Eliza Dresang and the Boy Who Lived

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Eliza Dresang's expertise in children's and young adult literature is evident through the wide range of books, articles, committees, and projects she wrote or contributed to over the course of her career. Her interest in Harry Potter was a very small and seemingly minor component of her entire body of work; however, this series of books and the impact they had on young readers captivated her attention in a variety of ways over the course of the publication of the books and continued until the time of her death.

Dresang's work initially focused on two areas: gender and censorship. She first addressed the issue of Harry Potter and censorship as "lessons for the digital age."[1] She discussed the relentless challenges made to J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and the six subsequent books.[2] In 2011 she returned to the issue of censorship in a *VOYA* article "Teens Fight for the Right to Read, Write, and Speak," with discussion of an incident in Zeeland, Michigan, where the superintendent issued a directive that the first three Harry Potter books be removed from school libraries and no future books in the series be purchased. A group of infuriated students, backed by the American Library Association and other anti-censorship organizations, established the website *Kidspeak: Where Kids Speak Up for Free Speech* (no longer available). More than 18,000 tweens and teens across the country joined *Kidspeak* to protect the right to read. Under this pressure, the superintendent reversed his decision.[3] In the only Harry Potter challenge to go to court, Dakota Counts, supported by her parents, stood up for her right to read the Harry Potter books without her parents' written permission. In *Counts v. Cedarville School District*, District Court Judge Hendren ruled that the school district must place no restrictions on circulation of the books.

Dresang's outspoken participation in the support of children's right to access literature has been recognized in articles and books; however, it is the topic of the character Hermione Granger and the role of gender where she truly provides a perceptive perspective that continues to be debated and discussed. Dresang's 2012 essay "Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender" has been cited many times as a foundation of the study of gender in the Harry Potter novels. In it Dresang finds that Hermione is portrayed as a bookish individual who supports and guides Harry through her research and work. She is the dominant force in Harry's success until the sixth novel, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, where her role as Harry's educator is taken over by Dumbledore. Dresang sees Hermione as being far more successful than she is made out to be by other literary critics, such as Farah Mendlesohn, who have also focused on this topic.[4] Dresang points out that Hermione gains agency and is able to take more control of her situation through her own actions than Mendlesohn gives her credit for. Dresang finds evidence in the text to be considerably more optimistic about Hermione's self-determination through her insistence about being sorted by the Hat and her refusal to be deterred from her purposes, whether it be learning, admonishing about rules, or championing the underdog.

Dresang argues that the Harry Potter novels are, in fact, feminist in nature.[5] She bases her analysis on what Rowling has actually written, and not on what Rowling could or should have written; moreover, Dresang refuses to view Rowling's writing as female subjectivity seeking to confirm itself through discursive strategies of the fictional text. On the other hand, numerous comments and interviews given by Rowling confirm Dresang's opinion that the author did not write her novels as consciously feminist, i.e. with the express intention of promoting the equality of women.[6]

Dresang argues in defense of Hermione and Professor McGonagall, but does so by

looking at the books and the characters through various feminist lenses that offer a multiplicity of readings. Some critics, for example, are critical of Hermione's plastic surgery in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, where Hermione's big front teeth are straightened and made smaller, and her hair is no longer bushy when she attends the Yule Ball with Viktor Krum. But Dresang acknowledges that feminist criticism is not monolithic and discusses the different ways in which Hermione's actions can be viewed using various feminist approaches: "Radical-libertarian feminists maintain that females have the right to do whatever they want to with their bodies, while radical-cultural feminists would more likely disapprove of using the body in this manner to attract male attention."[7] Dresang acknowledges that the portrayal of gender in Rowling's novels creates a "mixed and inconclusive picture," and that the books do not represent utopian possibilities but instead depict "the far less than ideal reality of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries."[8]

Dresang distinguishes between caricature and stereotype characters. Literary caricature is a representation that includes comic exaggeration in the description of the internal or external characteristics of a character and always refers to the individual. Stereotype refers to a group and represents a mental picture that a society has created about that group, as well as simplified opinions, prejudice, etc.[9] Rowling herself has mentioned that she based the character of Hermione on a "caricature" of herself when she was younger.[10] In the first novel, Hermione is unable to suppress her boastful nature while on the train to Hogwarts and tells everyone that she has already read numerous books, that she knows everything about a variety of magical beings, and that she is intimately acquainted with Harry Potter's history. Hermione has not yet learned how to share her knowledge with others without alienating them in the process. Another aspect of the author that is apparent through Hermione is her dedication to the rights of other beings (e.g., minorities, the

poor). Rowling used to work for Amnesty International in London and was involved with the problem of human rights in Africa. In the novels, Hermione fiercely fights for the rights of the House-Elves, which does not reverberate well with her classmates.

According to Dresang, the stereotypes in Hermione's characterization are reflected in her hysterical, timid, and fearful behavior, as well as the language that Rowling uses to describe this behavior. These are typical terms connected with the "weaker" sex (crying, sobbing), and in the novels they are never used to describe male characters. This leads to the false interpretation of female characters as weak or comical, which is unacceptable in feminist criticism. In spite of this, Dresang views Hermione as a positive character because she is a perfect example of the idea that possessing information and knowledge leads to power. Thanks to the many books she has read, Hermione often saves the other characters, and her incredible industry, which sometimes borders on stubbornness, contributes to some readers' misconstrued view of her as invulnerable and indestructible. Regarding Hermione's crying and sobbing, Dresang points out that Rowling stated several times that she had never cried herself, so Hermione's hysterical outbursts and weeping occur too often for us to view them as a credible development of her character. This behavior is completely inconsistent with her key role in the novels. Dresang sees in this a deliberate exaggeration of characterization concealing some kind of special agenda by Rowling.

However, Hermione's character develops from novel to novel, and the above-mentioned descriptions are gradually replaced by those with stronger adjectives and verbs as she becomes more powerful and focused on world problems. Roberta Seelinger Trites calls such an approach "subverting stereotypes," which can appear over the course of a novel, although the hero or heroine does not possess any particular abilities or powers at the beginning.[11] Hermione's character grows beyond the stereotype of the weak woman/geek and gradually attains abilities

usually attributed to male heroes, a process that could be termed androgynization. It should be pointed out that not all feminists agree with such an androgynous approach to feminism, as Dresang discusses:

> While radical-libertarian feminists believe both men and women should be androgynous, that is, have access to the full range of so-called male and female characteristics, radical-cultural feminists look more to the enhancement of the so-called female qualities. Although the series is not finished, by book four Hermione seems to be in the process of combining both masculine and feminine traits and thereby subverting the stereotypes imposed on her in earlier books.[12]

Dresang's Radical Change theory, first described in her 1999 book, *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age*, was developed in the mid-1990s. It serves as a lens through which to explain and use contemporary literature to examine youth growing up in the Digital Age. It identifies changes in forms and formats, perspectives, and boundaries in this body of literature—all changes related to the interactivity, connectivity, and access of the Digital Age.

When Dresang first conceived the Radical Change theory, almost everyone agreed that digital technologies were changing radically, yet almost no one acknowledged the concomitant change in a growing cadre of printed books for youth. Moreover, those who did take note of the changes in books saw little or no relationship between these alterations and the Digital Age in which they were written, illustrated, and published. Consequently, in discussions of the integration of technology in education, printed books were often either forgotten or treated as a completely different, unrelated entity.

In her 2008 reflection on her book, Dresang realized that Radical Change was then and is still the only theory that makes this connection between printed books for youth and the digital

environment. Radical Change is what is known as a spatial/temporal theory, rooted in the belief that authors and illustrators are influenced by the time and place within which they write. As Dresang points out, Mikhail Bakhtin noted that "for the purpose of his writing, an author must create entire worlds and, in doing so, is forced to make use of the organizing categories of the real world in which he lives."[13] Radical Change theory fits this tradition. It recognizes that temporal and spatial relationships in the digital world have "resulted in historically manifested narrative forms," in this case narrative forms of interactivity, connectivity, and access in books for youth.[14]

The principles upon which Radical Change are based explain how this offline/online synergy has grown and developed. Dresang finds that the Harry Potter books precipitated the largest online literary community in Internet history, a community of intense book discussion, role-playing, and creative writing. Dresang concludes that Radical Change predicts even more synergy of media as the Digital Age principles mature. The synergy created by shared interactivity, connectivity, and access between the print and digital environments makes all types of media involved more dynamic.

In 2014 Dresang, in collaboration with Kathleen Campana, turned to a new yet related element found in the Harry Potter series, that of the intratextual repetition used by Rowling. Dresang and Campana discuss how Rowling's intratextuality ultimately offers readers pleasure when they recognize that uncontextualized hints—references not discernible as significant upon first reading—are available to be recalled and found.[15] While foreshadowing is commonplace in literature, Rowling's particular type of intratextuality appears to be unique.

One example of intratextuality discussed by Dresang and Campana involves the character of Mrs. Figg, Harry's cat-loving neighbor. Mrs. Figg first appears in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* when the Dursleys leave Harry with her and go out to celebrate Dudley's

birthday. She reappears at the end of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* and again at the beginning of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. In this latter appearance, it is revealed that Mrs. Figg is a squib (a member of a wizarding family who does not have magical powers) and that she has been keeping an eye on Harry for Dumbledore the entire time he has lived with the Dursleys. Dresang and Campana find that it was therefore possible for a reader to deduce that Mrs. Figg does not invite Harry to tea only to be nice, but also to look out for him. They conclude that astute readers would therefore be able to deduce that while Harry feels forgotten and ignored by Dumbledore, the headmaster is actually watching over Harry and is concerned for his welfare.

Although intertextuality is evident throughout Rowling's series, close analysis of her work by Dresang and Campana reveals that both within and across the seven volumes, she also employs self-citational intratextuality. Dresang and Campana define intratextual repetition as "repetition as adaptation or unfoldering, repeating always with a difference."[16] Rowling's uncommon use of intratextual repetition, simple or complex, begins with an insertion of the entity to be repeated (a person, an inanimate object, a place, or a magical spell), without any signal that this element is to be taken as particularly meaningful. But its repetition in another context and at a later point plays a significant role in furthering the story. With no contextual clues from the author, readers are on their own to discover these treasures, as if Rowling is saying, "Maybe it's something you need to find out for yourself."[17] Dresang and Campana suggest that while Harry and his friends might call this type of repetition "transfiguration," they could also call it, simply, "magic."

Whereas intertextuality offers extra reading pleasure to the most informed readers, Dresang and Campana find that intratextuality offers rewards to a wider range of readers. Intratextuality within the Harry Potter books had not been discussed in any academic paper that

Dresang and Campana could locate, despite the dozens of examples of intratextual repetition in the series. They outline four examples, demonstrating their usefulness to four different types of readers, which they call the informed reader, the reflective reader, the astute reader, and the learning reader.[18] Dresang and Campana conclude that Rowling's use of intratextuality extends the pleasure of being in the know—a pleasure normally offered only to the most informed readers through intertextuality—to any careful reader of the Harry Potter series. In effect, Rowling's use of intratextuality produces both the frame for the cultural unit of careful readers of the series and the means for various kinds of readers to fit within that frame.

Eliza Dresang's impact in the field of Harry Potter research is perhaps most impressive in that it was fueled by her passion for the books and for the community of readers that was created through reading these books. Her recognition of the potential impact that these books would have on readers was ahead of its time. Her ability to contribute a unique point of view on the impact of this series for readers has added an important perspective to the scholarship of Harry Potter, whether she was discussing the attempted censorship of the books, the way in which the role of Hermione Granger reflected gender, Rowling's use of intertextual repetition, or in her most self-reflective look at the series, the ways in which the Harry Potter books precipitated the largest online literary community in Internet history, as demonstrated by her own theory of Radical Change.

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Looking at Kim Dong Hwa's Color Trilogy through the Prism of Radical Change

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Abstract

This essay examines Kim Dong Hwa's *manhwa* (Korean graphic novel) series the Color Trilogy using the critical framework of Eliza Dresang's Radical Change theory. This theory has had a significant impact on children's and young adult literature scholarship in the years since the publication of her 1999 book, *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age*. In the book, Dresang devoted very little space to discussing graphic novels. However, in a subsequent essay published in 2008, Dresang states that had she been writing the book then, she would have devoted at least one full chapter to a discussion of the graphic novel format. We attempt to extend Dresang's work by examining Kim's trilogy through the prism of Radical Change theory. We argue that all three types of Radical Change—Changing Forms and Formats, Changing Perspectives, and Changing Boundaries—are evident in Kim's sensitive, poetic story of a young girl's sexual awakening in early twentieth-century rural Korea.

