Genre Transformation

In this section, our authors explore the idea of genre change as a way to understand the rhetorical work done across (new) media forms. As we move from chapters that interrogate the relationship between medium and genre, this part looks more closely at examples of changing genres and explores what they can tell us about the importance of rhetorical action in response to cultural, social, and technological change. This displaces the focus on technology in culture and instead foregrounds the roles of cultures and spheres of discourse in shaping technology.

In her essay "From Printed Newspaper to Digital Newspaper: What Has Changed?" Jaqueline Barreto Lé expands the collection's study of global genres, looking at Portuguese-language newspaper genres in Brazil. Examining how the transition from print to digital news reporting changes news genres, Lé attends carefully to several types of change, including interactivity with the reader, linearity of text and narrative, multimodality, and information velocity. Her work represents emerging studies in the Brazilian genre tradition, and offers a distinctive synthesis of genre and media studies.

Huiling Ding's "Cross-Culturally Narrating Risks, Imagination, and Realities of HIV/AIDS" examines how new media forms may change an existing genre. Investigating patient narratives, Ding details how a specialized form of the genre emerges around risk narratives. Specifically, in her chapter, Ding explores how patients with concerns about contracting HIV/AIDS take to online discussions to discuss at-risk behaviors as well as assessment and testing for the disease. Through move analysis and

keyword analysis of several narratives, Ding suggests that these narratives seem to be functioning as a genre, a genre that has been occluded as an oral narrative, but made visible with new media change.

Neil Randall's "Source as Paratext: Videogame Adaptations and the Question of Fidelity" investigates how adaptations of literary or film genres cross modalities into video games. Commonly adaptation studies attend carefully to how the source text's genre elements are reconstituted in a new modality. Attention to how genres are faithfully translated across modalities, Randall argues, positions source materials as paratextual elements. Literary or film sources become paratext to a game in that they inhabit an important source of contextualizing information, much as we might look at the cover of a book or even author letters to help construct meaning. Ultimately Randall's argument considers whether game play requires the narratives of these paratexts or whether mechanics and game play take on a central role in game genres.

Christopher Basgier's "Atypical Rhetorical Actions: Defying Genre Expectations on Amazon.com" explores another case of genre change through resistance to antecedent forms on social grounds. Specifically his study explores how stabilized genres, and subgenres, of customer reviews open a space for "risky" rhetorical engagement, including playful satire and social criticism. Examining the departures from the expected review genres—wine review-style for a jug of milk, satirical reviews of gendered writing implements—Basgier finds the genre stretched and modified through its adaptation to new exigences that operate covertly along with the stabilized exigence of informing fellow consumers about products. Thus, we see possibilities for atypical rhetorics even in strongly typified and stabilized genres.