

## Feminisms and the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Class in

### YA Fiction of Police Brutality by Women of Color

Angie Thomas, author of the bestselling young adult novel, now a highly rated film, *The Hate U Give*, says that her depiction of the character of Hailey is influenced by her observations of “some white feminists” and “the lack of intersectionality when it comes to feminism.” The conflicts between Hailey and the protagonist, Starr, reflect those between white and intersectional feminists. Thomas’s representation of these conflicts is unusual, as young adult fiction rarely names feminism, despite the fact that feminism has profoundly influenced both young adult literature and its criticism. The mainstream, gender-only feminism that Thomas rejects has also been critiqued by women of color feminists, like bell hooks, who call for the experiences of those who have been on the margins to be moved to the center of feminist theory and practice. Thomas does just this in *THUG*: restoring the voices and experiences of black girls to the conversation about police violence. Seen within a genealogy of writing for and about adolescents by black women, *THUG* is the most recent of many depictions of the trauma that race, class, and gender-based oppression inflicts upon black girls, and which highlight the black female protagonists’ witness of police brutality. This genealogy, which includes Kristin Hunter’s 1968 *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*, Louise Meriwether’s 1970 *Daddy was a Number Runner*, and Kekla Magoun’s 2014 *How it Went Down*, depicts political activists who respond to the oppression experienced by the black community, inspiring the activism of the black, female protagonists and, perhaps, readers.