Introduction

Over the course of her career, Eliza Dresang made a number of contributions to scholarship on children's and young adult literature, but none has been more significant than her theory of Radical Change. In her 1999 book, *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age*, Dresang outlines the theory, which she based on characteristics she had noticed in many books published since the advent of personal computers and the Internet. These books, she argues, both reflect and facilitate the digital age principles of connectivity, interactivity, and access. She categorizes the types of changes she observed as follows:

- Radical Change 1 (RC1): Changing Forms and Formats
- Radical Change 2 (RC2): Changing Perspectives
- Radical Change 3 (RC3): Changing Boundaries[1]

While each type of change involves a variety of nuances, the overall concept suggests that these Radical Change books are offering new and exciting ways for young people to engage with texts and, in a broader sense, with the world around them.

Radical Change theory has had a widespread impact not only in library and information studies, but in education and literary studies as well. In a 2008 essay, "Radical Change Revisited: Dynamic Digital Age Books for Youth," Dresang notes that the digital age principles of connectivity, interactivity, and access continue to be incorporated into print books, and, in fact, "manifestations of these and other indicators . . . have matured considerably in the ensuing decade and are continuing to appear in more and more sophisticated forms and formats, promoting more and more active engagement of the user/participant/reader, just as is happening with other dynamic media."[2] She goes on to point out that Radical Change characteristics have continued to appear in the types of books she discussed in 1999 but are also evident in some types of books she did not discuss, including graphic novels. In fact, she writes, "I find no change has been more dramatic than that of the graphic novel."[3] While her discussion of the format amounts to less than two pages in her original book, she states that "if written today, my discussion of this format would comprise at least one entire chapter, for with the interactivity and graphic dominance of much digital media, this print format has mushroomed."[4]

In this essay, we attempt to extend Dresang's work by examining Kim Dong Hwa's[5] Color Trilogy,[6] a well-regarded Korean graphic novel (manhwa) series consisting of *The Color of Earth*, *The Color of Water*, and *The Color of Heaven*.[7] By looking at these books through the lens of Radical Change theory, we will demonstrate that Kim's series achieves synergy between words and pictures (RC1); offers new perspectives, in terms of history, culture, and gender (RC2); and expands boundaries in its frank depiction of the sexual awakening of its female protagonist (RC3).

We are considering the English-language versions of these books, which have been widely read, well-received, and marketed to young adults in the United States. Admittedly, we are considering these books from a Western perspective, but we do not see that as a weakness since we are interested in the interpretation of the books by Western readers, specifically young adults in the United States. In any case, Dresang's theory grew out of an examination of primarily Western and specifically English-language books for children and young adults in hopes of expanding their perspectives. Radical Change theory provides a particularly appropriate framework for analyzing the achievement of the Color Trilogy in employing images and text to present a culturally and historically unique perspective to Western readers.

Kim Dong Hwa and the Color Trilogy

With a career spanning more than forty years, Kim Dong Hwa is a celebrated manhwa artist in South Korea. Kim first gained popularity with female readers with romance manhwa such as *Our Story* (1970), *My Sky* (1975) and *Fairy Pink* (1984), and then with younger male readers, with titles like *Run, Thunderboy, Run* (1990), after changing his style in an effort to escape the focus on just the "pretty things" in his earlier romantic titles.[8] Influenced by Im Kwon-taek's 1993 film *Seopyonje*, Kim again retooled his approach to comics seeking to emulate what he called a "Korean aesthetic" in a 2009 interview with Seo Chan-hwe,[9] as well as to capture a broader audience. In this pursuit of a Korean aesthetic, Kim spent months relearning to draw women without the influence of Western standards of beauty.[10] Kim also readopted a cursive drawing style that was once popular in the 1970s to entice older readers to rekindle their passion for manhwa.[11]

Emerging from these efforts were acclaimed titles such as *The Story of Kisaeng* (1996), *Red Bicycle* (2003), and, of course, the series that would later become the Color Trilogy. All are titles that highlight emotive, uniquely Korean slice-of-life tales with universal appeal.[12] Since some readers may not be familiar with the Color Trilogy, we have included a brief plot summary for each book below.

Set in the rural South Korean village of Namwon sometime in the first half of the twentieth century, the Color Trilogy presents a coming-of-age story about a young girl, Ehwa, and her mother, a widow who owns and operates the village's tavern. In *The Color of Earth* (*CE*), seven-year-old Ehwa begins to learn about what it means to be a woman, particularly the differences between boys and girls; as she grows up, she experiences love and loss with her first two major crushes—Chung-Myung, a young monk in training, and Sunoo, a student from the Kwangju Province. Ehwa's mother's romantic life also is rekindled when she meets a traveling artist, known as the picture man throughout the trilogy, who seeks refuge at the tavern one night.

In *The Color of Water* (*CW*), Ehwa meets and begins to fall for a handsome and slightly older boy, Duksam, after he displays his strength during a wrestling match at the annual Tano Festival, a celebration of the coming summer. With guidance and peer pressure from her friend Bongsoon, Ehwa continues to learn more about her body and sex, by experiencing an orgasm for the first time. Meanwhile, the traveling artist and Ehwa's mother's relationship continues to blossom despite his infrequent visits.

As Ehwa and Duksam begin to get closer, the old farmer Master Cho, who happens to be Duksam's boss, takes a liking to Ehwa and sends an offer to purchase her as his wife from her mother, which she promptly refuses. Upon learning of Master Cho's plans, Duksam destroys the old farmer's property and must leave the village in fear of repercussions. Before leaving, Duksam promises to return to Ehwa with enough money to make a life together. Tearfully, Ehwa says she'll wait for him. As such, both Ehwa and her mother are left longing and waiting for their loved ones to return.

In *The Color of Heaven* (*CH*), both Ehwa's and her mother's romances eventually come to fruition. During the wait for their significant others to return, Ehwa and her mother grow closer than ever through conversations about love and life as women, Ehwa's father, and Ehwa's future. The story ends with Ehwa's marriage at sixteen to

Duksam, and with the traveling artist's plan to settle down with Ehwa's mother, seemingly for good.

Kim has said he hopes that by focusing on the Korean aesthetic, his work, including the Color Trilogy, will appeal to a wide audience, from youth all the way through to their grandparents.[13] Interestingly, the English versions of the Color Trilogy are most frequently recommended for and marketed to young adults ages fourteen and up, but also occasionally to those as young as eleven or twelve (according to the aggregated reviews of the series available in the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database).

Radical Change Type 1: Changing Forms and Formats

Dresang defines RC1 books as those that "convey information in a bold, graphic manner and in exciting new forms and formats."[14] She identifies several characteristics of RC1 books, two of which seem especially applicable to Kim's achievement in the Color Trilogy: "words and pictures reaching new levels of synergy" and "multiple layers of meaning."[15] In its beautiful and poetic interweaving of words and pictures, the books in the Color Trilogy not only exemplify characteristics of RC1, but also reflect and facilitate what the New London Group calls "multiliteracies," a term meant to suggest "the multiplicity of communications channels and media, and the increasing saliency of cultural and linguistic diversity."[16] Specifically, Kim's series employs three of the six design elements in what the New London Group describes as "the meaning-making process": linguistic, visual, and multimodal, by which they mean patterns of meaning that relate the other modes to one another.[17] Dresang and Koh, in a discussion of the relationship between Radical Change theory and youth information-seeking behavior, note that one characteristic of digital age youth is their "preference for graphic and visual information."[18] As Dresang explains in *Radical Change*, a new relationship between words and pictures, which she calls "synergy," has emerged in the digital age, a relationship in which "words become pictures and pictures become words."[19] Moreover, Dresang points out the "visual and verbal layering of story"[20] that also characterizes the relationship between words and pictures in many RC1 books. Of course, comic books and graphic novels have always relied on readers' attraction to and understanding of the

relationship between words and pictures, and therefore are natural examples of RC1. While not unique among graphic novels in this respect, the Color Trilogy offers many notably skillful examples of RC1 in a graphic format.[21]

Despite its name, the Color Trilogy is published in black-and-white. As such, the synergy between words and pictures throughout the trilogy contributes additional detail and contextual clues to its expansive scenes. Early in *CE*, Ehwa is caught in a sudden downpour.[22] Kim uses words, typefaces, and onomatopoeia to emphasize the sounds and feel of the storm: "**THUNDER**" in a bold, aggressive font over an image of dark clouds; *"plop, plop, plop"* in a playful font that seemingly bounces off of the page as the first rain drops fall; and "SHHH" hanging in the air, blended into the backdrop of rain with a ghostly, fuzzy font.

Kim's lyrical approach to narration and fluid scene design matches well with the characteristics of RC1. Vollmar captures this notion in his review of the series: "Kim . . . uses a dizzying array of narrative tools to craft the story, moving seamlessly from poetic narration to dialogue in metaphor. He shows no reluctance, however, in turning the story over to the visual component in order to capture the rhythms of a particular moment."[23] Throughout the series, Kim plays with the pace of the story and the delivery method of the narrative, often with varying panel layouts, text floating above the scenes with or without boxes, and changes in drawing style.

For example, in *CE*, we find Ehwa after just recently experiencing her first period reflecting on her new womanhood and what love awaits for her.[24] In this scene, Kim shifts from a full-page drawing of Ehwa walking in the rain with a closed text box floating above to a series of panels with various sizes as Ehwa gazes into the reflection pool hoping to get a glimpse of her first love. In *CW*, Kim abandons panels entirely for a two-page spread depicting Ehwa and her mother deep in thought and conversation across the span, overlaying the scene with a reflexive, poetic narration of a mother's worries for her daughter's future life.[25]

In many scenes throughout the Color Trilogy, Kim utilizes his drawings alone to convey meaning and emotion. The Color Trilogy is rich with metaphors of rain, flowers, and the seasons to signify coming of age and feelings of love and longing. The finale of *CH* is a grand example of Kim's use of images, and not words, as metaphors. As Ehwa

and Duksam consummate their wedding night, Kim sensitively and intimately combines lined drawings of their figures with flashes of light, glowing lanterns, waves and pools of water, fluttering butterflies, and clouds to capture the love, beauty, and ecstasy of the moment rather than offering detailed depictions of intercourse.

Additionally, Kim often creates contrast in his scenes by overlaying cartoonish, yet not overly exaggerated characters over a realistically detailed background. There are many examples of this technique in the trilogy. For example, in *CE*, Kim depicts Ehwa's mother sitting in the door frame of her tavern, waiting for her love to return.[26] The contrast between the detailed tavern and Ehwa's mother's pale face is stark, inviting readers to feel her loneliness. In his book *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud argues that the more cartoonish, less human-like figures in comics make it easier for readers to identify with the characters and see themselves in the story.[27]

The features of RC1 apparent in the Color Trilogy also enable readers to view and interact with new or evolving perspectives.

Radical Change 2: Changing Perspectives

Dresang defines RC2 books as those that offer "changing perspectives" to youth.[28] She argues that this type of radical change can be accomplished through "multiple perspectives, visual and verbal" and "previously unheard voices," among other things, in books for youth.[29] As a fine example of manhwa, the Color Trilogy offers new and alternative perspectives of Korean culture, women, and history, using both thoughtful narrative and delicate artwork.

