

Mediated Minds Conference, University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash April 19, 2019

How Genre and Discourse Community Relate to Each Other and Shape Both the Expectations and Content of Media

Winbush, Sayyidah

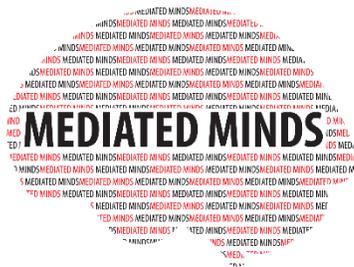
Abstract — In this presentation, I will demonstrate how genre and discourse community effect and change each other through images and information displayed on a poster that show examples of how the same content was changed, both physically and conceptually, based on the change in genre and discourse community that the content was intended for. Along with the poster and photographs, there will also be physical books that people can pick up and look through so they also can observe the physical differences in the content.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. GENRE AND DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES ARE OFTEN PERCEIVED AS TWO DIFFERENT CONCEPTS. HOWEVER, THESE CONCEPTS ARE BOTH DIRECTLY CONNECTED AND HAVE BEEN INFLUENCING EACH OTHER EVER SINCE THEY EXISTED. A VERY RECOGNIZABLE METHOD OF DISPLAYING THIS CONNECTION IS THROUGH MEDIA, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY, WATCHING HOW THE EXACT SAME CONTENT CAN CHANGE SO DRASTICALLY IF THE GENRE (OR IN THIS CASE, MEDIA/COMMUNICATION METHOD) OR DISCOURSE COMMUNITY (WHICH COULD ALSO BE CLASSIFIED AS AN AUDIENCE IN THIS SITUATION,) IS CHANGED.

II. FINDINGS

The concept of genre is widely considered as a way to classify something, and while that is true, the process in how we go about classifying those things is interesting. For the most part, in order for something to be classified as being in a certain genre, it has to have a specific set of features that is generally agreed upon as belonging to that genre. The people who decide those features are often certain types of discourse communities. Specifically, discourse communities that have a shared value



Mediated Minds Conference, University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash April 19, 2019

and agreed upon need or desire for that specific genre. For example, the romance genre of books came into existence because a very large amount of people had a shared value of writing books that contained romance, and over time, these books

started to have several similar characteristics, likely from people being inspired from the work of others in that same discourse community. These recurring features began to appear so often in romance books, that almost everyone agreed that when you read a romance book, you can expect certain specific features. This concept also explains how things like tropes and clichés are established. Some people in the discourse community may even actively try to go against these established features, and in the process, create a new set of features that also become associated with that genre.

This is how many genres are created, whether media based or otherwise. For that reason, when you adapt content from one genre to another, it means you have to make the content meet a new set of rules, which means you have to change it in order for it to be considered a true adaptation. This often means that some parts have to be removed from the content and other things have to be added. This entire process inspires many interesting questions about what certain audiences or discourse communities respond to, what they expect from certain genres, what many creators do to meet those expectations, and how flexible those expectations actually are.