

YA Fiction Starring...You! Fanfiction on YouTube

By Claire Dionne

Abstract: This article discusses the making of videos based on YA novels, and posted to YouTube. It includes a video list, giving examples of the great variety of videos that have been made based on YA fiction.

Who could not spend hours upon hours on YouTube, shifting through videos of all sorts, always finding something else of interest to watch? And teens, of course, love to do that. Jennifer Wooten reports that a Pew Internet and American life study found that 57% of teens watched online videos (2009), and claims that “YouTube looms large in teens’ lives” (2009, p. 38). One can find pretty much anything on YouTube and YA fiction is no exception, infiltrating the platform in numerous different ways. Alexis Burling’s article “Book publishing comes to YouTube” highlights different ways in which books and YouTube have come together, creating a “symbiotic relationship between video and print” (2015, p. 26). She describes how YouTube series have been picked up by publishers to be turned into books, and that authors and publishers are using video to promote their products to fans, citing authors John Green or Kiera Cass as examples (2015). But there is also an abundance of fan-made content on YouTube based on popular YA novels, and viewers’ comments are a testimony to how much people are enjoying it.

Burling describes the rise in “fictional web series and vlogging, or video blogging”, saying that young people currently enjoy “finding video content and friends with similar viewing interests on YouTube” (2015, p. 22). This suggests that YouTube viewers like making connections and forming a community around a specific subject or topic of interest. It gives teens a chance to talk about something they are interested in with other people who are interested in it. And bonding around YA novels, stories and franchises has certainly found a place on YouTube.

One trend that has been picked up is that of book trailers and book talking, some in which people just talk about the book, others in which people act out scenes in costume and makeup (Burling, 2015). Naomi Bates calls YouTube “[t]he most popular place to share book trailers” (2012, p. 76). Burling talks about the

rising number of “Book Tubers - teens and 20-somethings who have attracted tens of thousands of followers just by filming themselves talking about the books they’ve read and enjoyed” (2015, p. 25-26). Some Book Tubers have been so effective they have even been approached by publishing companies to help them promote their material (Burling, 2015). Bates points out that all it can take is two minutes to sell a book to someone, and he or she could be hooked (2009). Considering the difficulty teens have at selecting a good book to read, it is no wonder book talking and book trailers are seeing such popularity on a medium so popular amongst teens.

In addition to book talks and book trailers, fans have created multiple parodies, commentaries and many other creative forms of video all centering around their favorite YA stories. Wooten talks about a teen video contest they held in the King County Library System (KCLS) that asked teens to create a video about a book (2009). They received submissions that included book trailers, debates about a specific book, and image collages (2009). Wooten was very impressed with the resources teens came up with, and their ability at making these videos (2009).

Also very impressive is the extent to which the video makers understand the novel. To write a good parody and to create a good video, one must be very familiar with the content, and have good knowledge of the book or movie they are referencing. A montage of clips from a movie with running commentary, such as the *Honest trailers* (Screen Junkies, 2012), requires the movie makers to watch the movie, find patterns, pick out the scenes they want and string them together in a new way, with an ironic or sarcastic twist. Parodies of *Twilight* re-enact scenes from the movie using the exact script (nigahiga, 2009; EvilIguanaProduction, 2008). The Hillywood parody of *Twilight* recreates exactly the cafeteria setting, the costumes and the action from the movie (The Hillywood Show, 2009). Such levels of detail show just how much these video makers know about the story they are referencing, no matter if they like it or not.

And it is not just the content of the book they must consider when putting together their video. Indeed, Wooten cites a librarian in the KCLS saying that making videos ““makes teens examine the books

they choose. Because they have to focus on creating the elements of a movie, such as scripts, sets, costumes, etc., they're forced to wrestle aspects of the story they may not otherwise consciously examine....” (KCLS librarian, as cited in Wooten, 2009, p. 40). Movie makers must decide what they want to do with the story, and consider how to present it with moving images, be it through performance or a collage.

