knowledge and guidebook-making expertise. The paratextual inscriptions present the author's lifestyle as a main selling point. Every guidebook edition by the major English publishers includes an 'About the authors' section that presents the credentials of its author. To 'tell it like it is' requires proximity to the world-out-there, 'having been there' eyewitness engagement (Zelizer 2007). To be a scrupulous eyewitness of facts and events (i.e., to provide a detached and uninvolved report on reality), one must become a strong 'I' (Geertz 1988:79). Such paratextual representation is essentially a rhetorical strategy for legitimating the inability to objectively attain 'perfect accuracy'. The industry-wide strategy of using 'About the authors' sections generates authority, and authority begets narratives, through which the industry self-referentially addresses, defends and channels the parameters of appropriate action in the face of rapid obsolescence, ephemerality and labour-intensiveness. It is here that individual authority

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[42] http://www.footprinttravelguides.com/footprint/about-us/

becomes a marker of collective practice that delineates what is appropriate for all the members of the genre world. Thus, the authorial presence is attained through narrative strategies such as synecdoche, selection and personalisation, something that Zelizer (1992) also noted about the work of investigative journalists. Nevertheless, these are not autobiographical stories (as I will show in the next two chapters). They are institutionally processed, utilitarian, pragmatic quasi-self-portraits that mainly serve a branding purpose within the industry. Such paratexts are a vestige of the historical role of guidebooks in supplanting local guides and interpreters. Now, someone must be ethically responsible for the written guidance. Consider the following paradigmatic biographical description regarding one of my informants, which was appended to the guide she had authored. Here, a single, isolated, even 'bizarre' encounter with the destination stands for the whole of one's personalised expertise and authority, mainly as a rationale for one's employment in this position:

> Years ago, during Betty's first visit to Elbonia[43], she met a gentleman wearing sunglasses, a straw hat-and, that was all. Yes Betty had meandered into a nudist beach, and it is this occurrence she flaunted when she convinced Lonely Planet editors of her very intimate knowledge of Elbonia[44].

A labour-intensive non-fiction genre that is linked to nationalistic pursuits (Koshar 2000) and anonymous collaborative authorship can potentially assimilate a large workforce. That this was the case with travel guidebooks is illustrated by the Federal Writers Project. During the Great Depression, guidebook writing became the mainstay of the governmental strategy for engaging unemployed writers, editors and research workers in economically viable and useful civic work (Mangione 1972). Hence, the labour-intensiveness of the genre dovetailed with the state paternalism that characterised the American cultural policy in the 1930s. The publicly sponsored project, which was encyclopaedic in scope, was known as *American Guide Series* and helped to employ (on the payroll) a staggering seven thousand American writers over a five-year period. These writers produced 48 guidebooks for American states, cities and territories. The genre lended itself easily to subsidised cultural production in an instance in which the number of employees overshadowed the content. The bureaucratic rationality of the federal project and the generic idiosyncrasies overlapped within the process of large-scale cultural production. Even for those 'hack writers' who were forcefully employed as guidebook writers, turning a 'good copy' was a no easy task, precisely because of the implied anonymity – with no public acclaim, mundane tasks, and strict editorial guidelines from the centralised administration in Washington – but most importantly owing to the characteristics of the genre, which included immanent obsolescence and labour-intensiveness (Mangione 1972). The general feeling about the work was expressed in an oft-quote adage in verse by the writers of the Federal Writing Project: 'I think that I have never

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[43] The Republic of Elbonia is a fictional country in the popular comic strip *Dilbert* authored by Scott Adams. On several 'gossiping' occasions I have witnessed, travel guidebook writers referring to Elbonia when intent on avoiding mentioning a specific destination and thus invoking the names of the authors who are experts on it. Emulating this practice, I use *Elbonia* in order to protect the privacy of my informants.
[44] I have slightly rewritten this citation so as to protect my informant's identity. Yet, I kept the meaning intact.

tried; A job as painful as the guide; A guide that changes everyday;…A guide to which we give our best; To hear: 'This stinks like all the rest; There's no way out but suicide; For only God can end the Guide' (ibid.: 140).

Collaborative authorship in the extreme: co-opting the readers

In October 2007, BBC Worldwide, the main commercial subsidiary of the BBC, took over the world's leading guidebook publisher, Lonely Planet, and vowed to usher guidebook production into the digital era. It extolled user-generated content as a strategic profit-boosting tool and as a mainstay of its future business model. In the BBC annual report (Chief Executive's Review, 2007/2008), the BBC announced gross investments in Lonely Planet's 'passion site': 'a powerful and unique 'triple play' with users returning to source up-to-date information they can rely upon, to connect with friends and fellow travellers through groups and community tools, and to take content to share through their own sites' (p.32). In its 2009/2010 annual report, in spite of the recession, the BBC announced revenue growth through Lonely Planet owing to a major revamping of its 'passion site', Thorn Tree, built around an online community of travellers.

Guide-making is a 'deep conversation' between experts and audiences, as suggested an online manager for Lonely Planet in an interview. The manager acknowledged the productive role of the audience in guide-making. Audiences are part of the collaborative authorship.

> Any content website worth its weight in salt in **2009** needs to involve a deep level of conversation between users and in-house content experts (that is, editorial). … People talk to us and ask about new ways in which they can contribute. When something is wrong, our users let us know – and they want to help by fixing it. We read any single comment sent to us. How could we not want to harness this positive feeling and collaborative spirit? … [This] is not even a question of competitive advantage; it's just the sane thing to do.

Nevertheless, the deep conversation between editors and audiences and the constitutive role of the audience are rooted in genre ontologies and are only secondarily facilitated by the new media technologies and a strong institutional brand. The implicit genre contract of truthfulness and the fact that the guide is an assemblage of discourses actually facilitates audience engagement. Long-standing stasis or genre stability gives audiences a foundational understanding of the genre's principles of production. As a result, they can become competent interpreters and, by implication, producers (Culler 1997). Strong institutional brands can in fact take advantage of audience genre competence regardless of the availability of technology.

In an interview for the Pall Mall Gazette from 1889, John Muirhead emphasised that the only way to achieve 'accuracy' – 'the accuracy that secures purchasers' (1889: 2), was intensive collaborative production. Therefore, the collaborative nature of guidebook production, according to Muirhead, was intended to reduce error and involved concerted efforts by multiple actors, a

blend of amateur readers and professional writers. Among these were, first and foremost, 'Mr. Baedeker's personal diligence and editorial staff' – to whom 'the chief credit' went for the guides' success and who 'have collected, digested, and verified their information in a very laborious and conscientious manner'. Second came 'the aid of amateurs' – their 'valuable contribution' to keeping the guides up-to-date. Last but not least were the specialists or 'conscience-keepers' who 'ensure authoritative judgement' (1889: 1-2).

No less importantly, guidebook companies tap into the all-encompassing knowledge and creativity of a multitude of readers as a source of content that sustains the genre's non-fictionality and information intensity by supplementing or even supplanting the productive endeavours of professional travel writers with the all-encompassing and pervasive knowledge or generic competence of a multitude of amateurs.

What is the shape of the relationship between producers and audiences? How does the genre ontology afford audience agency? How do publishers make sense of this relationship?

The genre of the travel guidebook 'institutionalises word-of-mouth' (Hutnyk 1996: 29). The glimmers of the generic *modus operandi* interpolated with industry self-interpretation, including autocriticism, are strongly visible in those paratexts that institutionalise 'word-of-mouth' by exhorting their readership to actively participate in content creation. In making the genre contract explicitly transparent, the producers invited savvy guide usage. Invariably, the readers were invited to supply feedback, corrections, comments or simply their own 'personal observations', which were authenticated via the inclusion of their real names as authorial assistants in the subsequent edition of the guide. In addition, the implicit genre contract implies the possibility and legitimacy of verifying the 'facts' through road-checking or fact-checking. Fact-checking can be used to ascertain the truthfulness of a guide and allows readers a sense of involvement in the act of production.

Murray and Baedeker were both acutely aware of the impossibility of rendering a guidebook impervious to errors, and they also felt totally powerless in the face of the constant obsolescence and out-datedness of information. Here is how Murray, in the Preface to the 1836 edition of the *Handbook on the Continent* asks for reader tolerance of these inevitable inaccuracies and summons significant, active, productive participation by his readership in the process of curbing this obsolescence and reducing the number of blunders:

> That such a work can be faultless is impossible, and the author has therefore to throw himself on the indulgence of his readers, to excuse the inaccuracies (numerous, no doubt) which may occur in the course of it, especially in the first Edition, in spite of the care to avoid them; and *he most particularly requests all who make use* of it to favour him, by transmitting, through his publisher, *a notice of any mistakes* or *omissions which they may discover*. Such communications will

be carefully attended to, in the event of a new edition being required (1836: vi original emphasis).

The copious reader feedback (word-of-mouth) was an indirect agent of the material production of guidebooks. Baedeker also explains how he uses bona fide statements by travellers founded on their own personal observations to improve the guide:

> The fairness of the charges in different hotels has been invariably tested by the *personal experience* of the editor, or from an inspection of numberless bills with which he has been furnished from numerous quarters (1861:iv).

The need to self-reflexively ponder the cooperative strategies of production was also visible in the popular press of the time. Muirhead, the Baedeker editor, comments on the efforts to forestall obsolescence within the genre in an interview from 1898:

> When a new edition is being prepared, the first thing we do is to go carefully through the mass of correspondence, generally very voluminous, which has come to hand. This consists of hotel bills, notes, complaints, and suggestions. … Many of the letters thus received are most useful, not only as to mere correction of matters of detail, but in suggesting additions of one kind or another, improvements in maps, in arrangement and so on (1889:1).

As the editions multiplied, the guidebook publishing diversified and the demand increased further due to the rapid increase in tourism, the publishers were further strained by the need to amplify and streamline the network of correspondence. The editors began to introduce their readership to the production principles within the genre to elicit content that would be as exploitable and meaningful as possible in terms of both quality and quantity. In the second edition to the guidebook to Egypt in 1885, Baedeker provides instructions for readerly contributions to improve content usability:

> On the successful termination of the journey travellers are too apt from motives of good nature to write a more favourable testimonial for their dragoman [local interpreter] than he really deserves; but this is truly an act of injustice to his subsequent employers, and tends to confirm him in his faults. The testimonial therefore should not omit to mention any serious cause for dissatisfaction. Information with regard to dragomans (name, languages spoken, conduct, and charges) will always be gratefully received by the Editor of the Handbook for the benefit of later editions (1885: 14).

In a similarly amicable tone, Lonely Planet started requesting content from its readership. In the 1980s edition of *Africa on a Shoestring*, the producers write, 'We haven't heard of anyone going there (Comoro Islands) for a long time so we have no details to offer. If you do go, please drop us a line'.

On their website, Frommer's excuses its own inability to live up to its contractual vow of perfect accuracy, explaining its ontological boundedness by noting the 'perishability' of information, and then solicits input from readers as co-producers:

> Given how "perishable" travel information is, with constant openings and closings, the authors, editors and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experience of readers while traveling. We do, however, appreciate hearing from readers who have had a disappointing experience with a hotel, restaurant or attraction, and we promise you that we check out all complaints and take them with the utmost seriousness when preparing the next edition of the relevant guide[45].

According to Lister (1993), the bibliographer of Murray's Handbooks, Murray carefully read all of the incoming correspondence sent in by readers and, for the next edition, solicited contributions from the readers who sent the most compelling and thorough content amendments. Having meticulously researched Murray's financial statements and ledgers, Lister concludes that Murray rewarded the most enlightening and meritorious contributions with minor cash sums (Lister 1993: xlvii). After having submitted his sizeable corrections to several Handbook editions, Henry William Pullen was appointed a Handbook editor. Murray wrote in a message,

> I am very sensible of the value and utility of the Notes and Corrections of my Handbooks, with which you have from time to time favoured me. They also induce me to believe that you possess the abilities, knowledge and experience fitting you to edit and revise my travellers' Handbooks' – 28 May 1885 (Cf. in Gretton's introduction to Lister's bibliography 1993: xxxii).

The modern guidebook publishers that were established in parallel with the advances in new media technologies towards the end of the 20th century were prompt in channelling audience productivity through online communities. In 1996, Lonely Planet established Thorn Tree; in 2000, Rough Guides promoted IgoUgo; and the other publishers immediately followed suit. Thorn Three boasts a million registered users, of which 5% are prolific contributors and an additional hundreds of thousands have created content on a one-off basis. Centred on a conventional forum, Thorn Tree is a synchronous virtual simulacrum of an actual acacia tree in a hotel lobby in Nairobi that served as a crossroads for asynchronous hand-written information that was pinned to its trunk.

Publishing companies sustain, maintain and harbour online communities because they spawn low-cost content in the form of rumours, word-of-mouth, conversations and stories, which represent the foundation for the assemblages. Online communities interpellate travellers as active subjects and establish their agency as a constitutive element of guidebook production. Community members are committed to accruing, preserving and regurgitating large amounts of travel-related

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[45] http://www.frommers.com/about/about_faq_guides.html#ANCHOR7#ixzz1jGqTpk53

information, advice and recommendations, often in the form of updates, corrections and fact-checking. Thorn Three openly requests that guidebook users submit timely updates to old book editions (i.e., 'tie up loose ends,' comment, provide feedback, and road-test the guide) within a separate and carefully moderated conversation thread called 'Guidebook Updates'. In what seems like an inevitable capture of user agency and capitalisation on the human capacity for conversation, the community of participants is legally recognised as the author rather than alienated or oppressed. The company exerts ownership over user-generated content by acquiring a non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free worldwide licence to publish the products of this linguistic cooperation, as stipulated in the Terms and Conditions for participation. As the editor put it, harnessing the creativity of the many comes naturally to guidebook publishers: 'It is just the sane thing to do'.

The non-fictionality of the genre (the correspondence of the information with the reality of the travel destination) can be evaluated by readers. Every time readers travelled and followed the guidebook's didactic trajectory, they verified their guidebooks' adherence to the principles of the genre. This fact has consequences for industry practice. With each act of consumption, readers evaluate the quality of the text, measuring the performance of the production work. They gain generic competence that may lead them to generate amendments to guides, complementing the professional endeavours of the writers and decreasing the labour-intensiveness of the genre.

From douceur to quid-pro-quo

Providing information regarding travel logistics (e.g., lodging, local transportation, food and climate) that is non-fictional in the sense that it is accurate, immediate and up-to-date is a mundane task. Nevertheless, it is admittedly also 'the trickiest' (Foulke 1991:99) task and, I would add, is a resource-demanding proposition. Therefore, the contract of truthfulness is constantly menaced by the danger that freebies may be used to minimise financial and time investments. Thus, producers vigilantly guard and constantly communicate their vow to accuracy, claiming professional expertise and authority vis-à-vis the likelihood of douceur. Quite understandably, 'douceur', or efforts by tourism establishments to influence the content and tone of the 'personal' observations set forth in these guides, represent a danger in this capacity. Given that guide-making is exceptionally labour-intensive, time-consuming and expensive, it is not difficult to overestimate the allure of freebies:

> In answer to numerous communications on in-keepers addressed to the editor,
> some of them accompanied by douceurs of various shapes … have been
> invariably returned to the senders, he begs explicitly to state that his sole object
> is to be serviceable to the tourist, whose confidence he would ill merit if he
> palmed off upon him the self-laudations of inn-keepers themselves, upon which
> implicit cannot always be placed (Baedeker, 1861: iv)

In letter prefaces, Baedeker clarifies his repugnance for douceur in greater detail:

> To hotel - proprietors, tradesmen, and others the Editor begs to intimate that a character for fair dealing towards travellers is the sole passport to his commendation, and that no advertisements of any kind are admitted to his Handbooks. Hotel-keepers are warned against persons representing themselves as agents for Baedeker's Handbooks (1885:vi).

Along similar lines, Murray warns,

> No attention can be paid to letters from innkeepers in praise of their own houses; and the postage of them is so onerous that they cannot be received… The Publisher, therefore, thinks proper to warn all whom it may concern, that recommendations in the Handbooks are not to be obtained by purchase' (1855:4).

Modern publishers have devised elaborate 'freebie' policies that are meant to affirm the 'good' practice of guide-making and dissociate themselves from unethical or truth-compromising behaviour. These freebie policies, which are presented in paratexts, are meant to confirm expertise and thus to safeguard the contract of truthfulness. Lonely Planet proclaims in every edition that 'Our writers don't accept freebies in exchange for positive coverage', which, according to the publisher, guarantees 'impartial', 'honest' and 'objective' descriptions and recommendations:

> Lonely Planet guidebooks contain no advertising and Lonely Planet authors are not allowed to accept free accommodations or meals in exchange for favourable write-ups, so their recommendations are honest and objective.

Frommer's explains its freebie policy in more detail, indicating that it most vigilantly protects its 'editorial policy' and commitment to write 'from personal experience':

> Let there be no mistake about it! The airlines, cruise lines, tour operators, consolidators, national tourist boards, and other travel firms mentioned in our Frommers.com Newsletter and our popular Frommer's Travel Guides series have not paid a single penny for such mention. All establishment listings and reviews in Frommer's Guidebooks and online at Frommers.com are based on our author's individual experiences--our listings and reviews are not advertisements[46].

Such explanations articulate the industry-wide acknowledgement of freebies as a cost-minimising strategy. Although freebies threaten to undermine the genre contract, they appear indispensable. Freebie policies are meant to legitimise the genre as high quality despite the power dynamics of the travel industry. If freebies are not provided quid pro quo, they cannot destroy the genre contract. The high ethical standards of the 'expert' authors do not permit freebies to interfere with accurate judgment.

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[46] http://www.frommers.com/about/about_editorial.html

In summary, with a labour-intensive product that is constantly in danger of becoming out-of-date, guidebook companies have traditionally earned brand loyalty by building trust relationships embedded in 'expert systems'. As Giddens put it, 'expert systems depend in an essential way on *trust*' (Giddens 1991: 18) because they mediate the relationship between consumers (travellers, guidebook users) and any travel destination about which the former do not have direct knowledge. To fight their impending obsolescence, guidebooks self-reflexively promulgate an *expert paradigm* that does not postulate a body of knowledge that is *a priori* objectively true; rather, it requires that the experts convince a certain number of people that the knowledge they possess and dispense is both true and useful (Wilensky 1964). The expert paradigm is an antidote to the paradigm of belatedness. By relaying on an expert paradigm, guidebook companies have shifted the focus from the issue of ontological boundedness (the impossibility of revealing actuality/reality in its totality) to ethical issues related to moral rectitude and professional virtue among producers (i.e., guidebooks ought and are supposed to tell the truth). Therefore, the value of the expert paradigm is located in trust, credibility and social interaction rather than in a truthfulness quotient. As de Certeau put it, 'the credibility of a discourse is what first makes believers act in accord with it. It produces practitioners…and it makes people believe that it speaks in the name of the 'real'' (de Certeau 1984: 148). In particular, guidebook publishing companies have devised specific policies regarding subsidised travel, sponsored trips or what in the industry is known as 'soliciting freebies'.

Performativity: the infelicity of the genre

In 2004, when Bernard Loiseau, the chef and owner of a restaurant with three Michelin stars, was threatened with the prospect of losing one star in the next edition of the Michelin guides, he killed himself with a shotgun blast to the head (Colapinto 2009). Although it is an extreme example, this story testifies mightily to the performativity of guidebooks and their potential 'infelicity' in Austin's (1975) sense as speech acts gone wrong (pp. 14-15).

The second dominant of the genre is performativity. An implicit performativity or agentic effect is inscribed in the construction of guidebooks; guides are made with the aim of affecting reader behaviour and use practices. Therefore, guides possess an efficacy or an illocutionary power to generate what they describe in 'real life' by propelling the reader to act upon their reality in accordance with the text. In other words, the performativity of the genre is located in the application of the discourses in real travel.

As Murray himself admitted, in writing and publishing guides, he was aware of the genre's performativity. Early guide-making had the overt function of influencing how readers travel, see things, and experience places. The producer acts on behalf of the audience:

> I had to consult the wants and the convenience of travellers in the order and
> arrangements of my facts … I had to find out what was really worth seeing there, to

> make a selection of such objects, and to tell how best to see them, avoiding the
> ordinary practice of local Guide-books, which, in inflated language, cram in
> everything than can possibly be said – not bewildering my readers by describing all
> that *might* be seen – and using the most condensed and simplest style in the
> description of special objects. I made my aim to point out things *peculiar* to the
> spot, or which might be better seen there than elsewhere (Murray 1919: 42).

As travel became more frequent and guides assumed a more 'devotional' character as insurance against the loss of time, money and experience, the genre became ever more powerful. The guidebook genre is unlike any other in that guidebooks are imbued with 'nuclear power' that can devastate or resurrect everything they write about, making or unmaking things with words. Lonely Planet self-consciously and reflexively boasts about the performative power of its genre-rooted global brand:

> When you see a restaurant owner burst into tears when they hear the Lonely
> Planet author is in town, or a once-quiet hill town transforms into a big tick on the
> travel trail, you quickly become aware of the power of guidebooks (LP biz 2006).

The powerful agency of guidebooks has been well-documented even in adverse historical circumstances. Baedeker guides became the foundation of the so-called 'Baedeker raids' during World War II. The Nazi army's bombing targets were defined in accordance with Baedeker's prescriptions. Every building listed as having three stars was to be knocked down so as to devastate both property and national pride (see more in Lambourne, 2001). Conversely, Lonely Planet's authority expanded so much that it was used by the first American occupiers of Iraq to determine which historical sites were not to be looted, destroyed or demolished (see, for example, Friend, 2005).

The quasi-mythical power of the genre pervades its paratext, particularly the promotional materials employed, which include interviews, book launches, and reviews. The paratextual context of the genre is replete with apocryphal stories about and challenges to the power of the guides to 'make or break' a place. Tony Wheeler confesses in an interview:

> 'That's not apocryphal,' ... 'That happens all the time. All over the place. They're
> always at it. There was one place in Hanoi where we recommended the
> Globetrekker agency, and then a Globaltrekker agency appeared, and a Globe Treks
> agency, and Globetrekker 2[47].

Together with publishes' self-awareness of the power of the genre came suggestions regarding social responsibility. It was insufficient to assert the ethical standards of guide-making; doing good in the countries affected by the genre was also a requisite. Such paratextual description made social responsibility a pretext for the impact of the travellers on the performativity of the genre.

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[47] http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2007/oct/07/escape.travelbooks (Carole Cadwalladr)

A genre that claims constant reference to actuality but also exercises performative power over its readers is vulnerable to lawsuits (the courts being the keepers of the ultimate truth). Because of their performativity, guidebooks transcend the great divide between cultural and economic values, exerting a decisive influence on travel services, and on the politics and economies of the destinations in question. For example, the best known lawsuit levelled against Baedeker was in response to the 1894 edition of the *Handbook to Palestine and Syria*. In this legal case, the landlord of a hotel that was described by the author in an explanatory parenthesis as a '(second class hotel and a little cheaper; bargain with the landlord [an Arab] advisable)' claimed that Baedeker had libelled him and his hotel. In response, the British court in Malta forced Baedeker to withdraw the patronising parenthesis. In the subsequent edition, Baedeker completely omitted the hotel but added the cautionary note 'Hotels which cannot be accurately characterised without exposing the editor to risk of legal proceedings are left unmentioned' (for details, see Mandelson 1985). Mandelson (1985) affirms that the hotel in question went out of business soon after it was dropped out of the guidebook.

Another indicator of the performative agency of guidebooks is their influence on power dynamics. Many commentators and scholars researching the consumption of guidebooks have concluded that guidebook users faithfully follow guidebook recommendations and therefore exhibit herd-like behaviour (Cohen 1985). As a consequence of this performative efficacy, some scholars critically contend that guidebooks have turned out-of-the-way places into 'something that's loved to death' (Lisle 2008: 166). By channelling travellers into specific areas, guidebooks are suggested to have had a negative impact on nature, traditional lifestyles, and local cultures. In other words, guidebooks have been accused of resuscitating the very same inequalities that they reportedly claimed to destabilise by promoting 'independent' travel (Bhattacharyya 1997). Such criticism suggests that the way in which guidebook publishers maximise profits is contrary to the ethics of travel.

Guidebook publishers quite understandably cannot remain immune to concerns regarding social responsibility and ethical travel. These ethical paratexts self-reflexively justify the intense performativity of the genre by instructing 'responsible' travel that is supposed to alleviate global inequalities. The diachronic development of paratextual devices testifies for the shifting self-reflexivity. For thirty years, Lonely Planet defined itself as 'a travel survival kit'. This tagline was abolished in 1997 to distance the company from the idea that 'third world' countries were hazardous. The genre's founder-inspired injunctions are further exemplified in the philosophy 'Don't worry whether your trip will work out. Just go', a paratextual, self-defining statement that is printed in all guides. Just recently, the corporate motto was transformed to read, 'Attitude and Authority'. Such paratextual shifts capture the shifting awareness of the performativity of the genre and foreground the company's ethical credentials. In a message by its founders, Lonely Planet presents its ethical vision by critically engaging with the most vehement criticism regarding places that are 'loved to death':

Loved to death. These days it's a phrase that more and more travel possibilities get tarnished with.

We scratch our heads and wonder just when Bali's Kuta or India's Goa morphed from quiet surfer escapes or laid back hippy hangouts into international resorts of wall to wall shops, restaurants and package hotels. Cities the world over worry about how they're going to cope with ever increasing flows of tourists.

At Lonely Planet sustainable and responsible have always been parts of our vocabulary.[48]

Most commonly the ethical strategies intended to shift the performative impact of guides involve carbon offsets, the donation of resources to local charities, and the use of paper from sustainable forests.

From guide-book publishers to travel information businesses

The debate that has most energetically engaged the travel publishing industry is that regarding the death of the genre. The tenacity and pervasiveness of this debate are reflected in a series of 'genre obituaries' in the international press. Ominous headlines that have proclaimed the genre to be extinct have proliferated: *The hot topic: The death of the guidebook* (the Guardian, January 2006), *Death of the guidebook: Lost in a cutthroat world* (the Age, April 2008); *The end of the guidebook?* (the Financial Times, August, 2010); *Are guidebooks facing extinction?* (the Guardian, October 2010).

It was thought that new media technologies, from digital to mobile, might cause the demise of this venerable genre. Nevertheless, industry insiders were adamant. The genre might become less prominent in its print form, but it would survive and even thrive across new media platforms. Thus, the technological shift triggered shifts in the industry's form of self-reflexivity. Travel publishers repositioned themselves not as travel guidebook publishers but rather as travel content providers. This shift was most definitely not a move away from the practices of the genre. On the contrary, it signalled the desire to revivify the genre across media platforms. The shift epitomised industrial conglomeration and digitisation. BBC Worldwide took over Lonely Planet in 2007 with a clear-cut transitional strategy oriented toward the bottom line: 'the strategy to transform Lonely Planet from a travel book publisher to a diversified travel information provider'[49]. It was felt that the digital guidebook would need to supersede the 'book' and liquidify online by becoming mobile and locative. For example, Lonely Planet now presents itself as a transmedia travel information business in the *Who's Who* catalogue for the Frankfurt Book Fair from 2011:

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[48] http://www.lonelyplanet.com/about/responsible-travel
[49] http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/annualreport/pdf/bbc_ar_online_08_09.pdf

Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. provides travel information. The company offers guidebooks, including maps, language guidance, health and safety advice, and background information, as well as provides digital guides, wireless applications, and travel photographs. It also provides Chinese-language guides to China's provinces. In addition, the company operates a Website for travellers, as well as produces and develops travel and factual programming for various broadcasters.

Lonely Planet's business acumen involves new proprietary strategies of guide-making as described above. Self-reflexive industry repositioning can be read as an attempt to squeeze the maximum mileage out of production within a single genre. The authority and authenticity of guide-making should be profitably leveraged in the production of genre-related travel content. Instead of contracting, the genre of the guidebook actually expanded in multiple media formats.

Conclusion

Guidebook publishers self-present through their genre. The dominants of the genre support institutional autobiographical interpretations. Through the genre, the travel guidebook industry comments incipiently on its own genesis, its production techniques, and its overall, institutionalised *modus operandi*. The practices of the genre generate relevance and coherence, providing the basis for the industry's *raison d'être*.

The contract of truthfulness and performativity render guide-making labour-intensive, time-consuming and resource-demanding. At the level of the genre, the dominants discussed here are not mere discursive properties; rather, they provide models of production and consumption.

The paratexts that surround the genre, or that exist at the periphery of the texts embody the processual nature of the genre (Neale 1990). The paratexts function as reflexive strategies of self-definition and self-evaluation within the industry that is predicated on implicit genre-related expectations, rules and constraints that enable production and consumption. Yet, the genre does not a priori exist outside of the ways in which competent, intentional, imaginative and calculating agents engage with it in the practice of guide-making. As mediating entities, paratexts testify to the efficacy of the genre in influencing the process of guide-making that of industry self-definition. The histories or biographies of institutions are interlinked with the genre biographies. In accordance with Gell's (1998) theory of agency, industrial self-reflexivity retains traces of past history (past interpretations and agency) and anticipates the future (projecting genre-related assumptions into new, technologically advanced environments in accordance with new types of commercialisation). Therefore, the industry does not simply mirror or reflect the genre and its classifications (Negus 1998; Bielby and Bielby 2003). In its specificity and complexity, the genre actively constructs and produces the industry, just as the industry actively co-produces and modifies the genre rather than merely reflecting it, objectifying it or reifying it as some Marxist theories of media would have us believe (Adorno).

This fluid and interpenetrating process is only possible if the genres are indeed considered as distributed objects that are distributed in time and space and that are capable of exerting an influence on the industrial processes of production. The practices of the genre, once personalised via the founder, have been institutionalised in formal modes of organisation, standardised production practices and brand awareness. I have argued that in travel guidebook publishing, genre practices become ingrained as norms, editorial policies and guidelines that underpin industry self-reflexivity and the very process of guide-making.

By following the genre trajectories embedded in institutional biographies, I have tried to approach guidebooks not as completed objects but rather as objects that happen or continuously develop. At the same time, publishing institutions develop through the genre because the genre and its ontologies enable practices of self-reflexive self-definition. In a way, paratextual analysis makes it evident that the genre, its producers and its audiences are inseparable even from a diachronic perspective. The industry is a site in which the ontologies of the genre are foregrounded, and these ontologies, in turn, define industry practice.

I have attempted to show that the history of the genre, its genesis and its development are intimately interwoven with the genesis, rise and fall of industrial institutions. However, this does not mean that they co-existed in a vacuum. The appearance of the modern genre is a continuation of a long history of proto-genre development. Moreover, the mid-ninetieth century, when Murray's and Baedeker's entrepreneurial acumen led them to capitalise on the immense business potential of the systematic institutionalisation of the genre, was also a time of epochal and technological transformation. The formative period in which the genre was institutionalised was also a period of rapid, resolute decline in fanatic religiosity in which liberal individualism and human autonomy flourished. Guidebooks were meant to *catalyse* individual, independent yet responsible travel. The technological advances represented by the steamboat, the railway network and super-jet planes all influenced the history of the genre and the industry, particularly its growth rates and the differentiation between the genre and its publishing outlets. The change in printing technologies and the proliferation of digital and mobile tools accelerated the conglomeration of the industry and enabled the genre to transcend the printed medium.

However, one thing is certain from this diachronic overview: the emergence of a large pool of writers to uphold the genre. Owing to booming literacy rates and undeniable publishing entrepreneurialism, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, there was always a pool of 'hack writers' who tried to make a living through writing. This 'army' of writers was perfectly positioned to counteract the labour-intensiveness of the genre. However, the oversupply of creative labour confined in 'fish tanks' (Miege 1989: 30) by the creative industries has also been isolated as the main reason for the wage depression and dismal working conditions in these fields (Menger 1999).

In fact, what is it like to live and work in the travel guidebook publishing industry? How do travel writers themselves make sense of the intersections between genres and institutions? How

do they define their own standing and experience? Writers are required to conform not only with institutional requirements but also with genre practices. The authorial potential for action is both facilitated and constrained by the genre. How does this dynamic unfold in practice? I turn to these issues in the next chapter, which is devoted to the autobiographies of travel guidebook writers.

CHAPTER 5

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AND GENRES

I turned on the computer very early. It was 5 or so in the morning in November. I didn't bother to tweak my Skype settings. I was online by default. I don't expect anybody getting in touch with me at 5 in the morning Copenhagen time. Suddenly it blips, the signal of an incoming message: 'Hello, what's up? How's your research going?' asked one of the travel writers living in Taipei whom I had interviewed several days before. 'I was wondering whether you can edit my personal page on Wikipedia, you know to add a sentence or two about me? I have been interviewed by a real researcher so you may have something to write about me as a travel writer! They say in there that the entry is based on unverified sources and more people need to add to it. So, I've thought you may be the right person to do it.'

