



# Research on Diversity in Youth Literature



## Call for Papers: *Research on Diversity in Youth Literature* 6.1 Special Issue on Book Challenges

*Research on Diversity in Youth Literature* (RDYL) announces a call for papers for a special issue focused on book challenges. Scheduled to publish in Summer 2023, **RDYL 6.1** will be guest edited by Anastasia Collins (Simmons University) and Dr. Nicole Cooke (University of South Carolina). *RDYL* is a peer-reviewed, online, open-access journal hosted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Book challenges as coordinated, strategic attacks against marginalized identities in the US are all but tradition now, and they [regularly target children's and young adult books](#). Tressie McMillan Cottom has called libraries "[the public square](#)," and it is no coincidence that attacks on youth literature featuring [Black, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latinx, queer, trans, Jewish, Muslim, and other marginalized](#) narratives are aimed at school, public, and classroom libraries and the access they provide young readers even more than at bookstores and publishing conglomerates. Even as continued resistance and counter-organization among professionals and community members offers pushback, book challenges cannot be dismissed as mere, vicious backlash but grappled with as a part of our reading culture. Beyond the majority opinion that [opposes the banning of books](#), this special issue calls for a deep investigation of the stakes and implications—be they literary, informational, material, or ideological—of book challenges against diverse youth literature.

Some questions we are particularly interested in, include, but are not limited to:

- Given that libraries (and children's & YA publishing) are also spaces in which young readers have agency as a distinct reader group, what does it mean that book challenges regularly target not only diverse books but specifically diverse children's & YA books?
- What are the ideological implications of book challenges intersecting with librarians and educators engaging in self- or soft censorship practices? How does the regular threat of book challenges and controversy reinforce mainstream publishing professionals' exploitation and reviewers' tokenization of marginalized narratives?
- Not all challenges are equal. How do book challenges—as an elevation of the voices of those [excluded and neglected](#) by the white-dominated fields and white-supremacist practices of librarianship, education, and publishing—impact youth media and culture?
- Given what the freedom to read represents in our culture, what then is there to say about the intersection of book challenges with cultural constructions of childhood and children's literature as a social project?

*RDYL* seeks essays that address youth literature and culture from any time period. We welcome submissions from a wide variety of fields, including but not limited to literary studies, library science, education studies, media studies, history, and ethnic studies.

Submit complete essays by **December 16, 2022**, to Anastasia Collins and Nicole A. Cooke at [RDYLissue6.1@gmail.com](mailto:RDYLissue6.1@gmail.com). Essays should be between **4,000-6,000 words**, including footnotes and Works Cited, and be documented according to **MLA 9**.

<https://iopn.library.illinois.edu/journals/rdyl/index>