BLENDING OF LITERARY GENRES IN CONTEMPORARY LITHUANIAN LITERATURE: THE CASE STUDY OF AUŠRA MATULEVIČIŪTĖ (1978), LAURA SINTIJA ČERNIAUSKAITĖ (1976), RENATA ŠERELYTĖ (1970) AND RASA AŠKINYTĖ (1973)

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Abstract

The main aim of the article is to survey the situation in the field of Lithuanian literature of the first two decades of the 21st century discussing the phenomenon of the diffusion of genres. The main questions to be answered: how a genre could be related to the forms of writing and in what way can particular blends of literary genres justify expectations of a reader and give additional impulses to the emotional response of the addressee of the text. Those questions will be answered analysing prose texts by contemporary Lithuanian writers Aušra Matulevičiūtė (1978), Laura Sintija Černiauskaitė (1976), Renata Šerelytė (1970) and Rasa Aškinytė (1973). It is possible to conclude that particular blends of literary genres may realize the intentions of a writer and give additional impulses to the emotional response of an addressee of fictional text, but those blends should be constructed paying attention to the particular forms of writing.

Key words

Genre, forms of writing, novel, short story, Lithuanian literature

Introduction

The problem of genre could be treated as one of the most important problems in the field of literary research, as the need to define one's utterance should be innate: if I am to give any verbal form to my thoughts, I am to have an intention and an addressee; intention will stipulate the form of verbal expression and the latter will determine the result – particular reaction of an addressee. Such primitive situation illustrates possible attitudes towards the problem of genre; as Finnish researchers

Anne Mäntynen and Susanna Shore summarise the results of the research of Michail Bakhtin, Carolyn Miller, Vijay Bhatia, J.R. Martin, Norman Fairclough and John Swales, "from a linguistic point of view, a genre is a class or type of (spoken or written) text. From a social and collective point of view, a genre is a linguistically realized action or activity type or area of human activity. From an individual and cognitive point of view, texts representing the same genre have a similar communicative purpose (or purposes)" (Mäntynen and Shore 2014, 738–739). Cognitive point of view in some sense involves the linguistic and social attitudes, as cognition does not unfold in verbal or social vacuum. Closer philological look at works of fiction includes all possible interpretations of the phenomenon of genre and all possible agents of the communicative situation – a writer with his/her intentions, a reader with his/her expectations and a language with its ambiguity.

The main aim of this article is to survey the situation in the field of Lithuanian literature emphasizing peculiar tendency of the first two decades of the 21st century – the phenomenon of the diffusion of genres. According to A. Mäntynen and S. Shore, "… hybridity is an umbrella term for all kinds of blending, mixing, and combining that occur in genres and texts" (Mäntynen and Shore 2014, 738). The diffusion of genres may be treated as specific type of hybridity. The main questions to be answered in attempt to reach the aim are not so simple, but worth pondering upon. At first it would be useful to find out, how a genre could be related to the forms of writing. As a genre is conceptual and a text is material, the rhetoric of the text should be significant contributor to the determination of genre. The second question concerns the readers or the social point of view while discussing the phenomenon of genre; it would be interesting to find out, whether particular blends of literary genres justify expectations of a reader and give additional impulses to the emotional response of the addressee of the text. The third question could be rhetorical: does a post-modern reader need to decode? Those questions will be answered analysing different texts by contemporary Lithuanian writers Aušra Matulevičiūtė (1978), Laura Sintija Černiauskaitė (1976), Renata Šerelytė (1970) and Rasa Aškinytė (1973). Such writers of the same generation were chosen for the analysis because of their clearly stated intentions to give prominence to the form of the text, to experiment with the structure of the book (Šerelytė's and Černiauskaitė's case) or of the text. Matulevičiūtė, migrant Lithuanian author, is not as active in the field of literature as Šerelytė, Černiauskaitė or Aškinytė, well known prize-winning Lithuanian contemporary writers and researchers, but her intention to (trans)form the genre of the text after the text was written provoked the idea to ponder upon the result of the choice.