Manhwa as a graphic art form was able to develop since 1909 in its own right long before the external influence of Japanese manga, which was not imported into Korea until the 1990s.[30] While manhwa shares many characteristics with manga, such as the emphasis on emotion and the use of symbolism,[31] there are many ways in which it stands out. For one, the Korean written language, Hangul, is written and read left to right, top to bottom, making manhwa more accessible for Western audiences to read and easier for publishers to translate for new markets; however, this often results in marketing manhwa incorrectly as "Japanese light" novels or "flipped" (or reversed) manga.[32] More

specifically, while there are variations and exceptions, manhwa tend to be more realistic and conservative in artistic and storytelling approaches, and more focused on characters' development than plot.[33] Manhwa also feature characters that tend to have slender, more realistic bodies, sometimes with exaggerated faces (which, unlike manga, often have defined lips) and eyes; prominent use of screentone, shading, and texturing; and cultural annotations.[34]

The English-translated version of the Color Trilogy features cultural annotations throughout the series that provide insight on and context for Korean culture and social norms, which do not appear in the Korean originals. In *CW*, for example, feeling slightly embarrassed after her first interaction with Duksam, Ehwa remarks that she and her mother had hung up a sweet rush doll to keep evil at bay.[35] A footnote tells readers: "The mugwort and the sweet rush are aromatic plants frequently used in Eastern Medicine. They were also believed to ward off bad luck. Koreans would often make figures out of them and hang them in their homes."[36] Early into *CH*, Ehwa is punished for sneaking out in the middle of the night to bid farewell to Duksam before he escapes on a train and then refusing to reveal whom she was with to her mother.[37] As punishment, Ehwa's mother strikes the back of Ehwa's legs with a stick several times before concluding the punishment and handing the stick to Ehwa to dispose of it. The footnote at the bottom of the page reveals the purpose of this gesture: "In Korean culture it is customary for the child to discard the rod that was used for discipline. It's symbolic of recognizing one's error and discarding the wrongdoing, never to make the mistake again."[38]

These annotations, and those throughout the series, give young readers a glimpse into Korean culture and history, as well as many small inspirations and incentives to learn more. Dresang is a strong advocate for both international and multicultural literature for youth. For example, she praises the International Children's Digital Library (ICDL) as a resource that offers children and libraries access to books from many languages, countries, and cultures throughout the world.[39] She argues that "in-depth explorations into various corners of cultural and personal life add new dimension to all children's lives."[40]

In the example above, Ehwa's mother, of course, can tell that Ehwa is holding back her tears not because of the punishment, but due to loss of someone dear to her.[41]

Ehwa and her mother are often found throughout the series discussing their romances and their lives as women, as well as joking and otherwise enjoying each other's company. For example, in *CW* soon after Ehwa's crush on Duksam begins to unfold, Ehwa teases her mother, saying that even in his prime the picture man would have been no match for Duksam; she tells her his eyes are "droopy and full of misfortune" rather than "big and bright," insinuating that Ehwa's mother has low standards.[42] Ehwa's mother takes this to heart, feeling mixed emotions of doubt about the picture man, as well as worry and hope for Ehwa's future relationships. Ehwa and her mother's familial bond and trusting friendship throughout the trilogy is a major means of connecting readers to their own lives and to the story. The ability to peer into the thoughts of both Ehwa and her mother help the reader to understand their perspectives, what they are thinking and why they feel the way do, potentially giving insight into readers' own relationships with one or both of their parents.

Kim is well known for his interest in and ability to write thoughtfully and sensitively about women.[43] However, Kim has still faced criticism for how some women are portrayed in his works, succumbing to or seemingly endorsing sexist, patriarchal culture and traditional gender roles: for example, portraying women as having only simple natures, being obsessed with beauty and romance, waiting on and for men (Duksam and the picture man), tolerating sexual harassment (the constant bombardment of inappropriate gestures and advances from patrons at the tavern), and feeling shame as an unmarried woman.[44] Unfortunately, sexist, patriarchal culture was as prevalent then as it is now, albeit perhaps more so, and this trilogy shows readers that sexist attitudes and behavior are nothing new, but there is still hope for change.

The final scene in *CH* depicts Ehwa's mother conversing with the traveling artist on her porch in the midst of a renewing, yet melancholic rain shower. She shares a bittersweet reflection, "I think it's a woman's fate to always be waiting. . . . It never dawned on me that there would come a time that I would be staring at the village entrance waiting for my daughter."[45] While dramatic, we interpret such a statement as speaking on the nature of love, rather than the nature of women.

Kim, reflecting on the Color Trilogy, remarked, "Since I was very young, I've been interested in expressing the growth and change (mentally and physically) of a girl in

manhwa form. . . . Ehwa is the result of tracing back my mother's youth."[46] Kim goes on to admit that it would be a lie if he were to claim that he completely understands women.[47] He continues, "I think there's a wide river between women and men that men can not immediately cross. So it wasn't easy for me to understand women's relationships and emotions, especially a mother and daughter's."[48] With the heavy use of metaphors and quotes (e.g., "The heart of a woman is really strange" in *CW*) throughout the trilogy,[49] Kim artfully pays respect to womanhood while seeming to admit his own shortcomings in understanding them and to leave room for the readers' own interpretations. Inspired by the life of his own mother and the reverence that Koreans hold for the relationship between mothers and their daughters, Kim spent a long time studying Korean art and literature in order to develop a meaningful understanding of the mother and daughter dynamic.[50]

Despite the criticism of others and his own words of caution, Kim does portray Ehwa and her mother as independent and empowered women. Ehwa's mother owns and operates the tavern on her own, supporting both herself and Ehwa; maintains grace and dignity when dealing with condescending and misogynistic male patrons; denies the advances of an old man attempting to purchase Ehwa; and raises an independent daughter who marries of her own will and choice.[51] Ehwa's mother serves as her guardian and champion by embracing independence and denying archaic traditions.

Kim offers glimpses into the tragedies of those who cannot escape such traditions. For example, in *CW* Ehwa finds her friend Chungja out late one night, sobbing at the base of a tree. Ehwa congratulates Chungja on her upcoming marriage, certain that these are happy tears. Chungja then explains that her marriage was arranged with a nine-year-old boy, and that she must live with her young husband and his grandmother to care for them and learn the ways of their household.[52] Ehwa, shocked, relays this to her mother, partly in fear that the same fate awaits her. Her mother assures her that she would not let that happen to Ehwa, even if the bidder was wealthy (a promise she does keep), and that she would find a husband that Ehwa would like, or if Ehwa likes someone, she would like them too. While these situations and cultural traditions may be shocking to today's Western readers, Ehwa and her mother could be seen as examples of the transition from old to new ideas as Korea underwent enlightenment and rapid modernization during that

era—movements that owe much to the participation and contributions of women in regards to education, social justice, and civil rights.[53]

Along with the characteristics of RC1, the new or alternative perspectives offered in the Color Trilogy help expand the boundaries of what can and should be considered valuable and important literature for youth.

Radical Change 3: Changing Boundaries

Dresang defines RC3, Changing Boundaries, as changes that push the boundaries of topics considered appropriate for and/or interesting to young people. These characteristics include (among other things) previously "forbidden" subjects, "overlooked" settings, and "new, complex" characterizations.[54] Through its setting in early twentieth-century rural Korea, Kim's trilogy introduces Western youth (and perhaps many Korean ones as well) to a place and time with which they are likely unfamiliar, illustrating both key differences and striking similarities between the concerns of young people then and the concerns of young people now.

For example, today's readers would find things like cooking on a wood-fired stove and traveling long distances on foot to be novel ideas. They would also likely be intrigued by the beautiful rural countryside and fascinated with Korean courtship practices and wedding rituals. By the same token, they might be puzzled by and uncomfortable with the strict patriarchal society and the sexist attitudes displayed by some of the adult males, and they would almost certainly be disturbed by the notion of an old man trying to buy a young girl as a bride, a fate from which Ehwa is saved by her protective, strong-willed mother.

They would also note many similarities to growing up today, although they might be surprised to find certain "forbidden" topics as bodily functions and sexual awakening dealt with in such a frank way. *CE,* for instance, opens with the image of two beetles copulating—and two young men commenting lasciviously about the scene. Soon the two boys are engaging in a peeing contest and asking Ehwa to show them her *gochoo* (literally, a chili pepper, but also a slang term for penis). As the book continues, readers witness a young monk's first wet dream, Ehwa's first period, and another young man

(repeatedly) masturbating. The book suggests that young people a hundred years ago were just as fascinated by bodily functions as young people are today—although contemporary readers might be surprised at how little change there has been in some aspects of growing up. But for many of today's youth, the connections between bodily functions and the natural world might be a new idea. From the copulating beetles on the opening pages to the implicit comparison of a penis to a *gochoo*, to the description of the female and male versions of the ginkgo tree and the erotic nature of the gourd flower that opens only at night, the book is filled with sexualized images of the natural world that parallel the sexual feelings of the characters, both young people and adults.

And this is another sense in which Kim's books push the boundaries of what might be considered appropriate for young readers, for the focus of the series is on Ehwa's awakening sexuality and her mother's reawakening sexuality. Early in *CE*, seven-year-old Ehwa compares body parts with her mother while she is bathing. Ehwa, after her disturbing conversation with the urinating boys, is concerned about not having a *gochoo*. Her mother assures her that women do not have one, but that they actually have something more precious—"the door where babies come from."[55] Later, after a conversation with a more worldly boy, we see an older Ehwa exploring her own body and wondering, "Is there really a persimmon seed hidden inside a woman's body?"[56] The evocatively simple, two-page line drawing shows Ehwa peering at herself as she holds her skirt in front of her.

A significant portion (approximately twenty pages) of *CW* deals with Ehwa's gaining information about sex from her friend Bongsoon.[57] This section culminates in Ehwa's first experience masturbating, and, again, the scene is rendered in a simple, two-page line drawing without shading or detail. The effect is to focus the reader's attention on the almost otherworldly ecstasy of the moment. This drawing style is continued in *CH* in the penultimate scenes depicting Ehwa and Duksam's wedding night. Highly imagistic, these scenes intercut between the two lovers and visual metaphors such as waves crashing, the sun beating down, Duksam plunging into a pool of water, a dandelion being blown apart by the wind, butterflies fluttering, and so on. The highly charged, erotic scenes of the young lovers are also intercut with highly comical scenes of an old man trying to make love to his wife. His failed attempts, rather than arousing her

wife's passion, inspire her derision. The juxtaposition of scenes with the young lovers with those of the old lovers adds a layer of complexity to the way love and sexuality are depicted in *CH*, alternating in this case between the sublime and the ridiculous.

A richer and more serious juxtaposition is seen throughout the series in the parallel between Ehwa's sexual awakening and her mother's sexual reawakening. Though the picture man's visits are infrequent, it is obvious that Ehwa's mother and he care for each other. Rather than showing intimacy directly, Kim suggests it through images of two pairs of shoes resting on the step outside the house and an increasing number of the artist's paintbrushes hanging on the wall. During long stretches when the picture man is traveling, Ehwa's mother's longing parallels her daughter's yearning when Duksam is away at sea earning money so that he and Ehwa can get married. By presenting these two love stories in parallel, Kim deepens and enriches the effect of each.

Yet another way in which the Color Trilogy pushes boundaries is in focusing on a strong, single female character and her daughter in a time and place historically and geographically remote for today's young readers. In many ways, the most compelling love story told in the Color Trilogy is that of the mother-daughter bond. The characterizations of Ehwa and her mother are thoughtfully and convincingly delineated. At times, they are best friends, such as when they discuss their love interests. At other times, they are clearly portrayed as parent and child, for example, when Ehwa's mother switches her daughter after she stays out late seeing Duksam off at the train station and refusing to tell her mother where she's been. And at yet other times, the relationship is more one of mentor-mentee: Ehwa's mother offers poetic descriptions of sexuality and love, often serving as a corrective to the misinformation that Bongsoon has provided. Not surprisingly, the two women experience complicated, bittersweet feelings about being separated from each other when Ehwa gets married.

Expanding the boundaries of what is (and is not) considered appropriate for young readers may meet with objections on the part of parents and other adults, especially when the boundaries being expanded have to do with sex and sexuality. While these topics are not new in books for young people, they are, according to Dresang, "being revisited with greater candor," especially in Radical Change books: "The focus is on what young people

want to know and how they want to know it, rather than on what *adults* want them to know and how they want them to know it."[58]

It should be noted that another of Dresang's passions was intellectual freedom, and she was a tireless advocate for young people's right to read what they chose. In fact, along with John S. Simmons, she coauthored *School Censorship in the 21st Century: A Guide for Teachers and School Library Media Specialists*.[59] Perhaps it is not surprising that the Color Trilogy was number two on the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom's list of most frequently challenged books in 2011.[60] The reasons given for the challenges: "nudity; sex education; sexually explicit; unsuited to age group."[61] At the same time, the three books of the series made the Young Adult Library Association's Great Graphic Novels for Teens list in 2010, and reviewers praised the books, noting about one that "indelicate moments" were "tenderly rendered"[62] and that while "sexuality and puberty . . . are frankly depicted," this "quiet, dreamy book" is also "a thoughtful coming-of-age story."[63] No doubt, the fact that the books have been marketed to young adults and have received a number of accolades has drawn the attention and ire of some adults. It is also quite possible that what these adults find most objectionable is the *visual* depiction of sex and sexuality, which circles back to our earlier discussion of the multiliteracies reflected in and facilitated by these graphic novels. In any case, it is clear that the three types of Radical Change are closely interwoven throughout these books, offering a reading experience that fosters connectivity, interactivity, and access.

