

# The REIYL Conference: Glasgow

## Transatlantic Conversations in Research on Inclusive Youth Literature 8-10 August 2019 at the Scottish Youth Theatre

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### Call for Papers

#### Confirmed Keynotes:

**Dr. Ebony Elizabeth Thomas**, University of Pennsylvania

**Darren Chetty**, University College London

The idea for Researchers Exploring Inclusive Youth Literature (REIYL) began in January of 2018 when doctoral students Breanna McDaniel at the University of Cambridge and Josh Simpson at Strathclyde University began a conversation about justice and equity-focused research on inclusive representation in children's literature in the UK. From this came the idea of bringing together like-minded students and



established academics dedicated to the study and analysis of current research, in the UK and abroad, to form a network through this first conference. We facilitate teaching and knowledge exchange with the hopes of building a more engaged and interconnected community, so that gains made in one space can reach other spaces in a timely and even manner. With these goals in mind, we are organising this conference to map the terrain of current research in our field. We invited submissions for papers or presentations on inclusive youth literature publishing and scholarship with a particular focus on transatlantic conversations. While we are beginning with this focus, and are also open to critiques of this focus, we hope this will be the first of many conversations and collaborations. Abstracts were sought for individual presentations and panels from graduate students and seasoned scholars, which both pose and respond to critical questions about:

- Social media activism: #WeNeedDiverseBooks, #WeNeedDiverseScholars, #ReflectingRealities\*
- Youth literature texts and research in conversation across disciplines and borders
- Youth literature outside of the “mainstream Western canon” and destabilizing the very concept of “mainstream” youth literature
- Interdisciplinary engagement with youth literature and other forms of creative expression including theatre, filmmaking etc.

- Intersections of identities in youth literature, i.e., (not exhaustive) indigeneity, race, gender, disability studies, immigration status, language, religion, sexuality, and class
- Data collection on books featuring people and cultures that are typically marginalised and stereotyped
- Critical engagement with foundational approaches to diversity in youth literature (for example, Bishop's mirrors, windows, sliding glass doors)
- New critical approaches to integrating critical race, disability, feminist, gender, religious, post-colonial, queer etc. theory in youth literature and the intersections of these theories

We asked that the proposed papers and panels show how the contributor(s) will critically engage with the chosen topic. In other words, the proposal should do more than identify the current state of things (what might be called an "all-about" paper) and instead work toward a specific, arguable thesis and, where appropriate, include a specific case study.

**Submissions closed on 8 January.** A wide range of abstracts were received, ensuring an interesting programme and productive conversations!

For questions and concerns, please contact Breanna McDaniel or Joshua Simpson at [questions@REIYL.com](mailto:questions@REIYL.com)

\*We are particularly interested in developing urgent, critical conversations around the hashtag, study and ensuing studies occurring in the wake of the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education's #ReflectingRealities report, which reveals that, of all the children's books published in the UK in 2017, only 1% had a BAME main character and only 4% featured any BAME character(s) at all (2018, p. 5)

### *References*

Centre for Literacy in Primary Education. (2018, July). Reflecting Realities: Survey of Ethnic Representation within UK Children's Literature 2017. Retrieved from <https://clpe.org.uk/library-and-resources/research/reflecting-realities-survey-ethnic-representation-within-uk-children>