

The Thirteen Percent Problem:

Authors of Colour in the British Young Adult Market, 2017-2019 edition

Melanie Ramdarshan Bold

ABSTRACT

The underrepresentation of people of colour in books and authorship is a critical issue for the British publishing industry. Recent studies have provided both qualitative evidence and longitudinal, quantitative evidence that demonstrates the extent of the problem, fuelling numerous discussions and initiatives within the book community. This article will extend my previous study on YA authorship in the UK, which found that between 2006-2016 only eight percent of the published authors were people of colour. Findings are presented from an analysis of all YA books published in the UK between 2017 and 2019, contextualised with the data from 2006-2016 and recent developments in the market. This article will present yearly trends from 2006 to show if and how things have changed over the years. Specifically, as with the previous research, this study sought to investigate the percentage of YA books that are written by authors of colour, and the percentage of YA authors that are people of colour and British people of colour.

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INTRODUCTION

The language may have changed, and the social, political, and literary landscapes may have shifted, since 2016; however, the issue of ‘diversity’ (or lack thereof) is still, ostensibly, high on the agenda for publishers. In the UK publishing industry, the commonly used term ‘diversity’ is typically employed when talking about people of colour (publishing professionals, authors, and characters), rather than other socially marginalised groups. It is also a term that centres Whiteness, which is why it is written in single quotation marks in this article. Since my previous study, which highlighted the dearth of authors of colour in the British YA market (“The Eight Percent Problem”), there have been numerous reports, studies, and conversations about representation and misrepresentation. These voices all, essentially, say the same thing: racism in the UK is insidious, and the publishing industry has a role in maintaining (or challenging) the status quo (Publishers Association; Black Writer’s Guild; Ramdarshan Bold, *Inclusive Young Adult Fiction*; Saha and Van Lente). This structural inequality can manifest in different ways: in the way people of colour are visible (or invisible, as is often the case) in books (CLPE, “Reflecting Realities, 2017”; “Reflecting Realities, 2018”; “Reflecting Realities, 2019”; Chetty and Sands O’Connor) and on their front covers (Kimura); in how publishing professionals consider authorship and audience (Ramdarshan Bold, *Inclusive Young Adult Fiction*; Saha and Van Lente); in the demographic of authors being published (Ramdarshan Bold, “The Eight Percent Problem”, “Representation of People of Colour among Children’s Book Authors and Illustrators (2007-2017)”, “Representation of People of Colour among Children’s Book Authors and Illustrators (2017-2019)”; So; So and Wezerek); in how authors of colour experience the publishing process (Ramdarshan Bold, *Inclusive Young Adult Fiction*, “Representation of People of Colour”); and in the racial pay gap between authors (Flood, “#Publishingpaidme”).

This article will extend my previous research on YA authorship in the UK, considering the accelerated discussions about representation and inclusion in YA and the changing publishing landscape since 2016. Findings are presented from an analysis of all YA books and authors published in the UK between 2017 and 2019, contextualised with the data from 2006-2016 (Ramdarshan Bold, “The Eight Percent Problem”). Demographic data – gender identity, ethnicity, and nationality – was collected and analysed to understand who is writing YA published in the UK and what the breakdown of the market looks like. This article will present yearly trends from 2006 to demonstrate how YA authorship has changed over the years. Specifically, as with the previous research, this study sought to investigate the percentage of YA books that are written by authors of colour, and the percentage of YA authors that are people of colour and British people of colour. This article will not delve into the causes of underrepresentation; it will provide quantitative evidence, alongside

contextual information about the publishing industry, to show how YA authorship, and the British market, is changing.¹

CONTEXT AND THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTHORSHIP

Conversations about ‘diversity’ are not new, of course; as early as the mid-nineteenth century, African-American parents, educators, and other public and community figures in the US wrote about problematic depictions of Black people in youth literature (Bishop, *Shadow and Substance*; *Free Within Ourselves*; Connolly; Jiménez-García; M. Martin; Thomas, “Stories Still Matter”; Reese). This was followed by influential US scholarship that has shaped how academics look at youth literature today (Bishop, “Mirrors”; CCBC; Enciso; Xie; Jiménez-García; M. Martin; Reese; Thomas, *The Dark Fantastic*).² Things have moved at a much slower pace in the UK, partly due to the cultural differences in talking about, and tackling, racism, which will be discussed further below. It was not until a century later, in the mid-twentieth century, that UK publishers began to consider teenage books beyond the White, British experience (Sands-O’Connor, *Diversity and Inclusion*). The UK also has a shorter history of scholarship examining representations of ‘race’ and ethnicity in, and around, youth literature. Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, rightly, asserts, “[s]eventy years after the Windrush generation, and centuries after the first Africans arrived in London, critical perspectives on contemporary Black British young adult literature are necessary and long overdue” (“Young Adult Literature for Black Lives” 8). In fact, much of the archaeological, historical work has been undertaken by US scholar, Karen Sands-O’Connor (*Soon Come Home to this Island*; *Children’s Publishing and Black Britain*; *Diversity and Inclusion*). Sands-O’Connor’s work draws attention to the activists – typically authors and independent publishers and booksellers – advocating for multicultural youth literature in parallel to US movements in the twentieth century. However, these UK movements did not garner much mainstream attention until the twenty-first century, particularly the last decade. Industry discussion, and (proposed) action, have intensified in the UK since 2017. This is, in part, due to the increased focus on inclusive youth literature research, with both quantitative and qualitative data providing clear evidence of how woefully underrepresented people of colour are in youth literature and authorship.

YA scholarship has developed over the last decade to further explore the intersections of identities, and how they are represented (or misrepresented) in YA books (Jenkins and Cart; Irwin et al.; Mathison; Panlay; Reynolds; Hinton; Brooks and McNair; Thomas, *The Dark*

1 See Ramdarshan Bold, *Inclusive Young Adult Literature*, for explorations of the experiences of UKYA authors of colour.

2 This is just a snapshot of some key research; as is the case throughout this article, this list is not exhaustive.

Fantastic; Bickmore and Clark; Toliver; Suhr-Sytsma).³ Much of this research centres on the text and/or the reader, rather than examining the YA communication circuit (digital or otherwise); i.e. the factors feeding into the production, dissemination, and consumption of the text (Darnton; Squires and Ray Murray). YA authorship, the focus of this article, is an important point of examination, particularly in light of the #OwnVoices movement and subsequent discussions about who has the authority to write socially marginalised characters. There have been numerous cases, across the decades, of authors from dominant groups writing damaging and stereotypical depictions of socially marginalised people whose identity they do not share (Bishop, “Multicultural Literature for Children”; *Free Within Ourselves*; Bradford; Osa; Cai; Lo; Mathison; V. Harris). Recent YA examples include John Boyne misgendering a transgender character and centring the cisgender experience in *My Brother’s Name is Jessica* (2019) (A. Martin; Corbett). Boyne has been unapologetic about the offence caused by his book. In fact, Boyne states,

[t]here is this awful thing, in my opinion an awful thing, #OwnVoices [which says] that people can only write about their own experience and stories, and my experience as a reader and as a writer is the opposite to that [...] I don’t feel it’s my job as a reader or a writer to tell anyone what they can or can’t write. We are supposed to use our imaginations, to put ourselves into the minds and the bodies of others. (qtd. in Brown)

There have been widespread public criticisms of such work, but this has not stopped authors from writing outside of their lived experience (A. Martin; Schaub). As ‘diversity’ and ‘diverse books’ become fashionable for publishers, who are capitalising on such movements, it is important to investigate who is actually writing these books, and why (Alter and Harris; Peirson-Haggar). Boyne’s quote, for example, helps us understand why dominant group authors may write outside of their lived experiences, even though the result might be offensive and damaging to people within those socially marginalised groups.

Today, publishing is increasingly driven by celebrity or brand-name authors as a result of the conglomeration of the publishing industry (Cain). This business of mergers and acquisitions, and subsequent contraction of the industry, has transformed authorship and publishing into a more competitive, cross-media discipline. Claire Squires and Padmini Ray Murray argued, in 2007, that the publishing industry was under “a near oligopolistic control” (22). Over a decade later, the industry has shrunk further, with four publishers dominating the trade markets. Many publishers are now persistently looking for potential bestsellers, and authors who can be used as marketable commodities (Smith and Ramdarshan Bold). Authorship remains an underpaid profession and one that is characterised by the gulf between the small percentage of bestselling authors and the rest: the top 10% of authors, in

3 There is also a clear need, as Ebony Elizabeth Thomas outlines in her recent *IJYAL* article, for #OwnVoices scholarship in this area (“Young Adult Literature for Black Lives”).

the UK, earn around 70% of total earnings in the profession (Kretschmer et al.). There are many reasons why authors of colour struggle to get published in the first place. For example: acquisitions teams worry that writing by authors of colour will be too niche; (mostly White) editors often commission books by or about people with cultural backgrounds similar to their own and/or have biases that exclude authors of colour; and White authors are more likely to have a literary agent for their debut novels (Saha and Van Lente; Childress and Nault; Kean, “Writing the Future”). The contraction of the market means it is also challenging for authors of colour to become visible and earn a living once they are published (Ramdarshan Bold, *Inclusive Young Adult Fiction*). Time-poor consumers often depend on bestseller lists or in-store bookshop promotion to help them choose books in a saturated market; however, there are several factors that play into who makes it onto these lists or promotional tables. Publishers need to feel confident about the commercial power of a book to invest time and money into it, and authors who write on the margins (this can include authors of colour) are often regarded as ‘high risk’ (Kean, “Writing the Future”; Ramdarshan Bold, *Inclusive Young Adult Fiction*). This set of perceptions is often based on the publishing industry’s idea of an ‘imagined audience’ (i.e. White and middle-class) (Chambers; Ramdarshan Bold, *Inclusive Young Adult Fiction*; Saha and Van Lente).