Conclusion

Looking at the Color Trilogy through the prism of Radical Change both deepens one's appreciation for Kim's achievement and confirms the efficacy of Dresang's theory as a tool for critical analysis and evaluation. Through the coming-of-age story of a young girl in early twentieth-century rural Korea, Kim creates synergy between words and pictures (RC1), introduces new perspectives (RC2), and expands thematic boundaries (RC3). In so doing, he encourages the kind of interactive, thoughtful, engaged reading that Dresang argued was facilitated by Radical Change books. By stripping away the lines in his

mother's face (as he notes in the introduction to each volume in the series), he sees "her transform into a blushing sixteen-year-old girl."[64] In effect, he brings this "traditional" story into the digital age, making it accessible for today's young people and helping them connect with the life of a Korean girl from nearly a century ago.

Notes

[1] Eliza T. Dresang, *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1999), 19, 24, 26.

[2] Eliza T. Dresang, "Radical Change Revisited: Dynamic Digital Age Books for Youth," *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* 8 (2008): 295.

[3] Ibid., 297.

[4] Ibid.

[5] While he is credited as Kim Dong Hwa on the English version of the Color Trilogy, it is culturally appropriate to refer to him as Kim Donghwa, where Kim is the surname.

[6] The Color Trilogy was originally published as a serialized comic strip in *Twenty Seven* magazine over three years before being gathered and eventually published as a three-volume set in 2003 under the title *The Story of Life on the Golden Plains* in the Korean edition. The English-language three-volume set, published in 2009, was translated by Lauren Na. More information can be found in this interview: Michael C. Lorah, "The Colors of Kim Dong Hwa—the 'Color' Trilogy," *Newsarama.com*, April 16, 2009, http://www.newsarama.com/2683-the-colors-of-kim-dong-hwa-the-color-trilogy.html.

[7] Kim Dong Hwa, *The Color of Earth*, *The Color of Water*, *The Color of Heaven* (New York: First Second, 2009).

[8] "Dong Hwa Kim," *MacMillan.com* (2014), http://us.macmillan.com/author/donghwakim; Chan-hwe Seo, "Drawing a New Korean Aesthetic," *_list Books from Korea* 6 (Winter 2009), http://www.list.or.kr/articles/article_view.htm?Div1=9&Div2=&Idx=303&lPage=2.

[9] Chan-hwe Seo, "Drawing a New Korean Aesthetic."

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Dresang, *Radical Change*, 19.

[15] Ibid.

[16] The New London Group, "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures," *Harvard Educational Review* 66 (1996): 63.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Eliza T. Dresang and Kyungwon Koh, "Radical Change Theory, Youth Information Behavior, and School Libraries," *Library Trends* 58 (2009): 34.

[19] Dresang, *Radical Change*, 88.

[20] Ibid., 22.

[21] You can preview both *CE* and *CH* on Google Books for some of the examples we discuss below.

[22] Kim, *The Color of Earth*, 20–21.

[23] Rob Vollmar, "Three Korean Graphic Novelists Reimagine the Genre," *World Literature Today* 84 (2010): 58.

[24] Kim, *The Color of Earth*, 184–85.

[25] Kim, *The Color of Water*, 180–81.

[26] Kim, *The Color of Earth*, 70.

[27] Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: William Morrow, 1993), 36.

[28] Dresang, *Radical Change*, 24.

[29] Ibid.

[30] In-ha Park, "100 Years of Korean Manhwa" *_list Books from Korea* 4 (Summer 2009), http://www.list.or.kr/articles/article_view.htm?cPage=1&Div1=8&Idx=177.

[31] Robin E. Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2007); Elizabeth Kalen, *Mostly Manga: A Genre Guide to Popular Manga, Manhwa, Manhua, and Anime* (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2012).

[32] Michelle Martinez, "Manhwa: South Korean Comics," in *Critical Survey of Graphic Novels: History, Theme, and Technique,* ed. Bart H. Beaty and Stephen Weiner (Ipswich, MA: Salem Press, 2012.); Kalen, *Mostly Manga*.

[33] Martinez, "Manhwa."

[34] Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*; Kalen, *Mostly Manga.*

[35] Kim, *The Color of Water*, 25.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Kim, *The Color of Heaven*, 14–35.

[38] Ibid., 35.

[39] Dresang, "Radical Change Revisited."

[40] Dresang, *Radical Change*, 133.

[41] Kim, *The Color of Heaven*, 36–40.

[42] Kim, *The Color of Water*, 48–49.

[43] "Dong Hwa Kim," *MacMillan.com*; Lorah, "The Colors of Kim Dong Hwa."

[44] Daniel D. Clark, "Color Trilogy, The," in *Critical Survey of Graphic Novels: Independents and Underground Classics*, ed. Bart H. Beaty and Stephen Weiner (Ipswich, MA: Salem Press, 2012).

[45] Kim, *The Color of Heaven*, 310.

[46] Lorah, "The Colors of Kim Dong Hwa."

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Kim, *The Color of Water*, 53.

[50] Lorah, "The Colors of Kim Dong Hwa."

[51] Ibid.

[52] Kim, *The Color of Water*, 175–79.

[53] Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi, eds., *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Yung-Chung Kim. *Women of Korea: A History from Ancient Times to 1945* (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1977).

[54] Dresang, *Radical Change*, 26.

[55] Kim, *The Color of Earth*, 32.

[56] Ibid., 238.

[57] Another criticism of the Color Trilogy noted by Clark is the contrast between the sexual promiscuity of the less attractive Bongsoon and the purity, chastity, and beauty of Ehwa, where it is argued that Bongsoon's behaviors and appearance seem to be portrayed as less desirable or acceptable. In an interview, Kim addresses this by stating he wanted

to have the contrast and friendship there to show different ways in life and to show the uniqueness of Ehwa, but not to say whether Bongsoon or Ehwa was necessarily better or worse than other. Clark, "Color Trilogy"; Lorah, "The Colors of Kim Dong Hwa."

[58] Dresang, *Radical Change*, 190–91; emphasis in original.

[59] John S. Simmons and Eliza T. Dresang, *School Censorship in the 21st Century: A Guide for Teachers and School Library Media Specialists* (Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2001).

[60] American Library Association, "Frequently Challenged Books of the 21st Century," 2014, http://www.ala.org/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Karen Coats, review of *The Color of Earth*, in *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* 62 (2009). Retrieved from Children's Literature Comprehensive Database.

[63] Amy Luedtke, review of *The Color of Earth*, in *Voice of Youth Advocates* 32 (2009). Retrieved from Children's Literature Comprehensive Database.

[64] Kim, *The Color of Earth*, 7.

Putting Youth First: The Radical Eliza T. Dresang

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Putting Youth First: The Radical Eliza T. Dresang

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Abstract

This tribute presents a multi-faceted, multi-voiced perspective on the career and work of the late Dr. Eliza T. Dresang through the words of her colleagues. Dresang's groundbreaking work, *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age* (1999), grew out of conversations with colleagues that were facilitated by her service on book award and other committees. In her research, she pursued the larger connections between children's publishing and the burgeoning digital world, and she had an immeasurable impact on the world of children's and teen library services. She also influenced future youth services librarians by championing groundbreaking changes to the library school curriculum at the University of Washington. Throughout her career, Dresang advocated for services and literature that keep the needs of youth at their core. Her focus on the inclusion of all young people is evident from her work with special needs children as well as her courses on multicultural resources for youth and developing cultural competency among LIS professionals. This article includes interactive links to articles and audio interviews with colleagues that speak to the impact of Dresang's research.

Introduction, by J. Elizabeth Mills

> The onus is on us, the adults who care for and work with young people, to guide them to [information], give them the background to sort through it and interpret it, and write, edit, and publish it in books that give them the opportunity to reflect upon and absorb it.
>
> —Dr. Eliza T. Dresang, *Radical Change*, xvi

Information is everywhere and impacts each one of us, regardless of age. Dr. Eliza T. Dresang recognized this and examined various youth-related areas for potential study: information-seeking behavior by digital-age youth, information access for those who need it most but are often denied it, digital vs. printed information, information literacy for those who are too young to know what it is, fictional information in the make-believe worlds of novels and audiobooks along with the realistic information about emotions that is inherent in fiction. Through her work, Dresang added her unique vision to the field of library and information science.

In the 1990s, Dresang developed a theory by which to understand how information delivery was changing for youth in their literature—she called it Radical Change. Its tenets—interactivity, connectivity, and access—depict and unpack the new ways in which digital-age youth were interacting with the world around them. They are also the pillars by which one can examine Dresang's career: as a librarian in Los Angeles and Atlanta and as a media specialist and administrator in the Madison Metropolitan School District, Dresang provided access and connectivity to information resources; as the Eliza Atkins Gleason Professor at Florida State University, she further refined her work on her Radical Change theory, focusing her courses and research on studying how children interact with technology, as well as

providing strategies to evaluate those interactions; and finally, as the Beverly Cleary Professor in Children and Youth Services at the University of Washington, she began her culminating research study, VIEWS2, which looked at connecting librarians and children to early literacy resources and highlighted interactivity as the vehicle for that connection.

How then to best commemorate such a life well-lived? Perhaps through an examination of Dresang's extensive and varied body of scholarship; through a close study of her innovative research strategies and collaborations; or through an enumeration of her extensive service to the American Library Association through various award committees, including the Newbery, Caldecott, Batchelder, Pura Belpré, and Odyssey—all of which highlight her dedication to wide-ranging, quality media for youth. The sections that follow will present each of these facets of Dresang's career, culminating in a selected bibliography. Each section is written by and features an interview with people who knew Dresang in one capacity or another—as a scholar, researcher, mentor, colleague, friend. Dresang fulfilled all these roles, and so it is fitting to have the opportunity to hear from those who knew her.

We encourage you to read radically and synergistically—skip around, listen to the interviews first, read right through—each section sits on its own and builds on the one before. In her book, Dresang defined "radical" as "a departure from the usual or traditional . . . extremely different from commonly existing views" (4). While this work does not include pictures, the interviews serve to supplement and symbiotically complement the written words, presenting a multi-faceted, unique portrait of this radical individual.

Interview with Dr. Harry Bruce, dean of the iSchool at the University of Washington. Conducted by J. Elizabeth Mills on September 12, 2014.

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1. Changing Forms and Formats, by Annette Y. Goldsmith

> Children who live in a graphic environment do not leave pictures behind as they grow up. Words and pictures continue to intermingle in recent text-based stories for older readers.
>
> —Eliza T. Dresang, *Radical Change*, 95

Radical Change theory describes, explains, and predicts how youth interact with books in the digital age and how children's book publishing has changed, and continues to change, as a result. (The term "children's books" is understood to include young adult books, since it is often the children's division that publishes for both age ranges.) Radical Change can be recognized in many different types of contemporary children's books, and even some unconventional books from the past, through three classifications—Type 1: changing forms and formats, Type 2: changing perspectives, and Type 3: changing boundaries—and by the overarching principles of interactivity, connectivity, and access.[1]

Dresang's ideas about Radical Change in children's books were nurtured through conversations with many close friends and colleagues in the children's book publishing community. These relationships were facilitated by her service on book award committees. She was a collaborative thinker and very inclusive in her approach before coming to her own conclusions. Whenever she sat on or chaired a national book award committee—a frequent occurrence—she would invite local academics and practitioners to read books and share their impressions with her. Like an in-depth book club, these groups would help her refine her own thinking about the texts. Notably, she also took into account the responses of child readers. One in particular was Jerusha Burnett, the daughter of Dresang's close friend and

colleague, Kathleen Burnett, herself another important collaborator. Jerusha discussed her reflections on reading with Dresang from the time she was ten years old to when she finished high school. Dresang's respect for youth and their input is a theme that permeates her work.

