



jeunesse: young people, texts, cultures

Black Lives Matter – Statement of Solidarity

The editorial board of *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* stands in solidarity with Black students, teachers, librarians, academics, and their communities. While the current wave of #BlackLivesMatter protests was sparked by the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and George Floyd, systemic racism has a long history in the United States. Rooted in the transatlantic slave trade, it has taken many forms throughout the history of the nation, including lynching, police brutality, the War on Drugs, mass incarceration, the redlining of predominantly African American neighbourhoods, and other forms of systemic oppression. Systemic racism also has a long history in Canada and is similarly rooted in the transatlantic slave trade. In Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, where *Jeunesse* is housed, three Indigenous people were murdered by police in April of this year alone, including sixteen-year-old Eishia Hudson, thirty-six-year-old Jason Collins, and twenty-two-year-old Stewart Kevin Andrews. That all three of these murders occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately affected Black, Indigenous, and other people of colour, speaks volumes about the politics of disposability that informs the treatment of racialized people in Canada.

We acknowledge that racism is also an everyday, normalized reality in the academy, where it not only hinders the work of Black and Indigenous scholars and other scholars of colour, but can become rooted in the minds of students. The result is a perpetuation of racism and racist research. Neither texts marketed to young people nor studies of young people's texts and cultures have been immune to systemic racism. In fact, both have played a large role in perpetuating white supremacy. Today, racism in the field can be insidious, appearing in forms that may on the surface seem benevolent, but which are by design strategies that white people use to evade responsibility for their own complicity with oppressive structures. Scholarship is harmful when it collaborates with larger systems to maintain the illusion that we are living in a post-racial society. We renew our commitment to publishing scholarship that interrogates racism and combats white privilege and supremacy, and we strongly support and commit to promoting anti-racist creators, publishers, activists, teachers, academics, and other community leaders. We respectfully acknowledge the work of Black, Indigenous, and other people of colour who model anti-racism in their capacity as professionals in young people's texts and cultures through, for example, establishing Indigenous presses, engaging in #OwnVoices criticism, spotlighting #OwnVoices texts and authors, and mentoring emerging scholars. We urge our white colleagues to think about how they might use their privilege to advance anti-racism in the field of young people's texts and cultures, in the academy, and in the larger society. Black, Indigenous, and people of colour have been working on systemic change and social justice for centuries, so now the work of transformation needs to be taken up by those who benefit the most from white supremacy and institutionalized racism.