It is clear that there is a social and cultural imperative to publish and support books and authors that represent all facets of society (Thomas, “Stories Still Matter”; Park Dahlen). It is also widely known that representational voices in YA books are important for young people from *all* backgrounds (Bishop, “Mirrors”; Thomas, “The Imagination Gap in #Kidlit and #YALit”). Books are multifaceted, providing insight into a variety of different lives and cultures, and they have an important role to play in holding up a mirror to the world; what they reflect impacts on how young – and even not-so-young – readers see themselves and the world around them (Bishop, “Mirrors”). Representative books and authors also play an important role in developing the writers of tomorrow. The absence of a representative range of characters or creative role models in YA literature has the potential to deter young people from socially marginalised backgrounds from reading and experiencing the associated benefits. In turn, this lack of engagement with reading could deter young people from pursuing careers in writing and further embed and prolong the imbalance (Ramdarshan Bold, “Representation of People of Colour among Children’s Book Authors and Illustrators (2007-2017)”).

METHODOLOGY

This research employed the same methods used in my 2006-2016 study. The statistical data is based on the development and analysis of a corpus of relevant titles, which were identified and collected through the British Library’s British National Bibliography database. The

British Library is a legal deposit library, which means publishers have to deposit all of the (digital and print) titles they publish in the UK there: it is a legal requirement (Muir). The term ‘publisher’, in this instance, includes self-published authors, and ‘titles’ also include those without ISBNs. This means, for example, if an author publishes an e-book on Amazon it must be deposited at the British Library. The metadata team at the British Library provided a database of all books tagged with the phrases ‘Young Adult Fiction’ and/or ‘Young Adult Literature’ published between January 2017 and December 2019.⁴ This dataset did not include data from 2020 because creating the corpus is a painstaking and laborious process that takes months, and the submission deadline for this article was January 2021. The full 2020 dataset was not available from the British Library until January 2021.

The database did not include information such as author demographics or the type of publisher. This additional information was identified through digital and printed paratextual, mostly epitextual, information where available (e.g. publisher and author websites, author interviews, social media profiles, and book covers etc.).⁵ Authors were segmented by their (self-identified) gender identity, ethnicity (based on the Office of National Statistics terminology), and nationality. All of the collected data were publicly available and viewed as public documents. The data collection process draws upon the work of Langer and Beckman (2005), which adopts established research ethics used for content analysis in public media (for example, of reader letters in newspapers). The demographic data was aggregated and anonymised before being included in the analysis. This provided statistical information about what percentage of YA books were created by different demographic groups. Publishers, in this study, were segmented into six key categories: conglomerate, independent, NGO/Charity/Museum, self-publishers, hybrid publishers,⁶ and university presses. However, most of the titles were published by conglomerates and independents. Conglomerate publishing is when publishing companies are subsidiaries of a much larger, often multi-national and multi-industry, parent company.

The database analysis focused on three main areas: all of the titles published (including the various editions of a unique title; for example, there were different editions of the *Twilight Saga* in the 2006-2019 database); unique titles published (removing all of the different editions, so each *Twilight* book would be counted only once); and individual creators (removing the different titles, so Stephenie Meyer would only be counted once, overall and per year).⁷ The bestselling books data was accessed through Nielsen BookScan. The lists collate the bestselling physical books in each particular year, irrespective of

4 This study added the term ‘Young Adult Literature’ after feedback from various publishers, which yielded more results.

5 The core social media platforms used for data collection were: Twitter, Instagram, and Goodreads. These platforms are popular with both authors and publishers (Laing). Data was collected from author and publisher profiles.

6 Hybrid publishers combine elements of both traditional publishers and self-publishers.

7 Disclaimer, I am not obsessed with the *Twilight Saga*.

whether they were published in that year. Nielsen BookScan tracks physical books sales by their ISBNs, through cash register transactions. This means that digital book sales and, more importantly, book sales through online retailers such as Amazon are not included.

There are some limitations to this methodology. The intersections between ethnicity and social class (and other social marginalisation such as disability and sexuality) were not investigated in this study and warrant further investigation. In particular, Mike Savage argues that inequality in the UK is increasingly due to wealth and income; this argument can also be applied to social and cultural capital (Savage; Savage et al.). The creative and cultural industries in the UK can be socially exclusive, with subtle barriers to those not from middle-class or upper-middle-class backgrounds (Brook et al.). British working-class authors have spoken about the impact of these barriers – including lack of access to networks and insider knowledge – on their confidence, income, and career progression (Shaw). My own research found that class privilege acted as an enabler for British authors of colour (“Representation of People of Colour among Children’s Book Authors and Illustrators (2007-2017)”). However, it can be very difficult to determine someone’s social class, particularly when people from privileged backgrounds often misidentify themselves as working class to downplay their privilege (Friedman et al.). The data collection for this research relied on authors either self-identifying their ethnicity, gender identity, and nationality, or for such information to be identified in epitexts such as publisher websites or interviews in newspapers, journals, or magazines. Other identifiers such as social class, sexuality, and disability were not so readily available, and so the dataset would have been unreliable, which is why they were not added as part of the analysis.

A note on terminology: this article draws from a very large dataset that includes authors from a variety of ‘races’ and ethnicities across the world.⁸ As such, the term ‘authors of colour’ is used to refer to all individuals from racially marginalised groups wherever possible because there are many disaggregated categories for ethnicity in the database, including those developed by UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), to be discussed as a whole. ‘Authors of colour’ is used, in part, in the political sense to emphasise some of the common experiences of systemic racism experienced by Black and Brown people, whilst also acknowledging that Black communities are often the worst impacted by racism and discrimination (Byrne et al.). However, the term is used mostly because of the high number of different authors being analysed. In this article, Black and Brown are capitalised to depict shared histories and identities (within each category) whereas White is capitalised because it is also a construct and a model that reinforces inequality. In the UK, the term Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) is both widely used and highly contentious (Khunti et al.). BAME includes disadvantaged communities, such as Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers, who are

8 This article uses ‘ethnicity’, for the most part, rather than the empirical term ‘race’; however, it does reflect Stuart Hall’s understanding that ‘race’ should be seen as a discursive category rather than based on erroneous ideas of biological differences.

typically coded as White, so the term is redundant for this article. Likewise, the UK, and some of the other countries in the dataset, do not have Indigenous populations, so the US-term Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) is not appropriate. I acknowledge that all terminology used to classify people is problematic, that people of colour are not a homogenous group, and that people within different ethnic groups have different experiences of structural inequality.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

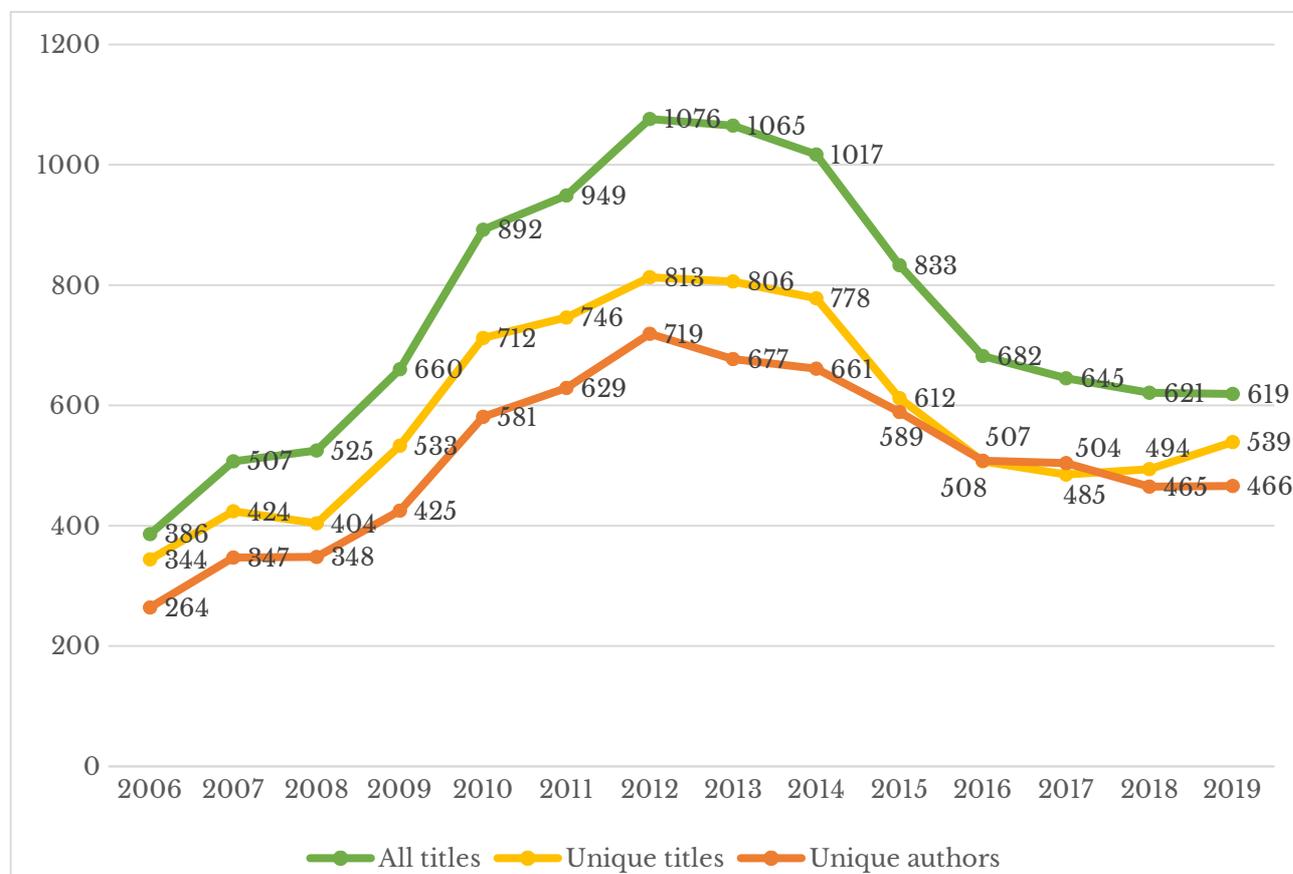
There has been a decline in all titles, unique titles, and unique authors published since 2015. This corresponds with the general downturn in YA sales, noted earlier. The reduction in output follows a boom period earlier last decade. This expansion was fuelled by film adaptations of YA bestsellers such as Meyer’s original *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008), Suzanne Collins’s *Hunger Games* trilogy (2008-2010), and Veronica Roth’s *Divergent* series (2011-2013); what Rebekah Fitzsimmons and Casey Alane Wilson call the YA “hypercanon” (ix). The likes of these global blockbusters have not been seen in the period under discussion, which has impacted the numbers of titles, authors being published, and sales, and thus the value of the market. Despite not being reflective of the wealth of YA being published, this “hypercanon” – often falling within the popular genre of YA fantasy – did help commercialise the field of YA, giving it a more global reach and wider audience. This resulted in publishers being eager to profit from a buoyant market. As Simone Murray notes, adaptations are both a creative and financial investment, where books are part of a transactional “cultural economy” (5). The release of new books in a series allows consumers to build relationships with characters – and for authors to build an ongoing world – which leads to publishers, and other entertainment companies being willing to invest in them. Fantasy stories, like much of the YA “hypercanon”, are particularly suited to transmedia storytelling due to their immersive nature (Gelder).

