

Kamboureli, Smaro. *The Ungrammaticality of Genre: The Contemporary Canadian Long Poem*. Thesis (PhD [English]), University of Manitoba. Ann Arbor: ProQuest/UMI, 1987. (Publication No. NL37417)

Abstract

This is a genre study of the contemporary Canadian long poem. Its central argument is that the contemporary long poem invites the reader to see it as a “new” genre, a genre, however, which, by various rhetorical strategies, resists all attempts at precise generic definition. The opening chapter discusses why the colonial imagination of the nineteenth-century Canadian poet saw the long poem not only as a form appropriate to colonial experience but also as a genre that had to be appropriated. The second chapter discusses the restrictiveness of mimetic and thematic theories of genre, which argue against the dissemination of genres, thus preventing the reader from fully appreciating the impure generic structure of the contemporary long poem. The third chapter argues that the contemporary long poem has the ability to accommodate within its structure radically disparate elements. The long poem’s major concern is at once to thematize its formal elements, i.e. the epic, the lyric, and the narrative, and to treat as formal elements its major themes, i.e. locality, the self and the idea of discourse. The fourth chapter focuses on the treatment of locality in Robert Kroetsch’s *Field Notes* and *Advice to My Friends*, Daphne Marlatt’s *Steveston* and Eli Mandel’s *Out of Place*. The fifth chapter deals with the concept of self in George Bowering’s *Kerrisdale Elegies* and bpNichol’s *The Martyrology*. The final chapter, a reading of Michael Ondaatje’s *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, examines the extent to which discourse displaces narrative in the long poem. This study then presents the long poem as a trace-structure of the signs of all the genres it employs. It inscribes in the present tense the desire in, and for, writing.