Wooten explains that teens making videos based on books “[g]et[s] teens [...] think[ing] about books in a new way” (2009, p. 40). And teens and video makers have been so creative in taking their favorite books and creating something new with it. Here is just a sampling of the different kinds of things video makers have done with YA novels and have posted to YouTube.

Book talks and book trailers

Recommended reading: young adult novels, by AlmostAlwaysAlex

A series of book talks in which the narrators talk about the book, its story and its appeal.

AlmostAlwaysAlex. (2015, February 24). *Recommended reading: young adult novels* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LD2Qoh5cv1w>

The Selection movie trailer fanmade, by Evelyn Andrade

Evelyn Andrade made a montage from many different TV shows into a trailer for the first book in the *Selection* series, by Kiera Cass. This series has not, as of yet, been made into a movie.

Evelyn Andrade. (2014, May 20). *The Selection movie trailer fanmade* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1S3iIMs1VvA>

Booktalks by polandbananasBOOKS

Spotlighted in Burling’s article (2015), Christine Riccio’s booktalks are energetic, focusing on one book at a time, and giving a good sense of the story and of the appeal of the book. Her talks are longer, often over ten minutes, and she uses make-up as appropriate to convey the feel of the book.

polandbananasBOOKS. (2015, March 3). *The Young elites by Marie Lu | booktalk with XTINEMAY* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMy_wjZDV7E

Parodies

Hillywood Show

These parodies include actors performing a scene from different YA novels, often incorporating song and dance. Hillywood also does popular television series parodies.

The Hillywood Show. (2009, February 11). *'Twilight' parody - by "The Hillywood show"* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MKz0gkcgAo>

Honest trailers, by Screen Junkies

Screen Junkies creates trailers with clips from popular YA movies based on teen novels, with the announcer mocking the story and the film. The group also creates trailers for popular movies.

Screen Junkies. (2012, August 17). *Honest trailers - The Hunger games* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hp_xsUg9ws

How it should have ended, by How it should have ended

How it should have ended is an animated series in which an alternate, humorous ending is proposed to novels and popular movies.

How it should have ended. (2011, August 18). *How Harry Potter should have ended* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsYWT5Q_R_w

How it should have ended. (2014, October 9). *How The Maze runner should have ended* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2FJJ7vSGoY>

Twilight trailer spoof, by EvilIguanaProduction

A parody of *Twilight*, this four-minute video re-enacts key scenes from the book and the movie, giving them a comic spin.

EvilIguanaProduction. (2008, August 11). *Twilight trailer spoof*. [YouTube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dompotjTeIA>

A Very Potter Musical, by StarKid

A filmed performance of the “fan-made musical” (TeamStarkid, 2009) based on the *Harry Potter* series. This is a full-length comedic musical in two acts, faithful to the *Harry Potter* world and story, but following its own plotline.

TeamStarkid. (2009, July 5). *A Very Potter musical Act 1 Part 1* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmwM_AKeMCK

Miscellaneous

Everything wrong with [movies title] in [number of minutes] minutes or less, by CinemaSins

These videos play the movie of a book in question, skipping to specific scenes in which they give a reason as to why the movie does not make sense, all while keeping count of these reasons.

CinemaSins. (2013, March 5). *Everything wrong with Twilight in 6 minutes or less* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghPsLcuLHHU>

CinemaSins. (2014, October 7). *Everything wrong with The Fault in our stars* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QY2mOlBHyHY>

John Green, Please Stop (A Fan/Parody Music Video), by Brigham

A song about how good novels by John Green are, and how they make the singer feel when he reads them.

Brigham. (2014, July 11). *John Green, please stop (A fan/parody music video)* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eP5IenVcVjw>

Top 10 Harry Potter characters, by WatchMojo.com

A list of the top characters in *Harry Potter*, based on “their popularity with fans, their inner strength and their magical skills” (WatchMojo.com, 2014), presented with clips from the movies.

WatchMojo.com. (2014, July 5). *Top 10 Harry Potter characters* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=biNkiUrtR2g>

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