Authors rock! Our authors are a bizarre bunch. They've done rain dances in Gambia, recorded radio jingles in Russia, worked as trekking guides in Pakistan, DJ-ed in Beijing, worked as location scouts for Tomb Raider and staffed various NGOs. One authored in Gaza while nine months pregnant, had the baby and got straight back out on the road. … Our authors' shoe leather, sharpened pencils and inquisitiveness are the foundation of everything we do. (Lonely Planet, About Us section on its website).

Authors used to be selected by a grueling interview technique known as 'THE PUB TEST' – if they engaged the editors over a few drinks they were in (Rough Guides Brandpack, 2010, p. 4)

In the previous chapter I dwelt on the mutually constitutive relationship between genre trajectories and institutional self-reflexive biographies. In this one, I will tackle the entanglement of individual writers' auto-biographies in genre trajectories and institutional histories. The main argument of the chapter is that the genre of travel guidebook exists in and through a long, complex and ambiguous series of mediations and valuations between authors (calculative,

imaginative and intentional instances) and institutions (market-based, profit-maximizing and organizational instances). In probing the mutual co-construction of genres, producers and cultural institutions, I want to highlight the continuities and discontinuities, conjunctures and disjunctures of cultural production, understood in its complexity as a relational and heterogeneous assemblage. The genre is continually contextualized and re-contextualized, qualified and re-qualified, commodified and rendered autonomous, in different modalities as agents do things with it. My intention is thus to show that the genre is not merely a backdrop for creative agency or a pre-determined set of rules, but a complex, spatially and temporally dispersed, entity that affords, permits, and proffers modes of action, self-definition and self-interpretation.

Cultural producers' biographies are entangled in the biographies of the product they produce. Writers' biographies are enmeshed in diachronic genre trajectories. As the genre is entwined with institutional biographies, by syllogism so are authorial biographies. But, how does this complex interplay between the biographies of persons, products and institutions unfold in practice? How do producers use the genre to corroborate sustainable and appropriate life-histories? How are authorial biographies entwined with institutional biographies? What actions and interpretations does the genre afford its users? What makes a travel guidebook writer a travel guidebook writer?

Cultural producers whom I interviewed place an extraordinary emphasis on the way they appear in public. Every interview, even with an obscure researcher, is used by them to add to the creation of authorial authority. Travel writers constantly worry about crafting pertinent auto-biographies. As opposed to careers, which evoke progression as compared to an ideal type of work-life, auto-biographies are life-stories about one's own standing in the cultural production field.

What I find extraordinarily intriguing in the authorial self-presentations is the similarity with which cultural producers tried to plot a career story that neatly *fitted* into the genre poetics. The interpretation and sense-making of employment choices, career decisions, and work-related success entailed an improvisation that revolved around the generic dominants. Every self-interpreting effort was oriented towards the creation of an illusion of credibility, autonomy and not least employability. Rather than levelling accusations of narcissism against them, I am keener on viewing every self-interpreting act as embedded in a specific genre world in which genres, with their autonomous poetics, enable or limit a producer's agency. The genre affords the margin of autonomy by making available a specific repertoire of action and, by implication, drives authorial self-definition. As the genre is a distributed object in time and space, and as authorial auto-biographies follow its diachronic trajectories, the writers were more prone to rationalize their past choices, standing, achievements (retentions) in the name of future projections, desires and success (or protentions). Interestingly, there is a set of basic assumptions that is taken as axiomatic, and which underpins the auto-biographical story. These form the generic dominants that were evoked whenever a conflict of interpretation occurred, when the ethics of action was

questioned, and more importantly when authorial autonomy was threatened by institutional impediments, managerial impositions and commercial interests. Paradoxically, then, by self-forming themselves through the genre, the writers rejuvenated the genre, especially when signposting their stories with regard to the genre's imminent decline and impending death, as well as its birth and flourishing. Ultimately, it seemed that individual choices were at the same time collective choices, since they echoed the logic of the genre as collectively and professionally shared. As such, the genre could influence and organize the actions of a large cast of producers whose self-definition and future employability depended on the degree that their life-story complied with that of the genre. I argue in this chapter that the genre enables and constrains the writers' biography because the writers self-consciously and intentionally *do* their own life-stories in and through the genres' affordances. The authorial self is sometimes in tension, sometimes in harmony, with the genre dominants. But, nevertheless, it is always crafted in relation to generic dominants. This is a drama of uncertainties and calibration of identity valuations and determination that happens as imbued by the autonomous logic of the genre.

The rules and power structures of the genre world do not merely enable or constrain guide-making practice. Rather, they emerge out of producers' agency and practice.

It is the genre within which an individual works that provides the trajectories of action, and in turn defines his or her life-trajectory as a genre-trajectory. Just as publishing institutions self-reflexively define themselves in and through the genre they produce (that is the genre produces the institutions that produce the genre), so do cultural producers define themselves as authors in and through the genre that they produce, because the genre they produce produces its authors. The genre defines the plot, possibilities, and margin of improvisation and freedom. In short, it defines the possibilities for action.

Travel writers' identities are articulated, then, in and through the genre. In other words, travel writers seek to legitimize their professional standing by profiling their expertise in the travel guidebook genre. That is, the genre provides the devices, tools, and techniques for self-definition. The kind of self-portraiture offered me by the producers I interviewed was thus determined by the resources provided in the genre.

I would like here also to emphasize the need to attend to the continual interplay between personal biographies and institutional constraints in specific time-space contexts. This is what Pred (1984: 281) identifies as the intersection between 'paths' and 'projects'. The biography of a person can be conceptualized as 'a path' – that is, the sum of the actions, daily routinized activities, and events that gradually make up individual existence. The path is implicated in 'projects' or intentions – 'the entire series of tasks necessary to complete any intention-inspired or goal-oriented behavior'. The coupling of individual paths and projects is integrated in institutional paths and projects distributed in time and space:

> Each of an individual's actions in a given setting, each detail increment in his or her biography, cannot be attributed in an idealistic manner to that person's independently existing personality and consciousness. Instead the singular personality and consciousness attributes that bring a person to make certain project-participation choices and to act in a given way in situations defined by others should be seen as resulting from a unique accumulation of everyday experiences, impressions, and memories that have been defined or influenced by specific already existing institutions (Pred 1984: 287).

Pred understands 'life biographies' as internal mental experiences of the daily interaction between the body and environmental entities such as other agents, material objects and production institutions. For Pred, the life biography is thus a daily association with sets of other human and non-human agents. This is so because the things or 'tangible resources' such as 'buildings, furniture, machinery, raw materials' all have their own 'path-projects', which daily intersect with and mutually inform individual 'path-projects' (Pred 1984: 281). Pred and Palm (1974) illustrate such path-project interaction with an 'ideal' and 'impersonal' case of an American single mother. Her biographical life path is restricted by the agency of the child-care facilities (their location, availability, opening hours), transportation (public buses or private car); her child (diet, house care, health), and so forth. Her choices would not be determined by labour skills, purpose or self-expression needs, but 'time-geographic' boundaries. For example, a well-paid job far away from home would be unfeasible due to awkward nursery opening hours. Yet, such a way of thinking too easily conflates the constraints with limitations that can never be turned into opportunities. Admittedly, it works with a simplified notion of agent and agency, which ultimately reinstates the same divisions between practice and structure. What are the nature, dynamics and logic of the project? How do paths and projects constrain, even enable, one another in practice? These questions are left unanswered.

Following and reworking Pred (1984), I argue that, however free or constrained by the institutionalized genre world travel writers feel in their work, the genre world always emerges out of biographical and practice-led historical actions, as it simultaneously contributes to the continual becoming and biography of the publishing institution. Individual and institutional path-project intersections result in producers' agency, which then reproduces the conditions of the genre and those of the institutions, while at the same time forming their own biographies. In a way, the cultural producers, cultural product and cultural institutions are constantly becoming the other as their life-paths overlap. The question that poses itself then is how the biography of the travel guidebook publishing industry intersects with the biographies of its practitioners, and how that interaction takes place in specific time-space genre worlds.

Auto-biography

Genre-related self-analysis goes much further than sheer self-promotion as part of an evolution of an intended self-image. Although self-promotion is probably the superficial and most straightforward reason for engaging in auto-biographical deliberation, it is also a strategy used to

negotiate a professional appropriateness amidst industrial, technological and market transformations.

Self-promotion has been well established in scholarship as the most taxing feature of creative work. Because creative work is for the most part project-based, freelance, and intra-organizational, and because entry boundaries into a creative profession are permeable and tenuous, no strict educational requirements, unclear quality measurements, near equal ability credentials of the aspiring workforce, union deregulation (Menger 1999; Mathieu 2011),the most commonly employed strategies of entry and persistence in the field of cultural production have been: through networks (who knows who) (Wittel 2001; McRobbie 1998), and making a name for oneself (sticking out) (Bourdieu 1993). Quite obviously then, a copious amount of networking and self-promotion is adjacent to the actual work done, contributing further to the precarious and insecure nature of uncertain and overworked lifestyles (Nixon & Crewe 2004; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010; Gill 2002).

Based on such observations, scholars come to define careers in the creative industries as 'boundaryless careers' (Arthur & Rousseau 1996), since they take place across, rather than within, independent from, rather than contingent on, the confines of organizations. Creative people are thus mobile, self-governing and flexible who value 'portfolio careers' (Flew 2011) – setting their own working schedules, breaking free from the office life, juggling multiple projects according to personal values and preferences. Yet in these conceptions of creative careers, the career itself is largely depicted as a succession or progression of related jobs, with a culmination or climax by way of self-fulfillment and self-satisfaction. On the other hand, career management, traditionally a mutual and shared responsibility of full-time, permanent employees and employers, has been outsourced to 'enterprising selves' (du Gay 1996). These enterprising creative selves are the short-term, contractual workers who interiorize the need to self-promote and network in order to perpetuate their own employability (a string of waged projects) and thus, in return, 'mindlessly' 'self-exploit' (McRobbie 1998) and 'self-commodify' (Ursell 2002).

Such divisive observations and deliberations are necessary inasmuch as they add to a comprehensive, though inconclusive, depiction of a contested phenomenon. Yet, by adopting the auto-biographical model of approaching creative careers, one can, in fact, observe how practitioners themselves negotiate, express and present their life-paths at the intersection of products, institutions and genres. According to Gill (2011) creative workers' biographies are far more complex and richer, shot through with serendipities and inadvertencies, than the traditional notion of career permits with the accent on linearity, progression and culmination. This is all the more important, because creative work has long been *totalized* either *hailed* or *condemned* as 'self-expressive' or 'exploitative'. As I will show through the empirical material, self-interpreting accounts are not just 'career accounts. They represent a sort of active engagement with the genre, which results in meta-theorizing about a specific genre-related professional identity and its relations to the inner workings of the industry. What would otherwise remain a local and patchy

interpretation of work-related decisions, became modified and justified responses to fit a particular genre-related professional community, norms and requirements.

This argument exemplifies what I described in Chapter 2 as *the fit* between genre and action. The genre offers resources for sense-making within, and fitting into, a specific genre world. By actively and strategically mobilizing genre's repertoires or dominants, writers configure themselves as ethical, professional and expert practitioners that refuse to uncritically succumb to editorial guidelines or pecuniary motives. Genre's dominants are constantly invoked, employed and reinstated when it comes to justifying career behaviour and appropriate conduct. In turn, travel writers practice a disguised form of genre theorizing when judging the viability, value or sustainability of their paths and projects (inseparable from cultural institutions). All genres are bound as biological organisms: they are given birth, thrive and eventually depart (Fowler 1971). It was precisely this form of genre theorizing to be employed as a point of reference when accounting for the genre-related career stories.

It was the psychologist Jerome Bruner (1995), in his conception of narrative identities, who most consistently argued that human lives are created and constructed by dint of genres, because the genres provide the margin for thinkable and appropriate agency. There is no life construction without genre construction. The 'rightness' of any autobiographical account is relative to its authorial intentions 'embodied in a conventional form and style that constitutes a genre – a more or less canonical way of organizing the account of a life' (p. 163). To Bruner, some genres simply fit some life-facts better, and therefore, *the genre choice* is vital in rendering the autobiographical accounts 'believable' and 'appropriate':

> A "wrong" choice, an inappropriate "model" for the life ends up lending an aura of unbelievability or "forcedness" to the episodes and the detailed enterprises of a life. Both tellers and hearers are sensitive to it. … They feel they [autobiographies] have been "pompous", or "frivolous" or "too linear by twice". More often than not, they have chosen the wrong genre. … So autobiography is perpetually caught between the mimetic rendering of its unique detail and the requirement of finding a negotiable genre in terms of which to render those details into a life (pp. 168-9).

Bruner's insights are all the more pertinent when applied to creative workers that actually produce genres for a living. In a way, the genre the workers produce produces the workers. Such is the co-constructive relation (Latour 2005) between the object of creative labour and the authorial subjectivities. The writers instantiate or instigate the genre's affordances over their life-span so as to work out the 'rightness' of their autobiographies. Writers' autobiographies exist in the very interplay between genre's properties and producers' skills and competences. In this light, the genre appears as a mediator through which the personal and professional subjectivities are being configured. For the writers need to co-ordinate their actions, decisions and choices, and because the genre (with the adjacent genre world) provide professionally and publicly shared modes of

doing and being, that are re-evaluated, negotiated and contested in practice, there is inevitably a regularity in responses, which I elucidate below.

As I have already demonstrated (see introductory chapter), the genre of the travel guide-book has been traditionally defined through a series of insults. By the same token, the producers of the genre were adversely judged as second-rate, mediocre, minor, or hack writers. A 'poor' genre accommodates 'poor' writers, and vice versa: 'bad' writers migrate towards 'bad' genres. A heteronomous genre attracts heteronomous writers who are divested of the autonomy of aesthetic work. But what is the meaning of this type of writing for those who practice it? What do those embedded in the genre world think, talk about, and experience by practicing the genre? How is the implicit genre contract fulfilled by the writers? In what follows, I argue that travel guidebook writers present themselves self-reflexively and almost therapeutically through the genre and its dominants, as if wanting to justify their appropriateness and suitability as cultural producers. Given the publicly demeaned status of their genre, writers' accounts of themselves were permeated with reasons for entering, but most importantly for persisting in, the particular genre world with which they identified themselves professionally. Validating a professional existence required critical evaluation of one's own career, craft, and ethical stances acquired during previous genre-related writing, not least of identity negotiations and consensus building within a specific genre world.

Among the writers I interviewed, 'masters' -- as measured by the rigid canons of literature -- were far and few between. Yet those writers, who decided to build their professional self-understanding (thus livelihood) in the mould of the genre, accepted and actively reworked genre practice as a definitional tool of their professionalism. Therefore the accounts they gave of themselves were mostly autobiographical tales of becoming, growing up and dwelling within the confines of the genre and adjacent industry and markets. To put it differently, the genre was the primary mode of professional self-reflexivity and ethical and aesthetic self-inquiry. Such accounts created a sense of professional solidarity, in spite of widespread cynicism and irony about producers' alleged anonymity, financial insecurity, and dubious literary abilities. These autobiographical deliberations challenged a nihilistic view of the questions of career success and the purpose of a creative profession. By employing the genre dominants as the basis for self-analysis, practitioners made sense of their job instability and precarious working conditions (such as erratic or seasonal schedules, pay disproportionate to the workload, fear of too much flying, and tight and unbending deadlines). However, much more importantly, such self-interpreting accounts were spun in order to rationalize future employability, to vindicate the validity of one's own portfolio of writing, and to argue for the appropriateness of one's skills and expertise. Writers scrutinized their past with a view to their professional future within the genre world. The retrospective presentation of biographical facts needed to dovetail with genre principles and thus to be modified accordingly. In a way, these recurrences testify to the obdurateness of the genre-specific autobiographical projects within specific genre worlds.

Becoming a travel writer

I agreed to meet up with Carl in front of the CalTrain station in San Francisco. He was in his mid-fifties, looking a bit scruffy, dishevelled and unshaved. He clutched several big thick books under his arm, our sign for recognizing each other. Just a bit later, I could tell that the books were 'his' guidebooks: 'Look! These books are mine. I've written them. I thought you might want to see them. I also have something else for you. I've got my old passport with me. I'm so proud of it because it's full of stamps, visas, signatures. You'll see. I have travelled in 70 countries in 18 years'. Carl was a travel guidebook writer who was loyal to one publisher for 25 years. Suddenly, though, he fell out of favour with that publisher three years ago, and had been unable to secure another travel writing job of any kind since. As he did not write and publish any more, he was, to his utter horror, expelled from the Society of American Travel Writers, a travel writers association and kind of trade union. At the end of our meeting I scribbled in my diary: 'He dealt with his passport and books with a lot of respect, turning the pages of the passport carefully and slowly, stopping to recount in detail the crossings of borders between China and Pakistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan and so on. He treated the guidebooks with equal reverence, kept as memorabilia of the time he used to travel, write and earn a living from travel writing. As if only to give me real, tangible, indisputable evidence that he used to be, in fact, a legitimate travel writer. The passport and the books were that undeniable evidence of being a travel writer'.

It was not only Carl who boasted about 'his' passport, and 'his' books. Several other informants waved their passports and books in front of my eyes. In a somehow self-mocking and quasi-philosophical manner Stuart commented on his own status of a travel writer: 'I write, I travel; therefore I am a travel writer'.

Travelling and writing were *recto* and *verso* of the same coin, the travel writing career. When I met Laura for our interview, the first thing she showed me were her passport and the last editions of the two travel guidebooks she had written three years ago. She put special weight on the gesture, by accompanying it with the remark: 'In this trade the stamps in the passport are as important as your clips [writing portfolio]. I get very sad when the time comes for me to renew my passport and my colourful visas are gone. I cling to my passport'.

A recurrent method to vindicate one's travel expertise, therefore, was to flaunt the number of countries visited -- to which the stamps and the visas emblazoned in the passport bore witness. At the same time, boasting about the number of written guidebooks to different places was a way of documenting one's authorship, as well as providing evidence of the kind of diversified portfolio that underpinned every travel writer's professional identity.

These episodes drawn from fieldwork made me aware of the importance of 'passports' and 'guidebooks' for the professional self-understanding of the creative practitioners whom I

interviewed. Possessing evidence of extensive travel and published credentials legitimized their professional self-identity as travel writers.

Little surprise then that the auto-biographical accounts that informants customarily spin about their career choice and entry into the field of travel guidebook writing, are essentially travel stories. As such, these self-interpreting accounts are a narration of person building, mobility, professional growth and love of travel. Although the tales differ in detail, there is an underlying thread: writing and travel are intimately coupled. Travel writing cannot exist without travel, and travel is meaningless if not told. In a nutshell, the auto-biographical tales revolve round the themes of displacement, personal transformation and the acquisition of literary capital and expertise. The narrative of becoming a travel writer is reflexively organized, as much mythologizing as rationalizing, in order to underpin the writer's existential and occupational continuity, divided between a congenital aptitude and learned techniques or craft.

The narrative usually begins with a justification of travelling credentials as a precondition for entry into the professional field. By being able to demonstrate a rich travelling history, writers could fulfill the first referential requirement of the profession of travel writing: experience in actual travel. By being able to boast a literary capital in the form of a well-read history of the genre of travel writing, writers could present themselves as conversant with the principles of guide-making, and thus not only as competent guidebook users but also as producers. A legacy of familiarization with acclaimed exemplars of travel writing acted as much as inspiration as a benchmark against which the professional success of the 'becoming writer' could be gauged.

There should, in fact, be little surprise that travel guidebook writers put so much emphasis on how they presented, and in a way branded, themselves as knowledgeable and competent genre-creators. Travel guidebook writers are without exception freelance writers, contracted on a project-by-project basis. In what has been long determined as a cluttered market, glutted by a chronic oversupply of labour, they considered it indispensable to stand out from the 'crowd' of potentially eligible contenders for a limited number of commissions. Against this backdrop the need for self-promotion appears self-evident.

Most travel writers resorted to new media technologies as a means to shape their authorial brand, and participated in a broader, yet dispersed, occupational community online. This functioned as a supportive and nourishing environment that provided insider information about the changing nature of genres and markets. A vast majority of the writers established their presence online, resolute in blurring the boundaries between private and public personae, in order to spark lasting interest in their authorial brand. The online self-branding enterprise was a way for them to maintain a network of contacts, promote themselves to readers, and make pitches to editors. Offline promotion, such as giving talks in libraries or bookshops, participation in radio shows, and jamming in clubs or parties, was also continual and somehow tagged to online presence. However, whether offline or online, self-promotion suddenly became work in its own

right, in parallel with or even overlapping the main commercial activity of travel writing. Sometimes it inundated writers' daily lives and impinged on their writing productivity, thereby eventually being poised to menace their economic feasibility. As Rick put it:

> If you want to make a faint glimmer of living off your writing, you must do some marketing, market your expertise and let the world know you are there. When I'm not writing, I'm marketing myself, and that is almost 80 per cent of my time. Does that mean giving your expertise sometimes for free? Yes, it does. I maintain my blog while pitching the editors. And that really takes a ton of time, but I know one day it will pay off.

Across the industry, self-promotion was considered taxing and narcissistic, but also a necessary evil. Even interviews with the researcher were part of the self-promoting project and entailed a mythologization of professional identity, as well as reflexivity about the industry and the genre they were working in. Given that, amidst accelerated conglomeration and digitization, travel publishers promoted their own brand at the expense of the authorial name, authorial self-branding appeared natural and almost a naturalized weapon against the impersonal corporation.

Traveller's tales: displacement and guidebooks

'Travel writers come from a variety of backgrounds. I guess the one thing we all have in common is this sort of attachment to travel and the attachment to clearly communicating ideas to other travellers'. This is how David, living in Australia and with 15 years of travel guidebook writing experience, concisely defined what a variegated bunch of travel writers shared as mutual ground. 'The attachment to travel' and 'the attachment to communication' almost invariably underpinned all the auto-biographical accounts I heard throughout my research.

The narration of displacement served as the most resilient rationalization/mythologization device for professional self-identification. The proven track-record of displacement – travel, voyage, journey – vouched for the possession of travel expertise. Therefore, the theme of displacement functioned as a narrative device, which was put self-reflexively and strategically at the centre of auto-biographical accounts. Most importantly, displacement always hinged on the materiality of a guidebook. The material existence of the genre was deeply implicated in stories of professional origin.

Most writers linked their vocational calling to their early childhood when they first got in touch with the travelling lifestyle or started travelling. They tried to rationalize (or better mythologize) their career choice as unavoidable, logical, almost a natural outcome of their *innate* 'travelling spirit' and *inborn* 'passion for travel'. Variously they talked metaphorically about 'getting the travel bug', 'getting itchy feet', 'becoming infested with wanderlust', 'gone mad for travel', and so on. The predominance of contagion and bodily metaphors is not accidental. The passion for work, the amateur ideal in its purest form and an addiction, even in its literal sense of

drug addiction/destruction, parallel each other. Passion (for music, drugs or travel writing) entails abandonment of the self to the forces of the object because passionate users/producers 'strive to be seized by objects of their passion' (Hennion and Gomart 1999: 242). My aim here is to document how travel guidebook writers presented themselves as being swept away by the object they make in order to vindicate their passion for work. In so doing, their autobiographical accounts seemed as if managed or controlled by the genre. This, as we have already seen, affords strategies of action and self-reflexivity.

The discursive documentation of a 'passion' for travel potentially legitimizes writers' professional claims on spatial expertise. The attachment to travel is a much sought-after auto-biographical property because it stands for the exclusivity of knowledge about/attachment to a certain geographical region. Sara, a travel guidebook writer with over 10 years of experience, confessed that she actually inherited 'the travel bug' as a child born into a naval family:

> I'm a traveller from birth. My parents used to move frequently because of my father who was a naval officer. I spent the first years of my life in Spain and since then, my parents have been dragging me all over the world. We've been moving every three or four years to a different country. Travelling is in my blood. I've visited more than a hundred countries by now. But, X [the country she is considered an expert on] has a special place in my heart. I spent three honeymoons there [*laughs*]. With a guidebook of course [*laughs*].

Laura admitted to having been infected with 'that incurable wanderlust' around her grandmas' table:

> When everyone on Sunday would start talking about how they fled Slovakia for the Kiwi's land, I started getting restless. Stared in awe and imagined all those different countries. When I grew up, I did what I was naturally predisposed to do, searching for my European roots and beyond. Then I took my first *Europe on a Shoestring* guide, and *poof* [snaps the fingers], found myself miraculously scouring Europe. By the way I still have that guidebook on my shelf, a little bit eaten by the parrot, but still there.

Some writers ascribed their career choice to their backpacking years. Backpacking or 'that gap year' was the spark that ignited 'the love for travel'. The desire to further extend their stay abroad forced some writers to contemplate the possibility of turning their travel into an impromptu economic resource. For these writers, writing was both a pragmatic tool to help subsidize their youthful travels and, however spontaneous at the very outset, a way to put 'travel writing experience under the belt'. Later, the mix of displacement and subsidiary writing was the opportunistic evidence of an accumulated travel writing expertise, potentially to be converted into a steady flow of commissions.

Ian, now a well-known travel guidebook writer, cherished the memories of his first trip across Asia that got him 'hooked up with travel writing':

In the early eighties I graduated from college and decided to travel across Asia. A roll of toilet paper and a guidebook were my constant companions. Everything else was more or less optional. I visited ten countries in three months and ran out of money. In my desperate search for whatever job was out there that would help me stay longer in Asia, I came across an announcement from an Asian magazine soliciting English articles on travel. Guess what I did! And, [laughs] I am still doing it. Back then it seemed like a perfect fit, and from them luckily it started rolling.

Another very common incentive for embarking on a travel writing career was an affiliation with the Peace Corps, a US government development organization. Twelve of my informants had served a two-year period as Peace Corps volunteers in a developing country. After graduation, refusing (or better postponing) placement in a steady, but unfulfilling job, they applied to become Peace Corps volunteers in Africa or Asia, a position which paid considerable living expenses when compared to the local community average, and which offered immediate cancellation of student loans in exchange for community work. The immersion in a country's culture, the intercultural training the Peace Corps provided, and the language skills acquired during this period, inspired some volunteers to become travel writers and never get a permanent job. Here is how paradigmatically Stuart pondered upon the Peace Corps's influence over her career choices:

I graduated in geology, and wasn't prepared to put my butt in a cubicle. I've always wanted to live in Asia, to travel before I commit to that cubicle. I knew the Peace Corps could get me overseas. I applied and a year later I was working on establishing a water-purifying plant in Asia. After two years, I figured out that no good guidebook existed for that area I was working in, and started joking with friends about how I could write that guide. In the end, I summoned up enough courage and pitched a publisher, and got four months to write a guidebook. Since then I've worked as a freelance travel writer, mainly guidebooks. I've never worked as geologist. Thank god, the cubicle nightmare never came true for me. The Peace Corps was a way to break out of the engineering rut.

And yet some writers saw travel writing as a reverse extension of their permanent jobs. A permanent job somehow connected to the tourism industry would spawn the conversion from permanent employment to freelance travel writing. A permanent job allowed Daniel to get to 'know the genre inside out' and parlay such genre-specific knowledge into a successful freelance career:

I got itchy feet, while I was working as a PR for an airline. At a certain point, I just got sick and tired of organizing free trips for other journalists whenever the company was promoting new flight destinations. As I realized very soon, the grass was greener on the other side of the fence and I badly wanted to jump over that fence, One day I suddenly found myself on the other side. I already knew the genre inside out.

The alluring proposition of self-expression and freedom of travel writing was a pervasive and powerful recruitment tool. Many informants succumbed to the seduction of travel, which seemed ever more appealing than the visceral boredom of 'the cubicle'. Most of the writers have publicly renounced or outright rejected the comfort of stable employment. Instead, they profile themselves as creative, countercultural, and most importantly 'free and footloose', a precondition for entry into the genre world.

Goaded on by a wide variety of triggers, aspiring writers calculatingly steered a path from well-paid full-time career to project-based freelancing. Yet such a transition was not completely irrational or insane, but embedded in a historical spatial-temporal constellation. Faced by company cut-backs, workforce downsizings, and/or deteriorating work conditions, travel writers fled the sinking corporate boat and ran headlong into the tumultuous terrain of freelancing. The economic downturn, the prospects of failure, and the reality of being laid-off were events that made freelancing a seething dream of self-realization that was not only desirable but inevitable. Pushed to the edge, freelancers considered the pros and cons of leaving the comforts of a five-to-nine job in a new light.

Laurence, who worked for 10 years as a receptionist in 'an important Fortune 500 company', summarized lucidly his transitional experience from a permanent post to a freelancing job as a long process of 'travel' and 'getting addicted to travel'. However, it was not until an unanticipated event occurred that he was inspired and emboldened finally to leave the company and abandon himself to travel:

> When I graduated from college with my art degree, I had nowhere to go. I set out on my travels. I got addicted to travel. After coming back in Australia from those two years of backpacking, I landed a job as a receptionist. The pay was poor, but at least I was getting it sharp on every first of the month. The job engaged only ten percent of my brain processing capacity and ten percent of my facial muscles' elasticity, while I was smiling at hurried yuppies visiting the company. At night I was DJ-ing, in the morning I was smiling. Seeing how much money my friends started making, I also started travelling up the corporate ladder, being promoted to a manager of communication, earning my clout, armchair and corporate cell phone and getting a fatter pay check. After 10 years of loyalty to the company, it suddenly struck me that I wasn't actually travelling anywhere. I realized that I was almost forty and work was taking over my life. My wife abandoned me, my friends forgot about me and didn't call anymore to go out, I was losing my hair and gaining weight. Something radical had to be done. In one of my rare morning post-hangover moments of lucidity, I received the CEO's e-mail that the workforce was going to be downsized until the end of the year. It was like the universe giving me a hint. Instead of risking being laid-off, I quit. You can guess what happened afterwards. It was time indeed to travel. I always travelled with a guidebook in hand, and always thought what sort of cool job that was.

Travel writers have in this way developed a wide variety of discursive and practical strategies to make sense of their seemingly economically irrational behavior and their quest for individual creative autonomy. One of the most recurrent strategies was to settle for a life on the fringes of society while subscribing to voluntary poverty and asceticism. Resignation to a modest and simple life shaped in accordance with personal norms and values was a choice of lifestyle for some travel writers. Stephen, for example, who also gave up a lucrative job and upwardly mobile career for the uncertainties of freelancing, most succinctly summarized this point, while stretching it to its logical conclusion, when he argued:

> Travelling humbles and inspires. I've seen people suffering, dealing with war traumas or trying to rebuild houses wiped out all over again by hurricanes, just to make me think that my freelancing, badly paid life was overly luxurious. I've seen a lot of people living on one dollar per day and laughing more often than my well-to-do bad-tempered friends back home. I don't care anymore how much money my friends make in their banking jobs. After all, I've realized that I love writing and need astonishingly little money, only a room of my own and a computer to feel rewarded in life. This is like living and breathing what you write.

As we have seen above, Stephen very consciously gauged the pros and cons of travel writing while choosing to live as an expat -- both to become more receptive to the place's sense (gaining travelling and writing capital) but also to economize. Stephen's decision to give up his day job and become an expat travel writer was a sophisticated economic calculation that aimed at offsetting the losses of pursuing a freelance career and bolstering the gains of a self-expressive project. At the same time, an expat life also inflated his travel writing credentials, by squarely profiling the 'expat' as a competent and well-travelled travel writer, outright eligible for a writing stint. For Stephen, as for many others, to live as a travel writer was in a way to be personally written in the genre.

Mark considered travel writing to be more commensurate with his personal ethical norms and values than the PR job he used to hold at a software company. He also felt that now in travel writing all his skills and potential were put to work, 'good work' for that matter:

> I was working full-time for PR in a software company. I have personal issues with embellishing the truth. In the journalism classes at Cambridge we were taught that good PR entails pitching a text one level above the level we would feel comfortable with when telling it how it is. Not anymore. I pitch texts on a ground level, not a level above! I decided to quit the job and do what I am passionate about without supercilious managers breathing non-stop down my neck. I knew it would be a hell of a lot of work to get a career in travel writing off the ground, but it was worth trying to make a living on what I knew best and actually enjoyed doing.

The theme of displacement, then, runs parallel to an 'attachment to communication' or an 'attachment to guidebooks'. Taken in isolation, displacement is not sufficient a reason to account

for a successful travel writing career. In writers' accounts, more often than not, it was interwoven with the theme of gaining genre-related skills, know-how and craft by interiorizing the genre principles of making. Writing was the ultimate consequence of travel, and travel the ultimate rationale for writing.