1. Genre vs Forms of Writing

The situation of Lithuanian novel of the 21st century was quite clearly reviewed by Lithuanian literary researcher Jūratė Sprindytė[1]. Defining the main tendencies of Lithuanian novel at the beginning of the third millenium Sprindytė emphasised particular *euro-turn* of the genre after Lithuania became the member of European Union in 2004. The so called *eurocanon* in Lithuanian context was described as "a mere abstraction, chimera and may be having more non-canonical than obligatory features or the features the writers are to strive for. [...] Moderate *euronovel* suggests such attractive model: ministory, few characters, good pace, the twine of every thread of the story at the end, clear wind-up (not necessarily happy), but the reward depends on one's merits like in a fairy tale or soap opera" (Sprindytė 2004)[2]. The researcher justifies the shallowness of a novel refering to the tradition of Lithuanian prose:

> The word of Lithuanian prose simply does not have its epic background. This is the feature of our unperfect narrative of backward prose, because we lack the long-lived cultural, philosophical tradition and simply the tradition of written word. The dominant genre was a short story for a very long time. The dominant style in the history of Lithuanian prose was pathetic or empirically descriptive, that's why a sentence is lightweight, nonrestrictive, containing little information (Sprindytė 2004).

> After more than a decade Sprindytė summarized the development of the genre during the thirty years of Independent Lithuania (from 1990) and found no hopeful changes:

> The subtitle of *euronovel* disappeared, but started to thrive various denominations of impure genre; such texts bear resemblance to a novel only by the number of pages, but they do not have any conceptual axis of narrative, they are vamped up of separate texts (*novel in short stories, novel in stories, novel-essay, novel-reminiscences, neuronovel, novel in poems with photos and pictures* and so on). The situation of strategic genre of a novel is unsatisfactory; Lithuanian novel lacks universality and social consciousness; composition is scattered, the spring of the plot is loose, there is a lack of outstanding characters and virtuous models [...] (Sprindytė 2021, 40).

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[1] Lithuanian novel was thoroughly discussed and characterised by Algis Kalėda (1952–2017) in his monograph *Romano struktūros metmenys: literatūrinės komunikacijos lygmuo* (issued by the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore in 1996); Lithuanian short story till the middle of the 20th century was discussed by Albertas Zalatorius in his monograph *XX amžiaus lietuvių novelė (iki 1940 m.)* (issued in Vilnius, Vaga, in 1980). The problems of the genre in press were highlighted by Rūta Marcinkevičienė in her book *Žanro ribos ir paribiai. Spaudos patirtys* (Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2008). As the main aim of this article is to ponder upon the phenomenon of possible blend of the genres, the review of the development of canonical genres in the field of Lithuanian literature is not provided.

[2] The translations from Lithuanian into English here and further in the article are made by the author of the article.

The impurity of the genre is being treated as devaluation of the novel and such elements as composition, plot and characters are considered to be essential in attempt to evaluate the quality of genre in comparison with a canonical novel. According to Lithuanian literary researcher Vytautas Kubilius, "the canon of genre draws an abstract projection of the form even before the first sentence of creative work is written; it establishes the type of the expression and the mode of language according to the character of ideas and experiences, it finetunes the composition, versification and plot of the work" (Kubilius 2001, 557). "Abstract projection of the form" is supposed to be related to the canon, but not to the genre, and the latter can not be immovable, as it is social and has "communicative purpose"; society experiences different changes depending on historical and cultural situation, that is why the disobedience to the cannon and various mutations of the genre should be regular. Different changes concerning the content of Lithuanian fiction, the relations between different cultural fields, the reception of post-Communist era, reflected in the works of Lithuanian writers and literary researchers were revealed in the book *Transitions of Lithuanian Postmodernism. Lithuanian Literature in the Post-Soviet Period* (ed. Mindaugas Kvietkauskas, Amsterdam – New York: Rodopi, 2011), but the problem of the genre and its mutations, described by Sprindytė as "disintegration and diffusion" (Sprindytė 2011, 89), was not analysed thoroughly.

