

Fragile Empathy: White Teachers Reading #OwnVoices
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Most scholars agree on the transformative nature of children's and Young Adult literature (Dresang, 1999; O'Neil, 2010), after all, that is why we make a study of it. But, what are the mechanisms, and how do readers experience those transformations? In this paper I use Bishop's (1983) concept of books as *Windows* and *Doors* as a framework to focus on the ways White teachers in a master's degree program respond, take up, reject, and struggle, during a semester of reading only #OwnVoices children's and YA literature. A window book can help the reader observe different perspectives, histories, and lenses on life, but what kinds of reading enable a reader to truly shift perspectives? What kinds of conscious engagement must a reader experience to truly decenter their own privileged perspective and change the way they experience stories that are not simply unfamiliar, but that are in direct opposition to their own reality?

The intent of this paper is a radical one: to show how children's literature classes can be places for deep engagement and change for teachers by focusing on intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), reading deeply heterogeneous literature, and exploring their own Whiteness. This study provides a road map for robust, challenging, interacting identities (peer, expert, novice, ally, advocate, objector) that can lead to the teachers decentering systemic privilege in their own classrooms.

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