Output

There were 1885 YA titles published between 2017 and 2019 in the UK (including different/new/republished editions of titles). The number of all titles has slowly decreased since 2016 (682 titles): 645 in 2017, 621 in 2018, and 619 in 2019 (Figure 1). In comparison, the number of unique titles increased, from 507 in 2016, to 539 in 2019. While this is a very small uptick in output, it is still positive since it shows the increased commissioning of new titles, rather than republishing old ones, after a lull in 2017 and 2018. The number of individual authors, however, has been in decline since 2012, when 719 authors were published. In 2019,

466 authors were published, which is a significant drop. In fact, in the 2017-2019 period, no more than 485 authors were published in a single year.

Figure 1: Number of titles (including different editions) and unique authors published 2006-2019



As noted above, there has not been an abundance of blockbuster YA film adaptations since the peak (2012–2014) period. That being said, several books published within the 2017-2019 period have been adapted for film or television, or are in the process of being so. *The Hate U Give* (2017) by Angie Thomas, for example, was adapted into a critically and commercially successful film in 2018 (Lewis), and the film rights for Tomi Adeyemi’s West African-inspired YA fantasy debut *Children of Blood and Bone* (2018) were bought by Fox 2000 in an (alleged) seven-figure deal (Fleming). Additionally, Netflix recently started adapting YA books, including Jenny Han’s *To All The Boys I’ve Loved Before* (2015) and Jennifer Niven’s *All the Bright Places* (2015); new editions of both of these books were published in the 2017-2019 period. In December 2020, Netflix launched a drama series based on *Tiny Pretty Things* (2015) by Sona Charaipotra and Dhonielle Clayton. This new emphasis on young adult programming on Netflix demonstrates the influence of the YA audience, and developments in the way they consume culture. This, alongside forthcoming adaptations of bestselling YA series, could provide a much-needed stimulus to the YA market. For example, the much-anticipated reimagining of Leigh Bardugo’s bestselling YA fantasy *Shadow and Bone* trilogy

and *Six of Crows* duology – *Shadow and Bone* – was released on Netflix in April 2021. Kelly Jensen notes, however, when looking at the list of YA adaptations to be released in 2021, that the majority are written by White authors.

A Picture of YA Authorship: Who is writing young adult books?

Echoing the previous study, White women (from the UK and the US) dominated YA authorship in 2017-2019. However, there have been some positive shifts, particularly with regards to author ethnicity, since 2006-2016.⁹ The following section will look at specific demographics to see how they have changed over this three- and 14-year period respectively.

Ethnicity

There has been an increase in the number of YA books written by people of colour, particularly in 2019, in the three years since 2016.¹⁰ Overall, in the 2017-2019 period, 13.14% (184) of authors were people of colour. The gradual changes can be seen when looking at individual years. In 2017, 7.10% of authors were people of colour and they wrote 6.13% of unique titles; 2.43% of authors were British people of colour and they wrote 2.54% of unique titles. In 2018, 13.25% of authors were people of colour and they wrote 13.49% of unique titles; 3.75% of authors were British people of colour and they wrote 3.53% of unique titles. In 2019, 19.60% of authors were people of colour and they wrote 20.30% of unique titles; 5.95% of authors were British people of colour and they wrote 6.45% of unique titles. Looking at how this has shifted over the longer time period: between 2006-2019, 9.88% of authors were people of colour and they wrote 8.89% of unique titles. In the 2006-2016 period, 8% of authors were people of colour. In the 2006-2019 period, 2.24% of authors were British people of colour and they wrote 2.04% of unique titles: an increase from 1.5% in the 2006-2016 period. These are fairly small but nevertheless significant changes, as can be seen from Figure 2. The percentage of authors of colour has more than doubled since 2006, and, most interestingly, is more than three times the amount observed in 2016; the end year of the previous study.

Figure 3 shows what impact this had on the number of unique titles being published each year: again, nearly three times the percentage observed in 2006 and over three times the amount observed in 2016. For both charts, 2019 was the year with the highest representation of authors of colour on all counts. What is most telling about the yearly statistics is that authors of colour were most poorly represented (in both the number of authors and the number of unique titles being published) during the prolific period of YA

9 As noted in the methodology section, it would be difficult to present the full list of ethnicities in this short article. This article will focus on whether the authors are people of colour or White.

10 1009 unique authors published in this period: there was no ethnicity information for 33 authors.

(2010-2015), particularly when output of all titles exceeded 1000 per year (2012-2014). In fact, despite far fewer titles being published in 2017-2019, the percentage of authors of colour, and titles by authors of colour, were more than double that of the prolific 2012-2014 period.

Figure 2: Percentage of authors of colour, by year (2006-2016)