The phenomenon of mutations or of hybridity of genres could be discussed having in mind useful terms suggested by Maria Antónia Coutinho and Florencia Miranda. The researchers speak about the need "to identify the foreseeable characteristics that constitute the identity of the genre" (Coutinho and Miranda 2009, 40) and define those characteristics as "*parameters of genre*", which can be understood as empirical elements, giving body to the abstract concept of genre. According to Coutinho and Miranda, "the parameters of genre are fixed as empirical texts through [...] *mechanisms of textual realization*. These mechanisms concern the management of the semiolinguistics resources of a text. The correspondence between parameters and mechanisms is not fully reciprocal. In fact, the same parameter will be able to be brought up to date through different mechanisms, and it is in the specificity of the mechanisms that the singularity of each text is rooted" (Coutinho and Miranda 2009, 41). It seems that *mechanisms of textual realisation* could be compared to the forms of writing, defined by Lithuanian literary researcher Kristina Tutlytė, working on doctoral thesis analysing the relations between a genre and its formal realisation. According to her, forms of writing could be understood as the ways of creating and constructing written literary narrative, encompassing the characteristics of the genre, different components of the narrative (chronological or non-chronological narration, dialogues, stream of consciousness, etc.), rhetorical figures (irony, grotesque, metaphors, metonymies, etc.), graphematic and paratextual elements. Refering to the shortcomings of Lithuanian novel Sprindytė mentiones scattered composition, the loose spring of the plot, the lack of outstanding characters

and ascribes those weaknesses to the "lack [...] of the tradition of written word" (Sprindytė 2004). It is obvious that forms of writing (or "written word" in general) are basic for constructing good narrative, capable to contain the parameters of the canonical genre. If the writer is eager to transgress the canon, particular *mechanisms of textual realisation* should be activated.

The phenomenon of hybridity in the field of fiction should be considered as particular transgression and in contemporary Lithuanian prose could be illustrated with the books by Aušra Matulevičiūtė, Laura Sintija Černiauskaitė and Renata Šerelytė, Rasa Aškinytė.

2. Blending a Novel and a Short Story

Matulevičiūtė's book "Ilgesio kojos" (*The Legs of Nostalgia)* (2010) has a subtitle *The novel in short stories*. The writer describes the way she has been working: "Every short story in my book represents new story of particular characters. I used to write them without any obligation to the previous ones. The particular form of the entirety of the texts was not important for me. Only at the very end the similarities to a novel appeared. Yes, there were several versions of the composition of short stories trying to maintain the course of the plot. I could play with the chronology of actions, with the intensity of the story. I am not to say that the order chosen is the most coherent, but it does not forbid the reader to gather momentum as in a "real novel" (Matulevičiūtė 2010). Matulevičiūtė admits that she had no intention to write a novel, but the genre as if embeded itself *per se*. The annotation of the book is laconic, the plot is simple: "The main character Inesa is an emigrant from Lithuania, she works as a nursemaid, cleans the houses of strangers and together with her husband Eliot tries to build her life in Paris. [...] Bizarre tangle of different cultures generates the string of misunderstandings and miscommunications. Every short story – new event, portret or reminiscence" (Matulevičiūtė 2010, 120). Though the subtitle of the book marks the genre (*novel in short stories*), the annotation highlights the character of short stories ("new event, portrait, reminiscence"). As Sarah E. Worth and Sean McBratnie consider, "the narrative itself stands separately from the narrative understanding or comprehension that the reader has. The way that the narrative is constructed has a direct impact on the way that its reader will be able to understand and construct the story" (Worth and McBratnie 2015, 38). Matulevičiūtė's book consists of thirty short stories with separate titles; each story is three or four pages long and some of the stories are graphically divided into smaller chapters of half a page or even of several lines. Such division is handy for particular shifts of space and time, but the reader nevertheless keeps to the supposed chronology, stipulated by the first short story of the book, written as a nostalgic letter of the main character Inesa; if the character misses her homeland (there is no doubt about that, as the

