

Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature*, Volume 4/Issue 1. In this issue, the editors sought out scholarship both *from* and *concerning* the underrepresented and often misrepresented—especially Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). Social justice issues of gender equity, gun violence, and diversity misrepresentation share connections through common themes in the young adult literature (YAL).

Jewel Davis opens this issue with a critical study, “(De)constructing Imagination: Racial Bias and Counter-Storytelling in Young Adult Speculative Fiction.” Utilizing critical race theory, Davis utilizes critical content analysis to examine race and representation in *Children of Blood and Bone*, *The Black Witch*, and *Carve the Mask*. Emerging themes hold implications for educators, including counter-storytelling and further analysis of representation in speculative fiction.

In a time of racial division, Rockey Robbins, Sharla Robbins, and Wiley Harwell explore both the history and possibility of reconciliation in a critical study of, not only the complicated relationship between the Scottish and Cherokee peoples, but also within an analysis of, two stories: *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson and the traditional Cherokee story, *The Gambler*. Using object relations theory, along with the concept of resonance, readers will find connections between the main characters, David Balfour and Cooch, as well as implications further analysis and the relationships teachers may establish in the classroom.

Julie Smit takes her research into the world of fantasy created by Rick Riordan. Focusing on the development of gender equity in two related series, *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* and *The Heroes of Olympus*, Smit shares findings from an exploratory case study. Perspectives and interactions of 8th grade girls, all part of a larger reading community, provide insight as the “study traces the development of social inquiries of gender inequality, heroism and imperfection, and good and evil” (p. 52).

This issue doubles down on conversations and reviews. First, Katie Sluiter interviews three English Education Professors: Steven Bickmore, Shelly Shaffer, and Gretchen Rumhor. The conversation centers on their scholarship in the field of young adult literature, as well as their book, *Contending with Gun Violence in the English Language Classroom*. Extending the conversation, readers will find a second piece by Sluiter, as she provides a review of the book. Similarly, Terri Suico facilitates a conversation between Sarah Park Dahlen and Gabrielle Atwood Halko, who co-edit a bi-annual journal, *Research on Diversity in Youth Literature*. Suico later provides a thorough review of the journal, its first three issues, and the significance of its scholarship.

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As always, we invite teachers, librarians, graduate students, and educators who would like to review for us in the future. We invite reviewers who are passionate about YA literature and are able to share their knowledge and expertise to improve *Study & Scrutiny* as well as to spread the word about the journal. Please email Leilya Pitre (Leilya.Pitre@selu.edu), and we will gladly include your name and contact information in our database of reviewers.

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