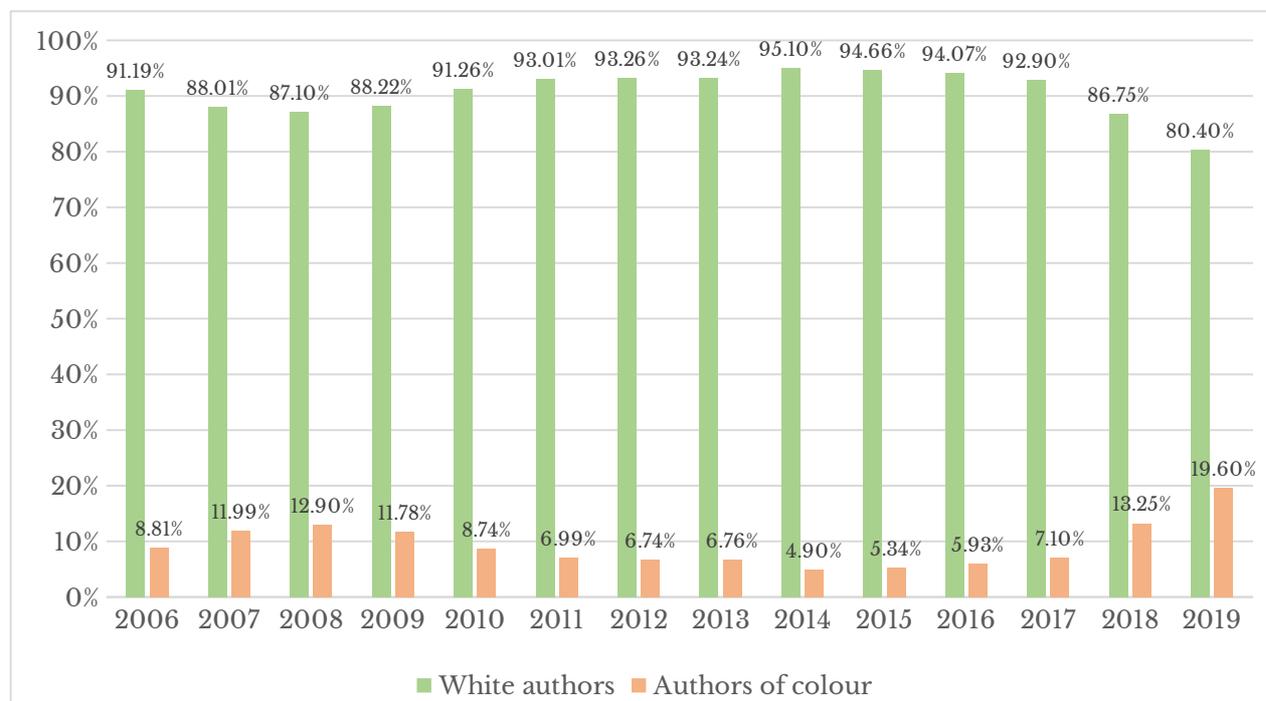
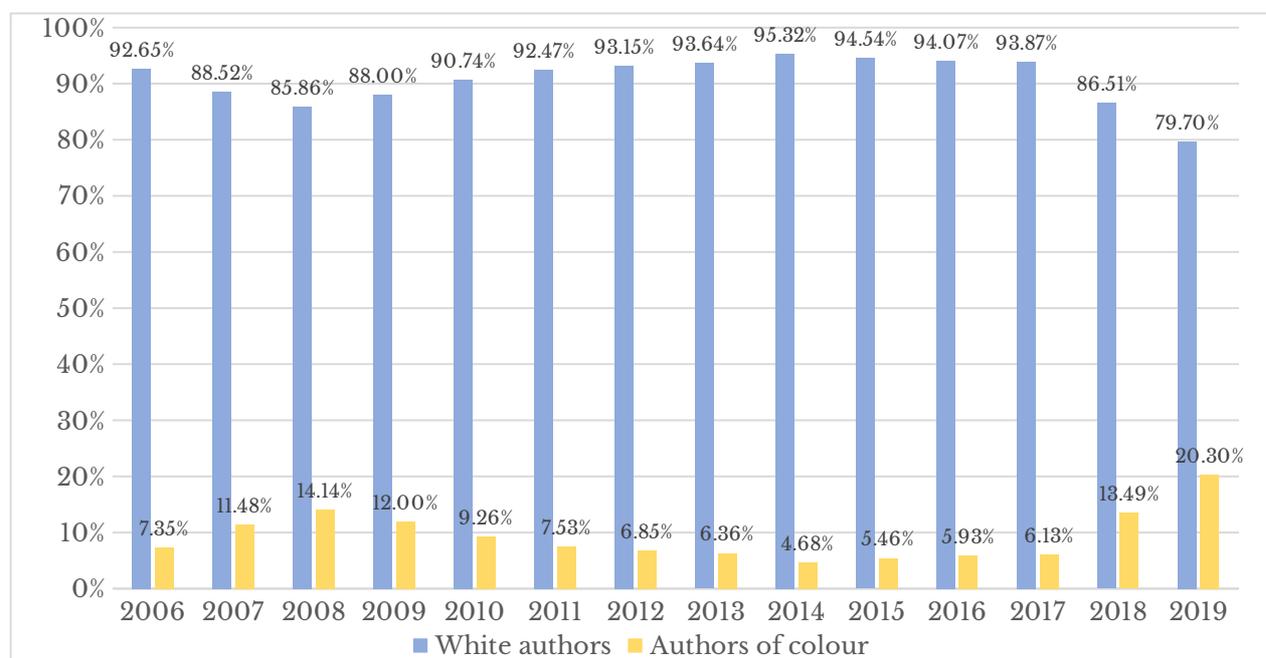


Figure 3: Percentage of titles by authors of colour, by year (2006-2016)



Nationality

In the 2006-2016 period, the YA market in the UK was dominated by authors from the UK and the US: this has not changed in the 2017-2019 period. In 2017, 88.71% of the authors were from the UK or US and they wrote 89.49% of the unique titles. In 2018, 82.81% of the authors were from the UK or US and they wrote 87.7% of the unique titles. In 2019, 85.2% of the authors were from the UK or US and they wrote 87.03% of the unique titles. The small percentage of remaining authors were from different countries; predominantly the English-speaking nations Australia and Canada. YA books published in the UK are mostly written by White British authors: 52.54% (2017), 49.01% (2018), and 45.59% (2019). USYA authors, however, do feature more prominently on bestseller lists and literary prizes lists. In fact, in 2019 USYA author Elizabeth Acevedo was the first author of colour to win the prestigious Carnegie Award since its inception in 1936 (Flood, “Carnegie Medal goes to First Writer of Colour in its 83-year History”).¹¹ Acevedo’s win, and work, may have been an impetus for more recent UKYA novels in verse, a relatively new form in UKYA, by authors of colour: *The Black Flamingo* by Dean Atta (published in 2019) was shortlisted for the Carnegie in 2020, and won the Carnegie Shadowers’ Choice Award, while Manjeet Mann’s *Run, Rebel* and *The Girl Who Became a Tree* by Joseph Coelho were both published in 2020.¹²

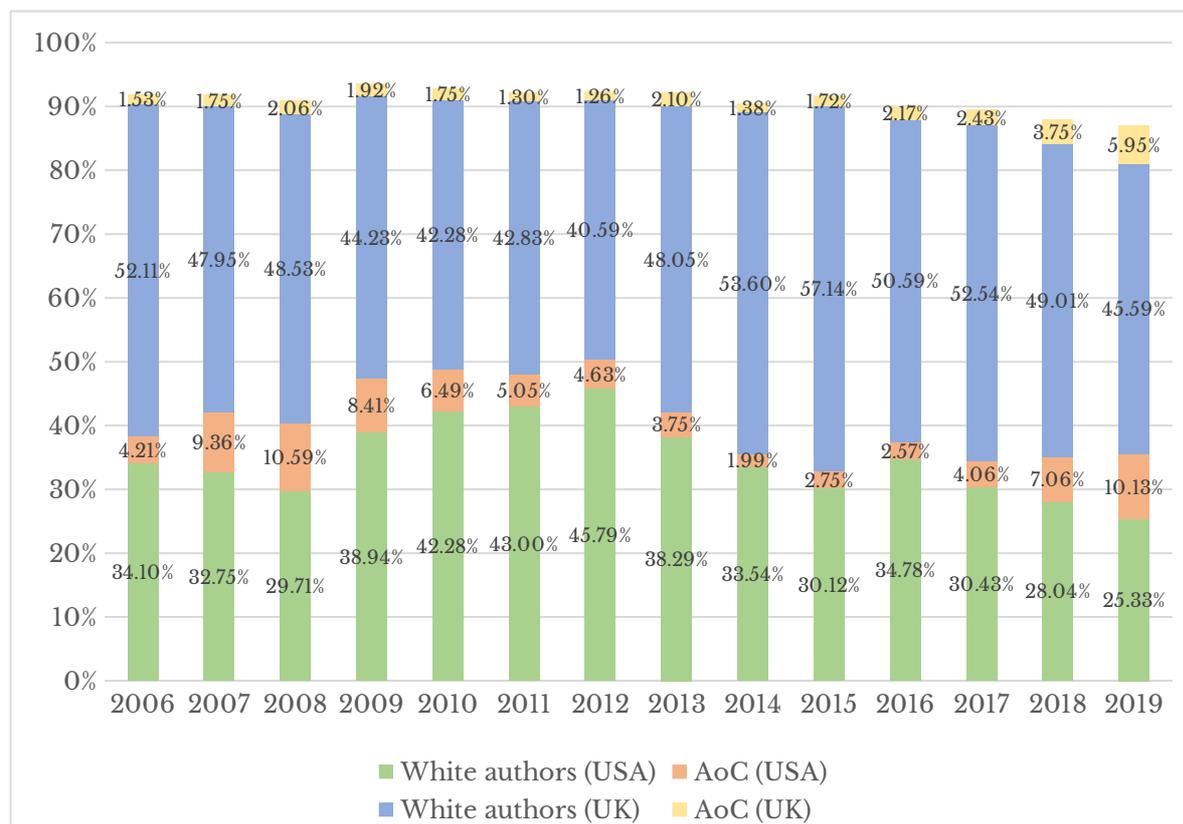
In general, there has been an increase in British authors of colour being published: the percentage in 2019 was more than double that of 2006 (Figure 4). This is a positive step for home-grown talent, and UKYA in general; especially since a range of debut and emerging authors – such as Atta, Muhammad Khan, Yasmin Rahman, and Alexandra Sheppard published alongside established UKYA authors – such as Patrice Lawrence, Bali Rai, and Benjamin Zephaniah – in 2017-2019. Nevertheless, more authors of colour are from the US than the UK. To reiterate, in 2017, 2.43% of authors were British people of colour and they wrote 2.54% of unique titles. However, 4.06% of authors were people of colour from the US and they wrote of 2.96% unique titles. In 2018, 3.75% of authors were British people of colour and they wrote 3.53% of unique titles. In comparison, 7.05% of authors were people of colour from the US, and they wrote of 7.88% unique titles. In 2019, 5.95% of authors were British people of colour, and they wrote 6.45% of unique titles. However, 10.13% of authors were people of colour from the US, and they wrote of 10.65% unique titles. Figure 4 outlines the breakdown between authors of colour and White authors from the UK and US over the whole time period. There has been a decrease in White authors from the US since the boom period

11 The Carnegie Medal has received criticism by many authors (such as Philip Pullman and Alex Wheatle) in the past, for its all-White long- and shortlists (Kean, “All-white Carnegie medal longlist”). Pearson et al. show how the Carnegie Medal contributed to the construction of British national identity; the early winners of the award, for example, portrayed White, British culture. Different cultures, if they were depicted, were depicted as other against this set ‘norm’.

12 The CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals have a shadowing scheme where children and young people, from across the UK, ‘shadow’ the judges. This group of ‘shadowers’ read, discuss, and review the books and vote for their winners in the two categories.

