

“This Isn’t Tumblr, Juliet, Straight Men Do Exist Here”: The Fluidity of the YA Book Community on Tumblr

In this paper, I will consider the space of Tumblr and the book community on Tumblr (designated “booklr”) as a fluid space, a site of literary oasis in which readers form a community around queer and otherwise diverse young adult texts as well as deconstruct the boundaries between children’s and adult literature. As my primary case study, I will analyze the YA Lit Meme, a challenge in which fans create visual representations (largely in the form of edited photo collages) of their favorite books and book series, as representative of the fluidity with which readers on Tumblr regard the categories of young adult and adult literature.

The repeated inclusion of several texts outside the designated YA category in this challenge (most notably Donna Tartt’s *The Secret History*, Madeline Miller’s *The Song of Achilles*, and Nora Sakavic’s *All for the Game* series) demonstrates the ways in which readers construct young adult fiction outside the genre’s deployment for purposes of audience and market, illuminating the types of content and narrative readers associate with YA. That these texts (both YA and so-called “adult” literature) often also center around queer subjects demonstrates the ways in which the booklr community fills the “gap” in regards to LGBT+ representation in larger, more mainstream fandoms (often centered around comics, films, and television programs) via the more diverse narratives present in young adult literature.

In addition, this “mis”categorization of texts in these fan spaces deviates from the ways in which young adult literature is regarded in the mainstream. Because of the youth orientated nature of Tumblr as a space (in regards to both users and content), young adult literature is regarded as the default literature of choice by readers on booklr, and “high art” texts outside that designation come to be categorized as young adult not out of denigration but celebration, a representation of texts which fit the reading tastes and interests of the booklr community. Thus, the booklr community uses the platform of Tumblr to challenge representations of queerness in mainstream media as well as the separation of “high” and “low”, “adult” and young adult fiction.