

What is genre?

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In essence, genres are a classification system. However, it's a very nuanced system, as this system has not been created, but was born. The genre system changes with time, changes as new genres are born, changes depending on the medium it's used for, is different for different social groups, etc.

Genres are born by human discourse. We as humans want to discuss everything. For this, we need a method to the madness and thus people come up with genres to classify what they are talking about (Todorov 1976). For example, the genre soulslike was coined at some point by someone, because people wanted more games like *dark souls* and wanted to compare similar games (FromSoftware 2011). Altman said it the best: "Film genres are functional for their society" (Altman 1999, 26).

The system is a mix match of different things it tries to classify in the hope to have some form of a general way to classify media. As many genres do not say much about the content of the media, but only put the media in a bucket with other media which has something similar to it. Having an action movie in space and an action movie in ancient Egypt come with very different experiences, but are both action movies. More genres should be used to classify movies (Games already do this). Another way of fixing this issue of specifying media is Altman's approach of 4 sub-categories. Altman explains came up with 4 different sub-categories, *Blueprint*, *Structure*, *label* and *contract* (Altman 1999, 17). I think this is a better way of looking at genres as it will give a clear view of what the media is. I would like to add a 5th sub-category to make this work for other media. The category medium/media type would be a good addition to this list. Movie, theatre, game, etc.

Sources cited

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