assumption could be proved by the quotation: "No matter where you find yourself, no matter what you do, you will be persecuted by the fear not to find what you have left behind. Bare feet on the banks of the river, high brick walls of the old town… everything will be taken to your memory not by the devil, but by the faithful nostalgy…" (Matulevičiūtė 2010, 6)), she will inevitably come back at least for a visit. Therefore everything, what takes place in the book, is being grasped as consequent preparation of the character to travel home. According to Worth and McBratnie, "the coherence-making required on the part of the reader happens spatially and temporally as each sentence adds more and more information for the reader. Simultaneously, as we comprehend story structures and are repeatedly reframing contextual clues as we read, we also assess the plausibility of the events of the story. This assessment is the beginning of the active construction of genre that happens in the reader" (Worth and McBratnie 2015, 38). In Matulevičiūtė's case the reader is capable of defining the outlines of the novel and perhaps would be more pleased not to be distracted by the titles of the short stories (which in the reader's mental space appear as chapters), so the genre of a novel does not benefit from the efforts of the author to experiment with particular blend of the novel and short story.

Lithuanian literary researcher and writer Virginija Cibarauskė emphasizes such specific feature of contemporary Lithuanian prose as fragmentarity and adds that "in recent years, novels have not been the only form of writing to become more fragmented. Increasingly often, literary, biographical, and even scientific works feature subtitles with terms like fragments, notes, etc. Perhaps this structural aspect can be linked to an attempt to break free from the main narrative and to draw attention to the beauty of classification, as well as imperfection and crudeness" (Cibarauskė 2017). Nevertheless there can be doubts whether the reader is ready to "break free from the main narrative" in favour of the short story. On the other hand, Matulevičiūtė's short stories, making the book, seem much more spacious and ambiguous while being read separatly, taken from the texture of the supposed novel. Reading separate text of three pages the reader notices every detail and is capable to interpret every passage of the narrative more attentively; because of that the net of associations can widen, at the same time widening the scale of the experienced emotions. For example, the short story "Inesa, rėk!" (*Inesa, shout!*) is constructed of the remarks of the narrator and of the attitudes of the teenager Enzo towards Inesa; Enzo tries to guess the misteries of Inesa's (the nursemaid's working for their family) personality and gets furious for not succeeding. The short story starts (and ends) at the table and the image of the spoon curiously becomes essential here: "There is a silver spoon at hand. May be it could be too fancy for everyday supper, but at the moment people are having unhurried Sunday dinner in the sitting room of Inesa's employers. Inesa is exploring flatware closely thus trying to hide the boredom from the people round about" (Matulevičiūtė 2010, 70). After the short introduction of the narrator the reader is being introduced to Enzo's opinion, which is put in quotation-

marks. Thus Enzo is being singled out from other people gathered round the table and the reader can easily mistake him for the narrator. The third passage brings the reader back to the very first line of the short story: "It is strictly forbidden to play with flatware at this place, but definitely not for her. […] And today she craves for scooping with this fancy spoon everything in turn without any elegance, hideously" (Matulevičiūtė 2010, 70). Several passages further the spoon is being substituted for the tablecloth: "Inesa detects being scrutinised and sets the spoon aside. But her hands immediately find another object – damask tablecloth" (Matulevičiūtė 2010, 71). Surface peacefulness, which disturbs Enzo so much, does not deceive the reader, who feels Inesa's inner uneasiness and urge for new experience and fulfilment, because the narrator unveils more details than Enzo is capable to notice ("God is the witness – Inesa is getting wild. Fortunately it is barely noticeable for the others, even for those, who know her, because one person covers her all the time. Eliot" (Matulevičiūtė 2010, 70).). The final Enzo′s remark reveals desperation of the teenager while trying to unriddle the inner world of the nursemaid from abroad and strengthens Inesa′s position: "My dear, isn't it too ungenerous to have so much peace?" – Enzo would like to ask" (Matulevičiūtė 2010, 72). The image of the spoon, which could be associated with constant urge for new possibilities and eagerness to taste everyday life in spite of everything gives place to the jar of drink – possible refreshment, which is as if being denied: "But [Enzo] only slaps the jar of drink backhanded" (Matulevičiūtė 2010, 72). Reading this short story as a piece of the novel the reader would hardly pay attention to those key images; Inesa's dreams, reminiscences and fears revealed in previous pages are too vivid to be changed by the simple episode at the table.