Dresang's experience on the 1991 Caldecott Award Committee helped the theory take root.[2] There were many discussions, in particular with Kate McClelland, a librarian friend and fellow Caldecott committee member, trying to make sense of David Macaulay's *Black and White*[3]—the eventual winner. This nonlinear picture book with four separate or perhaps intertwined story threads was unfamiliar territory at the time, and Dresang saw it as a new type of children's book. As she explains in the introduction to *Radical Change*, "taking root" really is the appropriate metaphor because it is based on Burnett's image of a rhizome—"a horizontal, root-like structure with sprouts here, there and everywhere (first used by French thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in the 1980s to describe an ideal book)."[4] Dresang was also influenced by another meaning of the word "radical"—Marc Aronson's description of the avant-garde eventually moving into the mainstream.[5] His vision of the provocative "radical" settling into the deeply rooted strengthened Dresang's belief that though Radical Change was new, it was "here to stay."[6] Perry Nodelman's child-focused works of children's literature criticism, such as *The Pleasures of Children's Literature*,[7] were another strong influence in the development of Radical Change theory. In addition to these contemporaries, Radical Change theory drew on Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Reader Response to produce the concept of synergistic reading: "What Rosenblatt's theory refers to as synthesis between reader and text in aesthetic reading, Radical Change Theory refers to as synergy—in both cases something new is created out of the interactive process between

reader and text."[8] Dresang and frequent collaborator Bowie Kotrla illustrate this Radical Change lens on Rosenblatt's aesthetic reading with a detailed analysis of *Black and White*.[9]

From the list of Caldecott winners and honor books since *Black and White*, it is clear that picture books consistent with the principles and types of Radical Change continue to be popular choices with the award committees. For example, there was the audacious choice of Brian Selznick's *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* as the 2008 winner.[10] This committee's decision unexpectedly expanded the definition of the standard 32-page picture book to include what might normally be considered a 533-page novel in words and pictures. *Hugo Cabret* is a prime example of changing forms and formats—"a dramatic departure from the typical picture-book tradition."[11]

Diversity in format, perspective, and boundaries is an important value embedded in Radical Change theory. The 2014 Caldecott winner, Brian Floca's *Locomotive*,[12] is innovative in its reworking of the informational picture book to incorporate a family story, bringing to life the experience of train travel in 1869, and in this way is arguably an example of changing boundaries. *Locomotive* is the first nonfiction book (other than a biography) since 1938 to win the Caldecott[13] and may also have been riding the Common Core wave of greater emphasis on nonfiction. Floca was criticized by Debbie Reese in her blog, *American Indians in Children's Literature*, for insufficient mention of Native Americans in the text and illustrations of a book where they might reasonably be expected to appear. He graciously responded point by point, explaining his thought process as he made his decisions.[14] Diversity has been sorely lacking in the Caldecott winners and honor books overall,[15] and with the grassroots "We Need Diverse Books" campaign advocating for a greater number of

books reflecting non-dominant experience, winners of major awards are likely to continue to attract this type of scrutiny.

Though they did not collaborate, Dresang and Henry Jenkins were familiar with each other's work, in which they display a shared respect for youth as capable-and-connected with a desire to create and share content through participatory cultures.[16] Three-time Caldecott winner and also three-time honoree David Wiesner's picture books play with conventions in a radical way, making them good candidates for study by both researchers. The 2007 Caldecott winner, *Flotsam*,[17] deserves special mention. With the involvement of Wiesner and his editor, Dinah Stevenson of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, an interdisciplinary group of researchers from the Annenberg Innovation Lab at the University of Southern California led by Henry Jenkins and Erin Reilly drew on *Flotsam* as "the mothership"—the source material—to design transmedia storytelling extensions and a template for future projects. The book's wildly imaginative, wordless, nonlinear approach made it the perfect subject for this type of exploratory investigation.[18] This was exactly the kind of innovative project that Dresang appreciated, right down to the focus group and play testers made up of second-graders.

Dresang wrote about *Flotsam* in a book chapter on the relationship between postmodernism and Radical Change in picture books.[19] She described them as "parallel theoretical approaches" coming from different perspectives and using different terminology to explain the same observed phenomena in picture books: "Postmodernism . . . emphasizes pastiche and parody, bricolage, irony, and playfulness that are related to the ambiguity and fragmentation of postmodernism in society. Radical Change . . . emphasizes handheld hypertext and digital design that are related to the interactivity, connectivity, and access of

the digital environment."[20] According to Dresang, the metafictive devices found in postmodern picture books are more likely to overlap with the changing forms and formats of Radical Change than with changing perspectives or changing boundaries.[21] Sylvia Pantaleo has adopted Radical Change principles in a number of qualitative literacy studies with elementary school students focusing on reading, including one on Wiesner's 2002 Caldecott winner, *The Three Pigs*,[22] and another on Macaulay's *Black and White*.[23] Pantaleo's work demonstrates how well Radical Change can mesh with postmodernism, even though they do not always overlap.

The books that Dresang discovered on her various book award committees always brought up questions for her to explore and sometimes new passions to pursue. For example, as chair of the 2004 Newbery Medal Committee that chose *The Tale of Despereaux*[24] for their winner, she became intrigued by the Dickensian but suddenly once again popular "Dear reader . . ." method of direct authorial address, which led her to consider how the use of this device has been adapted over time.[25] She served on the Jane Addams Children's Book Awards Committee for many years. Her passion for social justice fueled her advocacy for marginalized youth and unwavering commitment to intellectual freedom. Naturally changing forms and formats were appealing to her, and she became an avid audiobook reader while chairing the Notables and serving on the Odyssey Committee. In pursuing the larger connections between children's publishing and the burgeoning digital world, the international Harry Potter phenomenon was of particular interest to her.

Interview with Dr. Colette Drouillard, assistant professor in the MLIS program at Valdasta State University. Conducted by Annette Y. Goldsmith on September 4, 2014.

Dresang was an early and enthusiastic Harry Potter scholar[26] and had a book chapter written with Kathleen Campana about the series forthcoming at the time of her death.[27] International books were a passion that we shared. She served as chair of the 1989 Mildred L. Batchelder Award Committee, and it was a great privilege for me to take on the same role for the 2010 committee. The 1989 Batchelder winner, Peter Härtling's *Crutches*—a post–World War II survival story—was characteristic of Dresang's affinity for hard-hitting books that she knew would speak to young readers.[28] One of the few committees she did not serve on was the Schneider Family Book Award. Had she had this opportunity, it would have taken her full circle, back to her long-standing interest in children with disabilities.

How does Radical Change theory stand up fifteen years later? Judging from the award winners, radical change books are in the ascendancy. Research on digital-age youth is still needed and valued. Dresang's theory has been expanded by Kyungwon Koh to operationalize the key concepts of Radical Change—interactivity, connectivity, and access—in a new typology to describe, explain, and predict youth information behavior.[29] As noted above, Pantaleo uses Dresang's theory as a point of departure to study how children read postmodern picture books. Revisiting Radical Change theory herself in 2008, Dresang surmised that most handheld (print) children's books would eventually be replaced by some type of vastly improved e-reader, an indication that the predictive power of Radical Change theory is still robust.[30]

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2. Changing Perspectives, by Kathleen Campana

> A point of Radical Change is to give teachers and librarians a tool to examine what in past literature might be most similar to the radically changed literature of the present, and why.
>
> —Eliza T. Dresang, *Radical Change*, 40

In 2013 Eliza Dresang noted: "The roles of public libraries in the information behavior of youth are more research- and evidence-based than they have been in the past."[1] This phenomenon is due in part to Dresang's own radical research. In her early career, she writes, "libraries were not interested in research; everyone knew that libraries were good for youth and that was that."[2] Much of her work has focused on providing the research and evidence to support library services to youth. She empowered librarians serving youth by offering evaluation methods that allow them to collect their own evidence to inform their practice. The impact of her work with outcome-based planning and evaluation for youth services has been far-reaching. Her influence extends to future youth services librarians and school library media specialists through her drive to understand and transform core curriculum for youth services and school libraries. To this end, she designed and taught innovative courses, another part of her legacy.

Dresang's work with outcome-based planning and evaluation began with Project CATE (Children's Access to and Use of Technology Evaluation). Project CATE was a two-year study to implement and test a change model that integrates outcome-based evaluation into the design, development, and assessment of computer services provided for youth in an urban public library.[3] The Project CATE model for outcome-based evaluation emerged from this work as, in true Dresang fashion, an "interactive and iterative" model providing for

"constant modification and feedback" as the model is applied.[4] Dresang, Melissa Gross, and Leslie Holt's book, *Dynamic Youth Services through Outcome-Based Planning and Evaluation*, followed Project CATE and introduced the CATE OBPE (outcome-based planning and evaluation) model, which built on the Project CATE model. The CATE OBPE included the additional component of planning, essentially considering "planning and evaluation inseparable, with the planning process incorporating iterative evaluation."[5] With this work, Dresang, Gross, and Holt introduced outcome-based planning and evaluation as an innovative method for librarians who serve youth to plan for and evaluate their programs.

Dresang's significant role in highlighting the importance of outcome-based planning and evaluation for youth services was cemented through her work with VIEWS2 (Valuable Initiatives in Early Learning that Work Successfully). The first goal of VIEWS2 was to have a widespread national impact by providing currently unavailable, valid, reliable methods for assessing and evaluating the outcomes of public library early literacy programs. As part of VIEWS2, Dresang provided children's librarians with planning tools (developed from the research tools) to help increase the early literacy content in their storytime programs.[6] Because of her emphasis on outcome-based planning and evaluation, Dresang ensured that the planning tools could be used for self-reflection of their own storytime content as well as the outcomes for children attending the storytimes. Therefore, these tools utilized a similar iterative planning and evaluation process described with the CATE OBPE. As the VIEWS2 resources and training are delivered to four additional states outside of Washington, Dresang's work will continue to impact library services for youth many years in the future.[7]

Dresang also focused on providing evidence for the role of school libraries, public library storytimes, and youth services programs. In *School Libraries and the Transformation*

of Readers and Reading, Dresang and Bowie Kotrla compiled research examining and providing evidence for the role of the school library in developing and strengthening readers.[8] In response to one of the goals of VIEWS2, Dresang gave children's librarians at public libraries research-based evidence that their storytimes are making a difference with the children who attend them.[9] Through Project CATE, in addition to providing the CATE OBPE model, Dresang equipped youth services librarians with detailed evidence around how youth use computers in public libraries.

In addition to the impact that she made on practice for librarians serving youth, Dresang also focused on examining and improving curriculum for librarians focused on serving youth. Beginning with "Education for Youth Services Specialization in Librarianship," a background paper she wrote for ALA's Congress for Professional Education in 1999, Dresang then focused on curriculum for school library media specialists through her work with Project LEAD (Leaders Educated to Make a Difference). Project LEAD allowed for the development of a research-based online leadership curriculum for school library media specialists focused on leadership and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standard tenets at FSU's College of Information.[10] At the University of Washington's iSchool, Dresang continued to impact curriculum for librarians focused on serving youth when she championed changes to the existing core youth services curriculum. These changes that she supported included the addition of a foundational course that provides information on "major theories of human development from birth through age eighteen and application of these theories to examine youth's information behavior and digital media use at various developmental stages."[11] The subsequent courses were similarly redesigned to

include appropriate developmental theories and research as well as digital resources and research on digital media.

Dresang also brought her radical nature to course design. This can be seen in two innovative courses that she created while at the University of Washington's iSchool. As part of Project VIEWS2, Dresang designed a two-quarter course, taught both years of the study, called "Research in Action" to train MLIS students as researchers so they could help complete observations of public library storytimes. Residential and online students could both participate in the hybrid format, with residential students meeting in a classroom and online students joining the classroom through video-conferencing software. As part of the first quarter, MLIS students were exposed to research methods in addition to training on the observational tools used in Project VIEWS2. During the second quarter, the students performed the storytime observations. The course was well received. According to one student, "I took the basic research methods class, but this opportunity makes research so much more realistic and easy to understand."[12]

Dresang never got the chance to teach the final innovative course she designed--the culminating piece of a new digital-age youth-focused curriculum sequence she and other faculty developed at the iSchool. Libraries as Learning Labs is designed to apply theories and research on youth development and information behavior toward informing practice about programming and resources for youth.[13] The hands-on course focuses on the wide range of youth programming (maker-spaces, game design, booktalks, and storytelling) offered in libraries today and how this range underscores the library as a site of informal learning, thereby helping MLIS students to understand the *why* as well as the *how* of youth

programming. This course is scheduled to be offered in the spring of 2015, carrying on Dresang's legacy.

Over the course of her career, Dresang has provided a radical change for libraries and librarians serving youth by striving to place a focus on using research and evidence to support the role of libraries and library programs. She created a place for research and evidence-gathering at all levels of library service by empowering and helping librarians to perform their own research and evaluation of their programs. Dresang enabled important transformations for library school curriculum and courses by designing innovative courses as well as championing curriculum changes that emphasized research and theory. Dresang's influence on the field is described perfectly by Judy T. Nelson, Customer Experience Manager for Youth at the Pierce County Library System:

> In her own classroom, she prepared new librarians to be excellent, effective youth librarians. In her work with her doctoral students, she infused them with the desire to use research to support libraries. And with those of us out here in the working libraries, she was always asking what support we needed from her and from the university to be the best we could be for our youth and their families. She did this every day with grace, humor, and a positive demeanor. We will miss her and should honor her by continuing her good work.[14]

Interview with Judy Nelson, Customer Experience Manager for Youth, Pierce County Library System. Conducted by Kathleen Campana on September 11, 2014.