Writers' tales: acquiring genre-related capital

Travellers needed to acquire genre-related capital alongside their proven travel-record, since this would license their aspiration to become a travel *writer* and buttress their claims to travel *writing* expertise. As discussed earlier, genre-related capital refers to a practical and documentable grasp of the genre world, mainly garnered through travel writing courses, sustained usage of guidebooks, reading of travel literature, and emulating idealized writing moulds, which potentially legitimize entry into the profession.

The relationship between travel and writing in travel (guidebook) writing is convoluted and ideologically laden. Whether travel comes first and writing follows suit, or writing is foundational and travel is merely a generic form of choice in a writer's career, is an issue that kindles the spirits of travel writers. Travel provides the raw material for travel writing, but writing is what is ultimately sold in the literary market, which in turn garners more financial capital to enable more travel, which then leads to more writing and thus genre's capital, more writing leads to more travel, and so on.

What might appear to an outsider to be a futile debate, to be dismissed out of hand as a sterile hunt for the origin of the egg and the chicken, in fact reaches out to the professional standing of travel writing as a way of earning a livelihood. Debates about the circularity between travelling and writing are actually incessant self-inquiries about the sources of value and professional standards. A circuit of perpetually circulating events of travel and writing means that neither writing nor travelling is the alpha and omega of travel writing. Such circularity makes it difficult for an aspiring travel writer to break into the circuit and set priorities and career goals. Is it the travel that matters, or is it writing? Are vacation trips to be sponsored by intermittent writing (subsidized travels)? Or is professional writing (a way of making a living) to provide for a vacation? The circularity is further exacerbated by the virtual nonexistence of professional bodies that might set the boundaries of entry into the creative labour markets. This is especially true for writing: everyone can write (Menger 1999).

'Travel and get paid for it' or 'Be paid to travel'[50] -- as opposed to 'Write and pay for your own vacation' -- represents the divisive line between what is known in travel writing circles as

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[50] Many travel writing courses offering instructional programs for travel writing practices took advantage of such seductive tropes and fuelled amateurs' dream of their vocation as disguised vacation, while also feeding into the image of the travel writing industry as a cool and footloose workplace. Those tropes revolved around the premise of getting paid to 'explore the globe', 'enjoy the luxurious life of travel', and 'visit exotic destinations'. Such a spin on

'amateur writers' versus *'professional writers'*. 'Amateur writers' seek to subsidize their travels or simply underwrite the cost of a vacation by writing about their travels, whereas for 'professional experts' travel is not 'fun' but 'a job like any other job to provide for the family' -- by selling what they write about a particular destination. Therefore the acquisition of literary or writing capital was considered by professional travel writers as a vital currency of the trade and professional *differentia specifica* to supplement (and, ideally, surpass) their travelling capital (represented in the number of accrued stamps, visas or years spent abroad).

In the absence of institutionalized educational boundaries, the acquisition of genre-related capital is a matter of aching concern for those who want to break into the field and become a travel guidebook writer. The acquisition of genre-related capital, therefore, is a battle for initiation, access and skills. A whole new segment of the industry has sprouted around aspiring writers' scramble for genre-related capital. Travel writing courses, websites, agencies, consultancies, and published 'how-to' manuals have inundated the market, while seeking to cash in on aspiring travel writers' anguish. At the other end of the equation, many travel writers see a travel writing teaching job as a possibility to string another paying gig to their employment portfolio in difficult times, when the 'phone remained dead' and editors were not calling for the next guidebook update or travel article. Thus travel writer-teachers and travel writer-aspirants found themselves caught up in a self-congesting spiral that clogged the freelance market.

I will now outline different ways of accruing genre-related capital as a precondition for a professional career as a travel guidebook writer.

Nathan, a widely published travel guidebook writer, pondered over the link between his intimate practice of composing a travel journal or diary as an interim step to travel guidebook writing. His story also nicely illustrates the intricate connections between personal autobiographies and institutions, an issue to which I will come later on in this chapter. The conscientious usage of guidebooks translates into genre-related knowledge, which is potentially convertible into production skills:

> Nathan: I wasn't one who kept a diary in high school. But, whenever I travelled, I was getting that strange urge to scrawl away notes of the things I was experiencing on the road. I started writing for myself, and then I thought I might as well mete out what I wrote to my friends, and friends of my friends. It took me a while before I realized that I might as well make money from travel guide writing.
>
> Ana: How did you realize that?

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professional standards of writing were vehemently criticised by professional travel writers. As Stuart put it: 'For some so-called writers, travel writing is a paid vacation. They go on a trip or cruise, come back, knock off a cheap 500-word 'what I saw and did' piece, or a 200-word blog post, and that's it. For those people, travel -- or better the possibility to scrape up some free travel -- is all what matters in travel writing'.

Nathan: Well, it happened that the guidebook I was using while traversing Asia on a bike back in the early eighties needed a hell of a lot of updates. I was really annoyed by the mistakes and inaccuracies in it. As I already had my copious notes, I sent them in to the publisher. Thought other travellers might appreciate them. The publisher got back to me and I met X [the company founder] once, and next thing I was writing the next edition of the guidebook. Then, you know everything started falling into place, work falling into my lap. Now I co-author three guidebooks for three different publishers!

Timothy, a travel writer with several years of experience as a travel guidebook writer, placed the roots of his passion for travel writing in his 'avidity for reading' that 'kept him on his toes' and helped him 'hone the writing craft'. In a 'self-advertising' account, he boasted of excelling in English, in reading and writing:

Besides travelling, I adore reading and writing. And, I was reading avidly since I was a kid. Is it self-advertising if I say I excelled at English in school? I do think that reading writers I admired helped me hone my personal craft of writing. In the meanwhile, I graduated in Marketing and I've even ghost-written a biography. Then, I realized that I need a serious foray into travel writing and decided to attend a travel writing course in order to branch out in the field and combine my two passions – travelling and writing. I've borrowed $4000 in home-equity loan to pay for a course in East Anglia. I was finally able to mimic the writers whom I worshiped before and be self-aware of what and how I was doing it. I landed my first commission thanks to my teacher from the course. I still pay out my loan, though.

The processes of reading and writing seem to be encapsulated in a *perpetuum mobile* that impulsively converts reading into writing, and vice versa. Reading shapes writing, and writing reversely influences reading. Writers who read are *ipso facto* readers who write.

Jason was 35 years old and had graduated in English literature, with an advanced degree from an Ivy League university. After returning home from a yearlong trip across Africa after graduation, he soon realized that his diploma in English, even though bestowed by a prestigious university was a 'one-way ticket to unemployment'. While remembering the job- and soul-searching year immediately after his backpacking trip, he half-jokingly remarked:

Jason: I realized quickly that I have spent some four years of my life reading, and that I have a degree in reading, nothing else. Well, right, I have been writing occasionally, but, reading was what I was doing full-time in grad school at Princeton. The choice was either to get a job as a lowly-paid erudite bartender and recount the books I've been reading in grad school to my drunken customers, or to become a lowly-paid freelance writer since, to the best of my knowledge, there wasn't a job for a reader out there [laughs]. I loved travel writing. There was something fascinating about the genre. I always took it seriously in school.

Ana: What was so fascinating about it?

Jason: Well, the way you can give the reader a sense of the place. You grow with it. Start seeing the world in a different light. The thing is that I still think the genre is fascinating, though I've become an unbearable travel companion. It gets into you. It penetrates under your skin. Even on vacation you start interviewing people, scribbling, collecting stories in your head. The professional habit gets into your personal life. I found it to be extraordinary.

Jason's account bears witness to the bodily unity between writers and genres. The genre gets you and permeates under the skin. The personal and genre trajectories are so interwoven that they merge into the hybrid writer's identity. The writer 'grows' with the genre, and gradually becomes 'obsessed'.

Christina, 40, also insisted on the inextricable link between writing and reading, personal biographies, genre trajectories and publishing institutions. She also flaunted a Harvard University/*Let's Go* pedigree to be harnessed in search not only of distinction but of genre-related capital:

While at Harvard, I worked very hard to become a *Let's go* writer. I remember having to convince the editor that I was the perfect fit to write that guide to Italy. And, instead of listing where I went and what I have done, I wrote about a journey to a smelly Italy. You know a sort of smellscape travel of the coffee, the vanilla, the *cantuccini* trails. I was then reading the novel called *The Perfume* and got a brainwave. The editor fell for it. And, while I was at Harvard, I worked through the summers for *Let's go*. Making money and publishing was sort of a second thought. No one was thinking of that. The most important thing was to have fun and express a free opinion about things. Today's different. Today I need to earn money on guidebook writing and it is more systematic, strategic. It's work.

It is important to note in these accounts the interplay between the 'high culture' of prestigious universities and literary genres and the 'low culture' of the travel guidebook genre. A certain form of reversal is at play here. In order to trump up a bohemian, artistic lifestyle, the elite education alumni settled for apparently downgraded employment options. Yet, such self-presentation permitted them to adopt cultural sensibilities more appropriate to the genre of the travel guidebook. Such graduates forsook elitism in favour of an informed and conscientious vagabondism that made them desirable, competent and valuable cultural producers.

Many informants saw travel writing as a craft to be learnt by emulating or approximating other travel writers. Acclaimed and critically praised travel writing was a popular source of imagery that provided the aesthetic mould, successful benchmark, and rousing backdrop for aspiring travel writers. The names of writers who were seen to successful, both in an economic and a symbolic sense, featured recurrently and prominently in travel guidebook writers'

autobiographical accounts, which were interpolated with the ideal, paradigmatic career stories of revered figures. In a sort of protracted and distributed mentorship, famous or successful *literary* (that is *fiction*) travel writers of the likes of Bill Bryson, Paul Theroux, Bruce Chatwin, and Pico Iyer exerted a paradoxical influence over guidebook writers: both liberating and burdensome. Paradigmatic literary instances of travel writing were both a source of *desirable influence* and an *anxiety of influence*. Travel writing was to be learnt through apprenticeship and emulation of the masters, but at the same time a critical distance was to be maintained through re-qualification of genre sensibilities. The apprentices ought to attain the quality level of their masters, but at the same time cultivate deferential differences under the heading of idiosyncratic style, timbre, and pitch.

The anxiety of influence was most formidably visible in writers' awareness of the divides between genres and their adjacent fields/markets (see next chapter). Literary/imaginative travel narration defied the logic of the real-life, nitty-gritty circumstances of travel guidebook publishing, which was no long about chasing a freewheeling imagination, but meticulously checking factual details about places and serving the needs of readers, rather than exulting in authorial self-realization or self-expressive pursuits. The ability to transform a fascination with elevated, literary instances of travel writing into its more pragmatic counterpart -- travel journalism and travel guidebook production -- was embodied in the anxiety of influence.

Tony had been a travel guidebook writer for the previous five years. For him, Iyer's successful biographical account was an intertextual correlate for his own auto-biographical account. Tony negotiated his own martyr-like professional life in terms of Iyer's paradigmatically brilliant career:

> Guidebook writing is hack writing. Churning out prose according to formulas and strict editorial guidelines. I do think that travel guidebook writing is a launching pad to more, let's say, fiction writing. At least I want to believe so. You know, take for example, Pico Iyer. At the beginning, he was writing travel guidebooks, and was probably doing what I do on assignment, eat hot-dogs every day, bathe in sweat, sleep in shabby B&Bs, and visit 40 cities in 50 days, pull all-nighters seven days a week before submission. Today, he's the star, isn't he? No, even better, he is the *tsar* of travel writing, isn't he? Guidebook writing teaches you to write succinctly, express ideas in 45 words, fast, effectively. My style got terser and punchier. I learnt to hate clichés. See, that is the style of Iyer. I hope my guide-writing skills will turn useful one day.

The vulnerability and fragility of literary travel writers were used as a coping mechanism and delicate compensatory devices while making sense of the labour-intensiveness, instability and seasonality of guidebook writing. A careful genre and stylistic analysis underlies this introspective account. Informed analysis of genre-related capital is a methodological tool that helped Tony make sense of the impermeability between genres and the thorny transformation between 'hack'

writing and 'avowed' artistry. Straddling genres, and as a result, straddling markets and institutions, was pervasive in the guidebook genre world. In the last section of this chapter I will expound on this further. For now it is important to understand how writers, especially aspiring writers, talked about and negotiated the initial acquisition of genre-related capital.

Genre-related expertise: publishers, contracts, genres and parachute artists

Once aspiring writers proved themselves eligible to enter the genre world through accumulated genre-related capital, the chance of landing a guidebook stint was commensurate with the amount of accumulated expertise.

The notion of expertise was the bogeyman of travel guidebook writing. Imaginary or real, it was the condition *sine qua non* of travel writing. Moreover, the absence of any professional body to establish boundaries round a writing profession based on a monopoly of a certain body of expertise, made the interpretation of travel writing expertise itself open-ended and amenable to historical, organizational and structural contingencies, rather than providing a predefined set of professional conduct or norms. The curious interplay between writing and travelling lying at the core of travel writing expertise meant that expertise is not gained a priori, but a posteriori, by doing it, by trial and error, by the practice of intertwining travel and writing. 'There is no better expert than the one who wrote a guidebook' – was the most common adage to be heard among writers. Having written a guidebook was the ultimate indicator of 'guidebook expertise' since it stood for *proficiency* in the genre practice. Such obvious tautology was in fact a rhetorical strategy the writers used to protect their professional standing. The genre defines, maintains and shapes professionalism: it enhances the knowledge, boosts confidence, and bestows authority. As one writer explained:

> Well, it's always very tricky to say who is an expert and who's not. Are you going to get better quality content if you hire a person who lives in a place, say an expat or native, or hire a traveller who's experienced in vagabonding? Moreover, who's more suitable to write about hiking in the Alps, an expat having lived for 3 years in Switzerland or a writer who has never been to Switzerland but has written a guidebook about hiking in the Andes? I think the writer who's published a book is more suitable. The book legalizes expertise. Take me for example. I was given an update on Spain, a country where I've never been. It was hellishly difficult the first time. When I went there for the second time to update the book, people would recognise me and volunteer help, so I learned the county's customs and tricks and felt confident.

Yet, the tautological professional self-definition exemplified the vicious circle of travel writing expertise. Writing for free or for a discounted wage in exchange for exposure and attaining proficiency in the genre practice, to be later converted into a paying gig, was the most common though not the only way for aspiring travel writers to enter the travel writing market. Such

circularity had profound implications for the ways writers perceived, negotiated and managed their own professionalism.

Many experienced writers feared that content creation for free was a lucrative prospect for publishers who brazenly took advantage of it. Such dispositions, writers felt, undercut the cost of their labour and thus reduced their expertise to dilettantism, which compromised the quality of travel content and jeopardized the vitality of the genre. Garry was a veteran travel writer who had worked for years on a Lonely Planet guidebook to Germany. After a series of structural industrial changes, when Garry and the publisher could not reach common ground on future royalty payments, and Garry was forced to sign away copyright of the book he had been working on for almost 20 years, he became disillusioned and stopped working for that publisher. He complained about the deteriorating standards of editors who were willing to hire less-experienced writers with less-expertise in order to acquire less-expensive content and cut back the costs of content production:

> When I started working as a guidebook author in 1987, nobody questioned my copyright, and I got ten percent royalties on all sales. My contract for a new guidebook in 1996 made me sign away the copyright , but granted me the right to work on three subsequent editions. I was to be paid a flat fee, plus royalties on sales over thirty thousand copies and all foreign editions. In 1999, when I was working on its second edition, they withdrew the right to do future editions, and axed royalties other than for the German one. In 2001, a work-for-hire contract offered only a flat fee, no royalty, no copyright, but included a hundred-page House Style Manual. In 2007, I quit. Publishers paid peanuts. A million monkeys now type away at keyboards and took over my job. The travel industry does not respect expertise anymore. Gaining expertise is a tenuous and sustained process of development. Not anymore. The genre is moribund, headed for the ashes of history. The end.

The actual organization of the travel writing industry exerts influence over the ways travel writers have developed or perceived expertise. Yet, as I have argued in Chapter 3, the genre dominants of referentiality and didacticity, probably ever more acutely in the era of the Internet, rendered the production labour-intensive, time-sensitive, legally liable and thus ultimately expensive. Such genre effectiveness, amidst conditions of conglomeration and digitization, resulted in genre effectiveness curbing strategies: changing modes of recruitment, transformation in authorship, copyright and payment models, outsourcing of responsibility from media organization to freelance contractors, redistribution of power from writers to editors. Obviously, these changes, engendered consternation and anger in writers, but also doomsday projections for the future of the genre, to which vitality they linked their sense of expertise and career success.

Garry's self-reflexive account in this respect sheds light on the interplay between an author's professional self-understanding, the anthropomorphization of the genre, and the industrial structural changes – the latter consisting mainly of the shift from more 'lucrative' royalty contracts

to 'skimpy' work-for-hire contracts that came hand in glove with the accelerated conglomeration in the industry and the pervasiveness of digital technologies. One can actually read the diachronic, historical and contested transformation of the industry through Garry's autobiographical account which nicely illustrates the fact that writers likened their plodding career regression to the gradual decay of the genre, and not just to industry-wide deteriorating working conditions.

If compensated by a royalty, the writer was reimbursed a percentage of sales of the physical book. S/he retained copyright and the right to update, revise, and rewrite as deemed appropriate subsequent editions of the guidebook. This is commonly termed the 'right of first refusal'. The logic behind this was that the better the book, the more sales; the more sales, the more pay; the more pay, the better the books. Caught in this loop, the writer cherished an intimate, almost corporeal relation, both instrumental and non-instrumental, with the book, the destination and the publisher. Many of the self-professed 'veteran' travel writers I interviewed, commonly though nostalgically, referred to this period as 'the golden age' of travel guidebooks when the genre thrived, and writers' careers flourished:

> In the golden age, writers personally knew the owner; the company's offices were convivial and fun spaces for rest in-between travels; everyone was interested in travel and culture first, and money came second. Back in time, you could say honestly what was on your mind. Air the traps aloud. That the owner of the hostel is a crook, American politics in Asia sucks. Tell people where to score drugs and illegally cross the border just to see that wonderful lake, how to sneak in the pool area of a glitzy place, how to eat well on local weddings. Now, the guidebooks became politically correct, strictly legal, clean, and that's a shame, because they've become standardized and dull. Some editors whom you've never met now control everything. Travel guides are not individual, but a damned *group* of writers write one guide. Travel writing is being de-professionalized. The genre is slowly dying off. That is horrible!

As we have seen, early modern travel guidebook publishing existed in the image of its owner-travellers. As such it was a cottage industry – a small-scale, highly personal and convivial enterprise by and for restricted, counter-cultural audience-travellers. It was then that the writers, unmediated by managerial and editorial layers, exercised full unvetted freedom in what and how to write, rejoicing in their colloquial style of writing and outlandish prose. For these writers, travel writing was a way of living. It was a vocation that exceeded pecuniary interests and hinged on expert judgement about what was bad or good to write about, talk about, or represent, and a calling to serve the audience well. The relationship between writer and publisher was long-lasting and personal, as reflected in the royalty contracts.

Such a legal setting, in writers' views, legitimized professionalism because it secured future employability, mainly with respect to rewrites and updates. With repeated updates and place visits, their expertise increased. As I will show in detail later, the writers could then leverage the

in-depth specialized knowledge that they obtained in diversified spin-offs like newspapers, magazines, and/or TV outlets. The writer, the destination, and the book mutually co-constructed one another and could not possibly exist separately. Continuous guidebook writing and updating had an incremental effect of amplification, both on the book and writer's career, which was produced by coating content layers one over another -- a process made possible by the royalties system that kept the author-text link corporeal and protracted over time and space. Peter explained that his personal experience 'grew' as the book grew. Note here the autobiographical turn of the 'grow as it goes' status of the genre, which Baedeker and Murray so eagerly exploited as a selling proposition indexing the 'comprehensiveness' of their products (see previous chapter):

> I was emotionally linked to my guide. The first edition had only a half page on summer festivals. For the second I included winter carnivals. You know you cannot be at the same place at the same time. The last edition had four pages on events simply because I had enough time to visit them. Having worked on the first edition, I got to know the destination better. I got to know who my audience was and learned to better communicate with the editors. That's how I was building expertise. The sixth edition was definitely better than the first. The first got 170 pages, the sixth 340. This is no longer possible. Work-for-hire severs the umbilical cord. With work for hire, you write about a place you've never been to before and you never know whether you'll be commissioned to go there again. No copyright, sometimes no byline, so why care, why deliver good well-researched writing.

Ryan had a similar opinion about the payment by royalty system functioning as a warranty against low-quality content production, a sustainable way of augmenting discerning expertise and in-depth knowledge both of the destination and of the market.

> My first Lonely Planet guide to Elbonia had a half page on the Elbonian backwater villages. I was clueless about the importance of the WWI Elbonian campaign to Australians and New Zealanders. Subsequent editions had many more pages, and maps. If my work on Elbonia had been a one-off experience, I would have probably remained in the dark about the importance of Elbonian backwater villages for those who were purchasing my guides. That is how I was building expertise. That's impossible for young writers today when editors don't want to stick with the same author on subsequent editions. Alas!

The author, for most of the writers I interviewed, was the most obvious locus for cost-cutting in the midst of mergers, acquisitions, and digitization -- mainly through the introduction of the work-for-hire contracts. With work-for-hire the employer (the publishing company) has come to be considered the creative spark, the locus of inspiration and originality, whereas the writer is 'a mere mechanic following orders' or a 'pen-for-hire' (Jaszi 1991: 489). With no copyright, no authorship, no right for subsequent revisions, no promise of being commissioned again, and with competing clauses in their contracts (no work on a topic similar to that performed for the guide publisher for competing media outlets), writers felt 'demoralized', 'dissociated from their own

texts' and 'dis-incentivized' to commit to 'good' guidebooks. They became disheartened with the quality of work and felt they were toiling away in a content factory, churning out content mechanically and dispassionately.

With work-for-hire, a phalanx of aspiring writers, willing to sacrifice pay for the chance to get a foothold in the industry, could portentously act as substitutes for more experienced, and thus costlier, professional authors. And guidebook publishers were well-positioned (travel writing is the epitome of a glamorous job) to piggyback on the desirability of travel writing to sustain an incessant flow of aspiring incumbents, carefully managed as 'a pool' of authors who readily disgorge abundant (and thus inexpensive) content in exchange for a 'cool' job. This shift was known in industry parlance as 'parachute artistry' – relatively inexperienced authors who work-for- hire, are commissioned randomly, with no guarantee of work succession, or optional byline inclusion. The idea of parachute artistry is positively captured in the following quote by Wheeler, the founder of Lonely Planet:

> To research a big guidebook, you need some people who live in the country, but you also need some parachute artists, someone who can drop into a place and quickly assimilate, who can write about anywhere. I'm a parachute artist (as quoted in Friend, 2005).

It is interesting here to note a parallel undertow in the professional worlds of foreign correspondents. Hannerz (2004) describes how 'parachutists' (young and hopeful correspondents) who undertake quick passages across the globe challenged the career stability and viability of 'old hands', who used to live in the places they reported from. Similarly to the old-time veteran travel writers, foreign correspondents frequently comment that their occupation is dying off, not least because of the pressure from 'parachuting'.

In the travel guidebook industry the 'parachute artistry' was legally sanctioned. Work-for-hire contracts embodied the ideal of 'parachute artistry' whereby relatively inexperienced young writers wrote collaboratively about anything and everywhere without any specialized knowledge. It was precisely the push to become 'generalists' (write about everywhere) rather than 'specialists' (write about there) that curbed the accumulation of expertise and thus dried up gainful revenue streams. If authors are deprived of a niche specialization by foregoing repeated/time-protracted assignments on a specific subject area, are divested from authorship by non-compulsory attribution of a byline, any author can be commissioned at any time and assigned anywhere. In contrast to the royalty system, many writers thought that work-for-hire transformed authorship into hack writing by de-professionalizing their vocation (or, conversely, by professionalizing everyone) and killing off the genre.

Such an industrial shift in understanding authorship was fiercely opposed and vehemently criticized by the writers. Many perceived such a transition to indicate the death of the genre,

ominously signalling their impending exit from the profession. Andrew most cogently voiced his fears about travel guidebook writers being *rendered interchangeable* through work-for-hire:

> Now the pros are gone, and an army of young authors brought in. They are the parachute artists, working to mere acceptability, not excellence. The house style has become more brutal. The editors dictate everything so that they can manage authors easily. That's made authors docile. It strangles their authorial voice. In the most literal sense they became corporate, and work as a bunch of amateurs not authors. They wanted us to become mere updaters, grunts without brain, data drones. So, it's really difficult today for a guidebook writer to single himself out and become a brand for himself. Today, no name authors write guidebooks to no man's lands. Authors are expendable commodities. I remember playing mannish hilarious games with fellow writers back in time, in the golden era of travel writing. We were competing for who would get the moniker 'the most difficult writer to work with' by the editors. Editors would always say 'you're the most difficult writer' to every single one of us. By belittling the authorial voice they won't have difficult writers any more, and the writers won't have decent pay. And the lousy research is lousy research, the quality is tarnished. The genre is in the doldrums.

This industrial shifts heightened professional writers' angst about future career prospects and engendered a nagging feeling of *becoming disposable*. The industry-wide conglomeration, coupled with the realities of digitization that brought about the transitioning contracts, was welcomed with self-criticism, self-irony and a healthy dose of caution by the writers. Indeed, such genre-centered individual and industrial self-interpretation was the dominant mode of professional engagement, whereby the rhetoric and discourses of interchangeability took root. In a post to the Lonely Planet author mailing list, one experienced travel writer self-mockingly joked about what appeared to be a user-generated craze propelling the merger between Lonely Planet and BBC Worldwide. He saw authors as replaceable by aspiring writers ready to dive headlong into an assignment regardless of pay. What if travel writers resembled the main character of the long-running BBC science fiction programme 'Doctor Who', to date played successively by eleven different actors?

> Where do we Lonely Planet authors stand in the Doctor Who Chain of Succession? As we all know, BBC goes through Doctor Whos at a fantastic rate, and when one Doctor becomes exhausted or otherwise burnt out, a new one must me [*sic*] chosen. There exists a time-honored chain of succession for choosing the new doctor. …The process is mysterious and vague, kind of like becoming a Freemason. … but now thanks to the merger, any of us -- any of us, I say -- could be called upon at any moment to replace the current Doctor Who, who, rumor has it, may be vaporized at any moment. … I could be that Doctor… And I'm the right guy for the job, too, as in addition to having curly hair and a scarf, I'm also quirky, charismatic, and also amusingly psychotic.

Travel writers self-reflexively pondered their professional standing in a tumultuous industry, viewing their personal experience as both implicated in industrial changes and informed by their own shrewd industrial analysis. Ryan paradigmatically and astutely engages in such industrial and genre theorizing in an email sent to the travel writers list:

> Lonely Planet is legendary by now, and that works splendidly for them. They are in the buyers' market. They have more people that want to write guidebooks for them than they could possibly accommodate. The genre is all too often considered to be cool. Proof? Last week in Bali, I met two young Swedish ladies while waiting for the local bus. It was rainy and we had a long time to wait, so we chatted. They found out I had written for LP for many years, and one of them said 'When I was a little kid I had a colouring book. On one of the pages there was a space to write what I wanted to be when I grew up. I scribbled 'Lonely Planet writer'.

In light of pervasive author interchangeability, publishing entities have worked diligently to create a company's brand recognition through corporate collective authorship at the expense of individual professional authors. In the marketplace, the company's logo serves as the symbol of expertise and the guarantor of quality, not the individual name, creative uniqueness, or charisma of the authors. With labour-intensive and expensive genre-specific tasks (fact checking, content creation, data gathering) delegated to a group of less-experienced writers, companies have minimised their dependency on one brand or named author who might drive fees up, encroach on editorial time with eccentric requests, and delay printing schedules. In addition, a multiplicity of authors was well poised to remedy the incurable ephemerality and obsolescence immanent in the genre and staff the digitally-enabled accelerated production schedules (see Chapter 3). Publishers' decisions to delete author names from the cover page and book spine, in order to feature the company's logo prominently, has infuriated writers. Not to compromise the quality of content by outsourcing content-production to relatively inexperienced and less-expensive writers, companies have enforced "briefs" -- strict editorial guidelines, style manuals and formulas to be assiduously adhered to as part of the authorial contract. The author is evaluated according to his or her ability to fulfill these editorial guidelines. Heavy-handed editorial policies are designed to standardize the writing process, make it more efficient, authoritative and uniform, so as to reflect the integrity of the brand. Organisational editorial intervention has to make up for any flaws and inconsistencies in freelance work. Many authors thought that such 'rigid', 'stringent' almost 'military' briefs 'strangle the authorial voice' and render it 'docile'. Hence authors felt as if they were reduced to 'data drones' or 'a cog in a writing machine'.

Nevertheless, within media conglomerates, such a contractual shift is part of the rationalisation of cultural production, that Ryan (1992:178) calls 'type-based creative managerial policies' or 'formatting'. 'The formatting' is an insurance against the vagaries of creative labour markets and the irrationalities of the creative processes through the managerial enforcement of 'formats' -- in this case editorial briefs consisting of company-advocated rules, conventions and

guidelines for text making, as opposed to arbitrary and unruly idiosyncratic authorship. Such managerial control is geared towards meeting continual audience needs for specific 'types of work' (stylistically identifiable genres, strings of repetitions and modicums of differences, such as travel guidebooks). Type-based cultural production involves 'abstract un-named' creative labour (Ryan 1992: 43) in the form of 'a generalised capacity to perform creative work' to formats, causing the workers to appear as 'undifferentiated artists' as opposed to 'named, concrete labour' (p. 42). Hence, the work-for-hire, legally sanctioned guidebook writers as mere executants or anonymous, abstract labour commissioned to carry out editorial briefs (embodiments of corporate creative policies). Thus, the guidebooks resemble what Coser, Kadushin and Powell (1982: 260) call 'books without authors' or 'non-books': 'not the creation of individual authors; they are much more like products manufactured on an assembly line', similar to dictionaries, encyclopaedias and cookbooks. Unsurprisingly, these genres share the fate of guidebooks and thrive online as arenas of convergence between creative and co-creative labour.

Here is how Bob viewed the substitutability of writers under the company's brand, which acts as a guardian of the generic boundaries through strict writer manuals, guidelines and formulae. In a message to the travel guide writers list, he compared guidebook writing as a collectively orchestrated effort by interchangeable agents to non-fiction writing, as well as to the online attempts at 'crowd-sourcing' or pooling a multiplicity of anonymous collective intelligence for common creative ends:

> Very few, if any, Let's Go books are solo assignments. Certainly, updated editions almost never involve the same staff as the original. So new observations (often by relatively inexperienced travellers) get layered onto the existing text gradually, year by year. Watching a Let's Go guide evolve from year to year is actually quite interesting. With eight contract writers and two associate editors, I edited the first edition of *Let's Go* Australia not quite a decade ago, and - when I last checked, at least - I could still recognize traces of my/our hand in some passages. In others, it was completely gone; either some writer-editor team decided to cast out what existed and start from scratch, or successive generations of writers and editors had slowly replaced my first-draft material with sturdier copy or better informed research. In that sense, *Let's Go* books aren't entirely unlike Wikipedia entries, with all the attending strengths and weaknesses.

Within media corporations, guidebook writing has ceased to be a one-man enterprise. As such it has eviscerated stylistic deviance from established writing norms that accounted for novelty and originality and, by implication, indicated the flourishing of the genre. Inevitably guide-making has become a collaborative endeavour in fact-checking and updating of a proto-text (an avant- text), which signalled 'the death' of the genre.

While many experienced writers thought the work-for-hire recompense system 'cuts the author off the loop' by undermining the authorial brand, many younger authors, fresh from

school, saw work-for-hire, even at the current low pay rates, as a means to foster their foray into publishing. Donna confided:

> All those veterans always gripe about the loss of royalties. But, hey, if the veteran was still writing the guidebook to Elbonia for Lonely Planet, Rough Guides and Frommer's, I wouldn't be able to get in at all. Royalties clog the system, in my opinion. Why not give young people the chance. Are they afraid of competition? I don't decry the loss of copyright because travel content gets stale immediately and becomes inconsequential. Plus, I don't care whether the book sells once I've been paid the fee. Once I've got enough print credits, I'll set up my own online guide.