(ending 2014), and an increase in White British authors, and authors of colour from the UK and the US. There have been some high profile and bestselling Black authors from the US, such as Angie Thomas and Tomi Adeyemi, since 2017. These authors, alongside general industry discussions around the lack of ‘diversity’ in publishing, arguably acted as a catalyst for this change. Such high-profile US authors of colour have an impact on the publisher breakdown, which will be highlighted in the section about who publishes YA.

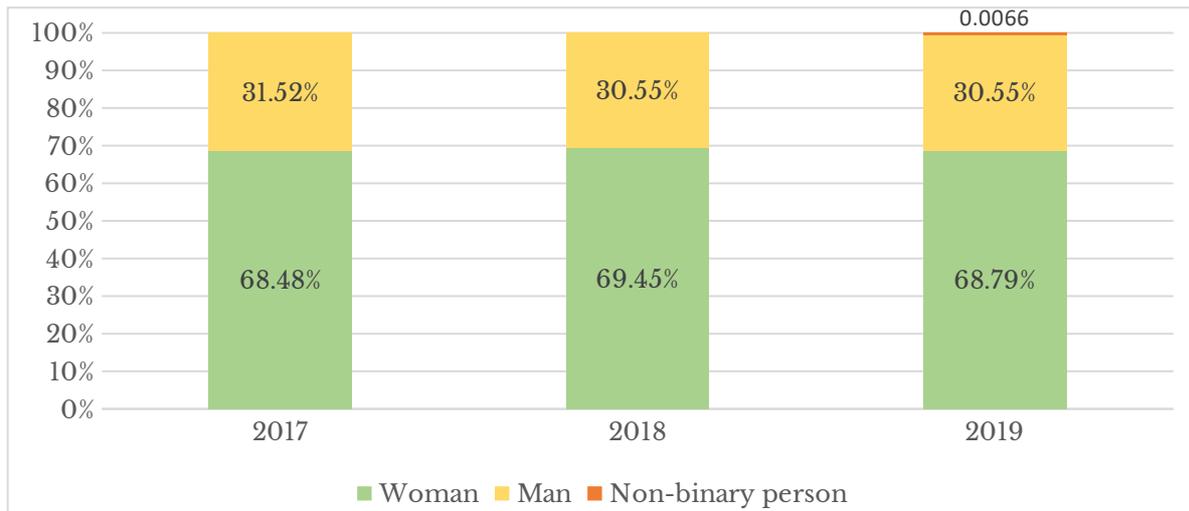
Figure 4: UK and US authors: ethnicity (2006-2019)



Gender Identity

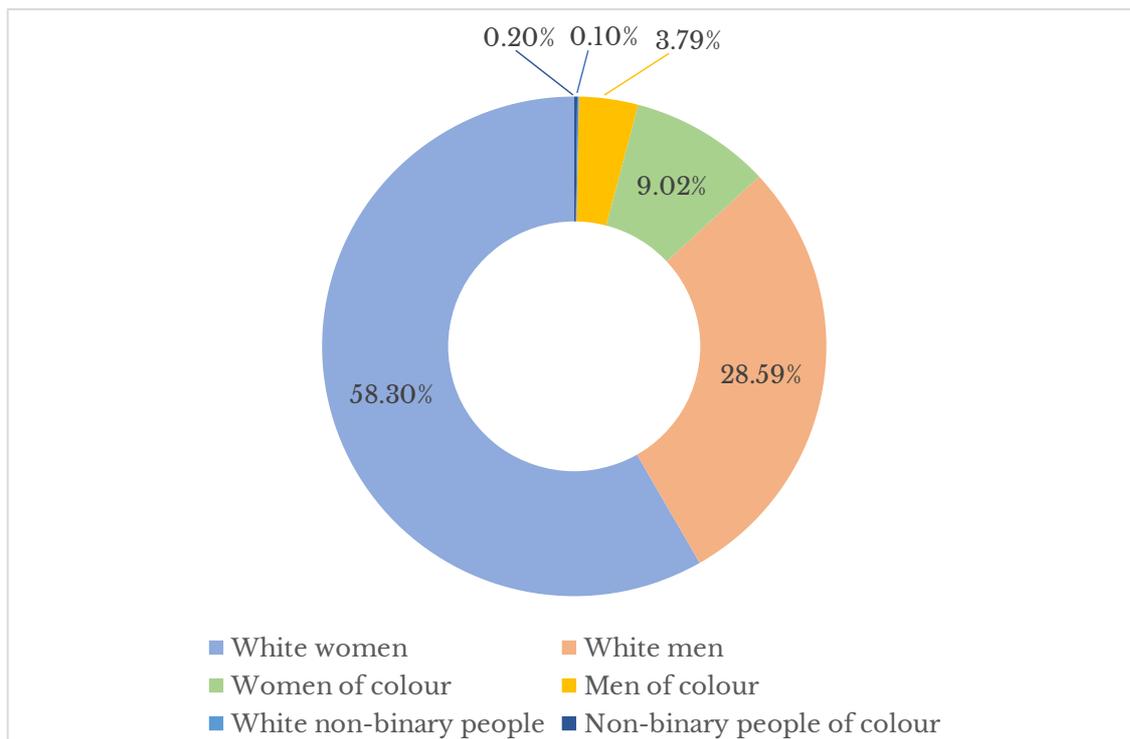
YA has, traditionally, favoured women readers and authors (Lewit). As with the previous research, this fact is reflected in the 2017-2019 statistics, as can be seen in Figure 5. The numbers are consistent over the three-year period; around 68-69% of authors each year are women. The terms ‘woman’ and ‘man’ include both transgender and cisgender people, although the authors were predominantly cisgender.

Figure 5: Gender identity of authors (2017-2019)



Looking at gender identity and ethnicity, as in 2006-2016, White women dominate YA authorship: 58.3% of the authors published between 2017-2019 were White women; 28.59% were White men; 9.02% were women of colour; 3.79% were men of colour; 0.2% were White non-binary people, and 0.1% were non-binary people of colour (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Gender identity and ethnicity of authors (2017-2019)



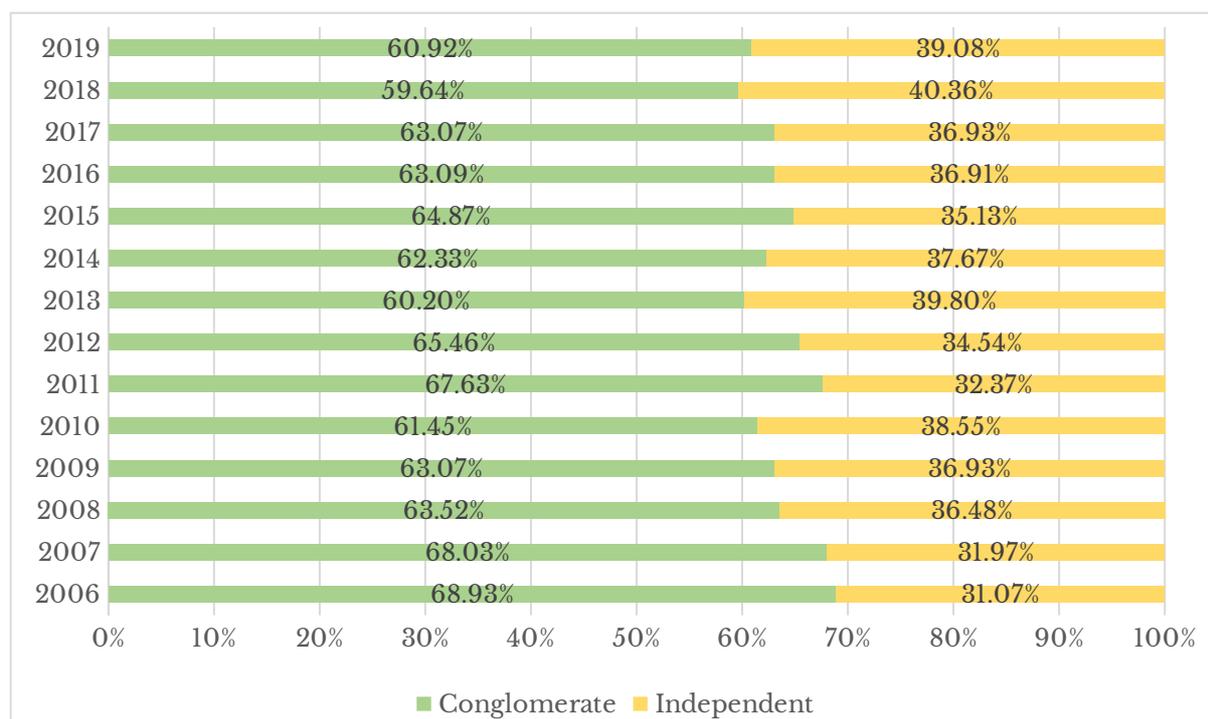
Drilling down further – looking specifically at authors from the US and the UK – the figures show that nearly half of the authors are White and British, and nearly a third are White British women. However, only 2.15% are British women of colour and fewer than 2% are

British men of colour. In comparison, nearly 5% of the authors are women of colour from the US. Men of colour, White non-binary authors, and non-binary authors of colour, from the US were the least represented groups: accounting for only 1.33%, 0.1%, and 0.1% of the authors.

Who is Publishing YA, especially Authors of Colour?

Large publishing conglomerates control the share of the British book market and thus guide cultural output (nationally and internationally).¹³ They also published the majority of the titles in the YA book market, during the study's period.