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3. Changing Boundaries, by Beth J. Patin and Sarah A. Evans

> [Children are] real people who have a right to the same community, interaction, and access that other community members have, as well as the right to the support they need to deal with these successfully.
>
> —Eliza T. Dresang, *Radical Change*, 74

In the mid-1970s, Eliza T. Dresang was the director of the Instructional Materials Center at Lapham Elementary School in Madison, Wisconsin. Approximately one-third of the 350 students in the school were designated "handicapped" for various reasons, but the administration, teachers, and students pulled together to create what today would be called an inclusive environment. Dresang led the way by creating a model library curriculum that supported the entire student body. In a 1977 article for *School Library Journal*, fiercely titled "There Are No Other Children," Dresang argued that librarians must "look at every child, at every need" and develop their programs "from an understanding of the needs of the children."[1]

This focus on the needs of youth guided Dresang throughout her career. Through her professional work and research, she in turn guided all of us to a better understanding of the needs of the youth we want to serve, and she demonstrated how library services could evolve along with the changing needs of youth throughout the decades. Previous sections of this article have discussed her committee work and research projects, such as CATE and VIEWS2, which have had profound impacts on youth literature and library services. At the center of each of her actions, there is a strong concern for the needs of youth and how adults

can better meet these needs. This can be seen especially clearly in her advocacy for quality multicultural resources for youth and cultural competence in the adults who serve them.

One way that Dresang advocated for the inclusion of multicultural books was through her dedication to service on various committees. In addition to her extensive service to the American Library Association through various award committees, Dresang was one of the founding members of the Advisory Board for the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries, which was founded in 2002 and has awarded more than $11.5 million to schools in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Marshall Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands. In addition to these yearly grants, Dresang worked with the foundation to award more than $6.3 million to school libraries in the Gulf Coast region to rebuild their library book collections that were lost or destroyed by hurricanes or storms.

Interview with José Aponte, San Diego County Library director, advisory board member of the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries. Conducted by Sarah Evans on October 3, 2014.

Dresang led workshops for the Gulf Coast librarians who had received grants to help them understand the new trends in books and media for youth, and she encouraged the librarians to diversify their collections. Dresang worked diligently to help support the mission of the Laura Bush Foundation, which supports the education of our nation's children by providing funds to update, extend, and diversify the book and print collections of America's school libraries.

In the United States by the end of the 1980s, the term "multicultural literature" was commonly used to refer to various kinds of diversity in literary representations. In some

instances, the term broadly encompassed race and ethnicity, gender, differing abilities, class, religion, and sexual orientation, while in others it was used more narrowly. For Dresang, it was important that this term be applied to groups that have historically lacked power and authority in society, and therefore lacked representation in children's resources as well. Culture refers to socially transmitted behavior, patterns, arts, and beliefs. Cultural competency is regarded as the ability to know and respect one's own culture and that of others; for many, acting upon this knowledge to effect change is an essential component of competence. In 2009 Dresang worked with Beth Patin, one of her PhD students, to develop a course encouraging the identification of and deliberations about issues relevant to the development of cross-cultural competence in relation to U.S. ethnic minorities through authentic resources for youth. To facilitate this, Dresang provided knowledge and skill development in location, selection, evaluation, and discussion of various genres and formats of multicultural resources as well as in strategies to use them with youth. The course related cross-cultural competence to meeting information needs of children and young adults through library and information collection development and services.

Dresang's continued work in the area of cultural competence differs greatly from much of the work currently available in this field. A number of books have been written about contemporary and historical multicultural literature for youth,[2] and numerous others have focused on multicultural education and teaching strategies central to it.[3] However, none of those books has encompassed a critical multicultural analysis of specific types of youth literature with the stated purpose of promoting cultural competence or proficiency. And none has accepted the value of inauthentic literature in developing cultural competency. While more than one author has used the metaphors of literature as mirror (reflecting one's own

culture), windows (into another culture), and even doors (moving into a different culture), Dresang took these metaphors further with the incorporation of all of these terms into the image of building a bridge that encompasses and links cultures, leading to a transformative experience, cultural competency, and transformative action.

Recently, Dresang was asked to write a book in the Multicultural Education Series published by Teachers College Press about the principles her course focused on with respect to cultural competence and transformative action. This unfinished work, tentatively titled *Building Bridges for Cultural Competence: Transformation through Multicultural Literature for Youth*,[4] focuses on the following: the growth of authentic multicultural literature in the United States; models for achieving or promoting cultural competency or proficiency; an in-depth critical multicultural analysis of specific genres of this literature; and how multicultural literature can be used by educators as a transformative vehicle for young people of all ages to move toward cultural competency with a strong potential for social action. Though many librarians and scholars would argue that reading changes and empowers us, for Dresang it was not enough to believe this; we have to know it. In order to investigate the transformative nature of reading, Dresang was engaged in yet another important research project at the time of her passing.

This research study, in the preliminary and early results stage, was designed to help fill this evidence gap with systematically gathered concrete evidence about the results of reading high-quality, culturally specific, globally oriented literature for children nine and ten years of age. It focuses on a convenience sample of children from the 2,500 students in forty-five schools who are participating in a Global Reading Challenge. The study also seeks evidence of the impact of a shared reading experience for digital youth, who are part of a

world dominated by interactive social media, by answering the following two research questions: What, if any, effect does the close reading of high-quality, culturally specific, globally oriented youth literature across a diversity of experiences have on children's information about the cultures about which they read? And what, if any, effect does the close reading of high-quality, culturally specific, globally oriented youth literature across a diversity of experiences have on children's gaining active cultural competence in relation to the cultures about which they have read? The initial instrument is a survey that the researchers developed and pretested with the assistance of the Social Development Research Group at the University of Washington. The questions focus on the readers' attitudes toward the cultures about which they read and their interest in active involvement with these cultures. For example, "I have read a book that makes me want to experience a culture other than my own."[5]

Though this research was just in its preliminary and testing phases, transformative action and the power of reading were already evidenced by statements of the participants. One student wrote, "Thank you, Ms. Sherman, for showing me that I can change racism. And stand up to the people that are racist." Many others mentioned being empowered to stand up to bullies. One of the classes involved in last year's study read a book about the shortage of water in Sudan and became involved in the Sudan Water Project. The results of this study will provide the first known research-based evidence about the impact on cultural competence of young people's close reading of high-quality, culturally specific, globally oriented youth literature across a diversity of experiences.

Dresang and many others have held firm to the belief that this type of reading can ultimately lead to cultural competency and world peace. This first step was to help determine

what information at least one group of young readers gain about other cultures through reading in a connected learning situation and how their attitudes and actions are affected by such reading. To the very end, Eliza T. Dresang held true to her belief that we should keep the needs of children, no matter what their backgrounds, at the very center of librarianship.

Conclusion, by J. Elizabeth Mills

Interactivity, connectivity, and access—pillars that support the foundation of a groundbreaking theory and descriptors that concisely capture this extraordinary life dedicated to youth and information. We have all been connected to one another and to many in this research community through knowing, working with, and learning from Dr. Eliza T. Dresang. We have been given access and provided access to others by sharing her research and scholarship. And we interact and grow together because that is the model she showed us through her own work. Libraries, librarians, and the practice that is librarianship figure prominently in our lives, our study, and the questions we pursue in our research. This is Dresang's legacy to us. Our distinct voices are yet a chorus in our shared dedication to continue aspects of her work as we rediscover her guidance through our own work and ideas. A remarkable life has ended, but her dedication to youth lives on in her scholarship, research, and colleagues. The selected bibliography that follows expands on the areas covered in this article. Where might these texts take you on your journey to better serve and educate the young people in your life?

Interview with Dr. Kathleen Burnett, the F. Williams Summers Professor and director of the Florida State University School of Information in Tallahassee, and Jerusha

Burnett, a law clerk in the Consumer Policy division of Consumer and Governmental Affairs at the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, DC. Conducted by Annette Y. Goldsmith on September 1, 2014.

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Radical Change Theory: Framework for Empowering Digital Youth

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Radical Change Theory: Framework for Empowering Digital Youth

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Abstract

Eliza T. Dresang influenced numerous researchers and professionals by equipping them to understand and better serve digital youth. This paper revisits her theory of Radical Change, which explains the synergistic combination of changing resources and youth in the digital age. The presented research applies and extends the theory by investigating the information behavior of digital youth. The study has two phases —Phase 1: content analysis of research literature; Phase 2: group and individual interviews with young adults who are members of an online community called Scratch. Selected findings illustrate the ways in which digital youth have an increased sense of control over learning, creative, and social aspects of their life. The study demonstrates that Radical Change theory provides a unique perspective to ferret out the potential of non-traditional information behaviors. The theory continues to be a tool for enhancing a sense of agency for digital youth by increasing their capacity to learn, create, and socialize. Future research applying the theory could explore how the dynamic interactions between changing resources and youth may have an impact on youth obtaining twenty-first-century skills.

Introduction

Eliza T. Dresang was best known for her theory of Radical Change, which explains changes in information resources and human information behavior in the current digital age. Her theory and research have influenced numerous researchers and professionals as they seek to understand digital youth. In this paper, the term "digital youth" refers to contemporary children and young adults (ages birth through eighteen years) who were born into this interactive and connected digital culture, regardless of their varying levels of access to technologies or digital media skills. In order to honor and remember Eliza T. Dresang, this paper attempts to answer the following questions:

Q1. What is the theory of Radical Change?

Q2. How does the theory help us understand the information behavior of digital youth? That is, what radical changes do contemporary youth experience when they interact with information?

Q3. What does the future of the theory look like?

To answer these questions, I begin with a review of Radical Change theory and research that has applied this theory. I will then present selected findings from my dissertation research, which was conducted with the guidance of Eliza T. Dresang. I had the privilege of working with her directly and take up her pioneering work of Radical Change by applying, testing, and extending the theory. The findings demonstrate the value of the theory in explaining the information behavior of digital youth. This paper concludes with a look toward the future of the theory.

The emphasis of this paper is on the theory's perspective on youth empowerment, as Dresang had always strived for empowering youth through her scholarly, professional, and personal achievements. The theory of Radical Change is fundamentally grounded in her belief in "the child-as-capable-and-seeking-connection."[1] This paper proposes the future of the theory as a tool for enhancing a sense of agency of digital youth.

Radical Change Theory

Radical Change theory suggests that many of the changes in information resources and human behavior in this digital age can be explained through these core concepts: *connectivity*, *interactivity*, and *access*. While the theory is currently being used to investigate both resources and behavior, it was originally developed to explain changes in youth literature. The theory's explanatory power to study human behavior was revealed later by research studies that applied the theory across disciplines, such as library and information studies, education, and English.

Initial Development: Youth Literature with Digital Characteristics

Radical Change theory was initially developed in the mid-1990s to explain changes in youth literature in the digital age, in which society became increasingly more interactive and connected through digital networks. Serving as a lens through which to examine, explain, and use contemporary literature for youth growing up in the digital age, the theory was developed based on the following four assumptions, which support children's sense of agency:

- Children are capable and are seeking connections.
- The digital environment nurtures children's capabilities.
- Handheld books offer digital-age connections.
- Adults and youth are partners in the digital world.[2]

Dresang explained that these assumptions are an optimistic view of youth, not universally held in the 1990s or even currently; nonetheless, it is a perspective that many youth services librarians have embraced in order to create participatory partnerships with youth.[3]

The core concepts of Radical Change theory, referred to as digital age principles, capture key characteristics of the digital society and include the following:

- *Connectivity:* A sense of community or construction of social worlds that emerge from changing perspectives and expanded associations in the real world or in literature.
- *Interactivity:* Dynamic, user-initiated, non-linear, non-sequential, complex cognitive, emotional, and physical behaviors and relationships with and among components of literature.
- *Access:* Breaking of long-standing information barriers, bringing entrée to a wide diversity of formerly largely inaccessible opinion and opportunity in society and sophistication in literature.[4]

Radical Change theory contends that an increasing percentage of contemporary literature for youth reflects characteristics of the digital age principles and that these Radical Change books may appeal to youth growing up in the digital age. For example, indicators for Radical Change books include words and pictures reaching new levels of synergy, non-linear organization and format, multiple layers of meaning, youth who speak for themselves, subjects previously forbidden, unsolved endings, and more.[5]

The initial development of Radical Change theory made groundbreaking connections between printed books and digital culture, which initially seemed to be competing and incompatible. Dresang writes:

> When I first conceived the Radical Change theory, almost everyone agreed that digital technologies were changing radically, yet almost no one acknowledged that concomitant change in a growing cadre of printed books for youth. Moreover, those who did take note of the changes in books saw little or no relationship between these alterations and the Digital Age in which they were written,

> illustrated, and published. Consequently, in discussions of the integration of technology in education, printed books were often either forgotten or treated as a completely different, unrelated entity.[6]

Radical Change is still the only widely used theory that makes this connection between printed literature for youth and the digital environment.