Aspiring travel writers approved of the work-for-hire concept as a way of gaining exposure and accruing highly valued print or digital clips, the 'travel writers' calling card', to build up their portfolios and career networks. In cultural production, labour market value is based on reputation rather than on training or education; hence the immense importance of 'accruing credits' (Faulkner, 2003). Credits function as an index of quality and on-the-job accumulation of skills, and thus of employability. Hiring requires more hiring, leading to the self-perpetuating spiral of an over-supply of labour. Work-for-hire has eased entry into creative industries and overwhelmed the labour market. With union derecognition in (travel) writing, writers' bargaining power was weak when it came to negotiating over pay, and this could then devastate the project of crafting a 'good' reputation. Ironically, rather than employers competing for and exercising power over a talented and skilled workforce, the freelancers themselves, as active subjects with biographical projects and desires, strained the industry's labour relations.

Alternatively, as I will discuss in the last chapter, many travel writers started recognizing and appreciating the 'parachuting' skills by which they readily configured themselves as experts on short deadlines and multiplicity of places. By refining the skills of 'quickly assimilating' into new places, these writers accentuated conscientious working practice, expertise and a craftsmanship attitude to work.

Configuring expertise: 'a job done well' and the genre

The feeling that writers were disposable was strongly felt across the professional world. The more the industry nurtured such feelings, the more emphatically did professionals vindicate their expertise. Conscientious self-regulation, self-discipline and proficiency with the genre practice inundated the autobiographical accounts given to me. Emphasizing 'good' work was used as a means against interchangeability. In such a context, the commitment to doing good work spills over what is contractually defined and economically viable, yet remains within the values of the genre that informs and steers strategies of action and self-definition.

In addition, as on-the-job supervision was rather random and woefully sporadic (travel writers conduct field research in far-flung countries, hidden from direct managerial control), the

relationship between writer and editor was largely a matter of trust. Travel writers took particular care to appear conscientious traveler-writers to their editors (buyers of their work), but also to their readers. In most cases, writers have never even met editors in person, so that the accent on 'good' work was a careful and calculative managing enterprise.

Most commonly, their professionalism was re-vindicated along the genre dominants. Firstly, the commitment to referentiality was turned into a professional obligation, both ethical and aesthetic. Secondly, the writer had to appear responsible to readers who were meant to enact or perform the guide in their travelling practice. The genre-specific professional standards of practice were especially invoked to establish the writers' claim to 'objectivity, 'accuracy' and 'authority' in questionable circumstances (as was also made manifest in the TK affair, presented in the Prelude). In this way the genre afforded the appropriate and preferred kinds of practice.

An expert writer commits herself to referentiality – attaining accuracy, objectivity and impartiality. Self-righteous auto-biographical accounts abounded to the point of morphing into hyperbole. Presenting the profession as risky, hard work, and arduous amounted to mythologized perceptions of the professional self. Exaggerated accounts about the heroic pursuit of 'objectivity' and 'accuracy' were indeed not sparse, especially when the writer held a kind of 'tsar' status among the fellow writers, as John did:

> In the backpacking community just several years ago there were stories about me.
> That I died in a truck accident in the desert, was run over by an elephant, got
> poisoned in Mali, starved to death in Siberia, fell off a cliff in Argentina.

Many expert writers were prone to vindicate their heroic and uncompromising fight to 'get all the details right' even at the expense of their own life. However, at the same time, they were neurotically aware of the impossibility of absolute and 'unmediated' 'truth-telling', which required the personal invention of daring and just tools of investigation to compensate for the precluded access to 'reality'. In doing so, writers happily recounted their quest for referentiality through personal mythologies and apocryphal evidence:

> I truly believe that the travel guidebook writer needs to see everything with his own
> eyes. I visit everything that I write about. Well, not everything precisely, but... For
> example once in Elbonia I couldn't get into a famous monastery. It was for women
> only. I needed to talk to the nuns and some random visitors. But otherwise, I learnt
> to dive in order to see the shipwrecks, learned to ice-skate in Siberia to see the
> forests. So, yes, I want to see, to touch everything out there. That is why I'm a
> guidebook writer. And the reader knows that their writers risk their lives to get them
> out there.

Writer's attitude towards referentiality often involved recourse to personalized strategies as to how to deal most effectively and efficiently with the multi-faceted totality of the referential reality. Pamela who is a vegetarian found it difficult to achieve a satisfactory level of referentiality

and thus fulfill her own criteria of good work if she had to leave aside meat dishes in a restaurant review. Yet, relying on her long-standing experience of the genre, she managed to justify her actions. In this manner, the genre-poetics reinforced and solidified her skills, techniques, and production habits:

> I am vegetarian, and when it comes to reviewing omnivore restaurants it becomes unbearable. I am perfectly capable of commenting on the service, ambience, atmosphere as noted through my own vegetarian plate, but if the restaurant has a meat specialty and I am on a solo research trip I quiz others, most often unknown random guests: 'How is your veal, Sir? I didn't like my plate so I deeply care about your dining satisfaction'. It must be hilarious for them that a loony stranger expresses interest in their meal. I always feel vaguely ridiculous asking total strangers. Most of my editors know about my diet. I consider it to be an asset on the theory that it is easier to spice up meat dishes with artificial flavours, but a vegetarian dish is a true measure of real chief's talents. Vegetarian can better vouch for the quality of a restaurant.

Yet, inasmuch as the genre provides a justification both of professionalism, and ethical standards, it is also a common source of burnout. It was commonplace to talk about 'chasing the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow' when writers tried to 'do back-to-back projects' – writing the whole guidebook from begging to end, although, the best way to attain expertise, doing back-to-back projects, proved to be 'backbreaking'. There was a nagging feeling of indelible failure every time a writer attempted to achieve 'radical factuality' of such 'a grand slice' of reality. Was it possible to see all the hotels written-up in the final draft? Was it possible to eat in every single restaurant? For many writers, the feeling of imprisonment in the genre became steadily tangible. Timothy forlornly conceded that the scramble for genre-related expertise and accountability equalled 'burnout'. Steadily, guidebook writing provokes a 'who cares' attitude:

> After you've visited the destination for the hundredth time your enjoyment is just muted and your senses mutilated. Have you slept in 30 different places in 38 days? It ruins your sight, feeling, taste, touch. After a while you become wedded to the destination. You know so many trifling details about one city or country. Some call it expert, I call it numb. No feelings, no sorrows, no enthusiasm. You don't understand why anybody on earth would go there. Who cares?

The fast-pace of research and the looming demand for referentiality, though often a source of burnout, was the primary mode through which writers took pride in guide-making. A deep respect for the readers, a sense of sustained responsibility underlined their quest for referentiality. And, this was not an issue of what the audience wanted or was willing to pay for, but an ethical stance: writers were aware of the genre's performativity, readers enacted the book in practice, and so the writer was liable. The personal sense of professionalism in 'getting the details right' and 'offering quality service to the reader' was best captured in Paul's account:

I experience a thing of beauty when torrential rain hamper me as I travel, negotiate flooded roads, freeze to death as I check out more remote places. It is a service to my reader. I was conscious that someone with a guidebook might be here and trust what I have written. And self-righteously, but as every other travel writer will tell you, I experience a sense of responsibility, and it is a sense of beauty. I always put myself in my readers' shoes. That keeps me on my toe.

There was yet another, probably more acute aspect, in which the performativity of the genre exerted both appropriate but also instrumental influence over the ways writers worked and the stylistic choices they made. As mentioned earlier, the performativity of the genre, resulted in potentially expensive legal sanction of its discourses. In order to alleviate the risk of lawsuits, the publishers outsourced the responsibility for referentiality and didacticity to the freelance writers by inserting a so-called 'indemnity clause' in the contract. In accord with this clause, the writer is responsible in court if any of the establishments reviewed deemed the description in the guidebook defamatory, or otherwise unrepresentative of *the reality* of their premise. In other words, it is the writer who actually indemnifies the publisher in regard to the work -- pays for all court decisions, costs and lawyers' fees, whether any suit was successful or not.

Again, the sense of genre-specific professionalism was invoked to counter the genre-specific hazards. The writers developed a range of problem-solving strategies such as: using quotations, personalized reporting and positive reviewing. Also, certain events become critical incidents that underpinned the professional self-reflexivity, and served as a blueprint for action. David explained most comprehensively:

> I remember some time ago one of my colleagues was charged with claims of defamation when he deigned to describe a bar as 'a dive bar'. The owner sued the publisher on the ground that the labelling of his bar as a dive bar was a libellous imputation and had hurt his business. I do not want to assume the responsibility for someone else's terrible bar or hotel, and be charged with frivolous or opportunistic suit, so I would rather steer clear and simply do not write about those sub-standard premises. I feel that the reader has the right to know about bad places, but as it seems to me there is no place in the guidebook for bad things. If there is a must see place and is really but really substandard, the most I can venture saying is 'I didn't like the food' or 'the couple I talked to find the food appalling'. I cannot say 'the lentil soup sucks' and 'the chief is a crook' although the soup really sucks and the owner is a crook. But, no one can dispute what I think is good and not. It is judgement in a disguised form but it just takes so much time to write and think of the legal responsibilities because the food is simply unpalatable. One needs to cope with it, alas!

The accent on expertise and professionalism became even more pronounced when 'freebies' were being discussed. 'Freebies' was a hot topic among travel writers not least because they largely played into the image of travel guidebook writing as a dream job. The freebies stood for an

indulgent, thus covetable lifestyle since they consisted of services or products that are usually associated with a luxurious, lavish and bountiful lifestyle such as free gourmet meals, free five-star hotels, spa treatments, swanky bars, cool tours of any kind (diving, snorkelling, bird-watching, dolphin swimming) – to name just a few of the most frequent freebies our informants claimed to usually receive while on a guidebook assignment.

The 'dirty little secret', 'the guilty secret' or the 'grey zone' of travel guidebook writing is how my informants referred to third-party subsidized or sponsored travel research. Travel publishing lives dangerously off the tourism industry -- airlines, hotels, tourist bureaus, travel agents - who are eager advertisers willing to offer what is known in the industry parlance as 'familiarization trips', 'junkets', 'perks', 'comps' or 'media rates' in exchange for media coverage. As such, freebies potentially can compromise the genre's referentiality. Travel writing must disavow economic involvement in the discursive objects (the way advertising does) in order not to cancel out the vow to referentiality (and, hence, prohibit lapsing into advertising as embellished reality).

As we have already seen, referentiality is an expensive proposition, which inflates the cost of production and contributes to the labour-intensiveness of production. As the genre postulated an actual journey, the travel expenses were factored in the authorial contract with a guidebook publisher. However, the majority of publishers administered the advance and research costs as a rounded lump sum. There was no distinction between the actual authorial writing fee (recompense for labour) and the research expenses (production costs). Thus, the management of fees was completely outsourced to the writers. It required ingenuity, resourcefulness or initiative to draw a line of separation while protecting the wage. Such a contractual loophole provided authors with the incentive to solicit freebies, thus spending as little money as possible from the undifferentiated sum on research in order to boost the wage. Although, depending on the accumulated expertise and reputation, writers could, in theory, negotiate their contracts and increase estimated research costs, most of those with less leverage or new authors did not have the necessary bargaining power, and took for granted the fuzziness between take-home fees and research expenses. Some of those not yet adept at managing the fees actually ended up subsidizing guidebook research out of their own pockets. Some publishers to write off the production costs even supplied writers with an official 'freebie-soliciting' letter, usually containing the offer of 'a contra deal' in advertising. This further exacerbated the quest for ethically-sound practice.

The sense of professionalism and good work -- 'developing benchmarks' -- were often invoked as an antidote to the ethically questionable acceptance of freebies. George, a long-term writer, explains in detail his own self-regulating practices in the face of the professional 'discovery' that freebies actually sustain, rather than discourage, good work:

George: Travel writing is subterfuge, but there is no exit. There are puritans who understand nothing about the industry and scoff at writers who accept freebies. I don't have the slightest remorse for accepting them. I quite like them. If I get a free stay in a hotel or free air ticket, I can spend more time doing research without decimating my fee. I'm a professional travel writer and the freebies let me gather a livable wage. In a way, freebies enable professionalism, help me stay in the business, if you wish. I'm certainly not paid enough to stay in these hotels. I've become quite judicious, so staying in a hotel is about the only way to evaluate it and review it. Now, I don't know whether there's mould under the windows, or the owner is homophobic. I became picky yes, but if I don't ask for freebies there's no way for me to visit a place. Better ask for freebies and smell the place. One develops benchmarks fast.

Ana: Can you give me an example?

George: You are pushed to cut deals for yourself, if you want to survive. Listen, for example, what happened to me the other day. I've been contacted by a publisher to do a 7-day-long update of a guidebook covering the wider area where I live as an expat for 500 euros. Then I sit down to divide the pay with the expenses. The outcome of the simple math was this: the research required staying at a hotel for at least 3 days, because it was far away and didn't make sense to try to get back home to sleep, plus I would have had to pay for the food and fuel while on the road. 500 euros, when you factor in the cost of research, boils down to 100 euros, a sum that scores far below the average European wage. I called the publisher back in the States and complained about the idiocy of the contract. They said that they'd expected the writer to have a day job and to write in the free time as a hobby, and to be satisfied with 100 euros for 130 hours of work, just for the pleasure and prestige of working for them. After all, they provided me with a letter sporting prominently the company's logo and stating that I have been officially commissioned on the title and work on assignment for them, so I could flash the letter in the hotel owners' faces and solicit free rooms.

Most of the writers pointed out that honesty was what actually mattered at the end of the day, regardless of whether a writer stayed somewhere for free or at a discounted rate. It is important to draw a line of separation between 'PR fluff' and 'genuine travel writing'. Bob for example argued that the 'discerning and candid judgement' of a professional writer was what contributed to the 'truthfulness' of the genre:

The honest description of the things out there is the most important imperative. The quick but discerning and candid judgement holds water in this business, no matter whether you stayed there for free, or paid yourself, or haven't ended up staying there at all. Readers simply know what is a PR cotton candy or PR fluff and genuine travel writing exuding truthfulness. It's the professional integrity that counts when deciding whether to blow a glitch out of all proportion – like an unpolished glass on a

perfectly set table, or one cockroach in an otherwise spotlessly clean bathroom in tropical climes, or how to gauge the service of an overly friendly hotel owner.

The discussion of freebies in the genre world oscillated often between the discussion of advertising and editorial, or 'advertorial'. The writers were constantly undergoing a great deal of soul-searching over freebies, and the possibility or impossibility of executing good work when that work was done in friction with freebies. Then the blurry lines between advertising and editorial were a matter of earnest and rigorous introspection and self-regulation. The incessant re-examination of daily ethics most usually ended up in sardonic and satirical commentary, which assisted writers in overcoming the feeling of being available 'for sale', while brazenly disregarding the referentiality of the genre.

Tommy talked about the perils and seduction of freebies in an entry to the travel writers' listserv. Although he had been working as a travel guidebook writer for the previous 15 years, he still could not clearly demarcate the line between editorial and advertising. Yet his self-irony, especially of an intertextual type, was his strongest weapon against full submission:

> The discussion about advertorials (and I have written some in another life...) always reminds me of the famous story of Oscar Wilde and a renowned society hostess at a dinner party during a discussion on morality:
>
> Oscar: 'Madam, would you sleep with me for a million pounds?'
> Hostess: 'Well, Mr Wilde, I believe I would'.
> Oscar: 'Would you sleep with me for five pounds?'
> Hostess: 'Good grief, Mr Wilde, of course not, what kind of woman
> do you take me for?'
> Oscar: 'We have already established what kind of woman you are,
> madam, now we are merely haggling about the price...'
>
> Unfair? Perhaps. Glib? Certainly. Valid? Indubitably!

The blurry lines between editorial and advertising are certainly not peculiar only to travel guidebook writing. Moeran (2006) elucidates the complex and inconclusive negotiations between editorial and paid features in fashion magazine publishing. Tuchman (1978) pointed out that journalists constantly gauge the style and expression against their proffered sources and sponsors.

In Chapter 7, I will discuss in more details how an author draws upon the genre's resources when committed to doing good work. For now, the questions that arise from the discussion on genre-related expertise are why was such expertise so important for the travel guidebook writers? How and why was it (im)possible for them to profitably leverage their knowledge, competences and skills in adjacent publishing outlets and markets? I turn to these issues below.

CHAPTER 6

GENRES AND MARKETS

An expertise in travel guidebook writing was potentially lucrative. As guidebook writing is labour-intensive, resource-demanding and time-consuming, the expertise gained is painstakingly obtained, but also potentially diversifiable. Such expertise could be leveraged in adjacent genre-markets such as travel journalism for the quality broadsheets. Among the most respected within the genre world were the travel supplements or sections of the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Age, the Guardian. Another, similar genre-market was the semi-fictional travelogues for specialized, niche, but highly prestigious travel magazines, such as Condé Nast Traveller, Travel & Leisure, and National Geographic. Less desirable were online publications, radio and TV programming that incurred an additional time outlay on formatting and re-adaptation of content. The writers who approached travel guidebook writing as a genuine 'business' were more prone to successfully leverage their expertise.

Yet, for some, guidebook-related expertise was 'an entrapment' – a necessarily narrow style and conventionalized expression which too easily provoked typecasting – something that was widely feared by those writers who approached guidebook writing as an intermediary step to writing fiction. These writers resentfully realized that guide-making was far removed from fiction/trade publishing, and that their genre-related expertise was detached from travel-fiction.

Before proceeding to elucidate how and why writers could make a living by leveraging their genre-related expertise, it may be helpful to briefly describe the interface between genres and markets in which cultural producers operate, and on which their financial solvency depended.

On genres and markets

Genres do not exist in a void. For they are industrially produced and publicly shared, they are implicated in a market economy and, thus interlocked in the processes of product differentiation. It has now been established that creative industries rely on reiteration of commercially successful textual formulas or genres -- producing more of *the same* for the loyal audience -- in order to attenuate the fickle vagaries of cultural markets (Negus 1998; Hesmondhalgh 2002). The logic of repetition and difference, which underpins genres, buttresses simultaneously cultural markets, in which genres are bought and sold. However, genres are not only pragmatic institutional means for linking products to audiences in the form of marketing techniques and packaging (Bielby and Bielby 2004; Squires 2007; Childress, forthcoming). Genres are essentially the ways producers

conceive of markets: where and how *to sell* what they write as freelancers. For the producers, genres are practical, calculative means for connecting what they write (their wares or goods) to editors, who are themselves representative of publishing outlets catering in turn to specific consumer segment. Thus, producers draw on genre-related tools in highly routine yet calculative ways in order to structure the endavours of garnering a livable wage from travel writing, the product of their labour. In this way, genres become again mediators that afford exchange and valuation.

Callon and his collaborators (2002) analyzed how a product turns into an exchangeable good. In order to become a good, a product needs to first, be different in relation to other products (otherwise there are no incentives to buy) and second, it has to be similar to other extant products (otherwise it would be unintelligible for buyers and thus unnecessary). This is what Callon et al. describe as a continual process of 'qualification-requalification'. In this light, a good is defined as a:

> combination of characteristics that establish its singularities. This singularity, because it stems from a combination is relational. … Defining a good means positioning it in a space of goods, in a system of differences and similarities, of distant yet connected categories (p. 198).

The dynamics of markets is constituted by the paradoxical nature of economic goods: they are different and similar; singular and comparable (p. 201). Genres, indeed, strike the balance between qualification and requalification. It is inherent in genres to allow for the complex recalibration between similarity and difference that has to be accomplished in order for markets to function. Rosmarin (1985) most influentially asserts the *relationality* of genres. She contends that the genre

> defines similarity; it repeats in spite of difference. … It implies, that is, the power to see similarity in difference, to define the general in a multitude of particulars. And this power is no less primary for the critic or theorist than for the poet (p. 23).

Therefore, the genre embodies the paradox of supply and demand: the writers (the poet) need to be similar enough to fit into existing publishing categories and conversely, be connected to a spectrum of qualities expected by the audience. This led Frith (1998: 76) to conclude in his study of music genres: 'genre is a way of defining music in its market or, alternatively, the market in its music'. At the same time the good ought to be made different, that is unique enough to be seen as adding value to the editorial enterprise. In this way, genres and markets play into writers' professional sustainability and not least comparability.

Markets are therefore not given, but performed in practice, as much as the genre's dominants are mobilized in producer's conduct and action. As genres are institutions themselves, - - they provide the interface, or better mediate between producers and consumers – they allow for imminent market exchange. Studying cultural markets, then means, studying how cultural

producers calculate values in market settings, rather than outright rejecting that such calculation occurs (Slater 2002). It is the market actors themselves that frame their own position and value within the labour market while strategically navigating it. By extension, fitting into the genre, also implies fitting into the market. It is in markets that producers engage with genre's properties (qualifying and requalifying them). As a result, valuation is no longer solely an outcome of structures or institutions, but a consequence of how competent and active people engage with materialities, such as the qualities of the genre (Caliskan and Callon 2009). Therefore, it may be said that the engagement with the genre (and its im-materialities) represents a process of economization (ibid.), whereby agents possess intelligence and acumen of their own financial and professional interests, yet also a deep understanding and even tacit or embodied knowledge, of 'the good' they produce. Hence, the genre and its dominants (im-materialites) influence -- enable or limit -- the modes of valuation and their outcomes, while simultaneously genre-related products are constituted as goods through those same modes of valuation. On the basis of this, a multiplicity of local economization practices and diversity in modes of valuation/calculation are at stake. In turn, there is no fixed or beforehand existence of market regimes or institutions, but market actors do play with, interact and tinker with various modes of valuation that enact markets as they work with, mobilize and employ genre's dominants in the production practice. Through such process of economization, the genre is constituted as economic, while producers self-reflexively define themselves as simultaneously calculative and autonomous agents (inasmuch as they *fit* both genres and markets). As value is created through qualification and re-qualification (the basis of economization) both objects and human identities are co-constructed. Therefore, people's judgments, competences, skills, interventions have to be fully recognized if the pragmatics and practicalities of valuation is to be grasped in its complexity.

In this chapter, I will expound in detail on the complex interplay between genres, markets and publishing institutions. I will pay special attention to how travel writers negotiate, manage and self-present their professional status in-between genres, publishers and markets. First, I will tackle the professional straddling of markets and genres, and then discuss why and how writers felt entrapped in the genre.

Leveraging expertise: Straddling genres and markets

> The first mark of professionalism is to know your market. … Writers often think of an interesting story, complete the manuscript and then begin the search for a suitable publisher or magazine. While this approach is common for fiction, poetry and screenwriting, it reduces your chances of success in many nonfiction writing genres. … Next, make a list of potential markets for each idea. Make the initial contact with markets using the method stated in the market listings. If you exhaust your list of possibilities, don't give up. Instead, reevaluate the idea and try another angle.

> Continue developing ideas and approaching markets. Identify and rank potential markets for an idea and continue the process (Writer's market, 88th edition, 2009, pp. 8-9).

This is how *Writer's market* educates writers to qualify and re-qualify the products of their labour in accordance with the market in order to attain economic feasibility. Very often the long-time writers would declare *Writer's market* the 'freelance writer's bible' - the most comprehensive, tax-deductible trade guide to publishing. *Writer's market* provides trade listings and contact information of editors and agents on the lookout for publishable material. Since 1921, *Writer's market* has propagated a proactive, businesslike approach to writing: 'Create a business plan, and follow it fatefully' is the dictum imparted.

Most travel writers I interviewed, viewed themselves as **experts in the guidebook genre** and approached travel writing as a profession that yielded financial viability. The claim to genre-related expertise allowed for diversification of the writer's portfolio ('goods') on the market. Ryan who is a successful travel guidebook writer and author-entrepreneur with two profitable online self-publishing ventures under his belt, most vocally advocated a businesslike approach. For him, travel writing was a self-evident choice of professionalism:

> Travel writers must be professional for our own good. We must approach travel writing as a business, as a *bona fide* way to earn a living, rather than indulge in it, and hope that we are simply entitled to or deserve to make a living at it merely because travel writing is what we want to do or god forbid, what we think is cool. The rate of pay for writing is not a matter of affection or appearance or good connections. Amateurs write for free, for affection or appearance, professionals approach it as a cold, hard business fact. That directly affects one's career as a writer and the prospect of success. Black and white: if you don't get paid enough for the work you do, you're not in business. You can't make a living as a writer, so you're out. It is difficult and exhausting to make a living from travel writing, but that's the reason why travel writers must be thoroughly businesslike. Yet I've known travel guidebook authors who have seen the light, given up the craft, and gone into other fields (such as tourism or paramedics) that provide a steadier income, pension schemes, health benefits. If I'd continued to work in accounting, I could have ended up wealthy, but I would have been an accountant, yuck, shuffling money around and letting a goodly portion of other people's money stick to my fingers. I can't imagine going to my grave after a lifetime of such trivial boredom.

Therefore, building a strong professional portfolio was a *conditio sine qua non* in the travel writer's career. As one informant put it, the professional portfolio was a career's currency. Work credentials were a 'verifiable writer's footprint in the atmosphere of travel writing'. High-paying publications led to more revenue and more exposure. Although exposure and payment were not always co-terminate, those authors who managed to garner a large number of brand-name publishers as employers were prone to eliminate the disparity between reputation and pecuniary benefit. Travel guidebook writing was considered the most money-spinning and rewarding groundwork that could spawn and sharpen writing skills, equip the author with first-hand

destination-specific knowledge and a rigorous research discipline, assets economically convertible into adjacent genres and markets.

The interdependence of genres and markets was clearly interwoven in the autobiographical accounts, being co-constructive of writers' professionalism. Self-avowedly and confidently self-mockingly, Shivi called the process of leverage 'an attempt at self-syndication'. Shivi's account of her freelancing career was most indicative of this circularity between genres and markets. As Lonely Planet's lead author of a best-selling book, high on the Lonely Planet's backlist, Shivi considered herself a 'writer with a big deal of bargaining power with the editors':

> Becoming a travel writer is somehow like climbing the travel writing ladder from easier to more difficult markets. I started out with my website-later-turned-blog, which is still there, but I update it less frequently than I used to. A paid job has the priority over writing for free, hasn't it [laughs]. Then, I pitched the editors at newspapers, invested a lot of time in understanding their style, circulations and markets. It was a sort of desperate attempt at self-syndication. I sent the same or slightly reworked piece to newspapers with different circulation markets but similar style to get somebody hooked on it. Newspapers don't request clips. If they like the story idea and the piece fits with their style, they'll get it on. Newspapers are a nice place to start for a beginner. Afterwards, I used my newspaper clips from a local paper to pester LP with queries. I was like bombarding them intensely for a few months, until they answered back. Guidebook publishers ask for clips and eventually for a mock chapter. I wrote about my city, and jumped into LP's pool of writers. After a month or so, a commissioning editor asked me if I wanted to write a guidebook to India, where I was working as a hotel manager for some time and I have Indian origins. More update work followed and I was submitting any guidebook by-product content on many fronts. You know, selling knock-out articles that you know the editors would buy into because that is what their readers want, such as 'Travel around India in 80 days with three pairs of panties' or something stupid enough to be lucrative. Eventually, an editor at Condé Nast contacted me for a gig, and NG [National Geographic] later that year. These two magazines are by the way gems to work with, professional, and pay well. I'm a lead author for LP now. I've been working on Elbonia for almost seven years now, and I've even directed a documentary on Elbonia, and NBC or CNN usually call me to talk as an expert on Elbonia. I do not pitch editors anymore; they need me and they get to me. I've come full circle, the roles have been reversed. The gigs fall into my lap.

As becomes evident from Shivi's account, the destination to which a writer's expertise was pegged was of immense importance in the process of leverage. For example, Erick called his authoring of the Rough Guides to Italy, 'the most lucrative gig ever', precisely because Italy was a 'mighty touristy destination' that attracted more reader-travellers, which itself meant more travel writing on Italy and more travel writers in demand. The destination that attracted a greater number of tourist/travellers, or the destination that was more popular with them , would

command a fast- and best-selling guidebook, thereby augmenting the writer's bargaining power and reputational clout. The greater the attractiveness of the destination, the bigger the travel writing market adjoining the destination. And, conversely yet paradoxically, the labour market was more cluttered, and difficult to break in.[51]

Once guidebook expertise is transposed into magazine and newspaper articles, the winning formula for travel writing is found. The work for a recognisable global guidebook publishing brand escalated the opportunities for leverage. A publisher's brand bestowed an aura of expertise and so symbolically legitimized the author' tendency towards professionalism:

> The work on my guidebooks gets me out there into the field. When on the road, besides doing my guidebook work, my primary focus, I gather material to write stories which I usually send to magazines or newspapers. Guidebook writing however tedious is a cash cow. One should learn to milk it. Working for Lonely Planet opens the doors wide open in the [travel publishing] industry. It is like being touched by the spirit. The work for them gave me experience, street cred and valuable contacts, though with regard to money it was a losing proposition. Just to give you an idea of how little I was paid, my first work for Rough Guides was a 100-page update of the guide to Eastern Europe and I shelled out most of my $3300 payment on my five-week trip around Poland and Slovakia. But, then I pitched an editor in a prestigious magazine and wrote a 3-page cover on the gay scene in Poland. That was spot-on.

Travel guidebook writers calculated their employment opportunities in practice. Every guidebook gig included practical anticipation of economic sustainability. Most of the writers who claimed to be professional travel writers, that is travel writers earning a livelihood exclusively from travel writing, were agents who were well-conversant with the inner working mechanisms of the industry, and who had frequently developed personal parlay strategies responsive to market demands and genre practice.

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[51] The direct correlation between the number of tourists visiting a country-destination and the number of readers that buy the guidebook to that particular country-destination (or the representative city in that destination – known as spin-off guide in industry's parlance) can be illustrated by comparing the World Tourism Rankings 2008 compiled by the World Tourism Organisation, a UN affiliated agency (UNWTO) (UNTWO World Tourism Barometer, Vol. 6(2), 2008) and the top 1000 Best-Selling Guides Lists in the UK's and the USA's travel publishing industry compiled by Nielsen BookScan (the world's largest book retail sales monitoring service). In 2007, according to the 2008 report published by UNWTO, the ten most visited countries (international inbound tourism – international tourist arrivals) were: France, Spain, United States, China, Italy, United Kingdom, Germany, Ukraine, Turkey, Mexico. According to the guidebook bestsellers list in the UK in 2008 the guidebooks to Italy (LP), France (RG), France (LP), Paris (DK), New York (Time Out), New York (DK) were among the top 10 selling guidebooks covering one of the top ten most visited destinations worldwide; the top ten bestsellers included also the guidebooks to Thailand (LP) and Egypt (DK) as countries that score among the top 20 on the UNWTO list; while Australia (LP) and India (LP) ranked among the top 50 on the UNWTO list. In the USA, the situation is quite similar, the top ten best-selling guidebook titles roughly correspond to the countries ranked as most visited. In 2008, topping the list of bestselling guidebooks is Rick Steves's guidebook to Italy and DK's guidebook to Italy, followed by DK's guidebooks to New York and Paris, and Rick Steves's guidebook to Paris. Among the top ten guidebook bestsellers are the guidebook to Ireland (DK), Egypt (DK), Thailand (LP), and the Greek Islands (DK) – scoring among the 20 most visited countries and India (LP) among the top 50 most visited.

Ryan, referred to by many informants as 'a star of guidebook writing', abandoned freelancing for a self-publishing career, which he self-reflexively described as first gaining genre-related expertise, then tinkering with it, and finally converting it into profitability. The craft values surrounding the production of guidebooks could be potentially leveraged in self-publishing ventures, where the process of career progression is not one of a 'ladder' (as Shivi did) but a constant exploration of and experimentation with content-production – 'a rock face'. Most adamantly, Ryan claims that professionalism and market sustainability go hand in glove with approaching travel writing as a 'business':

> As a freelance writer, I was always worried about the future, because I knew the wolf was always at the door. Anyone working on their own knows that sense of urgency well. Now, as an author-publisher I must say that the old travel writer business model of I-write-it-they-pay-me-then-I-do-it-again is obsolescent, at least as a way to make a living. Entrepreneurship is not a stairway or even a ladder, it's a rock face. You need to keep looking for and testing new handholds and footholds to climb higher. I've got plenty of work from my existing websites to fill all my time and then some, but I'm going to Elbonia in January to start work on an elbonia.com website, because first, I have a bit of a leg up, having written the Berlitz Elbonia guide years ago; second, Elbonia has always been a pretty popular tourism destination; and third, it's good to spread one's efforts over a variety of destinations and businesses. If one goes weak, the others may continue to thrive. Yes, having written a number of guidebooks we could sometimes guess— ballpark figures—what sort of labour, expenses and time might produce a certain level of revenue from a new guidebook to a comparable destination. Good travel writing is paid travel writing.