Figure 7: Publisher breakdown: independent and conglomerates (2006-2019)



Concentrating solely on conglomerate and independent publishers, the figures show, unsurprisingly, that conglomerates are publishing the majority of the YA titles; although 2018 did see independents publishing their largest share (40.36%) of the time period (Figure 7). Table 1, which displays author ethnicity and type of publisher, shows that there are variations each year and no clear pattern. Even so, titles by authors of colour were more likely than their White counterparts to be published by conglomerates since 2013, especially in 2019, where 73.79% of title written by authors of colour were published by conglomerate publishers in comparison to 58.72% of titles written by White authors. At this juncture, it is

13 The market will contract further when the Big Five (Penguin/Random House, Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins, Simon and Schuster, and Macmillan) become the Big Four following Bertelsmann's (owner of Penguin/Random House) purchase of Simon and Schuster (Jones), due to be finalised in 2021.

important to note that conglomerates are not publishing more titles by authors of colours than White authors; out of the titles the authors of colour are writing, conglomerates are more likely to publish them than independent publishers. This is not a slight against independent publishers, who often do the heavy lifting when it comes to supporting and promoting socially marginalised voices (Ramdarshan Bold, “Leading the Way”). Looking at the difference between authors of colour from the US and the UK, it is clear that titles by authors of colour from the US skew the previous statistics (see Tables 2 and 3). Authors (both White and people of colour) from the US are far more likely to have their titles published by conglomerates. This is because they already have a publishing and sales history in the lucrative US market, and because independents simply might not be able to offer a comparable deal. In 2019, for example, conglomerates published 83.05% of titles by US authors of colour in comparison 64.52% of titles by UK authors of colour. However, there has been an increase in conglomerates publishing British authors of colour: in 2016 they published 46.15% of their titles. This rose to 64.52% in 2019.

Table 1: Authors and their publishers: segmented by ethnicity and publisher type

Year/publisher	Conglomerate	Independent
2006		
White authors	69.54%	30.46%
Authors of colour	60.00%	40.00%
2007		
White authors	67.32%	32.68%
Authors of colour	72.55%	27.45%
2008		
White authors	64.50%	35.50%
Authors of colour	62.71%	37.29%
2009		
White authors	62.84%	37.16%
Authors of colour	60.32%	39.68%
2010		
White authors	61.04%	38.96%
Authors of colour	68.06%	31.94%
2011		
White authors	69.08%	30.92%
Authors of colour	54.39%	45.61%
2012		
White authors	66.09%	33.91%
Authors of colour	60.00%	40.00%

Year/publisher	Conglomerate	Independent
2013		
White authors	60.36%	39.64%
Authors of colour	71.43%	28.57%
2014		
White authors	62.04%	37.96%
Authors of colour	71.43%	28.57%
2015		
White authors	64.37%	35.63%
Authors of colour	75.68%	24.32%
2016		
White authors	62.70%	37.30%
Authors of colour	63.16%	36.84%
2017		
White authors	62.69%	37.31%
Authors of colour	73.17%	26.83%
2018		
White authors	59.62%	40.38%
Authors of colour	61.64%	38.36%
2019		
White authors	58.72%	41.28%
Authors of colour	73.79%	26.21%

Table 2: UK authors and their publishers: segmented by ethnicity and publisher type

Year/publisher	Conglomerate	Independent
2006		
White authors	68.89%	31.11%
Authors of colour	100.00%	0.00%
2007		
White authors	65.18%	34.82%
Authors of colour	66.67%	33.33%
2008		
White authors	59.41%	40.59%
Authors of colour	60.00%	40.00%
2009		
White authors	50.18%	49.82%
Authors of colour	80.00%	20.00%

Year/publisher	Conglomerate	Independent
2010		
White authors	48.82%	51.18%
Authors of colour	63.64%	36.36%
2011		
White authors	58.88%	41.12%
Authors of colour	40.00%	60.00%
2012		
White authors	52.01%	47.99%
Authors of colour	55.56%	44.44%
2013		
White authors	44.32%	55.68%
Authors of colour	38.89%	61.11%
2014		
White authors	53.25%	46.75%
Authors of colour	54.55%	45.45%
2015		
White authors	53.06%	46.94%
Authors of colour	58.33%	41.67%
2016		
White authors	53.67%	46.33%
Authors of colour	46.15%	53.85%
2017		
White authors	56.21%	43.79%
Authors of colour	68.42%	31.58%
2018		
White authors	50.37%	49.63%
Authors of colour	40.00%	60.00%
2019		
White authors	50.00%	50.00%
Authors of colour	64.52%	35.48%

Table 3: US authors and their publishers: segmented by ethnicity and publisher type

Year/Publisher type	Conglomerate	Independent
2006		
White authors	74.02%	25.98%
Authors of colour	75.00%	25.00%

Year/Publisher type	Conglomerate	Independent
2007		
White authors	72.26%	27.74%
Authors of colour	71.79%	28.21%
2008		
White authors	74.24%	25.76%
Authors of colour	62.50%	37.50%
2009		
White authors	79.39%	20.61%
Authors of colour	58.00%	42.00%
2010		
White authors	73.02%	26.98%
Authors of colour	70.69%	29.31%
2011		
White authors	79.67%	20.33%
Authors of colour	61.36%	38.64%
2012		
White authors	80.34%	19.66%
Authors of colour	63.04%	36.96%
2013		
White authors	79.89%	20.11%
Authors of colour	84.62%	15.38%
2014		
White authors	77.10%	22.90%
Authors of colour	100.00%	0.00%
2015		
White authors	84.08%	15.92%
Authors of colour	80.00%	20.00%
2016		
White authors	80.77%	19.23%
Authors of colour	88.89%	11.11%
2017		
White authors	75.00%	25.00%
Authors of colour	80.00%	20.00%
2018		
White authors	78.13%	21.88%
Authors of colour	71.74%	28.26%

Year/Publisher type	Conglomerate	Independent
2019		
White authors	71.34%	28.66%
Authors of colour	83.05%	16.95%

Bestseller Analysis

People of colour, US authors, and men, were better represented in the bestseller lists than they were in the overall output. In the 2017-2019 list (Table 4), 60% of the bestselling titles were written by women and, out of the thirteen authors on the bestseller list, 61.5% (8) were women. White men are the dominant group in the 2017-2019 bestselling author list: making up 38.5% of the bestselling authors despite accounting for 28.59% of all YA authors published in this period. Women of colour and White women accounted for 30.75% each on the bestseller list but 9.02% and 58.3%, respectively, on the overall 2017-2019 list (see figure 6). This means that despite there being around six times as many White women being published than women of colour, there are the same number of both groups in the bestseller list.¹⁴ 90% of the titles in the 2017-2019 list were from the US. Only two UK authors made the list: Holly Jackson's 2019 *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* (at number 12) and David Almond's 2017 *Island* (at number 14). The visibility of US authors on the bestsellers lists gives a skewed picture of YA authorship: this has led to UKYA authors believing the UK market is dominated by USYA authors. The high proportion of USYA authors on the bestseller lists can (partly) be explained/examined by referring to the previous section; as noted in Table 3, USYA authors are more likely, than their UKYA counterparts, to be published by conglomerate publishers. These companies have larger marketing budgets and distribution infrastructure than independent publishers. Additionally, publishers invest more in what they consider to be 'big books' (i.e. books they believe will be successful): this includes larger print runs, more marketing and promotional spend and events, greater in-house attention, and prioritisation in sales meetings (Thompson). Although it is difficult to predict what will become a bestseller – Thompson surmises, “[t]he difference between a big book and a bestseller is the difference between aspiration and reality” (193) – such 'big books' do receive special treatment (193). This could be the underlying reason for the discontent expressed by UKYA authors as they struggle for attention in the face of the US juggernaut (despite being the dominant group in overall YA authorship).¹⁵

The influx of authors of colour from the US has had a positive impact on the UK bestseller lists. In 2017-2019, a quarter of the 20 bestselling titles in the UK were by authors of colour: this is five times the number of titles than in the 2006-2016 period, when Malorie Blackman, the former Children's Laureate, was the only author of colour on the list (at number 19) (Ramdarshan Bold, “The Eight Percent Problem”). As detailed in Table 4, four US

14 A note to thank Christina Neuwirth for nudging me to discover this important finding.

15 Only 20% of the titles in the 2017-2019 bestseller list were published by an independent publisher.

authors of colour appear in the 2017-2019 list: Tomi Adeyemi (at number 13), Jenny Han (at number 18), Angie Thomas (at number 3), and Nicola Yoon (at numbers 2 and 9). Unlike the 2006-2016 period, authors of colour were better represented in bestselling books in 2017, 2018, and 2019 than in overall YA output. In fact, in 2019, 40% of the bestselling titles were by authors of colour: eight out of the 20 titles (Table 5). However, in this three-year period, looking at individual years rather than the combination of the three, the same five authors of colour appear: Adeyemi (who appears in the 2018 and 2019 after her debut novel, *Children of Blood and Bone*, the first book in her *Legacy of Orisha* series, was published in 2018); Blackman (who only appears in 2019, with *Noughts & Crosses* possibly boosted after the announcement of the BBC adaptation of the *Noughts & Crosses*, and the fifth book in series, *Crossfire* was published, in 2019, after an 11 year break¹⁶); Han (whose *To All The Boys* series appears in 2018 and 2019, following the popularity of the Netflix film¹⁷); Angie Thomas (*The Hate U Give* appears on all three lists¹⁸); and Yoon (who appears on all three lists, presumably, in part, due to the film adaptations of her novels – *Everything, Everything* and *The Sun is Also a Star* – being released in 2017 and 2019¹⁹) (see Table 8). Like in 2006-2016, Blackman is the only UKYA author of colour to feature in the 2017-2019 lists, with her award-winning novel *Noughts & Crosses* (the first of a trilogy, originally, but now extended to a tetralogy).²⁰ The US authors of colour bring genre diversity to the list; a mix of YA fantasy, contemporary/realistic fiction, and contemporary romance. Only two of the titles by the authors of colour – *Noughts & Crosses* and *The Hate U Give* – deal explicitly with topics of race/racism, showing that authors of colour do not need to write trauma narratives to be commercially successful.

