

Be The *Change* (book): author and publisher activism in the monochrome UKYA market

The UKYA market has flourished since 2006: the number of titles published, annually, more than doubled from then until 2010. Despite the growth and popularity of YA, there is a dearth of authors of colour, particularly British BAME authors, being published in the UK. In fact, UKYA BAME authors were less well represented in 2016 than they were in 2006, and authored only 1.5% of the titles published, in the UK, during this period. The marginalisation of authors and characters of colour has a long history in Anglo-American publishing, which has engendered a racialized, cultural hierarchy in publishing output. This imbalance of cultural output affects aspiring and emerging authors, trying to break into the market; however, it also impacts established midlist authors, who, despite being undervalued, prop up an industry that is focused on bestsellers. Consequently, writing and publishing against the grain can be seen as a type of activism. By contextualising the book within my quantitative study of the UKYA market (2006-2018), this paper will focus on the *A Change Is Gonna Come* (2017) anthology, which was commissioned in response to the lack of ethnic diversity in British publishing. This collection of, multi-genre, UKYA short stories and poetry, published by Stripes, features British BAME authors who are at different stages in their careers. Through interviews with the authors in the collection, and the books' commissioning editors, this paper will examine how the authors and independent publisher are collaborating to disrupt the cultural hegemony in the UKYA market.