Jacob had gone one step further. At the age of 62, he generated a six-figure annual income 'towards the fatter end' from having domesticated the power of the Internet and leveraged his multi-year guidebook expertise into an online guide self-publishing enterprise that resembled the traditional publishing business:

> I am absolutely satisfied with my income. My two websites are doing well. I also have a dozen people actually working for me as fact gatherers. You may call them travel writers if you wish. It's a small mom-and-pop venture, but a successful one. All it takes is to find a niche travel writing topic, understand the technology, and develop an entrepreneurial mindset. I couldn't stand working for editors now. I am getting paid in accordance with the work I put into it. I work day and night but it is my business anyway.

However, straddling genres and markets proved to be burdensome for most writers. It turned travel writing into 'fast-writing' and, according to many, into an almost mechanical enterprise. Many complained about the periods of accelerated workload that followed completion of a guidebook. Obviously, the pressure to produce more content faster generated anxiety and

heightened stress levels, while the prospect of putting creative skills to work was becoming ever more elusive. Mark openly admitted to his tribulations:

> When you become a travel writer, sometimes it feels as if you are a cog in a travel writing machine. I sometimes churn out a lot of texts, especially when I come back from a research trip. It isn't fun at all to know that you should deliver six longish articles in the course of four weeks to a different publisher. It's work day and night.

The management of the employability cycle appeared strenuous to travel writers as freelancers. Freelancing entailed a scrupulous management of time (even free time), self-discipline, and ultimately copyrights and payments. Instead of having the freedom to set their own schedules, travel writers succumbed to on average 15 hour working days, especially during their periods of 'write-up', which turned out to be mentally and physically straining. During these periods of intense write-up, they cut themselves off from their surroundings and completely abandoned themselves to the intensity of the task. Once it was over, they had to embark upon another round of pitching to magazine and newspaper editors, self-promotion, and so on *ad infinitum*. Sasha told this all-too-familiar story of overwork and burnout, with all the necessary iconicity of lone-wolf creativity, seclusion, and a messy life conducive to artistic pursuits:

> Time flies! Brr… There is no *post-festum* in this trade. Post research comes the writing. I go back home because I cannot afford to stay in Italy for that long. Then I seclude myself from the rest of the world. This is a maddeningly solitary job. I declare those days 'slippers-and-pyjama days'. Sometimes, I do not go out for three of four days in a row, and so it goes on for two or three months at a time. My contacts with the outside world are down to minimum. I order home-delivery food. Thank god, I got a washing machine last year and can now stay incarcerated but concentrated.

While on the road doing guidebook research, writers reported an 'around-the-clock' engagement with the destination, and thus with their work. Even mundane activities like eating, sleeping, washing, and drinking helped produce travel guidebook content .They were invariably regarded as work to be done, given that the writers were obliged to form and to express an opinion about the things they ate, saw, touched or felt while travelling. Aware of the scarcity of time and constrained by the lack of, or limited, resources to cover the expense of a possibly protracted stay at a destination, many writers reported chronic insomnia and heightened stress levels owing to their hurried attempts to cram in as much research as they could in as few days as possible. In this regard, many of them would self-mockingly and half-sarcastically take up the usual stereotypes of their profession as eternal fun and rework them into a commonly uttered rejoinder: 'Remember, if a travel writer does not attend bars and disco clubs at night, he doesn't do nightlife research thoroughly enough'.

Some of the more experienced travel writers talked jokingly about the need to straddle markets and genres, which provoked a potentially dangerous mixture of professional norms,

private lives, and personal biographies. In practice, such mixture led to overwork and self-exploitation, in contrast to the widespread public image of travel guidebook writing as the epitome of 'the dream job'. Consider Ryan's illuminating message to the travel writers' listserv:

> My wife used to log a lotta air miles, so she got two free tickets anywhere. 'Let's go to France' she said. 'Paris, Loire Valley, Dordogne, Perigord...' 'Sure' I said. I'll contact some publishers and try to get an update or a story'. 'No. No story. No work. Just a vacation'. Wha'? We did. I loved it. But...I was still writing the stories in my head anyway, so what's the difference? That was in the days of print. Now, with the Internet, I don't need to pitch an editor, so the story just flies out and ends up on a website. …. My problem (problem?) is that I'd travel, take photos and write web pages in my free time...if I had any free time. I don't. I'm too busy travelling, taking photos and writing web pages. I'm as happy, as Tom Lehrer said, as the young necrophiliac who achieved his lifelong ambition by becoming a coroner.

Time was ostensibly a scarce resource, in a more sophisticated sense than the sheer outlay of time on writing, researching and self-promoting. Since the content the travel writers were producing was time-sensitive and always on the verge of becoming obsolete, and thus inconsequential, they were forced to enter a Sisyphean race against the passing of time. In order to avoid their content turning stale and obsolete, they tried to sell their guidebook spin-off articles to newspaper or magazine editors prior to the trip. Finding publishing outlets prior to having produced content proved to be a mission impossible, in particular for young authors. While on the road many of them set time aside to write and frantically tried to reach out to editors, in order to avoid periods of protracted anxiety when back home with unsold content. On the other hand, if successful, travel writers would have to deliver content relative to the place or destination they had visited as guidebook authors, to as many publishing outlets as possible.

Having to diversify the trip into separate sets of content for different publishers proved to be a strenuous exercise. First and foremost, writers were bound to carefully juggle with dissimilar House Style Manuals , editorial policies and requirements, which were often in direct competition with one another. In an effort to write in a different style on what was essentially the same topic, writers found themselves in a position of '*self-plagiarizing*'. In order to avoid legal action, freelancers were vigilant about the possibility of inadvertently but illegally reusing their own content, while trying to recycle ('stretch') as much information as possible in diverse content packages offered for sale in the market. In the context of widespread work-for-hire contractual writing on behalf of the company, copyright is vested in the publisher and not in the author. Therefore, any attempt to work on a guidebook for the same place, or to bifurcate research travel into a range of sub-genres for sale in a range of publishing outlets, was accompanied by a nagging anxiety about unwitting lapses into *self-plagiarism*. The paradoxical lament over self-plagiarism nicely captured the 'agonizing' attempts at making writing different enough 'a good', yet comparable so as to fit a specific market. Tara paradigmatically confided the inner turmoil she experienced when necessarily diversifying her guide-related expertise into adjacent genres:

Most of the time I write articles based on my guidebook research and I have this lingering sense of walking on eggshells. I am very attentive not to repeat myself, since repeating yourself means plagiarising yourself in this case. It compromises the writing pace and diverts a lot of my mental energy to self-censorship. And you know that, oh well, what you have just written is such a perfect turn of the phrase and you can't reuse it. It is really agonizing to have to watch literally your every bloody word.

At the same time, the almost absolute unfeasibility of increasing their payment rates (overcrowded labour market, failing print outlets, unprofitable digital publishers) pushed writers to garner greater income by working longer hours on producing more content for a variety of publishers. In addition to their fast-paced working schedules, dealing with variegated editors and publishers across the globe meant that, as one of my informants put it, freelancers became 'bookkeepers' and 'self-censors'. Keeping an accurate and neat record of the fees, payments, checks, borrowings, invoices, and royalties was inevitably tedious. To keep track of the monetary wage-flow was a matter of considerable distress that encroached heavily on writers' productivity and time. As Pamela put it:

Freelancing is actually bookkeeping. Freelancers are bookkeepers. I must keep a very close eye on all my monies and invoices. I must neatly detail which editor paid what when, who owes me money, the due date for the checks, dates of payments in order to figure out how much I made and how much I am still owed. Otherwise, I won't be able to make the ends meet. It is so chaotic. Some payments come after 6-7 months after you have delivered the manuscript, some a year after the thing went in print, some come from overseas with transaction costs, some come half now half who knows when. Plus, some editors simply forget about you or tend to lose your invoices, and they need to be reminded, pressured and pestered. Systematically! So, if you have a couple of dozen gigs at a negligible sum per month and couple of dozen publishers or editors to deal with, it is hell important to keep systematically track of your money. [Pauses] And, when you consider that Lonely Planet pays my fees in American dollars, Rough Guides in pounds and Berlitz in Swiss francs, you can just imagine how good one needs to be at math to do this job. I really hate the time when I need to settle my tax accounts.

Those writers who did not have diversified portfolios were less concerned with finding a way to painlessly recycle content or meticulously keep track of their payments, because simply they did not have enough paying gigs. Some of them reported actually living on the brink of financial solvency.

As the guidebook publishers became aware of the practice of leverage whereby guidebook expertise was central and could potentially become a competitor's asset, they introduced a so-called 'non-compete clause' in the work-for-hire contracts. The non-compete clause prevented the permeability of expertise by barring the author from writing a guidebook on the same destination for a direct competitor for a stipulated period of time. The time varied from publisher to publisher

and according to the data seemed to be longest at Lonely Planet - 18 months after publication. Many travel writers were understandably furious at publishers who legally thwarted their leverage of expertise, and thus curbed their claims to professionalism and financial stability. The non-compete clause was frequently accused of forcing an exit from the profession. Commonly referred to as 'the bastard clause', the non-compete forced the writers to even further agonize over content production for diversified markets.

Entrapped in the genre

There was another side of the coin. Even if travel guidebook expertise could potentially be parlayed (mainly because it offset the costs of supplementary content production and equipped authors with skills and competences) into adjacent semi-fictional travel genres, such as travel journalism or magazine travelogues, trade or fiction publishing remained precluded for guidebook writers. The realization that the two genres, guidebooks and travel literature, were not bridgeable produced anxiety, ambivalence and even disbelief. Especially painful was the realization that the guide-related expertise was actually a hindrance to, and not an opportunity for, what was considered more prestigious, fiction-writing. It was at this point that autobiographical accounts revolved around the model biographies of accomplished and revered, yet distanced and idealized, travel (literary) writers.

Denis is an accomplished travel guidebook writer, who toyed enthusiastically with the idea of becoming a 'real travel writer' (fiction) and publish with a 'real publisher'. The split between the desire to become 'a writer using his imagination' and the everyday nitty-gritty of travel guidebook writing was a source of continual angst, as well as negotiation of his in-between standing. In Denis's account the great precursors were barriers to satisfying self-perception, especially in the face of the tangible and daily impermeability between the genres of 'travelogue' and 'guidebook':

> The more I want to be the next Theroux, you know [laughs and points upwards with his left hand], the more the reality bites. Theroux is one in a million and this is a winner-takes-all game, I know that, but rationality has nothing to do with it, I've never ceased to silently and stubbornly hope that one day maybe… I'll be there on that writing pedestal. My travelogue sold well, but not nearly as good as I wanted to. Travel guidebook writing pays better but it is gruelling, all that fact-checking, bus schedules and hotel reviews. It is tedious and boring, I think, but it pays better. I must squash Theroux and the likes, in the back of my mind when on assignment for my guides. Otherwise I'll just go insane. Travel guidebook writing isn't fun at all, not a smidge of imagination, let alone creativity. If you attempt to be creative you're dead. Discipline is what matters in guidebook writing. It's just another job that helps me pay my rent.

Literary (travel) writing and travel guidebook writing remained rigorously and historically divided, yet mutually reinforcing, from the moment Murray and Baedeker set the standard in the

industry and promulgated the boundaries of the 'practical' or 'non-fiction' guidebook genre as separate from 'literary' or 'fiction' travelogues/travel accounts. However, in a diachronic perspective, these two genres of travel writing and their adjacent markets - high-end (literary) and low-end (guidebook) - were a mirror in which each looked at the other. Being opposites but not exactly mutually exclusive, these two genres represented the *raison d'être* for one another's existence. Anecdotes of how revered writers managed to trespass the boundaries and migrate from the 'lower' to the 'higher' end of the genre-market fed into the prospect of genre cross-over. Stories of successful travel writing careers circulated widely and fuelled with optimism some of the informants who saw travel guidebook writing and publishing as an interim step from 'hack writing' (meaning non-fiction) to a 'real' (meaning fiction) writing career.

Patricia, now a veteran travel writer, with more than 30 guidebooks under her belt and two semi-fictional travel memoirs and innumerable travel articles in dailies and magazines, mused about the hurdles and obstacles at the beginning of her career some thirty years ago, while drawing lines of comparison with 'an important' literary travel author:

> I knew from the beginning that I didn't want to remain a guidebook writer forever. I wanted to do, how should I say it, more creative type of writing, novels, poems, that sort of thing. That means… well, I was prepared to wonk about at the bottom of guidebook writing for several years, get the necessary skills, insights and know-how to move on at a higher stage. It was very exhausting at the beginning, and heart-breaking every time an editor I was pitching turned me down. And then when I got the fortieth or so rejection in the course of a month or so, I came across an article about how Paul Theroux, you know the very important travel writer, tried to get some publishers interested in publishing his travel articles, but couldn't get a favourable answer from a single magazine he approached. That, I must say, blew me away. It was a ray of hope for a struggling writer like me. If he was getting rejected, what about the rest of us wannabes, I remember thinking.

However, not all travel guidebook writers had the endurance to run the marathon from guidebook writing to fiction writing. Squeezed in-between the liminal space of genres and markets, several informants complained about the burn-out syndrome looming large every day in their lives while they sought to reconcile guidebook with fiction writing. They started questioning openly the possibility of the transmutation of non-fiction into fiction, the transfer from Grub Street to Ivory Tower. Some of them, after having tried in vain to impose themselves as fiction writers, simply resigned themselves to sweeping commercial logic and continued to swim with the tide that kept their work flowing, thereby valuing their business acumen more than the possibility of self-expressivity.

Nicholas had been a travel guidebook writer for 14 years when I talked to him. For all that time he had vainly tried to break into fiction writing. In the end, instead of producing 'what his gut tells him', he decided to succumb to producing 'what the editors tell him':

> I think that every travel guidebook writer wants to be like Bill Bryson floating around
> and writing whatever the artistic gut tells him about that place. But reality dictates
> that only those very well-off can afford to travel that much and so freely. On top of it,
> nobody is too keen on publishing my travel musings, but quite a few want my
> guidebook writing. I'll pander to the editors. It pays my bills.

Writers despaired over the ever-dilating rupture between the two (sub)-genres. Anton was 35 and had been working as a travel guidebook writer for a big travel guidebook publisher for the past three years. During this period he was also toiling away on his first fiction novel for which he was lately and in vain looking for a publisher. He candidly confessed that he was 'on the verge of a burnout and pulling out of guidebook writing' in order to dedicate his time and energy completely to fiction:

> I'm not sure whether guidebook writing is viable from a business standpoint in the
> longer run, but also in terms of my long-term professional orientation. It is legwork,
> and dull, and above that one needs to deal with mind-numbing editors who think
> that they possess your mind and heart just because they offered you a commission.
> What has that to do with literature? Guidebook writing is far removed from writing
> literature. To hell with guidebooks! It's enough! I opt out of guidebooks. I'll dedicate
> all my time to my novels.

Owing to the absence of literary intermediaries such as agents, as well as to accelerated mass production schedules, fast turnover of authors (reflecting their ephemeral nature), labour-intensiveness, and the seasonality of the guidebook genre, travel guidebook publishing was widely considered by my informants as more accessible, even if fiercely competitive. However, due to the stringent and formulaic generic patterns writers had to obey when writing, guidebook publishing was also ranked at the lower-end on both the generic and market axes. By contrast, literary writing (travel or otherwise) presupposed the existence of literary agents to secure the first step into a trade publisher's door and thus entailed strict selectivity and additional effort at network-building. Trade publishing was considered almost impossible to break into because of these high-brow gatekeepers whom it was virtually impossible to bypass (Thompson 2010: 60). It was, as a result, perceived as 'cherry-picking', 'volatile' and 'capricious' against the backdrop of guidebook publishing. The requirement of originality and authorial uniqueness (that resisted systematization and order, thereby precluding formatting), the randomness of publishing schedules (providing recurrent and seasonally commissioned work), as well as the fickleness of audience tastes (dissolving the possibility of repeatable generic patterns), made fiction (travel) writing paradoxically more precarious, insecure and uncertain than the set-market position of the guidebook, with its loyal and targeted audience, formatted style, and seasonal schedules. However most informants believed that, if they gained non-fiction guidebook capital in the lower-end genre, it would be possible for them to convert it into the skills, acumen and knowledge needed for a fiction, literary travel writer. Although aware that the institutional contexts surrounding the production of guidebooks and literary texts remained helplessly and traditionally

separated (despite the fact that some of the production entities functioned under the umbrella of a single conglomerate), travel writers believed that the gap was bridgeable through the acquisition of skills of 'good writing' (guidebook writing as an arena for cutting teeth on writing) and the attainment of publishing acumen (by closely observing the organizational dynamics) of the trade.

Partings/exit: self-publishing

As I have already argued, the sustainability of the travel writing career was constantly gauged, re-thought and recalibrated in the face of industrial, technological and authorship changes. Alongside the discourses about the death of the genre, the end of the career was vigorously debated. A writer's life-course was juxtaposed to that of the publishing institutions and the genre. As travel writers reached a point in their life-histories, typically at around the age of 35-40, the demands of travel writing (acceptance of risk and uncertainty, long travelling schedules, irregular pay) conflicted with a changing personal lifestyle such as family/household obligations, age-related decline in energy, motivation and commitment, aversion to risk and tumultuous industrial and technological changes calling for adaptability and flexibility. The data reveal that after approximately seven years in the trade, travel guidebook writers decide to exit the profession.

Over the past several years a burgeoning corpus of scholarship on the entry strategies in creative industries appeared. Many scholars have pondered upon the somewhat inconsistent, random and self-exploitative entry into a creative profession. They have argued that the need to accrue credits and reputation overrides the need for equitable and just employment conditions (see for example, McRobbie, 1998 for early careers in fashion; Neff, 2012 for 'venture labour' and internships in creative industries; Ursell, 2002 for the television industry that like 'a vampire' ingest youngsters at low price). Most of the creative labour studies concentrate on the motivations for entry into a creative job. In the face of ample evidence suggesting that creative jobs, when stripped off the glamour, are low paid, unprotected and sporadic jobs, the persistence and determination displayed by the young 'hopefuls' bewilders many scholars (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Ross 2003; McRobbie 1998, Menger 2002 Gill 2011). While *entry* strategies to a creative job (often found to be self-exploitative and self-commodifying in nature) had been widely discussed, *exit* strategies are rarely considered, and I want to briefly touch upon how travel writers practically and conceptually manage an exit from the profession across the life-stages. As already mentioned, the disillusionment with work-for-hire contracts (withdrawal of copyright, non-compete clauses) writ-large contributed to the decision to stop freelancing. Another common reason was the discrepancy identified between travel guidebook writing as a romanticized and glamorized 'dream job' and the gruelling realties of production.

Yet, the most common exit from freelancing, though not entirely from the profession as such, was self-publishing. It is interesting to note that writers who successfully self-publish online reevaluated their life-courses as situated at the interface between publishing institutions, markets and genres. The digital technologies altered the 'business models' they relied on for financial solvency. At the same time, this financial vigour was thought to parallel the genre's vitality. The practical mastery at adaptability was a highly prized asset. As mentioned earlier, Jacob is an experienced travel writer who maintains and runs a successful online travel guide to a popular destination, and had earned very positive reviews in both The New York Times and Advertising Age. He compared the structural transformations in travel guidebook writing to pulp writing. Linking one genre's historical trajectories to another genre's fate was a common coping strategy at making sense of industrial, technological and autobiographical shifts. The comparisons between genres effectuated the need for inspired and confident authorial agency in the face of structural changes – the more it changes, the more it turns out to be the same thing. The 'lessons learned' will always result in a constant, or in Jacob's gloss – 'satisfying the readers'. Consider his message sent to the travel writers' listserv:

> Travel writing is not a dead-end street. With these new technologies, it may seem that no one is going to pay you, if only because everybody writes. The Internet is a golden opportunity. It does mean that the business model many travel writers have pursued in the past (write a 400- or 500-word article, earn $200 by selling it to the local newspaper travel section, then sell the article again somewhere else) is going the way of the business model that supported writers for pulp magazines back in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. When the pulps died, some writers survived the transition, but many were unable to adapt. I worked in a literary agency for several years in the 1960s, and some of our clients -- whom we kept on out of loyalty -- were pulp writers who still wrote the same kinds of 600- or 700-word O. Henry-style 'short shorts', confession stories, hardboiled detective novels, or Western novels they'd been writing all along. It got harder and harder to sell their work -- and that was in an era when changes in the publishing industry were a lot less rapid and extreme than they are today. The key is to find a niche that has a chance of success: not 'Mountaineering in Iowa', but 'Best Sushi Restaurants in New York' or 'Dordogne Deep Down', and don't get infatuated by the technology too much. Attracting and satisfying readers is the key, just as with books and articles. *Plus ça change*....

The institutions and genre that were mutually reinforcing at the beginning of the professional life have started gradually to fall apart, making the authorial exit and 'the death of the genre' seem inevitable. The new media technologies have furnished possibilities for both genre rejuvenation, and professional self-reinvention. Some experienced but self-declared 'jaded' writers quickly realized that digital technologies may potentially bring about a liberation from 'exploitative' corporations. In light of this, some freelance writers parlayed the genre-related experience gained in the print medium to digital platforms, and thus refashioned themselves into

digital guide author-publishers. These author-publishers abandoned artistic pretensions in favour of economic sustainability through full-time travel writing:

> Back then, with your good work, you earned a decent return for yourself, and you also contributed substantially to the development of the good reputation and market presence of the publisher. But when the publisher's reputation and market share has been well established and revenue is substantial, the head office will naturally look for ways to decrease costs and maximize profits (that's what a business should do), and inevitably the axe will fall on contributors, as they are not a presence in the world of the head office. In the early days, when the publisher is building its list of titles, its reputation in the marketplace, and its body of satisfied customers, high-quality content is essential. This is what happened to me at both Frommer's and Lonely Planet. The series, helped to a significant extent by the hard work and expertise of its well-chosen contributors, became successful enough so that the series publisher could afford to offer far less advantageous terms to its contributors… I have learned the ropes from publishers, from writing and travelling, but I also played around with technology, you know early bulletin boards and stuff. It came naturally to self-publish online. Now I am my own boss.… A lot of things changed however, also in the travel writing itself, I was not a backpacker anymore, my readers were not backpackers anymore. Instead of writing where to buy cigarettes, now I focus on where to enjoy smoking-free places, instead of teaching my readers how to hitchhike I review rent-a-car services, instead of showing them where to find a delicious trout for dinner though fishing is prohibited by law in that country, I teach them how and why to avoid places the trout features in the under-the-table menu.

Yet, although freed the writers from 'unethical' publishers and their 'bastard' contracts, and although it carried the promise to revitalize the genre, self-publishing came nonetheless with strings attached. Those writers were soon to realize that the transition from print to digital was not frictionless or trouble-free. Under the guise of being one's own boss independent from publishers, the self-publishing travel writer became author, editor and businessman all at once, dealing with both the editorial and the commercial side of guidebook production. The demands for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and monetization of the website traffic replaced 'commercialized' corporate editorial policies and 'stifling' house style manuals. Travel writers constantly tweaked the search engine capabilities in order to drive traffic to the online guide by improving its visibility in search engines (boost the page rank, which results in higher placement in the search results), which in turn would result in larger audiences and, by implication, in more advertisers. SEO was directly linked to genre practice, and since it is based on keyword density (most popular search terms) and inbound links (other websites linking to the online guide), travel writers streamlined the genre in accordance with the most profitable keywords in the form of the so-called 'evergreen content' – content that has a longer lifespan (encyclopaedic or reference-type content) which is not time-sensitive, and the information-value of which can protract in time and space, and thus be visible in long-tail searches. Such keyword-centred content potentially

generates more advertising revenue through both Google AdSense advertising (when advertisers bid for ads on a website through third party – Google search engine) and display ads (ad space the writer sells to advertisers through affiliated programmes). In turn, pretty expectedly, the digital genre and market end up being as daunting and demanding as the corporate editorial policies and commercial imperatives of freelancing. Keyword-driven content creation has implications upon content diversity. In order to generate revenue over time, the writers need to produce low-margin, but high-volume content. So content production becomes once again gruelling and labour-intensive, and the content itself standardized, uniform and genuinely commercialized - semantically coupled with advertising keywords. In order to secure more searches, writers write more of what the audience and the advertisers want. Little surprise then that, instead of pandering to publishing houses' editors, writers now pray to 'the mighty Goddess Google'. In an environment of online content overabundance and scarcity of user attention span, travel writers resort to gatekeepers such as the Google search engine, to channel their products to audiences. Ethical and aesthetic dilemmas inundate authorial self-regulation and discipline.

William professionally defined himself 'in niches' as 'travel writer', 'media entrepreneur' and 'communication consultant'. He is the owner of an online travel guide venture which is his main source of income. The online guidebook, in his opinion, took off owing to his professional reputation as an 'Elbonia expert', that he had earned among travellers and fellow-freelancers – 'I was simply the Elbonia guy'. He came to Elbonia in the 1980s as a freelance foreign correspondent for the Financial Times and the Business Week, only to be quickly converted into a travel writer producing guidebooks for smaller niche publishers in Latin America. In the late 1990s, he started being interested in technology and put up a blog online, and paid his dues in 'sweat equity' before turning the online guide into his full livelihood. William described online guide production in horticultural metaphors. The profitability of digital self-publishing depended on careful cultivation, care and sensibility over an extended period of time. Interestingly, such metaphors contrast directly with the 'cog in a machine' rhetoric, deprofessionalisation and disposability, that the writers threw in the face of corporations, and are congruent with the *crescit eundo* (growing as it goes) status of the genre. Yet, the imbrications of audiences and advertisers in digital content were a source of a nagging concern and angst, both ethical and aesthetic. The everyday activities of digital content production required rigorous and sustained self-regulation, and much practical mastery of a tightrope walker – to balance the tenuous line between the genre-related ideals of objectivity and referentiality, and the advertising demands for profit:

> The most difficult thing when publishing online is how to keep that Chinese wall erected and impervious between editorial content and advertising. Not that the Chinese wall was free of leaks and cracks in the print media, but when you self-publish and your income depends directly on advertising revenue which is in direct relation to the content you write, a lot of ethical issues emerge. That goes especially for the listings and tourism services reviews such as hotels or bars. I think that complete transparency helps. So I always separate clearly advertising supported text

from editorial. Draw a clear distinction mark. The web helped me replace the dry and dispassionate style the editors were imposing in traditional print guidebooks. So I try to work out a personal and passionate style in my online guide. However, I continuously try to figure out what are the revenue yielding topics and try to combine travel writing, more of feature writing with travel guide, more factual or functional writing. More active audience that seeks information online to plan travels, rather than armchair reader, is more lucrative since those people actually seek a way to spend their money and thus appeal to advertisers. I am very careful in generating an online audience and trying not to alienate my readers since more page views lead to more advertising revenue. I usually heed my audience's needs and give them what they want. Over time the online content grows, so the most important thing is to keep it fresh and infused with popular keywords. If I see that an article about 'the 10 sexiest nudist beaches in Elbonia' generates hits, I'm going to churn out more articles like that. It's all about business. As one great travel guidebook writer once put it, an online travel guide is like a garden. You plant the seed, water it, cherish it, prune it, fertilize it. It gives fruit after a while, and long after.

The direct relation between page views or audience, as well as the mixture of editorial and business practices converging in the field of travel writing or in the figure of the travel writer, renders the online self-publishing venture as binding, calculative and time-consuming as freelancing for traditional print outlets. Moreover, as the self-publishing self-enterprising venture is thriving in an economic, and not least a reputational sense, it more and more comes to bear a resemblance to traditional publishing outlets. As the income of the self-publishing travel guidebook writer is dependent on the monies per nugget-content generated through advertising that capitalises, in turn, on the number and activities of an audience, attention paid to that audience becomes a central part of the travel writing genre. Facilitated by the new media technological affordances that render both genre consumption and production at least partly traceable and measurable, self-publishers systematically trace the activities of their audiences and stayed tuned to incessant reader's feedback. In this respect, they largely emulate the audience or market research practices devised by traditional publishing outlets. In an effort to 'get to know his audience' (the audience of his self-published online guide) and respond to their needs, for example, Ryan had developed a wide range of methods that brought genre referentiality to its logical conclusion: hyper-referentiality and hyper-didacticity:

I work hard to get to know my audience. Something that I do very regularly is setting up an online survey, usually with Survey Monkey, which helps me learn the demographics, desires and propensities of my readers. You know, every time I analyse the results I'm impressed that my reader's profile is quite like me. That is not bad, per se, since they are a middle-aged, middle-class audience who can afford to travel. In addition, I always read carefully all the feedback readers send me. For example, I used to get bizarre messages about where to pee in Istanbul. As bizarre as it may sound, I put into it, bizarrely, a lot of work in order to develop content on

public toilets, and now the public toilet in Istanbul is the keyword that draws a fat revenue stream. Or, some time ago, a lady – obviously English – who owned a vacation house in Spain had asked me how and when to dispose of her waste. As stupid as she may sound, she's a representative of my audience who owns real estate in Spain, a segment worth catering to. You can't imagine all that bizarre stuff I sometimes get. Bizarre but indicative. I also have a forum on my website and quite useful comments are to be found there as well.

Self-publishing earmarked the rising writer's entrepreneurialism. It represented the ultimate form of entrepreneurial leverage of genre-related expertise independent from traditional publishers and conglomerates. In contrast to the inundating promotion of corporate brands, self-publishing was an attempt at establishing a visible and recognisable author-brand while trading on the expertise accrued in the pre-Internet era.

Yet, monetizing the expertise through online self-publishing was an arduous business. Although at a first glance, the cost of entry and the cost of distribution were considered negligible -- required neither expansive set-up nor a costly network of sales representatives, there were hidden costs lurking behind the apparent liberation of self-publishing. Self-publishing entailed long hours of work that was not immediately or adequately compensated. It was a kind of 'work on spec', an entrepreneurial investment of time and money in an anticipated successful venture. It entailed investments in driving traffic to the website; building audience by maintaining the correspondence with readers; securing inbound links to boost the search engine rank by constantly networking and mingling with other online entrepreneurs; keeping abreast of technological developments; nourishing technological skills on top of travel writing ones; constantly researching the market and incessant marketing and publicising (forum activities, PR online, Twitter); and constant anxiety as to how to garner an income from such activities.

Conclusion

In chapters 5 and 6, I have shown, firstly, through fieldwork examples how practitioners self-present themselves as captured in the practice of travel guide(book) writing. I have also demonstrated how the materiality of 'guidebooks' and 'passports' influences practitioners' genre-related reflexivity. The theme of displacement and attachment to guidebooks testifies to the appropriateness of practitioners for guide-making, which in turn makes demands on their professional self-definition. In a way, the practice of guide-making, the genre of the travel guidebook, and professional practitioners co-produce one another in their self-reflexive auto-biographical accounts. Both genre and producers mutually incite each other into existence.

Therefore, and this is my second theme, agents do not single-handedly master-mind their own biographical stories. Rather, these are entangled in the genre and proffer modes of action and self-understanding which are shared and essentially collective. The genre is structurally incorporated into individual biographies, which themselves stabilize and consolidate the genre. Hence, neither genre trajectory nor individual biography is reducible to the other. Every writer

lives and constructs his or her story differently, yet invariably as informed by the genre. Biographies include collective norms as contained in the genre, but are individually inflected, so that the genre becomes also *de facto* distributed. Producers' biographies are then all partial inclusions and partial interrelations with the genre, mainly imaginative and self-mythologizing, but also self-consciously calculative constructions of a professional identity.