The success of a book and an author is often linked to the author's name recognition and the success of the previous books. Three authors published in the 2017-2019 period appeared on the overall bestseller list and the bestseller lists for each year: John Green, *Turtles All the Way Down* (2017), *The Fault in Our Stars* (2018, 2019); Karen McManus, *One Of Us Is Lying* (2017, 2018, 2019), *Two Can Keep a Secret* (2019); and Nicola Yoon, *Everything, Everything* (2017, 2018), *The Sun is also a Star* (2017, 2018, 2019). Both McManus and Yoon gained recognition from, and developed large readerships with, their debut novels (*One Of Us Is Lying* and *Everything, Everything*) while Green, best known for his fourth novel (*The Fault in Our Stars*), has built his large readership gradually in the UK.²¹ This reveals that film

16 *Noughts & Crosses* was originally published in the UK in 2001.

17 *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*, the first book in the series, was first published in 2014; however, Jenny Han did not make the bestseller list until 2018, when the Netflix film was released.

18 In comparison, *The Hate U Give* has been on the *New York Times* Young Adult Fiction bestseller list, as of 27 December 2020, for 198 weeks, when it was positioned at number 3.

19 These were originally published in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

20 In 2019, *Noughts & Crosses* was included in the BBC's list of the 100 'most inspiring' novels of the 21st Century (BBC).

and television adaptations can also catapult YA authors, particularly authors of colour, into bestseller lists.

Characters of colour are also better represented within the bestselling titles. In 2006-2016, “[n]inety percent (18) of the bestselling YA titles of 2006–2016 feature White, heterosexual, able-bodied, cisgender main protagonists (human or otherwise)” (Ramdarshan Bold, “The Eight Percent Problem” 401): in 2017-2019, 60% (12) of the bestselling titles had characters of colour. These characters were written by both the authors of colour and White authors on the list. It is important to note that increasing the number of books featuring characters of colour, but written by White authors, is not the solution to the problem of underrepresentation. This is especially true if authors of colour continue to be underrepresented and if cultural gatekeepers continue to minimise their experiences, as has been the case until now.

Table 4: Top 20 bestselling YA titles in the UK (2017-2019)

Position	Title	Author	Imprint	Publisher	Volume
1	<i>One Of Us Is Lying</i>	McManus, Karen M.	Penguin	Penguin	227934
2	<i>Everything, Everything</i>	Yoon, Nicola	Corgi Children’s	Random House	138276
3	<i>Hate U Give, The</i>	Thomas, Angie	Walker	Walker	138246
4	<i>Thirteen Reasons Why</i>	Asher, Jay	Penguin	Penguin	131468
5	<i>Disney As Old As Time: What if Belle's Mother Cursed the Beast?</i>	Braswell, Liz	Paper Rocket	Parragon	127927
6	<i>Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children</i>	Riggs, Ransom	Quirk Books	Quirk Books	112552
7	<i>Two Can Keep a Secret</i>	McManus, Karen	Penguin	Penguin	82081

21 Despite publishing *Looking for Alaska* (HarperCollins) in the UK in 2006, John Green does not appear on the NielsenBookscan top 100 bestselling YA book lists until 2012 when the novel is placed at number 34. This is the same year that *The Fault in Our Stars* was first published in the UK: it appears twice on the 2012 list, at number 54 (E P Dutton & Co Inc) and 86 (Penguin). *Paper Towns*, which was first published in 2011 in the UK (Bloomsbury), also makes an appearance on the 2012 bestseller list at number 85. In the following year, 2013, *The Fault in Our Stars* was the bestselling YA book in the UK and John Green appears on the 100 bestselling YA titles in the UK list a further five times: *Looking for Alaska* (15 and 24, different editions); *An Abundance of Katherines* (16); *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* with David Levithan (17); and *Paper Towns* (29, Bloomsbury/paperback).

Position	Title	Author	Imprint	Publisher	Volume
8	<i>Disney Once Upon a Dream: What if the Sleeping Beauty Never Woke Up?</i>	Braswell, Liz	Parragon	Parragon	74174
9	<i>Sun is also a Star, The</i>	Yoon, Nicola	Corgi Children's	Random House	69659
10	<i>Hollow City</i>	Riggs, Ransom	Quirk Books	Quirk Books	61287
11	<i>Disney A Whole New World: What If Aladdin Had Never Found the Lamp?</i>	Braswell, Liz	Parragon	Parragon	60294
12	<i>Good Girl's Guide to Murder, A</i>	Jackson, Holly	Electric Monkey	Egmont Books	59427
13	<i>Children of Blood and Bone: Legacy of Orisha</i>	Adeyemi, Tomi	Macmillan Children's	Pan Macmillan	58969
14	<i>Island: World Book Day 2017</i>	Almond, David	Hodder Children's	Hachette	58470
15	<i>All the Bright Places</i>	Niven, Jennifer	Penguin	Penguin	58296
16	<i>Turtles All the Way Down</i>	Green, John	Penguin	Penguin	57668
17	<i>Dead of Night: A World Book Day Book 2017</i>	Grant, Michael	Electric Monkey	Egmont	51831
18	<i>To All The Boys I've Loved Before: FILM TIE IN EDITION</i>	Han, Jenny	Scholastic	Scholastic	49569
19	<i>Library Of Souls</i>	Riggs, Ransom	Quirk Books	Quirk Books	46278
20	<i>Holding Up the Universe</i>	Niven, Jennifer	Penguin	Penguin	44392

Table 5: Top 20 bestselling YA titles in the UK (2019)

Position	Title	Author	Imprint	Publisher	Volume
1	<i>Two Can Keep a Secret</i>	McManus, Karen	Penguin	Penguin	82081
2	<i>One Of Us Is Lying</i>	McManus, Karen M.	Penguin	Penguin	74371
3	<i>A Good Girl's Guide to Murder</i>	Jackson, Holly	Electric Monkey	Egmont Books	59427
4	<i>Nought Forever: World Book Day 2019</i>	Blackman, Malorie	Penguin	Penguin	43892

Position	Title	Author	Imprint	Publisher	Volume
5	<i>The Hate U Give</i>	Thomas, Angie	Walker	Walker	40130
6	<i>This Lie Will Kill You</i>	Pitcher, Chelsea	Simon & Schuster Children's	Simon & Schuster	39410
7	<i>Five Feet Apart</i>	Lippincott, Rachael & Daughtry, Mikki	Simon & Schuster Children's	Simon & Schuster	29811
8	<i>Noughts & Crosses</i>	Blackman, Malorie	Penguin	Penguin	28665
9	<i>Northern Lights</i>	Pullman, Philip	Scholastic	Scholastic	25680
10	<i>To All The Boys I've Loved Before: FILM TIE IN EDITION</i>	Han, Jenny	Scholastic	Scholastic	24890
11	<i>On the Come Up</i>	Thomas, Angie	Walker	Walker	21474
12	<i>The Hunger Games</i>	Collins, Suzanne	Scholastic	Scholastic	19010
13	<i>Children of Blood and Bone: Legacy of Orisha</i>	Adeyemi, Tomi	Macmillan Children's	Pan Macmillan	17614
14	<i>P.S. I Still Love You</i>	Han, Jenny	Scholastic	Scholastic	16932
15	<i>The Tattooist of Auschwitz</i>	Morris, Heather	Hot Key Books	Bonnier Books	16877
16	<i>The Sun is also a Star</i>	Yoon, Nicola	Corgi Children's	Random House	16060
17	<i>Dear Evan Hansen</i>	Emmich, Val & Paul, Justin & Levenson, S	Penguin	Penguin	15069
18	<i>A Curse So Dark and Lonely,</i>	Kemmerer, Brigid	Bloomsbury YA	Bloomsbury	14630
19	<i>Five Feet Apart</i>	Lippincott, Rachael & Daughtry, Mikki	Simon & Schuster Children's	Simon & Schuster	13818
20	<i>The Fault in Our Stars</i>	Green, John	Penguin	Penguin	13633

Table 6: Top 20 bestselling YA titles in the UK (2018)

Position	Title	Author	Imprint	Publisher	Volume
1	<i>One Of Us Is Lying</i>	McManus, Karen M.	Penguin	Penguin	84706
2	<i>Hate U Give, The</i>	Thomas, Angie	Walker	Walker	63356
3	<i>Children of Blood and Bone: Legacy of Orisha</i>	Adeyemi, Tomi	Macmillan Children's	Pan Macmillan	41355