"Contextual clues" (Worth and McBratnie 2015, 38) in Matulevičiūtė's book can add particular weight to the reader′s presumptions or, as Matulevičiūtė has stated, the reader is probably capable "to gather momentum as in a "real novel", but reading those short stories separately we could experience the joy of decoding and admire the potential of a genre of short story. In Matulevičiūtė's case the blend of a short story and a novel was more successful for the good of a short story.

3. The Shortcomings of "Cooperative" Blend

The example of the book issued by Renata Šerelytė and Laura Sintija Černiauskaitė "Hepi fjūčer" (*Happy Future*) (2015) is quite the opposite. The book has a subtitle "18 short stories". The annotation of the book is modest: "The news: two well known prose writers have composed new common selection of the short stories. Romantic imagination of Laura Sintija Černiauskaitė leans on the experiences of a child and of a young woman, on the experience of love, loneliness, humiliation. The short stories by Renata Šerelytė distinguish for incisive plot, futurological motives; the characters of her narratives are judges, members of the Parlament, businessmen. The readers themselves are to look for the links and differences of those specific writers"

(Černiauskaitė and Šerelytė 2015, 160). The differences are obvious: Šerelytė uses the stylistics of magical realism, and Černiauskaitė tends to revive the experiences of everyday life. The book is composed in a specific way – the short stories of both writers are published alternately, they are mixed in the book, but quite often the stories which go one after another have as if related titles (1. "Proprosenelė" (*Great-great-grandmother*) by Černiauskaitė 2. "Giminės šaknys" (*The Roots of the Family*) by Šerelytė; 7. "Nepaprastas žmogus" (*Unusual Person*) by Šerelytė 8. "Ypatingas žmogus" (*Special person*) by Černiauskaitė); the short stories are numbered – nine of them written by Šerelytė and nine by Černiauskaitė. The book could be treated as particular blend of different stylistics, provoking quite unequal response of the reader; Šerelytė astonishes with her colourful narrative:

> Solemn hum of the organ ceased. Mister B. relaxed, let out his breath waiting, when the priest will announce that the Mass is over, and commonalty with intellectuals will plug up the main entrance. Suddenly somebody' s voice pronounced authoritatively: "Keep order while going out. Goats to the left, rams to the right." Mister B. pricked up his ears. He got an idea, that his organism lacks not only magnesium, but zinc as well (Černiauskaitė and Šerelytė 2015, 41).

Černiauskaitė attarcts by vivid images, encoded emotions, which can be easily recognized: "Summer night is so short. Its volatile black body absorbs the melody of accordion getting more and more drunk and silent steps: the girl is trotting towards the abandoned stadium at the end of the small town; she is seventeen and her hair is like linden blossoms" (Černiauskaitė and Šerelytė 2015, 32). Nevertheless the blend of stylistics does not result in the blend of emotional responses; separate texts provoke different reactions and even different mode of reading. Obviously, the same genre being materialized through different mechanisms of textual realization (which could be grasped as different forms of writing), evokes quite different responses. Both writers of the book share the same ironic attitude towards the society, which is incapable of getting rid of soviet relics or false identity and seeks for *hepi fjūčer* at any cost, but Šerelytė's irony, based on daily miracles, sometimes seems too complicated to be decoded at once, especially for young readers.

According to Worth and McBratnie, "the essence of narrative and storytelling is imaginative engagement, indulging in descriptive language and actively constructing meaning out of disparate parts along with the author. Genre has as much to do with the way in which one approaches the text as it does with the text itself" (Worth and McBratnie 2015, 47). It is possible to experience "imaginative engagement" reading separate short stories by Černiauskaitė and Šerelytė, but the specific blend of different stylistics of two talented authors does not seem productive – the reader gains nothing in addition, only two portions of short stories.