Theory Application and Expansion

Research studies applying the theory posited that its applicability is not limited to literature for youth. These studies applied the theory to different types of information resources beyond books. Further, studies used the theory to observe human behavior in response to the information resources that reflect the concepts of connectivity, interactivity, and access. For example, Sylvia Pantaleo explored children's understandings of and responses to diverse resources—such as books, visual art materials, films, games, and the Internet—using Radical Change theory. Her research found that children are capable of reading, comprehending, and enjoying non-traditional information resources with Radical Change characteristics. Pantaleo further suggested that these Radical Change resources can be used to teach critical thinking skills, visual literacy skills, and interpretive strategies, in addition to providing pleasurable aesthetic reading experiences for digital youth.[7]

Dawnene D. Hasset (formerly Hammerberg) applied Radical Change theory to observe how elementary school children read and write. The theory was used to investigate how early elementary reading comprehension and writing instructions could be updated to reflect the characteristics of contemporary reading materials. She found a disconnect between the ways in which children are taught to read and write at school and the materials they are currently reading. Hasset's study suggested new technologies that promote interactive, non-linear, and hypertextual forms of communication and that call for new ways of reading and comprehending.[8]

Radical Change theory was also used to study reading behaviors of adults. Marta J. Abele observed pre-service teachers' responses to children's books with Radical Change characteristics. The pre-service teachers not only recognized differences between Radical Change books and more traditional children's books, but also positively responded to the books with digital characteristics. Abele reported that Radical Change books require a higher level of interaction for readers and that the books would make good partners with technology in

classroom teaching to attract digital youth.[9] These research studies from different disciplines reveal the theory's applicability to human behavior in general.

The versatility of the theory's potential applications was suggested to explain a range of contemporary information behaviors.[10] Dresang demonstrated how the theory provides a new perspective to explain the information behavior of youth in the digital environment by reexamining existing studies on the topic. She found that many of the studies tend to focus largely on the deficiencies and the need for improvement instead of recognizing the potential of new and non-traditional behaviors in this digital age. She suggested that "to view youth information-seeking behavior as generally lacking is to overlook the new behaviors nurtured and facilitated by the digital environment and to miss the golden nuggets embedded in these studies."[11] The study presented in this paper attempts to report some of the "golden nuggets" using the theory's unique perspective that empowers youth. The theory argues that behaviors that were previously interpreted as a lack of skills or failure might be understood as new types of thinking and learning, which reflect properties of the digital society.

Methodology

The presented study tested and expanded Radical Change theory to investigate the information behavior of digital youth. The theory was applied throughout the entire inquiry process; it spurred the research questions of the study, provided a framework for facilitating systematic data analysis, and offered an insight to interpret digital age information behavior.[12] The research questions included the following:

1. What are the key characteristics of information behavior of youth in the digital age?
    1.1. How do youth act independently?
    1.2. How do youth form identity and perceive others?
    1.3. How do youth interact socially with others?
2. How can Radical Change Theory be applied and further developed to explain youth information behavior in the digital age?

The study consisted of two sequential and qualitative phases—Phase 1: content analysis of research literature; Phase 2: group and individual interviews with youth. Phase 1 of the study involved conducting content analysis of literature to identify the behaviors of contemporary youth that represent Radical Change core concepts of connectivity, interactivity, and access, as

well as behaviors that do not represent these concepts. This approach to literature analysis was selected in order to cover diverse contexts, such as different age groups, tasks, and both school and everyday life settings building upon previous research efforts. The literature selected adhered to the following criteria: (1) research-based, (2) topics that address information-related activities across the disciplines, and (3) subjects born between 1992 and 2005, that is, youth ages 5–18 in 2010, the year when data was collected. An effort was made to separate the research evidence from unsubstantiated anecdotes and rhetoric. The collected literature was analyzed using a Directed Qualitative Content Analysis approach; the theory provided an initial coding framework while the researcher still immersed herself in the data to allow new themes to emerge inductively. That way the findings captured all patterns of behavior that both align and refute the theory.[13]

Phase 1 findings were tested in Phase 2 with a purposeful sample of youth, ages 12–15, who actively engage in digital media practices using Scratch. Scratch is a graphical programming language, also referred to as an online community for Scratch users, developed for youth to create various digital projects—such as interactive stories, games, simulations, magazines, animations, music, and art—and to share these creations on the Web.[14] Scratch was identified to be an exemplary place to investigate Radical Change information behavior of youth, because Scratch members formed a vibrant community to create various user-initiated projects using a highly interactive programming tool. Different from a traditional text-based programming language, Scratch takes the building-block approach: users create programming scripts simply by dragging and dropping colorful building blocks that indicate different commands. Scratch also makes it easy for youth to import, combine, and create sound, image, and video within the program. It has been used in schools, universities, libraries, and everyday life to promote young people's twenty-first-century learning skills, such as computational skills, collaboration skills, and information and media literacies. Youth who are active members of Scratch were recognized as likely to be capable of providing deep and detailed descriptions of the topic, since they are heavily immersed in digital culture and engaged in active information behavior embedded in digital media creation practices.

The researcher identified three of the most information-intensive projects in the Scratch community: the Interactive Journalism Institute for Middle Schoolers (IJIMS), Scratch Wiki, and Scratch Resources. The goals of IJIMS included developing middle school students' interests in

twenty-first-century writing, media, math, and computing skills through interactive journalism and digital storytelling.[15] The IJIMS students created an online magazine using Scratch and other digital media in a collaborative setting. They conducted interviews with members of the community, wrote articles, and worked as a group to create an interactive magazine with assistance from teachers and undergraduate mentors. Young Scratch members voluntarily initiated and maintained Scratch Wiki and Scratch Resources. Scratch Wiki is an information website where Scratch members share information on various aspects of Scratch. Scratch Resources is a digital media library developed to share tutorials, characters, and sounds, which is also contributed to by members of the Scratch community and can be used for Scratch projects.

Eight IJIMS students and four developers of Scratch Wiki and Scratch Resources were recruited for group and individual interviews, which were informed by Brenda Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology.[16] All IJIMS students were eighth-graders and included four girls and four boys from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. The four boys, ages 12–15, who developed Scratch Wiki and Scratch Resources participated in the interviews online, because they lived in different parts of the world, including Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United States; they are all fluent in English. Data analysis applied the directed qualitative content analysis technique.[17]

Findings: Youth Empowerment through Learning, Creating, and Socializing

The study findings identified the patterns of information behavior that represent the concepts of Radical Change theory: connectivity, interactivity, and access (see table 1). The findings suggest a holistic perspective for observing youth information behavior as interplay between various factors, such as young people's (a) intrapersonal processes, (b) identity formation and value negotiation, and (c) social interactions. The findings propose that digital youth engage in non-linear and interactive information seeking, use, and creation activities with an increasing sense of ownership; they form identities and negotiate value systems while they interact with a range of information from different, often conflicting, information sources; and they expand the boundaries of interpersonal information behavior by connecting to diverse resources, people, and communities to meet their information needs.

Table 1. Types and Characteristics of Digital Youth Information Behavior[18]

Radical Change Types	Characteristics	Definitions
Type One: Intrapersonal Process	Personalizing	The design of one's own information environment to facilitate access to and use of information concerning personal interests.
	Interactive seeking	Dynamic, fortuitous, and self-controlled information seeking behaviors.
	Squirreling	The way youth extensively gather and keep information in the digital environment in the form of downloading.
	Remixing	The creative reuse of information in order to produce new information or expressive materials.
	Tinkering	Interactive mode of information production, which starts as an idea and the idea evolves by continual modification, trials and errors, and experimentation.
	Visualizing	Affinity for visual and graphic display of information and synergistic integration of the use of text, image, and multimedia in their information behavior
Type Two: Identity and Perspectives	Self-expression	The ways youth express themselves by producing and publishing information that reflect their identity and perspectives to the connected information world.
	Seeking Identity-related Information	Information seeking regarding identity issues such as gender, race, and sexuality.
	Negotiating Value Systems	The ways youth process diverse perspectives and deal with ambiguity when interacting with various information, people, and communities.
	Sense of Empowerment	A greater ownership and a sense of agency over information activities as a result of new and innovative behaviors and the nature of the information environment in the digital age.
Type Three: Social Interactions	Networking	The act of reaching and connecting resources, people, and communities to meet one's information needs through technological networks, such as the Internet or mobile networks.
	Access to Collective Knowledge	The ways youth access and contribute to the aggregated information that is developed by individuals, especially on the Web
	Collaborative Problem Solving	Information behavior performed by two or more people working together in order to complete tasks or develop new information.
	Socio-emotional support	The ways youth exchange non-work related comments or actions to build rapport and trust during collaborative/collective information behavior.

This section presents selected findings from the study. These are characteristics that clearly represent the concepts of Radical Change theory when digital youth learn, create, and socialize. Interpreted through a lens of Radical Change theory, these behaviors have the potential to enhance a sense of agency in youth. Substantiated examples are from both Phase 1 (research literature analysis) and Phase 2 (interviews with Scratchers) findings.

Learning

Information Seeking. Youth in this study showed a greater ownership over their own learning in the digital environment through information seeking. Findings suggested that information seeking is a way of learning or acting that makes young people's learning more meaningful. The fact that contemporary youth have access to a range of information at their fingertips seemed to increase their confidence in learning new things, including knowledge and skills they have not been taught in school or from adults. A boy who is a Scratch Wiki administrator said that he learned the skills and knowledge needed to develop Scratch Wiki by looking around online: "It was mostly just by looking around the Internet, you know, whether from [the] Scratch website—people post various stuff there—or looking at tutorials at other wikis." The founder of Scratch Resources mentioned that the development of the online media library "was possible just because there were a lot of useful sites out there," especially since he had not taken an IT (information technology) lesson in school or elsewhere.

Contemporary youth can also look up information on sensitive topics that they are reluctant to ask other people to learn about, because nowadays they have access to information that was previously unavailable or difficult to access. Amanda Lenhart et al. reported that teens "use the internet to look for information on health topics that are hard to talk about, like drug use, sexual health or depression. A bit more than one in six (17%) internet-using teens look online for information about sensitive health topics. . . . [Teens] were more likely to look online for answers to health questions that were hard to ask of others."[18]

Collective Knowledge. Digital youth have access to collective knowledge—that is, the aggregated information contributed by individuals—especially on the Web such as *Wikipedia*, online forums, and expert communities. It allows them to pursue in-depth knowledge on specialized topics in their interest area. While some youth with specialized interests can become

discouraged due to the lack of local resources, the increasing availability of search engines, online forums, and networked publics permits them to access online resources for an initial introduction to a particular area.[19] Interviewees in Mizuko Ito et al.'s study accessed and shared information about their interests by participating in online communities. A teenage member of a fan sub community (a fan community to translate and create subtitles for foreign films or TV shows) described "how initially he was attracted to the specialty because of the depth of knowledge that he could pursue within an expert community. 'It just got interesting because other encoders were like, "here are some tips and tricks." . . . There were so many tricks in how to handle that stuff that it got pretty interesting.'"[20]

My interviews with youth concurred that digital youth seek out and create information on their areas of interest through an expert community, such as Scratch, where the members share and collectively build the aggregated information on specific areas of interest. For example, they use and contribute to developing collective knowledge through Scratch Wiki. It is a community effort to generate a knowledgeable source on Scratch. As an interviewee mentioned, "Well, if anyone has a question, like they wondered something, it's a spot where hopefully they'll be able to find an answer."

Remixing. Remixing provides a unique learning opportunity—that is, learning by example. Remixing is the creative reuse of information or projects to produce new information or expressive materials. Scratch was designed to make it easy for users to remix others' projects. All Scratch projects are under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License, which allows freedom to share and remix projects. Once a project is remixed, the Scratch program automatically produces credit for the original project. An individual interviewee explained:

> So, remixing is a very important part of Scratch. Without remixing, we wouldn't have been half as cool. And, the good thing is that because of all of this remixing, every single project out there is a tutorial. You can, so if you're interested in drawing a cake, you can just download a project and that has a cake in it and just see how it works and start playing with it. And, that's not possible on any other site or platform or whatever.