Consequently, if seen from within the socio-material local contexts in which they arise, the accidental encounter with travel writing, the irrational action of trading a lucrative job for precarious employment, and the uncritical reverence of a creative job as a self-realizing enterprise, are all associated with and profoundly influenced by the genre. The genre with its specificity shapes the ways producers recursively 'self-assemble' (Law 2004) in order to make sense of their own standing within a technologically and structurally changing industry, and not least uncertain labour markets. This professional self-assembling is then constructed on the go, as it becomes entangled with the genre it claims to 'live and breathe' or 'know inside out' in practice. The genre co-ordinates producers' self-definition by means of its overlapping and interferences with their training, education, family ties, social class, previously held job positions, and desires. The writers' life-stories are presented with the plot structure of the travel (guidebook) writing. That is what Hayden White calls 'emplotment'. 'Emplotment is the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind/genre' (White 1973:7). But how is the genre-related emplotment practiced in writers' autobiographical accounts? When does the genre-practice morph into self-representational mode? [52]

People's lives are *embedded* in genres (MacIntyre 2011:212). The autobiographical narration imposes retrospectively structure, order and unity upon randomly scattered events and actions so as to produce an intelligible account of its being appropriate to the genre in which it dwells. According to MacIntyre, agents are not only actors of their own lives but also 'co-authors'; they are able to account intelligibly for their authorial intentions only under the constraints of the genre they write and write themselves into. The professional *beginning*, *flourishing* and *partings* are only intelligible as that 'quest for the good' (p.215) embedded in specific genre histories. If the genre affords the 'phenomenon of embedding', then it is reasonable to ask about people: 'to what genre does their history belong? And this is the same question as: What type of account of their history will be both true and intelligible?' (p.213). Applying MacIntyre's ideas, it can be said that travel guidebook writers are embedded in the genre of the guidebook, the genre they produce and are professionally and intimately absorbed by (Hennion and Gomart 1999). Only within the genre do their actions and self-definition become pertinent, although they often appear forcefully embellished for the sake of genre-related self-promotion. Genre-practice affords courses of action and steers the life-course stories inasmuch as it leads to attainment of the good immanent in that

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[52] For the different archetypal modes of representation see Fry (1975); White (1973), which are alas beyond the scope of this study. Yet, seeing the professional self-accounts in light of the archetypal modes may shed light on the non-linear and imaginative nature of career-related stories.

genre-practice itself. The 'quest for the good' remains encompassed in the autobiographical narrative unity propelled by a communally shared vision of 'the good' within the specific genre world (hence the ample invocation of ideal-ized biographical models to justify good and rightful travel writing career pathways). Therefore, writers care deeply about appearing conscientious, ethical and diligent workers who comply with genre-practice as a collectively-sanctioned and inherited conception of 'good work'. Therefore, the travel guidebook genre both constitutes and is constituted by the writers' autobiographical accounts taken in their entirety, as an expression of collective, occupational ideals and the professional good. The genre is not only prescriptive and utilitarian, commercial and institutionalized, but a spatio-temporal autonomous entity that contains the rationales for appropriate/professional action. The self-constitutive autobiographies thus exhibit the ontological traits of the genre-practice such as *the quest* for referentiality, objectivity, honesty, impartiality, accuracy, ethical service to the readers, and not least the achievement of personal economic sustainability because travel writing is 'a business'. Hence, such generic ontological traits are not transcendental or a-historical but, local, lived and contested in practice and in discourse. At the same time, the juxtaposition with the Other – fiction/trade publishing as opposed to non-fiction/reference publishing – reveals the clash between genres, the ontological and epistemological discrepancy between them, and the difficulty (self-doubt and failure) of overcoming the 'entrapment' in one genre for 'the good' of the other. Therefore travel writers are bound to draw on and employ the genre concept as a means of professional self-definition, since such a genre has played an important role in their professional and occupational formation. From here, the autobiographical stories value, rework and reconsider the moral injunctions of the genre such as the objectivity, accuracy, honesty or impartiality which motivate, guide and justify writers' identity (self-perception) and actions (conceptions of good or bad work).

Here it is important to reiterate the Gellian idea of the interdependence of genres, objects, minds and persons. Gell (1998:222-223) argued convincingly that there is 'structural isomorphy' between internal, biographical time (mind, conscientiousness) and an external aggregate of artworks such as the artist's *oeuvre*, the stylistic tradition of the Maori meeting houses, or, as I argued, the genre of the travel guidebook, all approached as a macro object distributed in time and space. From this point of view, the individualized autobiographical accounts are externalized and collectivized cognitive processes embedded in genres. Every story about the professional dwelling in genres is a micro instantiation of the micro object of the genre. The genre, in Gell's words, 'exists between *mental states* in the cognitive process we recognize as conscientiousness' (p.236). This parallels the index-to-index relationships that form the entirety of the genre and from which authorial agency can be abducted. The biographical career of the artist is most resolutely the private experience of a string of artistic intentions. And agents need to account for such intentions in a narrative of some kind (MacIntyre 2011:206). Only then can one characterize correctly what an agent is doing. The genre absorbs the artist (ibid.:190) who willingly obeys its logic and inner workings. This interplay between the genre and authorial self-perceptions is most clearly evident in the ways the writers conceived of their expertise as a process of continual and

incremental growth. Travel guidebook expertise augmented as the book grew in volume. The book, the author, the genre and the publishing institutions (royalty contracts) were caught in a 'career-long generate-and-test sequence' (Gell 1998:237), where expertise in the genre was a cumulative, even routinized, process of modification, revision, and improvement of previous editions (ante-texts), rather than a abrupt explosion of innovation or radical novelty. It is at this point that writers' insistence, at times even a stubborn and ridiculous insistence, on the 'hard', 'gruelling' and 'taxing' nature of guidebook work, becomes understandable. The self-aggrandizing claims that guidebook work is 'not fun' were meant to both 'beguile' and 'terrify' (Gell 1998:253) the potential incumbents-amateurs intent on embarking on the perennial 'dream job', and thus portentously undermining the professional clout of the 'experts'. By presenting the production process in 'hard work' terms, writers justified their expertise within what is commonly thought of as an uninventive and heteronomous genre. The double-bind of beguiling and terrifying was also meant to critically fight off the industrial practice of rendering the travel writing job 'cool, 'desirable' and 'hot' – as in the opening quotations to these two chapters where Lonely Planet defines its writers as 'a bizarre bunch' and Rough Guides publicly boasts of a 'cool' hiring strategy called 'the pub test'.

Yet, as I have shown in the previous chapter, the genre is institutionalized and situated in institutions, which in Macintyre's sense are preoccupied with external goods such as profit minimization and cost minimization. Therefore, writers negotiated their professional standing also between publishing institutions and diversified markets. Here, the most indicative personal professional stories echoed closely the rise and fall of the publishing house and the birth and death of the genre. Personal, institutional and genre pathways were interlocking. As writers felt that their expertise was undermined by a series of structural – industrial and technological – changes, they imputed the inability to produce 'high-quality' content and attain financial solvency to the generalized demise of the genre. Their career disintegration was ascribed to the genre's immanent decay. Nevertheless, the affordances of the new media technologies were seen once again as a professional liberation and genre-related flourishing, at least up till the point of the genre solidifying and stabilizing in the digital context, and so once more becoming institutionalized and commercialized, standardized and 'stifling'.

This chapter has analysed the ways the professional travel writers defined their occupational and professional identities in and through the genre they produce. In other words, I have shown how professional self-definition and self-reflexivity are implicated in genres, both as autonomous trajectories and institutionalized, commercialized entities. But, how really does the genre shape actions in practice? To understand this, I need to analyze how professionals actually make use of genres and how they do things with them in ethical and conscientious terms. This leads me to the next chapter where I analyze how genres afford actors with possibilities for action by providing a repertoire of routine, technical skills, styles and habits that constitute professional(-ised) strategies of action.

CHAPTER 7

AESTHETIC AND ETHICAL CHOICES IN-THE-MAKING: A CRAFTSMANSHIP ORIENTATION TO WORK

This chapter shows how travel guidebook writers, who are committed to doing as good a job as possible within the constraints imposed upon them by their publishers, go about their work in practice. Because travel guidebook writers care profoundly about the products they create, they constantly employ craft standards or inner criteria of excellence by which they judge good or bad performance. The practical doing of guidebooks is an everyday achievement based on a concatenation of daily evaluations of work. In what follows, I analyze how a craft ethos underpins guidebook writers' evaluations of good work in the process of *doing* their job, and not just made sense of after the fact. This chapter looks directly at 'the act of composing', the cultural product in-the-making, that both Adorno and Williams identified as the site where the genre mediates producer's agency (daily choices and improvisations), and thus where autonomy resides.

Craft ethos and practical mastery: in pursuit of excellence

Craft ethos to work consists in the pursuit of excellence. MacIntyre argues that excellence should be understood as exercising the power of virtues within well-defined and coherent cooperative human activities that he calls 'practice' (1985: 187). Every practice requests certain standards of excellence and delineates the internal goods. The pursuit of excellence consists in attaining goods internal to that specific activity, 'goods' that are appropriate to and constitutive of that practice, that are practice-specific, and not external – such as wealth, prestige or social status, which in fact are obtainable equally efficiently elsewhere. For MacIntyre, good artists (he gives the example of painting and painters) are in pursuit of excellence through achievement of goods internal to that practice (painting) which itself, autonomously, defines those internal goods in terms of iconic relationships immanent in a genre-poetics. It is the practice and the entailed culture-structure (genre, poetics) that afford trajectories of appropriate action for the attainment of good work.

The internal quality of the practice can only be recognized and appropriately evaluated by those who are engrossed in the practice and well-versed in its history. As MacIntyre put it: 'Those who lack the relevant experience are incompetent thereby as judges of internal goods' (2011:189). Those initiated in the practice are equipped with a competence to identify, appreciate and order the hierarchy of internal goods. By engagingly participating in the practice, practitioners develop

what Bourdieu (1996: 165) names, but alas, rarely fully elucidates with the view to the field of cultural production, as 'the feel for the game' or 'practical mastery'. For Bourdieu 'the practical mastery' is palatable in cultural producers' ability, skill and know-how, which often lies outside conscious control and explicit discourse. In contrast, MacIntyre argues that the agent, however unconscious or oblivious of her action, is nonetheless endowed with *intentions* that render each and every action intelligible, or appropriate, and not just random or incomprehensible. Therefore, to characterize what a moral agent is doing, to pinpoint his or her contradictory behavior, we need to become familiar with the agent's intentions, beliefs and history of practice. Moral agents are then 'practically rational individuals' (MacIntyre 2011; 1988) which does not mean cynically calculative, but reflexive of their practical mastery. They often step back from their work, constantly evaluate and critically reassess their standards of practice. In this way, aesthetic and moral actions intermingle to the extent that the mixture becomes a matter of practical thinking and making, rather than abstract theory (Faulkner 1983; Fine 2008).

This claim has a hefty methodological import. If the utilitarianism of rational choice can be probabilistically measured, owing to the quantifiability of external rewards (profit, reputation or status), the practical evaluation of quality can be both justified and understood only through a deep immersion in that specific 'practice', as allowed for by a deep ethnographic case study. A case study is useful not only because it is empirically rich and attentive to the practical unfolding of action, but also because it reveals actors' intentions in addition to their practical thinking (*phronesis*) and intuitive strategies. What is good or bad to do is compared in context – if I do this, it will enable me to achieve that. It is practical reason that drives moral agents to act daily: 'all practical reasoning arises from someone asking the question "What am I to do?"' (MacIntyre 1988: 24).

Yet, I want to redress MacIntyre's skepticism that practices and the ensuing pursuit of excellence is impossible within institutions, concerned solely with obtaining and discriminatorily deploying external goods. Drawing on my fieldwork I approach writers' action simultaneously as rule-following and autonomous, institutionalized and individualized. By closely following the on-the-ground work of travel writers, I contend that the practical making of guidebooks is structured along two axes which cut across the contradiction between commerce and culture. When gauging the quality of their work, travel guidebook writers resort to two diverging, yet complementary logics: the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequentiality (MacIntyre 1988; 2011). The logic of consequentiality presupposes agents who act upon consent and contracts, and who choose among a given set of alternatives after having judged their likely consequences and having calculatively predicted the future. The logic of appropriateness involves agents who act out of desire to link personal identities and values to particular situations and collectivities, that is genre worlds.

The coupling of these logics configures the standards of excellence or the craft attitude to work. Writers' evaluative actions are driven by regulations, expectations and obligations contractually set by the publishing institution in the editorial brief (calculative, rational, instrumental logic), yet simultaneously rooted in the autonomous rules, expectations, history and requirements of the genre (perceived as apt, rightful, even normalized, although often vague, fuzzy and tacit). The logic of consequentiality is thus determined by a set of contractually-set constraints such as temporal pressures, strict style guidelines, budgetary limitations, legal boundaries, and not least career prospects circumscribed in the editorial brief, whereas the logic of appropriateness hinges on genre historical trajectories that provide modes of appropriate and 'good' thinking and doing, and which spill over contracts, editorial impositions or managerial dictates. Travel guidebook writers deem what it is appropriate to do in a particular situation based on the evaluation of what constitutes 'good work', and good work is aligned with the body of rules handed down in genres or poetics (Woodmansee 1984).

Editorial briefs and genres

What producers evaluate as 'good' is assessed not in a vacuum, but with a view to a range of conflicting demands. On the one hand, they are contractually bound to obey institutional requirements and audience preferences, which are embodied in *the editorial brief*. On the other hand, cultural producers are self-avowedly accountable to the ethical and aesthetic principles (norms, conventions) of *the genre* they produce, separately from managers, administrators and markets. This is so, because the cultural product is doubly articulated; it is both a commodity and an artistic object. It follows from here that the practical making of cultural products is an ambiguous and ambivalent, habitual yet often reflexive reconciliation of the commerce-culture tension.

The editorial brief and the genre are interlocking and co-constructive of each other. As I have already shown in Chapter 2, genre theory has long argued that genres in fact function as 'institutions within institutions' – autonomous and independent 'models for writing' (Todorov 1990: 18) that in turn are backed up by the material and commercial institutions of cultural industries (Altman 1999: 91). A genre is an independent regime which defines what it is appropriate to do in a particular situation and professional genre community. As I argued in Chapter 3, the two principle travel guidebook dominants are those of referentiality and didacticity or performativity. The rules deriving from these dominants are not always written or explicit. Yet the dominants (autonomously and culturally coded) lay down tacitly obligatory and practically obliging rules of text-making that are recurrent, shared, and sustained in a locally and historically specific 'community of genre' (Devitt 2004: 37). Only afterwards is the genre incorporated in the relations of capital and pragmatically institutionalized in the editorial brief.

The editorial *brief* is a template for action, as well as a regulatory and legally-binding document, developed in-house by editors and aligned with corporate financial charts. The writer delivers in accordance with the brief, which functions as a disciplining tool that allows a publisher to audit, measure and reckon his or her performance. Writers get chastised for failing to meet the brief's demands: in particular, with regard to addressing audience needs, heeding the bottom-line and executing on time. The brief is thus conceived of as a controlling mechanism that casts a scrutinizing, undercover eye on freelance writers who, in principle, do not work in spatial or temporal proximity to their managers (Hirsch 1978).

As it is inherent in genres to stabilize the voluntary and thus self-governing 'contract' between producers and audiences (Genette 1997), it has readily become the mainstay of the managerial strategies to counter the uncertainties of cultural markets by linking pre-established consumer trends with pre-sold products (Bielby & Bielby 2003). As a result, the genre was eagerly used to render the 'unruly' creation 'rationalized' and 'bureaucratized' by steering producers towards repetition and predictable outcomes via genre-related norms, models and formulas.

It can be said, then, that the genres are sanctioned in the editorial brief, which in turn enforces a standardized plan (Adorno 1975:12) or format (Ryan 1991:160) in the guise of structured conventions and company-advocated rules of text-making that have been presented to writers as a set of stringent regulations, detailed stylistic guidelines, extensive product manuals, and meticulous instructions. The brief thus underpins authorial intentions and ensuing aesthetic and ethical choices (Griswold 1987:7). Fulfillment of its requirements leads to writers becoming entrepreneurial creative individuals (Christopherson 2004), who try to boost their income by expediency and efficiency of execution. This increases their chances of repeated commissions (especially if they court editors); reduces their working hours (by mixing research and writing with family and vacation time); and leverages the experience and content gained from guidebook work (by selling adjacent stories to magazines and newspapers).

The guidebook *genre* represents a less obtrusive set of rules than those of the brief, but rules all the same, which are embedded in corporate culture, inscribed in the unwritten conventions of professional performance, and underlain also in the tacit agreement pertaining between producers and consumers. The genre seamlessly blends independent codes of making with commercial imperatives: 'formatting transforms the usual rules of a form into *necessity* in the workplace' (Ryan 1991:172, original emphasis). Guidebook writers thus have to follow the editorial brief, but also work within autonomous rules of the genre with its independent trajectories and sovereign conventions of form. Psychologists of creativity, most notably Amabile had argued that when people execute plans, formats or what she calls 'algorithms' – straightforward, pre-determined tasks – they are unimaginative and uncreative. To this end, Amabile (1996: 36) writes:

an artist who followed the algorithm "paint pictures of different sorts of children with wide sad eyes, using dark-toned backgrounds" would not be producing creative paintings, even if each painting were unique and technically perfect.

Yet, it escapes Amabile's experimental research agenda that the 'algorithm' in creative work obeys more than just the logic of consequentiality. It involves also the independent aesthetic or genre trajectories, which are neither simple nor straightforward, but historical, compound and often appear obscure to outsiders. The brief and the genre play off each other in a practical manner while underpinning the craft ethos to work. The coupling of the brief and the genre affords resources and schemes of text-making that are deeply contradictory and conflicting. Together, they represent constraints in addition to affordances, or those properties of objects that help structure, organize and order action (DeNora 2003; Born 2005). In other words, it is how they are used that matters; not what they mean or how they are to be critically re-interpreted. In order to illustrate this point, I will now describe how Daisy[53], an experienced travel guidebook writer, judges her work while doing it, as I follow her engaging with, mobilizing, and employing both brief and genre. At the time of my ethnographic work she was commissioned by a renowned global travel (guidebook) publisher to write anew a guide to the capital city of Elbonia. I first describe how she goes about aesthetic and ethical choices in practice, and then describe her mania for inscription and writing while walking.

Spreadsheet culture: 'stick to your brief'

[The company] loves spreadsheets. I spend most of my time figuring out how that works, why some cells are bigger than others, and so on. I must follow the pattern they give me: how many words I'm supposed to use for a hotel review, or particular neighbourhood. … They use an incredible number of abbreviations. It took me forever to learn them. For example they say POI for Point of Interest, referring to the process of updating info – like hotel names, addresses, telephone numbers, things like that. I need to follow the brief. It represents a sort of outline of the work I'm supposed to do. I'm really grateful they did it because it says everything here and all I need to do is follow it. I always keep that to hand and close to my heart when writing. Just to make things in accordance to what they ask and expect. Actually, the more constraints I have, the better job I do. That may sound strange, but it's true. I take pride in delivering in accordance to the brief. I thrive on positive feedback from the editors. It is about pleasing the editor. If they like what I do, they'll commission me again, especially now that [the company] doesn't give you the faintest hint that they'll contact you again with a gig.

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[53] Daisy is a composite 'implied author' consisting of the mutual traits of two actual writers whose work I have followed *in situ*.

The brief undergirds writers' calculative and consequential agency. Writers anticipate their future (in terms of employability and income) by projecting whether they have the capacity to finish the job on time, within budget, on target, and above all according to the expectations and regulations set out by the editors. They express that paradoxical feeling of being both overwhelmed and inspired by publisher's directions and rules, not least by a company's internal jargon (for freelancers are, of course, external), in their agitation to deal with spreadsheets. At its core, travel guidebook writing is filling in a grid of cells that organize content creation as an arithmetic operation. The spreadsheet enables an efficient and expedient deployment of massive amounts of content. By enforcing impersonal censorship, it automatically calibrates the number of words written, leaving no space for excess. What doesn't fit in the spreadsheet doesn't belong to the guidebook. The spreadsheet affords an overview, chart, and totality of the process of making that produces a homogeneous, uniform, and coherent voice which, in turn, is overridden by the publishing brand, rather than by the author's name. To this end, the spreadsheet erases the idiosyncrasies of the individual writer and acts as an agent of homogenization (Law 2002: 27), as it moves purposively from the sphere of statistical and economic calculability to that of creativity. Then, what about the unclassifiable, residual, and aesthetic choices? How do writers cope with the arithmetic restrictions of the spreadsheet?

The travel writer needs to find solutions to the constraints contained in the spreadsheet, including space, word limit, outlook. In order to meet such contingencies, writers not only keep the brief 'at hand' (as a tool), but also 'close to heart' (a goal). It is interiorization of the brief that, first and foremost, has a bearing on a writer's self-evaluated ability to do good work. Daisy devoted herself to the implementation of the brief requirements for two reasons: firstly, to profile her credibility and please her editors, in order to build up credit for possible future employment (Faulkner 1983); and secondly, to take personal pride and enjoyment in successful, timely, and efficient realization of the brief.

The brief dictates in minute detail a writer's assignment: what is to be included in, or omitted from, a guide, as well as the tone of the review to be adopted, the pitch of voice, the angle; all informed by meticulous audience and market research. Words need to be carefully chosen and always measured against the overall word limit, which needs to be rigorously adhered to in order to avoid inflating editing and printing costs. As one brief admonishes: 'please stick to the word counts assiduously'.

> I haven't had the chance to write more than 45 words on any given subject in about five years. That's why, maybe, I began to write a blog. What I'm not allowed to say in the guidebook, I put on my blog. So when editors censor me, fine! I have my blog! Whatever drops out of the guidebook – you know, word limits, practicalities, suitability – is not wasted, it goes out there. The Internet is unlimited. I cannot write about that quirky wig shop, almost a wig museum, down a dark ally in a guidebook. The editor would immediately

say: 'that's a bit off…. A wig isn't a memento of your trip to Norway, is it?' It doesn't make any business sense, at least not to editors.

The brief, then, determines what it is appropriate to say and write in a particular situation. Although the writer has to fall in line with the institutionally-determined logic of appropriateness, she can also translate it into a margin of freedom elsewhere, and not just in terms of her future employability. What she can also do is set up a private publishing space, free from imposed limitations, which escapes close scrutiny. In this way, new media technologies disintermidiate the publishing value chain by eliding editors and publishers (Thompson 2010).

Some writers felt that spreadsheet-induced censorship was especially disturbing because the brief explicitly demanded personality and subjectivity: 'write with colour and flair'; 'the author should include an angle'; 'find some interesting twist to the coverage – we must cover the Statue of Liberty, for example, but can we lift the coverage beyond the ordinary?' Daisy interiorized the brief to the extent that she unwittingly, yet approvingly, reiterated editorial demands as part of her own style and benchmarks. She hoped to present content which the editors would find compelling and appealing, but also content of which she herself was going to be proud of – not only content that it would be functional, accurate, factual and objective, but also 'atmospheric' or 'prose with an angle'. Daisy developed her own standards of excellence – aligned with genre-specific discourses – that could not be reduced to editorial requirements or bureaucratic specifications. Her sense of having achieved quality was often perceived as inventiveness within the conventions of the genre – usually through a critical and reflexive engagement with the genre-poetics. This was especially evident when she questioned the truthfulness or factuality of the genre, and when she reprimanded other writers for failing to uphold its 'referential' poetics:

Ana: When do you feel happy with what you write?
Daisy: When I've caught the spirit of the place. Captured the atmosphere. It is important to get the angle on the place.
Ana: How does one capture an 'atmosphere'? How do you know how wide the angle should be, so to speak?
Daisy: [hesitating]. Let's say that you need to review a sleepy seaside village. You've been there, as once happened to me, and say: 'the place is full of veteran fishermen. Beware, they all tried to hit on me'. This succinct explanation reveals the atmosphere of the place. It may not tell the truth about the place itself, but it reveals the truthfulness of the author's experience of the place. Or if you describe a small town, woefully conservative for generations now, from the perspective of its central square sculpture, which is all nakedness – basically a couple on the verge of having sex – then you can spice things up. You aren't boring, or tempted by clichés. You're factual, but at the same time you've got that twist. This is a strange sort of genre. It inflicts the need to use clichés, even on the most eloquent of writers. It's a daily combat against clichés. It is so funny. Great writers otherwise write texts full of worn out phrases. That resembles more a third grade essay than serious guidebook prose. 'You can wear a bikini all year round,

although the majority of people are Muslim', or 'you'll encounter smiling faces despite being so deprived'. That's abominable.

Writers reflect upon the interrelationship between the brief and the genre, even though it is fussy, vague and undifferentiated. That interrelationship underpins choices of appropriateness, not only with a view to the brief, but also to generic trajectories. In Daisy's account, the boundaries separating the brief and the genre are blurry and indeterminate: 'the brief is rigid' but also 'the genre is demanding' and 'sort of strange'. Choices are made at the intersection between the two. The genre is judged as 'demanding', and the brief as 'stifling'. Clichés and 'flowery language' are not appropriate for a 'factual' genre, and certainly inappropriate for the thrifty economy of words as regulated by the spreadsheet. Writers can be critical or appreciative of what they have achieved on the basis of their assessment of the outcome of their work.

Fighting off clichés that corrupt the genre and defy editors' expectations, together with short deadlines and skimpy budgets, is a constant source of anxiety and burn-out. Equally, however, it can form the basis for enjoyment and pleasure with one's own work when successfully navigated:

> Travel guidebook writing is a very demanding style of writing because the genre itself is really demanding. First of all, you have very tight and precise word-lengths; you have to learn how to express ideas very succinctly, leaving aside a lot of flowery language or descriptive excess. I found it exacerbating to always need to come up with a fresh perspective, or fresh turn of phrase. It's almost robotically searching for freshness. Look now, for example, about how best to describe the restaurants and bars we visited today, and those of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. I go tasty goat sandwich, yummy olive spread, delicious lentil soup. Then I try mouth-watering, lip-smacking. But then what? This is gruelling. … But, once you've got the word in place you say, that's that. That works well. Eventually everything falls into place. Just like in a mosaic.

Daisy simply 'knew' when the words were appropriate and when they 'felt a bit off'. She would just convince me that something 'didn't work well', because she 'knew' it 'wouldn't click'. 'The search for the fresh turn of the phrase' was 'gruelling' and time-consuming because she was determined to get the job done well, not just to get by. She was not content with just regurgitating the same old adjectives or clichés. That would be taking the easy way out. Being aware of a range of alternative linguistic devices at her disposal, Daisy defined what she believes (while endorsing both editors' and customers' expectations) 'doesn't work', what doesn't pair together, what doesn't describe well, what doesn't capture the truthfulness appropriately. At the same time, a source of apprehension – the incessant search for the 'right' word – is also a source of pride. The development of skills turns into a joy of learning and refining, a never-ending pursuit of excellence. At this level, Daisy's daily choices become aesthetic choices, which are relational because they are always evaluated in context and in relationship with other possible alternatives. Daisy evaluates again and again the qualities of words, the potential of a specific turn of phrase, the blasé character of epithets. By constant trial and error, she painstakingly puts together 'the mosaic' of

the guide. She obsesses over words until they feel right and in place – in other words appropriate both with a view to the brief and the genre.

Most importantly, it is the long-term, pretty consistent, self-avowed commitment to writing 'good guidebooks' that prevents the temptation to do 'bad guidebooks'. This decision buttresses a writer's perseverance through periods of disillusionment, tight deadlines, and poor pay. Daisy, for example, was resolutely committed to doing good work. Even if lacking an obvious formal theory or doctrine, this writer devised her own standards of judging good work on the basis of her experience with, and professional understanding of, the genre-poetics, as well as of lessons learned from previous editorial work.

> I'm feeling the burnout even in this first week of research. My head is filled with addresses and URLs and random mental notes. I have yet to commit anything to paper because I've been biking the whole day. I feel the time pressure. Being late in [the company] creates a black spot – a stain. You can be a bad writer, but being late means that you aren't going to be hired any time soon. Hence, people might do a crappy job to avoid being late and to catch up. I want to write good guidebooks, so that will make me stay away from bad guidebooks.

The melding of the brief and the genre contributes to individual self-interpretation that is part of wider professional debates about norms, standards and ethics. At the interface of the brief and the genre, practitioners critically and self-reflexively re-evaluate their writing practices. This is a mode of professional engagement, with the two institutions, the publishing company and the genre, made manifest mainly through irony and resistance. One such instance of resistance was clear when Daisy tried to negotiate the appropriateness of a review she had been unconditionally requested to 'execute'. The editorial brief made a review of Elbonia's War Museum compulsory. The writer, though, was convinced that this was an overrated and boring experience, which needed to be played down in importance, not highlighted. The editor, though, had other ideas, as the following extract from the brief reveals:

> Elbonia's War Museum – [comment from the author written in green]: honestly I find it a little bit of a ho-hum experience, as the crowds are too off-putting. Am I cruel for saying that? It is heartless to make this not a highlight.

> [Comment from the editor marked in red]: from a marketability/sales point of view, this should be a highlight. It is one of the top draws for visitors (about a million visitors per year, hence the crowds)… emphasize that the crowds can taint the experience, and give tips on what time of day to visit/best time to avoid crowds. But you must write about it.
> The blurb of the guide to Elbonia makes the museum a highlight and a main selling point in spite of the author's objections.

> When I later met Daisy and asked as how she felt about 'having' to write in spite of her personal beliefs, she explained: *The traveller needs to figure out himself that it is an overrated experience,*

though. That's the catch. I've seen so much disappointment but also victory on their faces when standing in front of it.

While Daisy dared to interpret the brief requirements in a matrix alien to the brief's consequential logic, her interpretation turned into a conflict of interpretations. Ultimately, it was resolved by an instrumental and yet appropriate evocation of 'the audience'. 'The audience' that is measured, charted and market-researched (as represented in the brief) and the audience that is made of flesh-and-blood, *bona fide,* here and now (as is intended, imagined, and encountered 'out there' by the author).

Aesthetic choices

Travel guidebook writing involves a practical mastery of discernment and quick immersion in new places and cultures (a practice commonly referred to as 'parachuting'). The practical mastery comes from a bodily awareness of a place and this kind of sensuous perception is clearly made visible when the writer seamlessly and effortlessly navigates through the place evaluating tourist establishments. This is well demonstrated in the following two episodes drawn from fieldwork:

> We have been walking in light drizzle for almost an hour now. It's pouring with rain and we're soaked from head to foot. Daisy considers stopping off at some random place. As we pass by a bar, she hesitates for a moment. Soggy and tired, I hope we are finally going in. But she is adamant: *No. This bar is totally uninspiring. No, I won't lower my criteria. This isn't a good bar. Let's go a bit further. Our bar is somewhere here. I was here two years ago but I can't remember exactly every street. Anyway it's a maze around here.*
>
> I somehow manage to ask what's wrong with the bar we've just passed and, for that matter, with another half a dozen along the way. *It has neither a fancy aura, nor a cosy feeling. It's just ordinary,* Daisy replies.
>
> After almost an hour of roaming without any (at least to me) fathomable purpose, I ask: Daisy, do you know where we're going? Do you have something special in mind? *Not really! I've developed an inner compass of the place. I can feel the place. I've got the place at my feet. I've developed a mental sifting process. I sift through the data and rely on my taste and judgement. I don't care any more if I'm not capable of seeing everything. I just want to be sure I do the best job possible.*
>
> I still have difficulty understanding and ask her to clarify what really she means by 'the best job': *I want to merge seamlessly into the background, listen to the city sounds, and sort of touch the place. I have a nose for quirky places. A good writer must be able to follow her nose and discover the place instinctively. When I feel I've got the place in my feet, it's time to stop. That is that. I just want to wave my flag and say 'Hey, I was here'!*
>
> Suddenly, she exclaims: *Wow! Wow! That bar! Let's go in!*

I possessed neither the 'nose', nor 'the feet', let alone the 'inner compass', Daisy was so successfully, and sometimes even stubbornly, clinging on to. From years of practice, Daisy had painstakingly worked out and reworked the inner evaluative mechanism, her '*wow* criteria. Devoid

of that embodied knowledge (superbly captured in the bodily metaphors she uses), I was at pains to make sense of the ostensibly haphazard itinerary and even worse, to assess instantly what was a 'fancy' or 'cozy' feeling in what seemed like an indistinguishable string of bars.

Here the difficulty writers have in explaining their actions and describing their practices is self-evident. The reference to bodily senses and sensibilities remedies the inadequacy of language to formally capture embodied knowledge. Daisy's 'taste' and 'judgment' were shaped by an intangible ability to feel the place in 'the feet', to develop 'a nose', 'to touch' the place, to follow 'the inner compass' and 'merge' into the place by 'listening' to its sounds. Her post-rationalized account of what it is she was doing will become 'intelligible' once she openly makes clear her authorial intentions: 'I want to show that I have been there' and 'I want it to be a good read'. In this way, the making of guidebooks goes beyond a spreadsheet culture, with its formal editorial mechanisms and control devices. The challenge to write efficiently within editorial formulas, as a purely cognitive, rational or consequential task, blends with the calling to most appropriately (intimately and bodily) understand a place, and conversely most appropriately convey the meaning of that place to readers.

It is in 'being there' that bodily sense-perception comes into being (Geertz 1988). Bodily or situated choices are sensuous, and *ipso facto* aesthetic, in essence, thereby surpassing narrow functionality as an expressive ways of knowing (Polanyi 1998). The basis for evaluation and expression of sensory qualities is nested in the craft ethos to work: writers care about what they produce in practice, and act as critics, often ruthless, of their own performance. Even in the case of travel guidebooks that serve the practical purpose of guidance and are written with a view to affecting readers' actions, instruction can, and indeed is, expressive: a result of aesthetic choices and evaluation when the execution of good work is at stake. It is the goal of achieving expressiveness that melds technical craft with the imagination, as Sennett (2008) so convincingly demonstrates when discussing the production of an equally mundane and lowly genre: cooking recipes.