4. The Case of Productive Hybridity

The novel "Glesum" by Rasa Aškinytė could be a perfect example of "imaginative engagement" because of its attractive form and playful style. The plot can be outlined in two sentences: "Glesum ("amber" in latin) is a woman and a mother living in a tribe; she is indulgent and susceptible, dutiful and passionate, strong-willed and following the stars, as it is characteristic to Aistians. The action of the novel takes place in the second century in Aistian land" (Aškinytė 2016, 176). The writer professes at the end of the book: "I was writing the novel using the books by professor Eugenijus Jovaiša: *Aistians. The Origin; Aistians. The Development; Aistians. The Beginning of Lihuanians and Lithuania.* I am thankful enormously to the professor. I beg to forgive those, whose graves we have disinterred, whose lives we have slandered. I hope we haven′t disturbed their eternity and that their souls rest in peace" (Aškinytė 2016, 172). Aškinytė reconstructs the life of Lithuanian ancestors emphasizing the power of passion, maternity, envy and love, basic elements, usually holding the framework of the novel. At the end of the book the author provides a short chapter under the title "Historical Knowledge" and explains the importance of amber for ancient Lithuanians, indicates the borders of their lands and names Aistian tribes. The reader can get an impression that historical facts were recorded after the testimony of the narrator of the novel, but not the novel was based on historical knowledge.

After publishing her second novel "Lengviausias" (*The Lightest*) Aškinytė said: "I think not only about the plot, but about the form as well. All the stories have been told already. Now you can play with a form of the novel" (Aškinytė 2011). The form of "Glesum" is rather interesting – there are seven parts of the novel and every part is named after one of the stars of Ursa Minor constellation; every part consists of seven chapters; the chapters are named after differet states of water or other liquids, containing water (snow, rain, water, fog, tears, blood, milk, mead). After the title of every part there are short extracts as if from encycplopaedia, containing main information about every star of the constellation:

> The North Star is the brightest star of Ursa Minor, to be precise, it is a system of three stars. The system consists of the grand star of periodically changeable brightness and its two satellites – yellow dwarfs. The distance between one of them and the central star is 17 times bigger than between the Earth and the Sun and it goes around the central star during 30 years; the distance between another star and the central one is 2400 times bigger than the distance between the Erath and the Sun and it goes around the central star during 42 000 years... (Aškinytė 2016, 11).

Such mixture of fiction and nonfiction in some sense illustrates the *motto* of the novel: "It did not happen, but could have happened." Factual world serves as prerequisite for fiction; if the reader is patient enough to read the passages of

nonfiction about the stars, he/she will be prepared to believe the narrator as the one, who prooves the validity and significance of the previously stated facts. Such "microhybridity" does not modify the genre of the novel, but the insertions written in different stylistics (or insertions of hypogenre, according to Coutinho and Miranda) empower cognitive capacities of the reader and provoke new associations.

The correlation between the genre and the forms of writing is obvious, but not easy to define. Forms of writing could be equated to the mechanisms of textual realization, which materialise abstract concept of the genre, but the same forms (dialogues, ironic narration, the stylistics of magical realism) could be used constructing different genres. Speaking about basic preconditions for the narrative Worth and McBratnie refer to the claims of Catherine Emmott and mention basic aspects, guiding the reader through the text – the characters who are present in the physical environment, the location of the action and the aproximate time of the action (Worth and McBratnie 2015). All the aspects should be materialised using particular forms of writing, which depend on the intensions of the writers to fit into the frames of one or another genre. The physical environment and time of action can be quite easily indicated and described analizing any genre and could be depicted in different forms or stylistics; in point of place and time the canon of genre does not restrict the writers significantly. Speaking about the characters the canon of genre provides particular rules and have more serious requirements. Describing the situation of Lithuanian novel at the beginning of the 21st century Sprindytė states: "We can speak about the processes of the decay of genres, about the diffusion and similar to those entropic shifts, but, if there is a subtitle "novel" at the beginning of the book, the expectations of the reader are clear! Conventionally the genre of the novel does exist, because it is the most usual way of text-categorization" (Sprindytė 2004). Looking for the shortcomings of Lithuanian novel the researcher emphasizes the shallowness of plot and juxtaposes it with the works by Valdas Papievis (1962), migrant Lithuanian writer, famous for his specific poetical prose:

> Two-dimentional representation of the world is too obvious in many novels. How long can the reader be content with shallow narrative or post-modern surfaces being shuffled around in various ways, which infantilize the mentality of the addressee? [...] The depth is being eliminated from the game, but is it possible to remove it totally? The depth stares, hurts, asks, as we can say about the character created by V. Papievis; Papievis' character is constantly strained, sensitive, plunged, obsessive, merged, melted away, dizzy, prick-eared... (Sprindytė 2004)

Sprindytė refers to the characters as if they could concentrate the essence of the genre and of the narrative. The ability to create convincing character should guarantee good narrative; a novel in comparison with a short story gives more space to rich portraits with their life stories and expectations. Original mechanisms of

textual realisation play vital role while composing the text and portraying characters and can partially reflect the regulations of the canon of genre (more developed characters and wider panorama of their life in a novel and more concentrated narrative in a short story), but the concept of genre will nevertheless be secondary component looking from the point of view of a reader – if one is satisfied with the plot, if one can recognize everyday life and compare his or her solutions with the solutions of fictional people, why should one think about possible digressions from the canon and the effects of hybridity? Without such kind of thinking cognitive response to various blends is impossible.

5. Conclusions

Refering to the novel in short stories by Matulevičiūtė it could be concluded, that particular forms of writing – scattered compositon, constant shifts of place and time, intermingled monologues of the characters and short dialogues – immerse the reader and make him or her ponder upon the problems of migration, particular aspects of liminality, compassion, guilt or mutual help, but the canon of novel requires more depth and wider look than can be found in this book. On the other hand, the genre indicated by the writer does not oblige the author to justify the expectations of the novel-fans. The reader would hardly try to read the book as a selection of short stories taking the text from the middle of the book and then from the beginning or from the end, though by reading in this way he/she could benefit from the book more.

The book by Černiauskaitė and Šerelytė attracts with rich narratives, original stylistics and easily recognisable types – people from everyday life. The short stories correspond to the canon of genre, therefore the phenomenon of hybridity could be observed only in stylistic level and refering to the decision of the writers to cooperate. If the reader had a possibility to read the short stories by Černiauskaitė as a novel in short stories (if there were such a subtitle), he/she could have succeeded; it is possible to link the characters created by Černiauskaitė even chronologically. As some of the characters have no names and in some of the short stories the characters have the same names, there are no obstacles to imagine different events of the texts as a life story of the girl, with whom the reader gets acquainted in the first short story of the book. Most probably the reader will not complicate his/her emotional response and admire ironic monologues, colourful descriptions and strange metamorphoses in the realm of short story.

Aškinytė's novel "Glesum" proves the possibility to construct particular hybrid narrative not distracting the reader and provoking him/her to enter deeper layers of interpretation. The blend of fiction and nonfiction is quite natural here – some facts from the field of astronomy create a specific link between the characters of the novel and the readers. The same stars have been admired by the people of the second century, the same tears, blood, milk or water have accompanied people through

centuries, so how can the reader not respond to the events taking place in the novel? As Worth and McBratnie have concluded, " the blending of genres will cause us, as readers, to make reading a more cognitively engaging activity, where we do more work outside of placing the formula or genre on a text, but instead look at the ways in which the genres are blended and acknowledge that we need to actively work to understand what the work does" (Worth and McBratnie 2015, 45–46). Aškinytė's novel illustrates the validity of this conclusion. Composition of the novel is quite traditional, but specific insertions – nonfictional hypogenres – delicately expands the scale "of cognitively engaging" processes without possible resistance of the reader, not fond of decoding.

It is possible to conclude that particular blends of literary genres may realize the intentions of a writer and give additional impulses to the emotional response of an addressee of fictional text, but those blends should be analysed paying attention to particular mechanisms of textual realisation. As the concept of genre is being generated in the mental space of the reader and only after the process of reading (if one doesn not succumb to the subtitles given by the writer), it should be important to construct those blends using reader-friendly forms of writing. On the other hand, every reader has different expectations and capacities or willingness to decode, so the definition of "reader-friendly form of writing" is impossible.

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