Several interviewees concurred: "When I see other people that have added more intricate, more difficult things to their Scratch project, then I'm, like, 'Oh, how did you do that?' I will ask them

how to do that. And then I will want to go add that to mine to make my scratch better than it already was." Remixing in Scratch accelerates learning the programming language: "I mean, it [remixing] is really important. When you're learning . . . a typical new programming language, you have to rely on the people that are specifically supplying tutorials, and in Scratch you can just explore projects. You can say, 'Oh, I like this.' And, then you download and you see how it's made."[21]

Creating

Findings revealed that youth feel a sense of empowerment when they create things and make a participatory contribution to the community. The Scratch Wiki administrators mentioned that they liked Scratch Wiki because it is a community effort by youth themselves: "It's quite cool how people can share information over there, because before you had just the Scratch Support on the website. And, only the [MIT] Scratch Team could upload content to there. And, it's kind of cool, how now all this help and support is provided by the community, other than the Scratch Team."

A boy mentioned how he feels when he engages in creative activities using a tool that allows flexibility and choices:

> What I like about Scratch is how it's not just passive. We're actively working with media and it allows everyone to do so. And, that's important. The longer I use Scratch, the more I start to hate TV. It's very weird. But, I mean, TV is just such a passive medium. You just look at it. You're looking at the television and it just comes to you for a long time. And, I guess, I can still watch a nice movie, but it has to be nice. Just this annoying television shows [*sic*], well, it's really annoying, just so passive and you just lose your time sitting without doing anything, and I sort of like to be productive. And, I like how Scratch allows me to do it, but I bet there are more people who like to be productive, and it also allows them to be. With script you can basically do whatever you want. You can make a very big diversity of projects, and you can use it to make PowerPoint-like presentations with some graphics. I already did for school. That's very cool. But, you can make games, information about yourself, and that's what I like about it.

> You're not really restricted to games or whatever, you just start and do whatever you want.[22]

Young people's creative activities are a way of expressing themselves. The digital environment in particular offers young people the chance to be powerful and to express their identity and creativity.[23] Youth find value in expressing themselves online, because self-expression online plays several roles in their identity construction, including self-reflection, catharsis, self-documentation, identity experimentation, and social validation of self from their audience.[24] Meanwhile, by creating and publishing information within a specific area of interest, young people define themselves as experts, geeks, freaks, or artists within particular communities.[25] For instance, personal web pages maintained by youth reveal a range of information and opinions of youth, such as favorite music, sports, daily experiences, jokes, photos, and more.[26]

Scratchers in this study were engaged in expressive activities, particularly digital media production, in both school and everyday life. An IJIMS participant mentioned, "I have been using Scratch [when I was not] in IJIMS. One particular time [I created Scratch projects] was just on my own . . . trying out what was on my mind." An interviewee's description revealed how his Scratch production is a way of self-expression:

> Interviewee: It [working with Scratch] does help because that's one of those programs where you're not limited. You can do a lot of things. It's pretty much putting your emotions in a computer screen. And it kind of helps. It's kind of relieving in a way.
>
> Interviewer: Can you explain the word "relieving"?
>
> Interviewee: You can just put it out there, and you know that it's down there, so you can go back and look at it another time. So if you were feeling sad, you could go there, and you could just make a Scratch and just let it out.

Socializing

Youth have an intrinsic need for social and connected information behaviors.[27] Traditional interpersonal information behaviors where youth seek and share information with peers, family members, teachers, and librarians in their local communities are still prevalent. Digital youth,

however, are capable of expanding the boundaries of their interpersonal information behaviors by interacting with diverse people and forming communities of practice beyond geographical restrictions.[28]

By the time the interviews were conducted in 2010, Scratch did not provide many communication tools other than public forums and comments. Despite that, Scratchers from different parts of the world collaborated all the time. An interviewee discussed Scratch members' strong need for collaboration:

> Well, the weird [thing] about people collaborating on Scratch is that except for remixing, there is really nothing that helps you collaborate. And, people just find their way of doing it. So, there are Scratch Companies you might have heard of. So, people form a group using a gallery. They usually all just use technologies that were not intended to be used as a collaborative platform. . . . [T]hat also makes collaboration on Scratch cool. People seem to be, they really want to do it and they don't just do it because it's there. They find their own way of collaborating. That's really cool.

All interviewees in Phase 2 were actively interacting with others during their problem-solving or knowledge-creation activities—that is, creation of an online magazine in IJIMS and development of Scratch Wiki and Scratch Resources. Scratch Wiki itself, in particular, is where youth collaboratively create knowledge about Scratch. The nature of Wiki—that is, being edited by anyone and having the ability to see previous versions—enhances the collaborative/collective aspect of Wiki as an information resource, as discussed by two participants:

> As far as collaboration, what's really nice on the Wiki is that you can of course compare the text from the previous revisions, [which] I think is one of the helpful things about collaboration, which you can't always do, like, maybe you're in a collaboration and you remake a project. You can't really see directly what changed.
>
> The good thing about the Wiki is that it can be edited by everyone. And, still always stores older versions. So, when someone does something wrong, they don't have to feel shy or whatever, you can just revert the edit.

During collaborative problem solving or creation activities, youth frequently exchange non-task-related comments or actions to build rapport and trust. Although they have never met in

person, the individual interviewees mentioned that they make "lots of good friends in Scratch." Interviewees point out the many modern technologies that help them overcome the geographical distance and build relationships and trust one another:

> There's stuff to help people talk online. It can help you make friendships and things, even without meeting, though it is kind of sad, like oh, you probably will never be able to meet this person.
>
> On Scratch, there are the forums. And as you use them, you start to see people and sort of generally become friends with some of them. . . . If we share interest in something, then it helps. And the people that we were in with our collaboration group, they're friendly.

Another interviewee concurred that one could build relationships and trust online:

> In the modern Internet, you know, here we use emoticons, you know, especially if you're a kid, you understand, you know, like texting—you understand how to use abbreviations and kind of how people act. And, for example, you end up—people will exaggerate things of course, you know, but it's all part of the process. Yeah. We also have to, like, when meeting new people, you know, we have to assume good faith. We never try to act—assume that they're trying to do something bad or assume that they were trying to do a certain thing. So that's kind of an important thing about being on the wiki.

Opportunities and Challenges

The findings show the ways in which digital youth have an increased sense of control over learning, creative, and social aspects of their life; as Dresang suggested earlier, Net Generation youth are increasingly in the driver's seat.[29] Digital age information behavior offers a new type of learning opportunity, which supports both autonomous and social learning. Information seeking—especially in which youth can choose what to explore in what order in the digital environment—allows them self-taught and autonomous problem solving. Beyond seeking and use, engaging in productive and creative information behavior seems to provide digital age youth with an enhanced sense of empowerment. As information creators, digital youth have a growing chance to be powerful and express their creativity and identity. They also create information collaboratively and contribute to the development of collective knowledge. Moreover, youth feel

a sense of agency during their social interactions, especially when their voices are accepted and they can make a meaningful contribution to the information world to which they belong. As demonstrated in the study, Radical Change theory provides a unique perspective to ferret out the potential of non-traditional behaviors to empower youth who are immersed in digital culture.

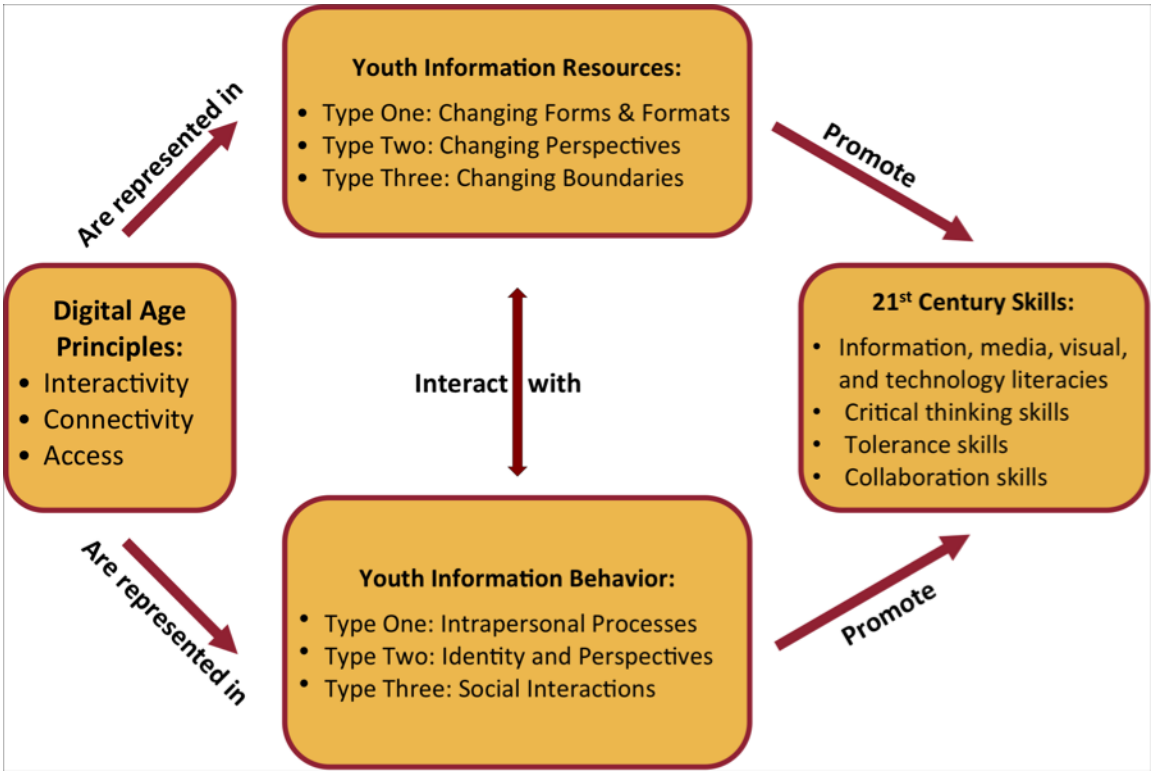
The theory, however, is not naive enough to overlook challenges in the digital environment. While most digital youth appreciate an increasing amount of information at their fingertips, processing a range of information demands a high level of thinking skills and information-credibility judgment. Today's youth must be equipped with digital information literacy skills in order to have a meaningful learning experience through information seeking. The creative information behavior of youth raises ethical issues concerning ownership as well as the problem of a digital participation gap, because advanced technologies that facilitate creation require a high cost. Collective knowledge can be challenged by quality concerns since anyone without traditional authority can contribute. Furthermore, constant connectivity and increasing online interaction bring up issues of privacy and online safety. The availability of diverse perspectives does not always lead to a broadening perspective or high tolerance when young people's social interaction is deliberately limited to a circle of like-minded people. Such challenges have implications for the future of Radical Change theory.

Future of the Theory

While the theory may not provide direct applications to all those challenges in the digital environment, Radical Change theory offers a valuable perspective for tackling the difficult issues for both professionals and scholars. The theory guides us to choose an approach to supporting a sense of agency in youth, instead of being intimidated by the dangers of the digital environment and attempting to protect "the innocence of youth" by limiting their access to information and technologies. I believe that the implications of the theory include the significant role of information professionals guiding and supporting digital youth in ways that do not stifle the digital age principles of connectivity, interactivity, and access. The principle of access can be seen as providing the foundation for Radical Change in both information resources and youth behaviors. Dresang explains that "an affirmative regard for Radical Change resources rests in part on a belief that the principles of intellectual freedom (based on the First Amendment) are applicable to youth as well as to adults." She further suggests that "the danger of withholding

information from youth far exceeds the danger of providing it. The onus is on us, the adults who care for and work with young people, to guide them to it, give them the background to sort through it and interpret it, and write, edit, and publish it in books that give them the opportunity to reflect upon and absorb it."[30] Fostering digital youth's twenty-first-century skills, such as digital information literacy, is key in order for them to truly take advantage of opportunities through the interactive and connected digital environment.

I offer the following diagram as a potential way that Radical Change theory can guide future research. It is a framework for studying the information behavior of digital youth, radical resources, and the outcomes for youth in obtaining twenty-first-century skills. Dresang recognized the framework to be "the next step in understanding digital age children's information behavior and the role of libraries in meeting their needs."[31] The diagram flows from the digital age principles—interactivity, connectivity, and access—to the Radical Change resources and behaviors that represent the principles. It depicts interaction between resources and people. Owing to its emphasis on the synergistic combination of users and information resources in the digital age,[32] researchers can benefit from the theory in investigating how digital age resources and changing users interact and influence one another. The theory can also be applied to exploring the effectiveness of Radical Change resources in promoting the twenty-first-century skills of digital youth, just as Pantaleo's findings proposed that Radical Change resources are tools to teach critical thinking skills, visual literacy, and more.[33] Finally, the diagram calls for future research that explores how the interaction between changing resources and youth may have an impact on youth obtaining twenty-first-century skills, because these are critical skills in enhancing a sense of agency in youth by increasing their capacity to learn, create, and socialize.



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