As the writers clearly value the sense of 'being-there', their authorial intention is to create 'expressive instructions' (Sennett 2008:179) which are functional, but not boring, both factual and inspiring, and which make navigation in space and time seamless and safe. It is about *showing* a place from an insider's perspective, not merely *talking about* it. The poetics of the genre presupposes that a writer will visit a place before writing it up. In alignment with this, the editorial brief recommends a minimum of a four week stay. 'Being-there' is the prerequisite for obtaining intimate knowledge of the place, and thus making a good guidebook, both contractually and generically. It underpins writer's sensual perceptions, bodily awareness and discernment in making situated choices. As a result, travel writers take pride in writing in a sense of their presence to show that they have indeed 'been there'. This is Daisy's paramount goal since a sense of presence is both an index of good work and a function of intimate knowledge. To capture the

mood of being there exonerates the very act of writing from distrust, qualms, or misgivings on the part of both editors (who do not oversee the writing directly, but expect and pay for a truthful 'as is' account) and readers (who expect and pay for a first-hand, accurate, and factual description pursuant to an actual trip). Both editors and readers take good work for granted (Faulkner 1983). Hence, crafting a sense of presence is an immanent insurance against bad work, but also a well-gauged investment in building trust relations with both editors and readers.

Daisy has developed a range of strategies to exhibit 'being-there'. One is a focus on detail; another involves wearing 'readers' moccasins'; and a third is premised on the senses, especially smell and touch. Smell is powerfully evocative and atmospheric, and thus adds to the 'angle of writing' and the capturing of ambience, while touch implies a direct connection and physical contact with a place, and so reconfigures the truthfulness of 'I was there' poetics. Daisy would often stop, sniff and touch. Once, I even caught her thinking aloud:

> Artificial flowers and a cheap distasteful room-refresher. Does that make a four-starred hotel?

When urged to post-rationalize her strategies at conveying a sense of presence, Daisy resorts to instrumental rationality. Yet, the writer is not totally calculative subject. Her work involves sensibilities, senses, ways of perceiving and evaluating that are not tantamount solely to organizational constraints or spreadsheets (editors as controllers), but emerge out of a deep engagement with the genre, the place and the readers. When trying to describe how and why she strategically employs her senses, she explains how difficult it is to describe things 'freshly' and anew when they look 'exactly the same'. The use of senses helps differentiate guidebook reviews by supplying an 'angle'. It is also a tool against boredom that helps steer clear of an 'ugly' (dull, bad) write-up.

> Daisy: When you have visited the umpteenth hotel, a giant generic room haunts your spirit. They all look exactly the same. The room is [she changes her voice to ironic] nice, beautiful, clean, moderately clean, spacious, relatively spacious. It has a chair, a desk, a bed, double, single. So what?! That doesn't work. You cannot write that ugly stuff. The editors don't what that, and the readers for sure hate raw reality. I need to show that I've been there. I've seen for myself, and also for them. I've sampled a place, I've touched it, rubbed my fingers against the furniture, smelled the flowers in the vase. You cannot know about the smell of the lobby or the texture of the sofa unless you have actually been there. I think the editors like that, and it makes an interesting read. It is a concrete sign of having been there and having seen and smelled and touched more than a chair, a desk and a bed. You can see the hotel rooms on the Internet and then how they're described, call the staff from home to check the opening hours, but the smell or the tactile sensations, these give a lingering sense of presence.
> Ana: But is this enough? Is there anything else you can do to show your presence?

Daisy: When I think better, I like to exaggerate a detail. To take something totally mundane or unimportant – a feature, a facet – and play with it. It may be the strange smell of hay and horses, or the colorful door plagues with the hidden history, or that exotic talkative parrot in the lobby. Or I write: 'regulars are locals, and a big fat cat'. I want the guidebook to be accurate, but also to make a good read.

The utilization of senses and the exaggeration of detail to achieve expressive representation of actuality are stylistic and aesthetic actions *per se*. However, practical mastery is required to instantaneously and spontaneously bring them out in practice. To strive to leave an indelible impression of being there, to try to present the familiar 'generic hotel room' so as to appear 'interesting' and maybe even surprising to the readers, to aim to expunge the obvious and 'the raw reality', is not only to blindly and uncritically follow the requirements of the brief to lift the review 'above the ordinary'. It is in fact, a deep engagement and instinctive play with the stylistic devices, tools and instruments, conscious or not, at a writer's disposal to enable 'expressive instructions' (Sennett 2008:179).

A good travel writer should not succumb to the pernicious tendency to 'automatization' by reiterating formulaic patterns. Instead she should resort to stylistic tools to de-familiarize the familiar: 'the raw' and 'dull' actuality of a myriad of bars, cafes, hotels and so on. In this she engages in what Russian formalists called 'a device of making strange' or 'technique of defamiliarization' (Shklovsky 1965). Their craft ethos drives travel writers to counteract the constraints of the routine and the sameness, by showing rather than telling – but showing with an 'angle', either through the senses or by hyperbole of certain details. And this is not only a subjective decision. It is a submission to the compelling craft-sanctioned good work: 'show, don't tell' is the principle dictum passed on to the students of creative writing. Showing is 'a good way', telling 'simply bad' (Booth 1983: 28).

However, a travel writer carefully gauges how far she can go in making things strange. Often an inarticulate dose of 'just enough' prevents the guidebook from lapsing into fiction or poetry, or trespassing on the territory of some other field and thus encroaching on some other rules of the game. The careful juggling of 'just enough' aesthetic choices so as to preserve the specificity of the genre while fighting off automatism, is most obvious when travel writers research and write 'unique' items – like boxes, highlights, and snapshots, which are supposed to be 'brief and snappy', 'quirky and interesting', or 'inspirational and fun' ways of writing. Being as unspecific as they are, these requirements give leeway to creativity and allow a writer to show that behind the book there is indeed a 'real' writer.

The freedom accorded in the boxed texts poses other kinds of constraints and responsibilities, however. Here a writer's subjectivity, sincerity, judgment must shine through. She must make herself out to be an expert who is entitled to make judgments about other cultures

and make recommendations, and not least to make jokes about others. Even though accompanied by a sense of unease, such opportunities allow writers to take pride in discussing places and cultures with wit and eccentricity. Personal stories, opinions, mental pictures, intimate experiences, anecdotes give symbolic meaning to the physical travel.

> You cannot really tell what is bad and blatantly ugly. You need to know how to couch an argument, and not offend anybody. For example, I hate Elbonian liquorice lollies, and Elbonian people adore them. So I write about all the shapes, colors and wrappings they come in. And write a warning!

These unique items with their relatively unstructured guidelines often call for re-examination of the writer's craft, as when Daisy decided to devote one of her snapshots to marijuana smoking and felt uneasy about it:

> I'm certainly not the one most suitable to judge weed or a joint. How can I write about it when I've only tried it once, and almost died! So I need to write in a manner that, say, stops younger people from getting too enthusiastic about smoking, and doesn't put off those who are a bit older.

This quotation points to the fact that writers must address the testes and preferences of their audience, to write 'just enough' quirky, fun and snappy stuff to neither offend nor bore their audiences.

> I need to cater to an audience that is youngish, cultured, and smart; that lives in a big metropolis, is probably childless, and can afford to spend a day or two, or a long weekend, somewhere nearby, and not be particularly bothered with the prices.

Consumer demand is paramount. Market research has been employed extensively and consistently in the design of the brief, involving a large-scale quantitative study in terms of market size and market segmentation. Audience research assists publishers in rationalizing the production process and minimizing costs by offering simplified, reified and schematized representations of the audience. The results of audience research define what is appropriate to the guidebook and how it should be covered:

> Research shows that the city-break market is aged 25-40 years, professional and educated, … the average length of stay is between two and five days. … Our market is intelligent, interested, discerning, relaxed, experience-led and hungry for a memorable time. … they realize that immersing oneself in a city isn't a matter of ticking off eight sites in one day (though they may wish to do this) but might be about sitting people-watching in a local café all morning or spending an afternoon browsing the market.

Although the audience is an object of calculation, administered, schematized and integrated from above by the culture industry (Adorno 1975), the match between writers' intentions and the intended audience is never completely straightforward or functional, let alone cynical or malicious. Daisy takes pride in identifying with her readers, acting on their behalves, and not just in uncritically following the brief. It is about assuming the reader's point of view. She rejoices in meeting travellers, potential readers, on the road and objects to their being thought of as numbers, typifications, or impersonal markets. Craftsmen imagine their audiences (Sennett 2008). As Born (2000:415) in her study of the BBC also says: 'producers engage imaginatively with the audience' and do not just follow the results of institutional market research. Yet, for travel writers who meet their readers on the road, audiences are not just anticipated, but tangible and real: it is they who frown at a meal in a restaurant or ask for directions.

> Good work is when you put yourself in your readers' moccasins, and try to imagine what they would like to do and say. When one is passionate about the job, nothing is impossible. Readers want advice about where to spend their hard-earned dollars. I cannot slack off. We travel writers are responsible for their good time. Every time I need to work in scorching heat or torrential rain, I remind myself that my reader may one day be right on this corner baked, or drowned and lost. I need to get this job done, and done well.

Daisy engages with her imagined audience almost magically through the simulacrum of the moccasins. She sympathizes with the audience through her own vulnerability. She retraces her steps emotionally in the process of making so as to provide 'good' guidance. Moreover, she operates on the assumption of a shared genre world identity – "we travel writers" – that takes the genre which instructs 'good' ways of travelling, seriously on its own terms.

Ethical choices

Travel writers resolve daily also ethical dilemmas. The pursuit of good work is inseparable from a creator's ethics and his regard for the others. At high levels of technical proficiency the work is oriented towards others. Good craftsmen are thoughtful and reflexive of their responsibilities and the impact of their work on the wider society (Gardner et al. 2001).

Consider the following anecdote from the fieldwork:

> We head for another glitzy boutique hotel. She asks staff to takes us on a tour of the hotel. They readily accept. A light smile hovers over Daisy's face as she looks around what seems to be an immaculately clean and tastily furnished room. In the bathroom, to Daisy's and my own surprise, we come across a big fat cockroach in the sink, which against the white background seemed ever larger. Aghast, Daisy scribbles something down again. The receptionist with us makes profuse apologies, with excuses that cockroaches are common in a wet city like the Elbonian capital,

which is crisscrossed by myriads of channels. We are out, ready to pound the pavement again. Daisy turns to me, brimming with energy. *Here is one conundrum. Should I mention the creepy-crawly or turn a blind eye? Will I pump up a small glitch if persist on paying attention to it. If a small malfunction becomes exaggerated, so much so that it defines a total hotel experience, that's unprofessional. I think all writers know this. Is this bug worth paying attention to in the write-up? No! This hotel seems so well-run that one isolated bug becomes an accident, rather than a standard. Once also in Mexico, I noticed a stain on a crystal wine glass in a five star resort. Well, maybe the washing man had a pensive moment, maybe the waitress just happen not to look carefully on that side. In a superbly run hotel, those accidents are more a matter of refinement than something really calamitous. If I am actually so stubborn to write about, even think about, the smallest random accidents, I would just unhappily equate myself to any other Trip Advisor or Wikitravel hopeful that dashes off hyperbolic and naive reviews.*

Although acting on the spur of the moment, when urged to think aloud, Daisy unpacks reversely the tacit knowledge that bears on her daily choices. She re-considers anew the ethical conundrum and weighs in what is morally right or morally appropriate to do in specific circumstances. In doing so, she nurtures an empathetic relationship with the readers. As a writer of instructional prose, Daisy re-engineers the process of reader's evaluation by retracing the reasons *for omitting* 'the bug'. As the writer of information-laden non-fiction, she justifies the omission, which equals a self-conscious breach of referentiality, paradoxically through her deep respect for the same referentiality: the creepy-crawly is not an objective representation of this 'well-run' establishment.

Moreover, the resolution of ethical dilemmas does not happen out of the blue. Daisy self-reflexively brings the newly-faced dilemma in dialogue with her past experience that supplies the yardstick for a good practice. More importantly, Daisy engages with industry wide examples of good practice as signposts of her own decision-making. The upholding of high ethical standards is what sets the professional writer apart from the myriad of unvetted and singularized reviews online. The craft ethos based on ethical standards, is an investment in the perpetuity and sustainability of the profession:

I remember someone telling me that they approached him when the BBC, now the owner of Lonely Planet, decided to revive an old series of bike guides. The instructions were in fact instructions about driving, not biking. It takes so much time for the writer to bike and therefore it's expensive for the company, so they ironically asked writers to write about biking while driving. He declined because it was so ethically corrupt.

Moral agents, that display high ethical standards, will not succumb uncritically and naively to the requirements of the social roles, be it professional or family roles. The social roles are always questioned in 'everyday practice' and through 'practical thinking'. Thus, for MacIntyre moral agents possess 'the potentiality for living and acting in a state of tension, or if need be, conflict

between two moral points of view' (1988:318). The point of tension is never a matter of general doctrine or abstract theory, but 'modes of practice' (ibid.).

For travel writers committed to act morally, the tension is always between commerce and autonomy, market and creativity. To decline a contract based on dubious ethical assumptions, is to self-consciously severe a potential revenue stream. This is a totally incomprehensible act from a crude rationality point of view. Yet, in line with 'the being there' type of referentiality rooted in genre trajectories, the exemplary travel writer acts appropriately, with integrity and self-assigned responsibility to readers.

The complex ethical tension between commerce and autonomy is rendered greatly palatable in the controversial issue of freebies. Freebies are free gifts offered by the tourism industry establishments to travel guidebook writers, who are expected to objectively and impartially review the same establishments. Travel publishing dangerously rubs off the tourism industry - airliners, hotels, tourist bureaus, travel agents who are eager advertisers willing to offer freebies, as part of their advertising spending. Freebies offer an extraordinary opportunity for unethical behavior (see previous Chapter).

In other words, the wage and the research expenses were welded in an undifferentiated sum, and it was left to the writers' ingenuity, resourcefulness or initiative to keep the two items apart and stay afloat. Such contractual loophole provided a tenacious incentive to rabid productivity at vertiginous pace (getting as much work possible in as less time possible) in order to guard the wage. In addition, travel writers developed personalized but elaborate cost-minimising-wage-boosting strategies, among which staying with friends or family while doing research, simultaneously vacationing and researching when the spouse most often tagged along, maximising the impact of Internet research, staying in a cheap hostel while reviewing five star establishments, relaying on a network of local informants for updates and similar, sampling the cheapest dish on the menu, prodding other customers to voice their experience. Yet, the most controversial and contested strategy was soliciting freebies (in the form of free hotel rooms, meals or even airfare), thus to write off at least a fraction of the expenses incurred in the on-the-ground research. As Daisy once intimated 'a freelance career is nothing else but shrewd money management'.

In MacIntyre's scheme, freebies are external to travel guidebook writing practice, and thus hinder the achievement of excellence through the attainment of internal goods (pp. 188-189). Freebies carry the imminent risk of skewing the review by influencing negatively what is generically expected to be an objective, disinterested yet opinionated and engaged evaluation of tourism establishments. If a travel writer is beholden to the service-providers she evaluates (through freebies), then the evaluation is by definition corrupted. However, the professional attitude to freebies is not only shaped by moral injunctions or regulated by stringent publisher's no-freebie policies, but lived through practical solutions to ethical conundrums.

We enter one, a big ritzy place. She actually sneaks in *incognito*. We take the stairs to the third floor, where by chance a chambermaid has left the door wide open after cleaning a room. Daisy sneaks in unnoticed, and hurriedly scribbles in the notebook. *I'm certainly not paid enough to stay in these hotels. But also too old for sneaking in like this and running around trying to remain unnoticed. I've become very judicious, so staying in a hotel is about the only way to evaluate it and review it. Now, for instance, I don't know whether there is mould under the windows, or the owner is homophobic. I become picky, yes, but if I don't ask for freebies there's no way for me to visit a place like this. … I am not beholden to people that offer freebie. It is my expert judgement that matters in the end of the day. If I think a freebie will increase the usefulness of the review for my readers that I will grab it.*

Another strategy aimed at mitigating the costs of research, yet circumventing freebies, was the reliance on second-hand accounts from 'believable' informants. Such strategy was not only an outcome of crude calculation, but ontologically grounded, pertaining to the inherent hybridity of the genre – an assemblage of stories, anecdotes, word of mouth (Hutnyk 1996).

Daisy somehow knows how to tell tourists from locals at a bar. Approaches them unobtrusively, and enquires about their experiences of the food, the atmosphere, the ambience, the staff. We pass in front of what Daisy thinks is 'a very chic bar' and, according to the menu appended on the tree, a very expensive one. We walk in between the tables, while Daisy is peeking inquisitively at other people's meals. *Hi, how are you? Do you like that dish? We were wondering whether to have dinner here later today. Would you recommend it?... Oh that looks delicious! What are you having? Is the salad as fresh as it looks?* Daisy approaches an American couple having lunch on the terrace. Writes down what they say, thanks them, and moves on. In a matter of two hours we thus inspected ten bars. She talked forensically, yet unobtrusively to 50-60 people a day on average.

Daisy learnt how to cope with having to deliver content that does not live up to her own standards of excellence, such as writing up a hotel or restaurant she could not afford to stay or dine in, and content that is only 'partially' true, oblivious to 'the mould' or directly unaccountable of 'the taste'. When forced to 'must' write in a certain manner, she dissociates from the product by severing the identification with her own work and employs irony as a defensive mechanism. Once after sneaking incognito in a hotel she quipped in an effort to expunge the feeling of failure to account responsibly for what she writes: 'Oh well, at least I have seen more hotel rooms than a Babylon whore'.

The layered experience and knowledge of the history of the practice shapes 'the expert judgment' and provides the sense of righteousness and purpose. It drives the practical action towards a variety of modes of excellence. To balance the tenuous line between freebies and objective reviewing it requires confidence in the craft standards. The craft values steer the practical outcomes of writing. And here again, the ethical choices find their *raison d'être* in

audiences. The guidebook must be useful, and all the ethical decisions, about accepting freebies or not, must be gauged against the perceived audience usefulness.

'The note-guide': writing while walking

The establishment of an ethical and responsible authorial presence in the text haunts writers. And, this is less a narratological issue, as may have been the case with the aesthetic/stylistic choices –convince readers of 'being there' through an opinionated, yet seemingly unmediated style. This is an epistemological matter: how to resist subjective feelings and values to colour objective truth-claims, representative of the genre's dominants. The anxieties about the degree of subjectivity result in an empiricism extreme, characteristic of scientific study, not cultural or literary pursuits.

Similarly yet reversely of what Latour and Woolgar (1986) observed happens in a biology laboratory, travel writers are manic and compulsive writers who meticulously and quasi-scientifically (as opposed to scientists who quasi-literarily) record every detail, every street corner, menu prices, opening hours, bus schedules. This is what Latour and Woolgar call a 'mania for inscription' (p. 48). This mania has its upshot in notes scribbled hastily on toilet paper, snippets from a conversation with a hotel owner jolted down on a napkin, photographs taken unassumingly from restaurant menus, a selection of paper menus, a thick bunch of business cards the back of which is filled with notes, museum tickets and supermarket receipts covered with hand-drawn maps. All this is to be found on the writer's desk, carefully spread out, as the groundwork for what many informants referred to as 'the mosaic job' of putting a guidebook together.

Seven guidebooks are scattered on the desk. One guidebook is the guide to Elbonia, Daisy has penned several years before for a different publisher than the one commissioning her now. The other three are guidebooks to Elbonia from competitor publishers, and the remaining are a country guide to Elbonia and a city guide to the capital of Elbonia by Daisy's employer. In the armchair there was also a selection of free city brochures, city maps, leaflets, and postcards. Every time she sits down to fill in the spreadsheet she juxtaposes intertextually at least three sources. This proved time-consuming and somewhat tiring.

To shorten the 'annoying' desk write-up, Daisy needed to get the most out of the writing while walking. To preserve the intertextuality of such 'footwork', she had ingenuously invented a practical 'note-guide' (analogous to an ordinary note-book). As she was commissioned to update, improve and rewrite two predecessor guides, or what Lejeune would call avant-texts (2009: 214) in a brand new pocket-size guide, back in New York she leather-bound selected passages in a custom-made working-copy guidebook. Every left-hand page carried a copy of the old editions, while every right-hand was left blank where she could edit or rewrite. Occasionally, she had glued snippets cut from competitors' guides for reference. The back cover had a large pocket, where she would stock all the napkins, toilet papers, business cards, receipts.

The note-guide's card-board covers coated in leather eased writing while walking by providing a prop. In a way, it coordinated the walking foot and the writing hand. Daisy would follow the recommendations contained in the avant-texts and would re-evaluate them on-the-go. Appended to the note-guide were three pens writing in black, orange and green. Black was used to correct the old version, the orange for the maps and the green for the registration of personal impressions or fleeting thoughts that would be later developed in full-fledge write up. For example she wrote a memory-triggering note in green when passing by an ice-cream parlour: 'smells like heaven'. Such on-the-spot remarks were a strategic tool aimed at preserving the accuracy of the desk write-up. The memory-triggering notes will later explode semantically, vividly invoking the 'facts' of the past occurrence. The note-guide is heavy with rectifications, alterations, crossed words, question and exclamation marks.

The note-guide functions as an inscription device, *par excellence*. It materialized the inner drive to write *live*, on the spur of the moment as if unmediated by mental processing power or even time – the ideal of referential description. Writing while walking was a prototype procedure that enacted the act of eye-witnessing as an accounting of reality. It was the eye-witnessing that became the synonym for good guidebook-making practice within the genre world. Similarly, as Zelizer (2007: 411) observes, eye-witnessing renders 'news' journalism credible and authentic. Therefore, sight metaphors (allegedly superior senses of vision) have dominated in its designation: watchdog, insight, revelation (Hartley 1992). Yet, in writing while walking the eye-witnessing is not merely a intellectualist technique of sedentary, chair ruminations, but a technique that connects the thought and the action, the body and the mind, vision and movement in a sort of 'thinking with feet' (Ingold 2004: 323). It is because of this that travel guidebook writers frequently self-define as 'vagabonds', 'itinerant experts', 'peripatetic experts', 'roving gastronomes', 'nomadic writers' and similar. The fortitude to walk seven to nine hours a day is one of the most prized attributes (alongside competent and cogent writing) within the genre world. When I once asked Daisy what makes a good travel writer, she explained rather quizzically: 'A good pair of shoes, than a genius really'. In such comments the technologies of walking and writing converge into footwork – the melding of locomotion and cognition; embodied sense of space and the mastery of the genre.

The footwork (in addition to Sennett's [2008] apotheosis of the hand) thus represented the primary mode in which 'the practical mastery' unfolded. Bourdieu (1977) saw the practical mastery of everyday tasks situated in the body's active engagement with its immediate surroundings, when it involves certain postures and gestures, that is bodily *hexis*. A way of walking (and writing) does not just express thoughts or feelings, but it is itself a way of feeling and walking that produces cultural forms (pp. 93-4). It was not difficult to tell a travel guidebook writer from the social surroundings. The usual posture of writing while walking gives away her own occupational ideals -- circumambulatory knowledge, direct perception of the environment, seamless navigation, seeing the landscape from multiple perspectives, but also hazards – tripping

over, bumping into other people, falling over dustbins, getting lost. Far from being objective facts out-there discoverable by meticulous data-gathering, the guidebook's referentiality is constructed through the footwork-generated inscriptions contained in the note-guide. These inscriptions served more as memory-triggers rather than guarantors of deferred translation without corruption. At the same time, far removed from direct empirical verification, the writing while walking enabled mediation of 'out-thereness' by dint of a sensuous, bodily engagement.
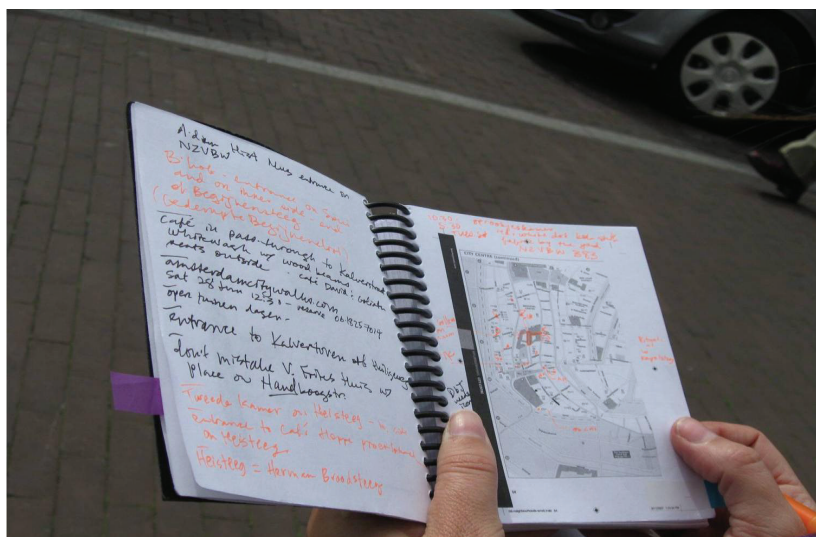
Photo: Writing while walking

Conclusion

Travel writers constantly judge their own performance so as to arrive at a personally satisfactory assessment of 'good work'. When building a more authentic relationship with their work, in the face of a strict adherence to company-advocated rules and the need to make a living, cultural producers trade autonomy for a habitual, yet self-reflexive craft attitude to work. The skilful cultural producer sets standards of excellence for herself while engaging with the independent genre-poetics or models for writing, by which she judges work. No matter how lowly, normative or prescriptive the genre is (as was the case with travel guidebooks), it is thought to provide the craft modes of achieving aesthetically and ethically sound work.

One of the most durable residues of Romanticism is probably the conviction that art is a pursuit of self-expression beyond economies and pecuniary benefits. The great works of art are produced in violation of, not in compliance with, market principles. Bourdieu even argued that commercial producers were 'mediocre and failed writers and artists' (1996: 347). For Adorno (1996), the producers (and recipients) of popular culture suffered from 'pseudo-individualism' as they needed to conform to prefabricated patterns and formulae. In contrast, Gans (1974) was an early sociological voice to propound the notion that aesthetic criteria applied to popular genres, and not solely to 'high culture'. Thus, aesthetic criteria need not be only about beauty and taste, but also about craft-values, intellectual and emotional benchmarks. Producers are neither failed nor pseudo-individuals just because they work with, and inhabit, low or popular genres.

The sociological approach to creative work, most superbly exemplified by Faulkner (1983) and Fine (1992), has shown empirically that the incursion of markets into creative work at a micro level (day-to-day practices of low-status cultural production such as studio-music making or cooking, respectively) entails turning art into craft worlds. Within 'craft worlds', the emphasis shifts from expressiveness and autonomy to issues of virtuosity, acting in accord with one's top expertise; judgments oriented towards editors and readers; skills, discipline, and above all a long-term commitment to skillful and good performance; and a honed sense of style, quality, and sensuality commensurate with available resources.

Recent scholarship on creative work from within media and communication studies has revived the interest in commercial media work. Mainly through interviews, these scholars contend that producers in media industries take pride in their work, and derive pleasure and satisfaction when making good cultural products (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Kennedy 2010). In spite of the culture industries' impending commodification of culture, craft values are still vigorous and vital (Banks 2007).

Following in these footsteps, I have shown, through a detailed ethnographical account, how cultural producers negotiate in practice the tension between aesthetic choices and more calculative rewards. Instead of focusing on what is commercial or formulaic in travel guidebook production, I asked what is aesthetic, sensory and expressive, on the grounds that all 'good work' involves making aesthetic and ethical choices.

At the level of technical and practical mastery, the production of how-to, instructional accounts such as travel guidebooks becomes the production of expressive instructions as the result of dexterous footwork. Well-conversant with the history and principles of the genre, travel writers make choices that escape managerial control and editorial impositions. Thus, craft standards are embodied in a producer's ability to balance conflicting demands or constraints: the

market and its commercial imperatives, on the one hand, and the aesthetic and ethical, autonomous requirements of the genre, on the other.

Acting at their best, travel writers become severe yet productive critics of their own performance. 'The expert judgment' provides a sense of righteousness and purpose. And here again, the commitment to doing the job well is relational: finding its *raison d'être* in an imaginative engagement with audiences, rather than in market research and ratings.

CONCLUSION

Ample evidence drawn from the work described in this thesis suggests that in spite of precarious working conditions – low pay, intermittent jobs, insecure employment – travel guidebook writers intimately identify with and take pride in the product they produce. A comprehensive understanding of producer practices and the actual dynamics of production within cultural industries in general is therefore achievable only through an understanding of the product the producers produce, alongside the social and economic organization of each industry.

When the affair of 'the rogue writer', presented in the Prelude, came unexpectedly but felicitously my way, it evinced the importance of *the genre* for producers of travel guidebooks. And it is the pervasive, almost habituated and normalized producer attitude to *the genre* that was abruptly unshackled from its dormant, taken-for-granted status. Only then did the discourses about 'the death of the genre', 'the seriousness of the genre', and 'the yoke of the genre', that otherwise would have remained cloaked in silence and professional empathy, suddenly start to trickle out. It transpired from the 'scandal' that the genre exerted some sort of influence over the ways producers imagined themselves, conceived of good work, worked in practice, and thought of their career prospects, via-à-vis managerial impositions, commissioning procedures, paltry wages and even fuzzy editorial guidelines.

The main aim of the thesis has been to argue for the relevance of a genre approach to the analysis of cultural production. This calls for a rapprochement between sociological and anthropological studies, which have hitherto dominated the analysis of cultural production (see chapter 1), on the one hand and, on the other, the insights generated from within hermeneutics and genre theory. In this way, this thesis hopefully contributes to the consolidation of a genre-centered approach to the study of cultural production, following in the footsteps mainly of the cultural studies of media production (Jensen 1998; Dornfeld 1998; Grindstaff 2002; Bruun 2010; Born 2010). The notion of genre is well positioned to serve as a mediator between social sciences and humanities, since it introduces, in a very substantive sense, cultural objects – the products of cultural production – into the analysis.

Genres retain autonomy by virtue of their formal logic, and producers experience their work and careers, as well as their professional solidarity, with reference to such genre autonomy. Being at the same time formal (obeying its own ontological formal laws) and social (shared within communities and handed-down by tradition), the genre allows for the investigation of the interplay between agency and structure, individual subjectivities and collectively sanctioned expectations, and disinterestedness and pecuniary, functional imperatives. The genre hands down

rules and principles of making that are historical and local, autonomous and institutionalized, in the form of craft standards of excellence shared within the genre world and leading to the achievement of good work. As such the genre furnishes the spaces in which producer agency and autonomy are rendered possible, intelligible and most importantly empirically verifiable, and not just probabilistic or merely plausible. In addition, the genre offers the possibility of generalizing from and between specific instances of production, whereby the genre is an active agent or ingredient in the production act, rather than solely an outcome of industrial and organizational processes.

The genre approach that I advocate for the study of cultural production has three main advantages. First, it allows access to the ways the community of producers could be thought of as a genre world, in which the independent structural laws of the genre provide the resources for what writers do, should and should not do. Producers make their actions and intentions accountable in terms of a legitimate genre-specific professionalism, which itself is rooted in genre-poetics and its intrinsic aesthetic and moral guidelines. Second, it allows us to conceive of producer autonomy and agency as mediated by autonomous culture structures, irreducible to, yet intertwined with, structural pressures. Genres are institutionalized, disseminated and promotionally defined by the publishing institutions, but they also 'generify' those institutions in an immanent manner. Third, it enables an empirical grounding of the changes in cultural production and cultural objects. Genre laws are historical, yet also structural, and always subject to *ad hoc* interpretation in production practice. All in all, this is ultimately an argument for a textual understanding of cultural work, in which the genre carries particular implications for the practical organization of work, professional practice and self-reflexivity, at both individual and industrial levels.

