



## From the Editors

### Mediating Media in a Digital Age

Today's young adult readers access and generate texts in myriad forms. Through multimedia platforms, television and film adaptations, social media, and video gaming, they engage with stories in ways that extend beyond the originals. These opportunities for connection are rich in potential and complication. As we considered the theme for this issue, we contemplated whether media enrich our interactions with others and our world—or is there a falseness in this apparent linkage? Consider the perspective of Rainbow Rowell's narrator: "There are other people on the Internet. It's awesome. You get all the benefits of 'other people' without the body odor and the eye contact" (*Fangirl*, p. 147). We wonder if all readers are inspired by techie texts or if some, in fact, imagine life as "an analog girl, living in a digital world" (Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*, p. 332).

In this issue, contributors encourage us to ponder, examine, and learn from the ways in which they use young adult literature to help young people mediate media. They share how they foster innovative engagement with media in their professional settings, examine the challenges of and potential solutions for teaching and learning with digital media, explore how digital communities invite and/or exclude young people today, and ask the question *What role does/can young adult literature play in successfully navigating life in the "digital age"?*

Our opening piece, "From Novel to Film: A Collaborative Conversation," features James Dashner, Marie Lu, and Patricia McCormick, award-winning authors for young adults whose novels have been or are being translated into films. In this engaging conversation, they give us a glimpse into the intricacies

involved in this process, their thoughts on the strengths and limitations of books and films as differing media, and a reaffirmation of the power of story across multiple formats.

In "Prying Open the Oyster: Creating a Digital Learning Space from the Robert Cormier Archive," Annamary L. Consalvo and Elisabet Takehana share the processes and teaching and learning implications of digitizing portions of the Robert Cormier Archive into themed, open exhibits of artifacts. They explore how re-mediating archival documents as a digital platform for discovery, exchange, and sharing can invite scholars and students to engage in dialogue with the author through his or her papers and how using materials from an open archive might offer alternatives to the physical limitations of many educational spaces.

Two articles offer innovative examples of classroom practices that utilize digital media in teaching YAL. In "Backchanneling Technology: Transforming Students' Participation during Discussions of *If I Grow Up*," James S. Chisholm and Ashley L. Shelton examine how 10th-grade English language arts students and their teacher used TodaysMeet to engage in conversation around Todd Strasser's (2009) young adult novel, *If I Grow Up*. By analyzing discourse produced in both face-to-face conversation and in the TodaysMeet online forum, they offer insights into how high school students used backchanneling technology to participate during discussions of a young adult novel.

Jennifer S. Dail and Nick Thompson describe a collaboration between students in a high school English class and those in a university English Education course as they read Matt de la Peña's *Mexican Whiteboy* (2008) and *We Were Here* (2009) in their

article, “Talking Back: Remix as a Tool to Help Students Exercise Authority When Making Meaning.” The authors share how they fostered a student-centered learning environment through a project in which students collaboratively created a multimodal remix that examined overarching themes across the two novels.

Three articles work to define and extend our understandings of the intersection between digital media and young adult literature. In their article, “Understanding Technology-based Young Adult Literature,” Kristine E. Pytash and Richard E. Ferdig introduce a framework for examining five key intersections between YA literature and technology: technology as context, technology as a central premise, technology as style, technology as non-essential dissemination, and technology as a book in its own right. They then explore how educators might utilize these intersections to engage technology-savvy adolescents in the reading of YA texts.

In his piece, “Networked Teens and YA Literature: Gossip, Identity, and What Really #matters,” Antero Garcia offers examples of how digital social networks are presented within contemporary young adult literature and how these depictions are similar to and different from uses of these networks in the real world. In his comparison of fictitious social networks and real world civic activism through the use of the hashtag #blacklivesmatter, the author suggests the limitations of social networks as depicted in YAL and offers recommendations for how educators can guide youth reading to include students’ own YA texts produced in online spaces.

Jon Ostenson’s “Multimodal, Interactive Storytelling: Critical Reading of Video Games” argues that video games are young adult texts in and of themselves and that these texts serve as increasingly popular and important media for storytelling, especially for teens. The author examines *Everybody’s Gone to the Rapture* (Crawshaw & Pinchbeck, 2015), a critically acclaimed video game, to demonstrate the literary value of this text and to explore how the unique characteristics of video games allow for uniquely compelling narrative experiences for readers.

In her last Book in Review: A Teaching Guide column titled “It Only Takes a Spark: Almost All Changes Start with a Small, Personal Act,” Barbara A. Ward explores the idea of change and how many significant changes begin with a decision or an act made by just one person. She discusses the protagonists in Julie Murphy’s *Dumplin’* (2015) and Emil Sher’s *Young*

*Man with Camera* (2015), both of whom ignite change through seemingly small acts of courage. Ward provides rich, thought-provoking ideas for teachers to use while reading these texts with their students.

In their final Right to Read column, “Do No Harm,” E. Sybil Durand and Jim Blasingame entreat educators and librarians not only to defend the use of challenged and challenging YA texts in the classroom but to advocate explicitly for their inclusion. With the help of YA literature veteran Gary Paulsen, they passionately advance the reality that book banning is inherently harmful.

Guest author Carolyn J. Stufft joins Sandra Schamroth Abrams and Hannah R. Gerber in the Layered Literacies column, “Critical Thinking and Layered Understandings: Book Clubs, Videogames, and Adolescent Learning.” Carolyn bridges traditional and contemporary practices to describe how videogame experiences informed seven adolescent males’ conversations about young adult literature.

We express heartfelt thanks to these outgoing column editors. Barb, Sybil, Jim, Sandra, and Hannah, your wisdom, care, and passion have resulted in writings that make a significant contribution to the journal and field. We appreciate you.

The world of audiobooks is opened for readers in our final piece, a collaborative article between two experts in the field. In “The Magic of Audiobooks: From Inception to Implementation,” Jodie Cohen, Senior Marketing Manager at Listening Library, reveals the secrets of the industry from title acquisition to production. Teri S. Lesesne, Professor in the Department of Library Science at Sam Houston State University, offers benefits and practical applications of audiobooks.

We hope this issue both affirms and challenges our collective vision of what counts as young adult literature and how we might think beyond the page as we invite readers into story.

## References

- Crawshaw, A. (Designer), & Pinchbeck, D. (Writer). (11 August, 2015). *Everybody’s gone to the rapture*. Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan: Sony Computer Entertainment.
- de la Peña, M. (2008). *Mexican whiteboy*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- de la Peña, M. (2009). *We were here*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Gaiman, N. (2001). *American gods*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
- Murphy, J. (2015). *Dumplin’*. New York, NY: HarperCollins/Balzer+Bray.
- Rowell, R. (2013). *Fangirl*. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Griffin.
- Sher, E. (2015). *Young man with camera*. Photos by D. Wyman. New York, NY: Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine Books.
- Strasser, T. (2009). *If I grow up*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.