4	<i>Love Simon: Simon Vs The Homo Sapiens Agenda Official Film Tie-in</i>	Albertalli, Becky	Penguin	Penguin	39090
5	<i>Everything, Everything</i>	Yoon, Nicola	Corgi Children's	Random House	37549
6	<i>Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda</i>	Albertalli, Becky	Penguin	Penguin	36514
7	<i>Disney As Old As Time: What if Belle's Mother Cursed the Beast?</i>	Braswell, Liz	Paper Rocket	Parragon	28486
8	<i>Kingdom of Ash</i>	Maas, Sarah J.	Bloomsbury Children's	Bloomsbury	26340
9	<i>Disney Once Upon a Dream: What if the Sleeping Beauty Never Woke Up?</i>	Braswell, Liz	Parragon	Parragon	25527
10	<i>To All The Boys I've Loved Before: FILM TIE IN EDITION</i>	Han, Jenny	Scholastic	Scholastic	24679
11	<i>Queen of Air and Darkness: The Dark Artifices</i>	Clare, Cassandra	Simon & Schuster	Simon & Schuster	22925
12	<i>Perfect</i>	Ahern, Cecelia	HarperCollins Children's	HarperCollins	22399
13	<i>Fault in Our Stars, The</i>	Green, John	Penguin	Penguin	21701
14	<i>All the Bright Places</i>	Niven, Jennifer	Penguin	Penguin	21161
15	<i>Disney A Whole New World: What If Aladdin Had Never Found the Lamp?</i>	Braswell, Liz	Parragon	Parragon	20256
16	<i>P.S. I Still Love You</i>	Han, Jenny	Scholastic	Scholastic	19295
17	<i>Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children</i>	Riggs, Ransom	Quirk Books	Quirk Books	18890
18	<i>Sun is also a Star, The</i>	Yoon, Nicola	Corgi Children's	Random House	18524
19	<i>Things a Bright Girl Can Do</i>	Nicholls, Sally	Andersen Press	Andersen Press	17248

20	<i>Always and Forever, Lara Jean</i>	Han, Jenny	Scholastic	Scholastic	16796
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Table 7: Top 20 bestselling YA titles in the UK (2017)

Position	Title	Author	Imprint	Publisher	Volume
1	<i>Everything, Everything</i>	Yoon, Nicola	Corgi Children's	Random House	100727
2	<i>Disney As Old As Time: What if Belle's Mother Cursed the Beast?</i>	Braswell, Liz	Paper Rocket	Parragon	99441
3	<i>Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children</i>	Riggs, Ransom	Quirk Books	Quirk Books	93662
4	<i>Thirteen Reasons Why</i>	Asher, Jay	Penguin	Penguin	71895
5	<i>One Of Us Is Lying</i>	McManus, Karen M.	Penguin	Penguin	68857
6	<i>Hollow City: The Second Novel of Miss Peregrine's Peculiar Children</i>	Riggs, Ransom	Quirk Books	Quirk Books	61287
7	<i>Thirteen Reasons Why</i>	Asher, Jay	Penguin	Penguin	59573
8	<i>Island: World Book Day 2017</i>	Almond, David	Hodder Children's	Hachette	58470
9	<i>Turtles All the Way Down</i>	Green, John	Penguin	Penguin	57668
10	<i>Dead of Night: A World Book Day Book 2017</i>	Grant, Michael	Electric Monkey	Egmont Books	51831
11	<i>Disney Once Upon a Dream: What if the Sleeping Beauty Never Woke Up?</i>	Braswell, Liz	Parragon	Parragon	48647
12	<i>Library Of Souls</i>	Riggs, Ransom	Quirk Books	Quirk Books	46278
13	<i>Holding Up the Universe</i>	Niven, Jennifer	Penguin	Penguin	44392

Position	Title	Author	Imprint	Publisher	Volume
14	<i>Disney A Whole New World: What If Aladdin Had Never Found the Lamp?</i>	Braswell, Liz	Parragon	Parragon	40038
15	<i>One Memory of Flora Banks, The</i>	Barr, Emily	Penguin	Penguin	38869
16	<i>All the Bright Places</i>	Niven, Jennifer	Penguin	Penguin	37135
17	<i>Lord of Shadows: The Dark Artifices</i>	Clare, Cassandra	Simon & Schuster	Simon & Schuster	36053
18	<i>Sun is also a Star, The</i>	Yoon, Nicola	Corgi Children's	Random House	35075
19	<i>Hate U Give, The</i>	Thomas, Angie	Walker	Walker	34760
20	<i>Girl Online: Girl Online</i>	Sugg, Zoe (Zoella)	Penguin	Penguin	33565

Table 8: Authors of colour in the bestsellers lists (2006-2019)

2006	Malorie Blackman (no. 15, 16)
2007	Malorie Blackman (no. 17)
2008	None
2009	Kristin Cast [with her mum PC Cast] (no. 9, 10, 12, 14, 15)
2010	Kristin Cast [with her mum PC Cast] (no. 18)
2011	Kristin Cast [with her mum PC Cast] (no. 9)
2012	None
2013	Kami Garcia (no.2)
2014	None
2015	None
2016	Nicola Yoon (no.8)
2017	Nicola Yoon (no. 1, 18), Angie Thomas (no. 19)
2018	Angie Thomas (no. 2), Tomi Adeyemi (no. 3), Nicola Yoon (no. 5, 18), Jenny Han (no. 10, 16, 20)
2019	Malorie Blackman (no. 4, 8), Angie Thomas (no. 5, 11), Jenny Han (no. 10, 14), Tomi Adeyemi (no. 13), Nicola Yoon (no. 16)

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this article is to provide ongoing statistical evidence to support discussions about YA authors of colour being published in the UK publishing industry. The data presented in this article is encouraging and demonstrates a yearly increase in the percentage of authors of colour being published and appearing on bestseller lists. 2019, in particular, shows how far the publishing industry has progressed over this 14-year period of study. While these increases are positive, they are still small and are from a very low starting point. Although the data presented here shows that the number of YA authors of colour being published has increased, this article does not fully investigate what types of books are being published. For example: are YA authors of colour still being encouraged to write stereotypical depictions of their cultural heritage, or books centred on race, racism or trauma, which has been the case in the past; and have their experiences, sometimes negative, of the publishing industry changed since 2016?

Despite various initiatives, conversations, and well-meaning intentions, authors of colour continue to face barriers in the UK publishing industry (Ramdarshan Bold, *Inclusive Young Adult Fiction*, “Representation of People of Colour, (2007-2017)”). In fact, British novelist Dorothy Koomson described it as a “hostile environment for black authors” (@DorothyKoomson; Flood, “Black British Authors”). The #PublishingPaidMe conversation in 2020 shows that authors of colour, particularly Black authors, are still undervalued by publishers. The #PublishingPaidMe hashtag was started by African-American YA author L.L. McKinney to highlight the pay gap between Black and non-Black authors. The hashtag, which quickly trended on Twitter, allowed authors to share their advances (Flood, “#Publishingpaidme”). Malorie Blackman tweeted: “I’m currently writing my 70th book. Though not all my books are in print any more, I have never in my life received anything like the sums being posted by some White authors on #PublishingPaidMe” (@malorieblackman). Blackman, as outlined above, is the only UKYA author of colour, and one of the three UKYA authors, to appear in the top 20 bestsellers list, 2017-2019 (see Tables 5 and 8). It should be stressed that advances are not indicative of the quality of a work but of the level of confidence the publisher places on the book and the consumer. As N.K. Jemisin argues, and as confirmed by academic research, this confidence can be swayed by implicit and unconscious biases, and, in some cases, racism (@nkjemisin; Childress and Nault; Saha and Van Lente).

Publishers have expressed their commitment to ‘diversity’ in recent years and this seems to be reflected in the increased numbers. Women of colour, in particular, have shown that they can sell books in large numbers, as evidenced by the bestseller lists, despite the low percentage of women of authors of colour being published each year. However, as demonstrated in some of the incidents around remuneration, content, and the small number of repeatedly published authors, this commitment has proven to be merely performative in

some cases. Statistical evidence may show a positive increase, but structural inequalities – as brought to the fore by the #PublishingPaidMe conversations – persist. The visibility of Black authors rose in 2020, in part due the expansion of Black Lives Matter as a global movement following the murder of George Floyd. In the UK, Bernardine Evaristo (*Girl, Woman, Other*) and Reni Eddo-Lodge (*Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*) were the first Black British women to top the UK's fiction and nonfiction paperback charts, following George Floyd's murder (Flood, "Black British Authors"). Eddo-Lodge said of the news, "[c]an't help but be dismayed by this – the tragic circumstances in which this achievement came about. The fact that it's 2020 and I'm the first. Let's be honest. Reader demand aside, that it took this long is a horrible indictment of the publishing industry" (@renireni). While publishers may have good intentions about improving representation and better supporting Black and other authors of colour, it is important that they first interrogate their own role in perpetuating inequality before trying to profit from conversations about race/racism. They must question their own intentions behind publishing books by and about socially marginalised groups, and understand when and how their practices might be harmful to authors and readers. In the future, a positive step would be for authors of colour to receive the same kinds of deals their White peers are offered, for all kinds of narratives, not just those about race and racism. YA books that explore issues of racism, discrimination, prejudice, and inequality – the types of books by authors of colour that publishers like to publish – are still vital. However, more stories, about the different facets of British youth culture, are needed for the publishing industry, and the books and stories it produces, to be truly representative.

Black authors, and other authors of colour, more often get deals when they write race-based narratives, generally around trauma (McKinney; Reddin; Saha and Van Lente; Ramdarshan Bold, *Inclusive Young Adult Fiction*). In the future, a positive step would be to see more UKYA where ethnicity is incidental – where the “ordinariness” (that is, the centring on everyday life and activities) that Alison Waller describes is more of a defining feature than the protagonist's ethnicity – and where publishers are not simply commodifying a movement or a trend. Teenagers in the UK often read about the youth experience through a US lens, so it a more multifaceted range of UKYA is needed to explore all facets of British identity. Conglomerate publishers, with global reach and bigger marketing budgets, are key to supporting UKYA authors of colour and ensuring their work is not just accessible to UK readers, but to readers around the world.

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