To this end, I have contended that the notion of genre needs to be introduced more generally in the study of cultural production as an analytical and performative – rather than merely utilitarian, heuristic or descriptive – category. In other words, I have argued that the hermeneutically defined category of genre as a category of labour and production has to be operationalized in the empirical study of production. Without this effort at operationalization, the notion of genre remains merely a classificatory or taxonomic category that would not make any difference to the analysis. This means in effect tuning into the ways that the genre gets into action – the resources it furnishes producers (as well as audiences) for appropriate and professional (accountable and conscientious) action. The *effectiveness* of genres rests, therefore, on their capacity to function analytically as culture structure, which in turn mediates, organizes and structures a producer's trajectories of action (geared towards earning a livelihood but also pursuing moral and aesthetic goals). Thus, the genre *acts* and *does* something for its producers. This *something* is the provision of professionally sound codes of conduct, but also a 'validity in interpretation'. Producers are the most vehement and sarcastic critics of their own work and career stories. They often step back from their work while doing it, and self-reflexively and

critically ruminate. What is more, producers actively *do* things with the genre – they think, feel, imagine, and arrange their professional work, career-related self-perception and practical behavior. With its formal model based on shared dominant properties, the genre then provides the tool for interrogating particularities: that is, the ways in which it enables concrete, lived, practiced autonomy in cultural work. Only when the analytical autonomy of genres, in terms of its structural properties, has been established, can the analysis proceed to examine the local, historical and contingent concrete practices of their formulation, interpretation and enactment. This is, indeed, an argument for practicing 'structural hermeneutics' in the empirical study of cultural production, much in the mould of American cultural sociologists (Kane 1991; Alexander and Smith 1993; 2006), who seem to offer a sociological extension of the hermeneutical approach to literary production, for which I hope I made a compelling argument in the Introduction. In this way, this thesis contributes to the solidification of the notion of genre as an analytical category in the tool-kit of the cultural studies of media production which has most saliently trodden the path towards a genre approach to production analysis (Jensen 1984, 1998; Dornfeld 1998; Grindstaff 2002; Bruun 2010, 2011).

In chapter 1, I introduced the three dominant 'grand' paradigms of cultural production: the sociological, anthropological, and socio-cultural. This was an effort to review the place of the category of genre in these venerable traditions, by getting closely acquainted with their basic and underlying scientific principles and rationales. By moving from the sociological treatment of genres to a socio-cultural engagement with it, by way of anthropological studies of 'the aesthetic', I tried to chart the trajectory of the possible move from genres, understood as outcomes of production, to genres as (co-)constructive element of production.

As I argued in chapter 2, in order to grasp what genres *afford* producers, one needs to turn one's attention to the anthropology of language, and the pragmatic and rhetorical theory of genre. Their empirical frame of analysis is the *use* and *function* of genres within communities, institutions, language groups, or classrooms, by which they take into account structural forces and producer agency as interwoven and mutually reinforcing. Yet, the underlying functionalism of such approaches needs to be re-qualified by insights from literary and film genre theories, which have long asserted that genres function as autonomous institutions within more material and commercial institutions in the system of cultural production. It is for the understanding of this seeming *mise-en-abyme* that I call in this thesis. It is within this *mise-en-abyme* that the genre needs to be understood as a set of affordances, where a genre's properties exist relationally and intertextually – in relation to producing agents and other texts.

In chapter 3, I eclectically explained the continuity and internal structural principles of the genre, focusing specifically on how it functions as an autonomous institution. I attended to the inner working mechanisms of the genre, so as to assure its analytical autonomy – that is, its capacity to structure cultural production independently of the determination of social and economic structures. I established referentiality (or non-fictionality) and didacticity (or

performativity) as genre dominant properties, dominants or laws which simultaneously reside in and run across texts, being both structural and intersubjective (intertextual). These dominants rendered guidebook production labour-intensive, time-sensitive, legally liable, and thus extraordinarily expensive. As such they *afforded* the ways individual and institutional actors conceived of themselves and approached their work.

The argument would be flawed if it were to conceive of the genre merely as an abstract, a-historical and transcendental system of quasi-scientific relationships for, through its dominant principles, the genre has an evaluative dimension which specifies the good and the bad (to do, to think, to feel). And it is owing to this evaluative dimension that genre dominants mediate cultural production. Producers constantly link their actions, motives, behavior, and commitment to doing a job well, to the genre dominants, and thus attribute moral qualities to the practices in which the genre is produced. In the following empirical chapters, I investigated how the genre, produced by professional cultural producers and publishing institutions, produces its producers. I tried to elucidate their co-constructive relationship unfolding in practice, both in autobiographical self-interpretation and observed production moments. In this manner, the analytical autonomy of culture structure becomes situated in concrete historical, but also institutional and industrial, processes and conditions. This was, in effect, an empirical investigation of how the genre functions as an institution within the institutions of cultural production.

In Chapter 4, I shifted attention to what may be called an ontological ground of industrial self-reflexive practices by way of detailing how the genre mediates -- governs and organizes -- the historical self-presentation of the institutions of cultural production. Genres are industrialized by these institutions , but they also have the capacity to 'generify' the industry. They connect the structural, economic and systemic conditions for creativity and producer agency through the product being produced. The genre influences the ways institutions self-reflexively ponder upon themselves – accounting for the impossibility of 'perfect accuracy', defending ethical production practices, profiling expertise, and underscoring a responsible service to the reader. Yet, the genre also structures the shift to collaborative, anonymous authorship alongside the tactical promotion of individual authorial biographies, replacement of royalty contracts with work-for-hire terms, outsourcing of legal responsibility to freelancers, allocation of editorial power from writers to editors and, not least, the insistent cooptation of audiences in the production loop (all strategies geared towards curbing the labour-intensiveness, time-sensitivity and legal liability inculcated by the genre). In a word, I hope to have shown that genres are active constituents of institutional practices, and an *a posteriori* necessity of the workplace, and not simply determined and controlled *a priori* by the industry.

In chapter 5 and 6 I looked at how the genre structured producers' professional autobiographical self-interpretation and accountability. Professional writers chose 'the right' genre for professional self-presentation in two main ways. First, they interiorized the genre, to the point that it could be mobilized as a moral and aesthetic imperative for the construction of

appropriate and pertinent career stories. Second, they performed their employability, expertise and capital in terms of the good immanent in the genre. As the genre offered publicly and communally-shared resources, individual actions were typified and held morally responsible in reference to these resources. I hope to have demonstrated in these chapters how writers feel, think and imagine in and through the genre they produce. In this way, I argued, the genre becomes a mediator of action and agency, mediating authorial selves and their sense of career success *in situ*. The genre anchored autobiographical accounts, but also writers' professional solidarity. It provided the resources for establishing which kinds of practice were appropriate, preferred or even desirable. As such, the genre was appropriately, yet also calculatively, mobilized to corroborate the claim to morally and poetically sound work, and thus travel writers' future employability, especially in questionable and difficult circumstances.

In chapter 7, I described the concrete ways in which a travel guidebook writer proficiently draws upon the socially distributed, yet formal resources of the genre to configure herself as a conscientious, competent and expert producer. The argument was that genres provide concrete and appropriate codes of conduct and behaviour. Here the genre shapes the craftsmanship-orientation to work – working within rules handed down to writers in genre-poetics, but also contractually imposed as editorial briefs. I argued that the brief turns structural genre dominants into explicit necessities of the workplace. Constrained by stringent rules, detailed stylistic guidelines, extensive product manuals, and meticulous instructions that characterize both the genre of the travel guidebook and the brief given each writer by the publisher, guidebook writers take pride in meticulously following instructions (since this may lead to repeat commissions), while at the same time providing work that is 'atmospheric', 'with an angle', and giving a sense of 'being there' for an imagined audience, yet also embracing a sense of moral duty and responsibility to the people and places being described or represented. Because they care about the products they create, guidebook writers constantly employ craft standards, or inner criteria of excellence, by which they judge good or bad performance. It is in the actual 'act of composing' that the genre most evidently merges or clashes with material and institutional constraints, calculation, and self-interest.

Critical reflection

I do not pretend that this work is complete or even remotely exhaustive, so that I should, perhaps, add a few words here about the limitations of the analytical approach I have adopted in my work. This would seem to be a suitable way to ponder upon the multiplicity of possible actions, choices and decisions that have been made and not made, but which might have been made, but also to elucidate the generative potential that I anticipate when applying this approach to other genre-centered forms of cultural production. This may also be a statement about the work-in-progress status of this thesis. By identifying its limitations, hopefully I can chart a way by which to consolidate and extend this current work in a 'post-doc future'.

The main danger of practicing 'structuralist hermeneutics' in the study of cultural production is the impending risk of privileging the inner *modus operandi* of cultural objects and their structuring effect on production and, in so doing, to sidestep a discussion of 'materiality' with its economic, social and organizational dynamics. This equals 'cultural idealism' or 'cultural determinism' as opposed to 'material determinism'. Indeed this is the criticism so often leveled at the strong program of cultural analysis, which propounded structuralist hermeneutics as a way forward in the sociological studies of culture[54].

By arguing that the genre takes the lead in cultural production, one is inclined to see all the 'material' mechanisms of production through the prism of the genre. To subscribe to this view is important, I have contended, because in this way cultural objects, as socialized in genres, are considered active elements in the acts of production, and not mere outcomes of institutional or organizational fiats. Genres have the capacity to imbue the actual processes of production, as much as they are produced, defined and marketed by the institutions of production. This reciprocal relationship is well captured as a co-producing relationship by according analytical autonomy to genres. Yet there is one caveat. According analytical autonomy to genres is by no means intended to suggest that there is autonomy in the real world. This latter autonomy is always actualized in concrete production instances and events, from which the genre, together with its poetics and effectiveness, cannot be divested. Here, to paraphrase Smith (2005:26) writing about culture, there is a fine line between 'all about genres' and 'just about genres'. To accept the genre structuring of cultural production is to offer an alternative view of cultural production understood as 'just' and 'all' about organizations, market structures, policies or institutions. That is, the outcomes of cultural production – why a guidebook looks the way it does, for example, or why a film takes on the final form it does – are *explained* through the structuring capacity of the genre. Every concrete institutional act of production is at the same time a poetics of production, which has to do with autonomous, culturally coded logic of genre systems. Nevertheless, in this immanent strength lies the biggest vulnerability of this approach. In not carefully attending to the structuring capacity of genres in concrete instances of production, there is a risk of occluding important aspects of material production. Much in the spirit of narrative identity theories (White 1973, McIntyre 2011) which argue that cultural narratives and genres frame 'the self', I tend to see travel writers' autobiographical accounts and working practices as imbued by the genre they work in and identify with. By the same token, I tend to explain the shifts in employment and commissioning policies, copyright entitlements, and conglomeration also through the prism of the genre. Such a focus, indeed sidesteps the discussion of industrial transformation in favour of one of culture structures. Yet this is done as an explanatory gesture, in the belief that there are indeed genres with their own autonomous poetics behind the industrial production of genres. I explained that travel guidebook publishers are rightly considered by publishing world insiders as 'canaries in the digital coalmine' (lending themselves easily to digital formats and platforms); and that

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[54] See Alexander and Smith (2010:20-22).

professional travel guidebook writers were rendered easily interchangeable, and thus lowly paid and casualized (through shifts from royalty to work-for-hire contracts, amendments in copyright, by corporate capture of online communities) mainly owing to the nature of the genre they live and work with and in. Such an explanatory mode is more attuned to the ways in which cultural producers talk, think and feel professionally about themselves as producers of genres, and to the ways in which the cultural industries self-define as a specific genre-producing industry. In this way, such an approach is a corrective – that is, a hermeneutical corrective – to the descriptive and inductive approaches to cultural production, regardless of whether they originate in cultural or media studies, sociology, or even anthropology.

The challenge of this explanatory mode is to balance oneself vigilantly between cultural idealism (genres influence production) and material determinism (genres are influenced by institutional and social structures). This is the challenge of linking abstract, structuralist genre poetics to embedded situations and contexts. Although genres are important in the process of cultural production, they are not all powerful. The accent on genres as active agents in production is practiced at the expense of the changing and shifting ontological dynamics of genres and genre trajectories. In this regard, the genre of travel guidebooks was particularly rewarding due to its long-standing genre stasis. Yet, a careful consideration of genres as being pushed forward by 'extraordinary' authors or artists, but also by cultural institutions that stand in the vanguard, has to be part of a comprehensive analysis. This will call for more emphasis on the co-producing relationship between genres and the institutions of cultural production, on the one hand, and genres and individual authors, on the other.

Another pitfall concerns the immanent interdisciplinarity of an approach that centrally introduces the category of genres, as a category of labour and production, to the study of cultural production. The problem of interdiciplinarity, as witnessed in this thesis perhaps, comes in the guise of seeming commonplaces and superficiality.

I made an argument in this thesis that in the study of cultural production the category of genre should not be viewed as either *explicans* (the tools of explanation) or *explicandum* (what is to be explained), but both. Many sociologists of culture have vociferously called for a rapprochement between the humanities and social sciences to enable a comprehensive and holistic study of cultural production by invoking the insertion of the cultural object back into sociological analysis (Zolberg 1990; Wolff 1993; Griswold 1987; Born 2010). The gist of this argument has been that cultural objects are 'more than cigarettes and soap on the market' (Zolberg 1990: 72, approvingly citing from Adorno 1976:3) or 'more than porkbellies' (Griswold 1987:3). As such they should not be accounted for by reference only to audience demands, organizational structures or managerial hierarchies. So the argument against the treatment of cultural objects as merely objects of explanation has been long made. This thesis hopefully contributes to one possible mode of analysis in which the genre (as a corpus of cultural objects) is treated as *explicans*, that is the explanation of cultural production itself, in addition to being an

explicandum. I have argued that this treatment is only possible through an account of the structuralist conditions of the genre system, to be subsequently empirically probed in specific instances of production. Yet, in order to do so, I needed to introduce the category of genre and its structuralist poetics into the analysis, on the one hand, and to tackle issues of labour, employment contracts, copyright, industrial conglomeration, and markets, on the other. Inevitably this led me to appreciate breadth and extensiveness over depth and conciseness. Here the problem of commonplaces and superficiality became acute.

What has become by now a commonplace in one discipline or intellectual research tradition, sticks out as novel and alien in another. How much space and effort should one dedicate to explaining the truisms of genre theory – for example, that genres are a corpus of texts, or systems of repetitions and difference, or that poetics is an immanent coupling of ethics and aesthetics? How can one prevent one disciplinary conceptual framework from becoming depleted when wedded with another conceptual apparatus? Such a dilemma can potentially lead to an unwelcome and inadvertent encroachment on disciplinary turfs. But it can also lead to the resurrection of old spirits in the form of universalizing claims about invention or creativity, biographism or author essentialism, and so on. Most importantly, such interdisciplinarity can potentially result in an uncritical and superficial marriage of irreconcilable premises that makes the account resemble a hodgepodge of bits of sociology, hermeneutics, anthropology, linguistics, stylistics, genre theory, and so on, without fully teasing out their overlaps and incongruity. Most importantly, such interdisciplinarity leads to blurred usage of central concepts and frameworks. I openly admit here that this thesis may not be immune to such criticism. What I have striven to do, however, is to outline most clearly from where my intellectual Odyssey has started, where it had meandered and where it is headed. I repeat here that my aim was not to aestheticize social sciences, as much as it was to sociologize and make analytically applicable a category that hails from the humanities (mainly hermeneutics, poetics and literary studies), as just one of the many possible ways of tackling the sphere of the aesthetic in the social sciences.

In this regard, for example, I opted to explain authorial self-interpretations or autobiographical accounts of professional advancement and success as imbued by the genre, as well as to explain their sense of freedom as framed by the genre dominant features. This was done in conversation with, as well as against the background of, cultural industries studies that have tended to treat producer autonomy as a function of policy arrangements, employment and contractual policies, managerial quest for profit, art education and so on. In other words, I have attempted to insert genres as categories of labour and production in the study of creative labour and the experience of producer autonomy – the preserve of media or cultural industries approaches to cultural production. By focusing on the genre structuring of authorial autonomy, I introduced the cultural objects and their effectiveness back into cultural analysis.

However, this argument could have been strengthened not only through an engagement with sociologically informed cultural studies, but also by means of those insights from the

humanities that try to sociologically treat literary phenomena by navigating between 'vulgar biographism' and 'vulgar anti-biographism'. While biographism and the actual questions of literary markets and production were for a time banished from literary and art studies, the humanities were altogether more receptive of sociological ideas, than was sociology of aesthetic and literary tenets[55]. It is in this reverse order (by starting out from the humanities rather than from the social sciences) that I think propitious forms of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of cultural production may be contained. For example, in explaining genre-imbued authorial self-definition, one can enter into dialogue with Jakobson's ideas of 'poetic mythology' by which the plot, characters and the genre that the author produces enter as something real to directly shape the course of his life. In his work on Mayakovsky, Jakobson concludes that 'when this myth entered the sphere of life, it became impossible to trace a limit between the poetic mythology and the curriculum vitae of the author without committing terrible forgeries' (1982:139). Another propitious dialogue would be with Fray's (1953) ideas of archetypal constructs that shape the personal mythology of a poet who strategically crafts his biography and poetic agency in accordance with literary models and plots. Without doubt, Bakhtin's (1984) ideas of genres as inextricably linked to performative events would have added another more exhaustive dimension to the analysis of the performative and active role of genres in professional cultural production.

What goes on in the genre world of the production of travel guidebooks is far from unique. One may indeed read the analysis of the production of travel guidebooks as a transformation from craft to industrial modes of production much later than it happened in other industries, as discussed by Marx for example. In the face of increased conglomeration, introduction of managerial hierarchies, editorial control, comprehensive commissioning policies and strict employment rules, 'veterans' were more prone to decry the 'demise' and 'the death' of the genre, while nostalgically recalling the 'golden era' of craft standards when they identified more fully with their work. In contrast, young writers were more prone to relish in the 'spreadsheet culture' introduced by stringent editorial policies and commissioning briefs. They happily admitted to 'loving the briefs' since they kept them focused so as to deliver on time, within budget and with quality. What are the subjective reactions to industrial change? How does macro industrial transformation influence the everyday practices of producers and their subjective interpretation? Is this the case with other cultural industries? How does such transformation unfold in other industries? The consideration of such macro instances of the transformation of production should take place in the analysis. A cross-industry parallel may largely enrich the overall understanding of the dynamics of creative/cultural/media industries.

Besides these theoretical limitations, I also admit that I have failed perhaps to engage with empirical strands that could have proven enriching. Given the time and resources allocated to a doctoral study, the amount of data I was able to systematically analyze has been necessarily

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[55] For a similar argument in the domain of art history see, for example, De La Fuente (2010a) and Geertz (1983) and their respective treatments of Baxendall's work.

limited. With hindsight, I wish I had been able to pay more attention to important aspects of guidebook making. One of the most salient empirical pointers and leads that I did not take up is map making, especially because this is a crucial nexus of the genre's way-finding didactic function. Guidebook writers master what Svetlana Alpers (1983) in her study of map artists calls 'the art of describing', an art form which oscillates between artistic matter and factual information. Guidebook writers draw verbal maps with careful consideration to the fine line between reliable, practical navigation and expressive directions, or what Sennett (2008:179) called 'expressive instructions'. Map-writing underlies their craftsmanship orientation to work, creating both anxiety and a sense of triumph, when done right and correctly, but also aesthetically pleasing. Travel writers on the road often invoke their 'inner compass' or 'mental maps' as an explanation of their seamless navigation. More sustained attention to how travel guidebook writers create verbal maps would, I think, add considerably to our understanding of what Gell identified as a less known 'mental' leap from 'the squiggly lines, colours and written inscriptions on a published map' and 'the covert or overt practical instructions of way-finding' (1985: 276). More work and research is required in this area, especially in the light of technology-enabled geo navigation becoming widespread. The convergence of 'practical' and 'expressive' instructions of way-finding, with which travel guidebook authors daily engage, is a promising site in which to continue the engagement with the residues of empirical data left out in this thesis.

Another empirical aspect, left relatively less prominent is the digitization of travel guidebook production. I would have liked to spend much more time and space on shedding light on those travel writers who abandoned a career in the embrace of the traditional media industries by setting up self-publishing digital ventures. Here it would have been especially instructive to attend to the co-producing relationship between digital revenue streams, new digital gatekeepers (such as Amazon, Apple or Google) and the changing nature of the genre. Given the lack of studies on authors-publishers (content producers who make a living from digital self-publishing), sustained attention to such data may well add substantially to our grasp of the complexities and contradictions of professional digital production practices, and the accompanying moral responsibility of content creation in the digital era.

Among the many misgivings relative to this thesis, the most acute is the failure to follow a guidebook author's work outside Europe, mainly owing to a limited budget allocated to this thesis. As the authors I have empirically followed were both commissioned on guidebooks to relatively well-off and orderly societies, the data generated was inevitably skewed. I have argued that there is an intimate link between an author's perceived sense of autonomy and expertise, and the destination one specializes in. I believe that the dynamics of such a link would unfold differently in economically and politically less stable societies, where ample evidence suggests the impact of guidebooks on the destination is far more robust and forceful, which in turn may be reasonably expected to pose distinct challenges on the authorial sense of responsibility and duty, but also to the aesthetics of representation.

Potential usefulness

Although the insights in this thesis are generated from an admittedly niche – but nonetheless distinct and particular – case, I am confident that similar genre-centered production processes will be discovered in other domains of cultural production. It would be especially interesting to understand how the genre gets into action in other 'productions without authors' – for example, cookbooks and encyclopedias.

Yet probably the most promising future research will comparatively juxtapose different cultural industries, and elucidate the differences and similarities between a genre's mediating power in genre-centered cultural productions such as TV production and publishing, music and film. The challenge is to transfer the analytical framework developed on a genre with just a few (and relatively uncomplicated) generic dominants, to a one that in Aristotle's terms has 'beginning, middle and end' such as, for example, crime fiction or romance. Genres are potentially a propitious concept in future studies of the media industries: both in a methodological and analytical sense[56].

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[56] Let me give an illustration by outlining a rough hypothetical research proposal, drawing on preliminary research, for the study of *Scandinavian crime fiction* as a genre-centered cultural production in a Danish publishing context. Scandinavian crime fiction, or Nordic Noir – a blend of thriller, mystery and whodunit – has lately taken the global publishing world by storm, becoming itself a publishing brand despite critical claims of bleak formal innovation. Given the diversity and ever growing niche segmentation of media industries (Thompson 2005) and their immanent complexity (Hesmondhalgh 2002), as well as the 'infinite variety' of media products (Caves 2000), it may be nearly impossible to include all aspects of any media industry in a particular industry-level research study. Amanda Lotz (2009) suggests scoping down the research design by geocultural regions of production, which I found feasible in delineating the study to a Danish publishing context, but not entirely functional. The vital global success of Danish crime fiction cannot be separated from the global success of *Scandinavian* crime fiction predicated on shared *Scandinavian* book markets, shared specialized genre-specific literary agents, marketing strategists and distribution networks, shared genre-experienced freelance editors, and shared crime-writing academies. Yet these cooperative dependencies are also riven by competitive and rival strategies, imbalances of scale and market opportunities. Therefore, methodologically, it is only through the notion of genre that a regional media production study can be conducted. The notion of genre delimits the scope of the study to manageable field coordinates (Bourdieu 1996, Thompson 2005). The genre-bound field of production consists of genre-defined positions of agents, both institutional and individual actors, who engage in 'objective position-taking' (Bourdieu 1996): publishing houses specialized in crime fiction (Aarhus-based Klim or Modtryk) or departments within larger publishing institutions (the krimiromaner division at Politiken forlag or Gyldendal); crime fiction specialized literary agents (Salamonsson or Nordin agency); crime fiction writers and crime fiction writers' associations (Dansk krimiforfatter forening); but also field-configuring events (Moeran and Strandgaard 2011) such as crime fiction fairs (Krimimesse in Horsens), or crime writing academies (Den danske krimi akademi), as well as crime fiction literary awards. Here, the scholar should take due diligence to cover by empirical research (interviews and participant observation) all the important 'positions' in the field, individual and institutional, attending to their organizational relationship, associated professional practices and their embeddedness into global book marketplace.

However, this is only one part of the story. It complies with the dominant definition of media industries as those industries that produce, promote, distribute certain texts (audio, visual) grouped (labeled, branded or classified) for easier management into *genres* (see Bielby and Bielby 2003, Negus 1998). Yet, as genres are not only the product of media industries, but obey an autonomous logic by virtue of their aesthetic ontology which is independent from market structures, they can be reasonably expected to exercise some sort of influence over the process of production, not only vice versa. The question is *how* this happens. And, this begs for devising an analytical framework (that I described in the doctoral thesis) with which to approach data and data-gathering that will grant an ***analytical***

The genre approach to cultural production can be especially generative in industry-level studies of cultural production (Lotz 2009). If the field of cultural production (in Bourdieu's sense) is approached through the prism of the genre, then the genre can first serve as a scoping tool for the study, in which the mediating and co-producing role of the genre would be rendered investigable. In this way the field would resemble what I have termed 'a genre world' – a production world that gravitates around a specific genre – of fashion, film, book, guidebook, music, dance, or any other activity currently labeled 'creative industry'. Such genre-bound scoping will delineate the genre-specific actors in the field: institutions of production (for example crime fiction or romance publishers, crime fiction or romance departments as part of larger company units, country music recording companies, but also crime writers associations, or dance musicians unions, or crime fiction academies and so on); genre-specific field-configuring events (such as, for example crime fiction fairs, country music festivals, and so on); the genre-specific experts and authors. The next level will be the investigation of the compositional level (the level at which, as Adorno and Williams argued, the autonomy of cultural work is most clearly situated). At this level, the writers are at work, and their producing practices will always be genre-bound, while the genre will function as an institution within the more material institutions of cultural production. It is at the intersection of these two levels that the genre-centered approach to cultural production should proceed, if one is to respect the active role the genres play in this process.

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autonomy to the concept of genre, that is, the genre of 'Scandinavian crime fiction'. Here useful borrowing can be made from insightful structural analysis of crime fiction genre. Suffice it to say, crime fiction is the utmost favorite of structuralist criticism as it replicates the foundational structure of fairytales, the preserve of Formalist critique (Scaggs 2005; Eco 1979; Agger 2010,2008). Once the analytical autonomy of the genre (plots, themes, techniques of construction, narrative) has been established, the analysis should proceed to examine its operationalization *in concrete events* of production by the way producers – managers, editors, translators, fair organizers – mobilize and engage with the genre in their daily practice and professional self-understanding. The focus will be on their professional development, labour issues, but also concrete compositional decisions and craft attitude as they happen at the threshold between markets and genres. To illustrate, every Christmas, publishers push for a new title in what proved to be before a bestselling series of crime novels. In response, authors have to make formal, both ethical and aesthetic, decisions about the longevity and lifestyles of the main characters. At a crime fiction conference, some experienced and outspoken writers confessed to a 'writing fatigue' mainly with regard to the characters they themselves have dreamt up. In a book published three years ago, Henning Mankell gave Wallander (the main detective to appear in a dozen of books and tie-in TV series stretching over a decade) Alzheimer's disease, which means the detective could in principle, commercially, return in a new sequel but not practically and ethically, for which Mankell felt liberated, but also little bit impoverished, severing important revenue streams. In informal preliminary interviews, some crime fiction writers described the work on a novel as a meticulous 'forensic' research and experimentation with storytelling, plotting and police procedures so as to attain a make-belief effect (the gist of fictional poetics). A Danish crime fiction duo, at the annual book fair, described the collaborative writing process as a 'chess party' between 'two impostors': the detective and the crime perpetrator, roles they each take in turns when they write so as to identify 'the cliffhangers' and 'twists' in the plot (genre-poetic consideration) that 'will grip the reader who will ask for more' (market consideration). Interestingly, the act of composition described by the duo as a 'chess party' is what both Scaggs and Eco identify, by textual structuralist analysis, as the main structural principle of the genre of crime fiction. To conduct an ethnographic investigation, coupled with the 'think aloud' method, of such genre-driven processes of production is an imperative, as such a focus will complement the organizational and managerial explanations of market success of specific genres.

ENGLISH ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the production of travel guidebooks. Its aim is to explore the mutual co-construction and entanglement of genres, producers and institutions in cultural production and cultural work. It also examines how authorial and institutional, professional and industrial self-reflexivity exists in and through ambiguous and shifting interrelations with genres and their poetics. To this end, it develops a preliminary theoretical framework for a comprehensive exploration of the complex dynamics of cultural production that is attentive to the cultural objects themselves: here, a down-market, 'uninventive' and 'heteronomous' genre known as the travel guide(book). The thesis argues that the specificity of the genre is continually contextualized and re-contextualized, qualified and re-qualified, commodified and rendered autonomous, in the daily, local, and intimate practices of guide-making.

The argument presented is that the genre is not merely a backdrop for creative agency or a pre-determined set of rules, but a complex entity – spatially and temporally dispersed – that affords autonomous opportunities for various modes of action, self-definition, and self-interpretation. Thus, genres are active elements or animating forces of cultural production, rather than merely outcomes of industrial dynamics. What arises from the empirical material is that cultural producers experience 'autonomy' in and through the notion of genre which itself is fuzzy, vague, tacit, implicit and often non-formalized. Nonetheless, it is obdurately present in a spectrum of strategies, rhetoric, a sense of responsibility, expertise and professionalism applied by such producers in order to explain, define and justify their practical decisions and evaluations.

The first three chapters explore perceived limitations of sociological, anthropological and socio-cultural paradigms of cultural production. They also indicate some potential areas for cross-fertilization with genre theory, which has conceptualized the notion of genre as social action, cognitive action-schemata, and institutions that mediate between industry, producers, and audiences. The last four chapters follow and trace interpenetrating and interlocking relations between genres and institutions firstly, as they mutually and historically co-produce each other in industrial practice; secondly, as entangled in individual and professional auto-biographies with reference to the genre and its adjacent markets; and third, as embedded in actual production practices - how guidebook producers make use of and interact with the editorial brief (or institutionalized and contractually binding genre specificity) and independent genre trajectories (autonomous logic), while making daily evaluations of their work and their own professional self-reflexivity.

DANISH ABSTRACT

Genre, autonomi og kulturproduktion: med produktionen af rejsehåndbøger som case

Denne afhandling fokuserer på produktionen af rejsehåndbøger. Målet med afhandlingen er at udforske den gensidige konstruktion og sammenfiltring af genrer, producenter og institutioner indenfor kulturproduktion og kulturelt arbejde. Den undersøger desuden, hvordan forfattermæssig/institutionel og professionel/industriel selvrefleksion eksisterer i og gennem tvetydige og skiftende relationer til genrer, genreforløb og ontologier. Med dette for øje udvikler afhandlingen en foreløbig teoretisk ramme, der muliggør en ikke-reduktiv udforskning af kulturproduktionens komplekse dynamikker. Denne ramme vil være særligt opmærksom på selve de kulturelle objekter – her i form af den 'ikke så prestigefyldte', 'uopfindsomme' og 'heteronomiske' genre kendt som rejsehåndbogen. Afhandlingen argumenterer for, kort beskrevet, at genrens specificitet og ontologi kontinuerligt kontekstualiseres og rekontekstrualiseres, kvalificeres og rekvalificeres, varegøres og selvstændiggøres gennem rejsehåndbogsproduktionens daglige, lokale og nære praksisser.

Det foreliggende argument er således, at genren ikke blot er en kulisse for kreativ agens eller en forudbestemt samling regler, men en kompleks enhed, der – spredt over rum og tid – leverer selvstændige muligheder for diverse virkemåder samt muligheder for selvdefinition og selvrefleksion. Det empiriske materiale viser, at kulturproducenter oplever 'selvstændighed' i og gennem idéen om genre, hvor idéen om genre i sig selv er uklar, vag, tavs, implicit og ofte uformaliseret. Ikke desto mindre er idéen konstant og bastant til stede i et spektrum af strategier, retorik, følelser af ansvar, ekspertise og professionalisme, som førnævnte producenter anvender for at kunne forklare, definere og retfærdiggøre deres praktiske beslutninger og evalueringer.

De første tre kapitler udforsker sociologiske, antropologiske og kulturalistiske paradigmers forestillede begrænsninger for kulturproduktion. De angiver derudover en række områder med potentiale til gensidig udveksling med genreteori, hvilke har konceptualiseret genreidéen som social handling, kognitiv handlingsskemata og institutioner, der medierer mellem industri, producenter og publikum. De sidste fire kapitler følger og sporer gensidigt brydende og sammenholdte relationer mellem genrer og institutioner. Relationer som, først og fremmest, gensidigt og historisk producerer hinanden i industrielle rum; som, for det andet, er indviklede i individuelle og professionelle selvbiografier; og som, for det tredje, er indlejrede i faktiske produktionspraksisser – såsom hvordan rejsehåndbogsproducenter bruger og interagerer med redaktionens pejlemærker (eller den institutionaliserede og kontraktbundne genrespecificitet) og de selvstændige genreforløb (autonome logikker), alt imens de dagligt må evaluere deres eget arbejde og deres egen profesionelle selvforståelse.

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